



Hamas Governance in the Gaza Strip: Activity, Institutions, Administration and Public

February 19, 2024

Overview¹

- ▶ The Hamas government media office recently reported that since the beginning of the war (October 7, 2023), 140 facilities belonging to Hamas government institutions in the Gaza Strip had been destroyed. Despite the prolonged fighting and the IDF presence on the ground, the destruction of buildings and the damage to Hamas' military and political capabilities, apparently many Hamas government and public institutions continue to function partially or almost fully. They include some of the government ministries, security forces, municipal authorities, and sometimes also mosques and religious institutions.
- ▶ In the northern Gaza Strip and in Gaza City, the focal points of the fighting since the beginning of the IDF's integrated ground maneuver and from where most of the population was displaced, a significant decline in the functioning of the official institutions was evident. The lull in the fighting which lasted from November 24 to December 1, 2023, when some of the kidnapped hostages returned, and later, the departure of IDF forces from the northern Gaza Strip in mid-January 2024, gave Hamas an opportunity to reorganize in the northern areas. Many services began to operate again, such as the police and the security forces, some government ministries resumed their activity and an advance was paid to government employees. The attempt to restore the symbols of civilian governance was accompanied by the attempt to reorganize Hamas' military wing, which had suffered severe setbacks. According to reports, orders were given to appoint battalion commanders, lieutenants and field commanders to replace those killed by Israel.
- ▶ The active government ministries are the ministry of health, the government media office, the ministry of the interior, which is responsible for operating the security forces, and the ministry of national economy, which regularly monitors the situation in the markets; the other ministries are inactive. Regarding the security forces, apparently Hamas police and

¹ Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

civil defense forces have been operating regularly since the beginning of the war, even if they have not always been fully functional. Police are openly and covertly present in city centers and near hospitals, and maintain public order. In the Rafah area, the Hamas police are fully operational and their operatives are present throughout the city and at the Rafah and Kerem Shalom Crossings. The civil defense mechanism deals with the evacuation and rescue of victims from the ruins.

►The local authorities, especially the five largest authorities in the Gaza Strip, continue to provide almost all municipal services. Some of the authorities, mainly in the southern Gaza Strip, took on the additional role of caring for the thousands of displaced persons who came from the northern Gaza Strip. On the other hand, the municipality of Gaza City, the largest city in the Gaza Strip, announced the collapse of its services and operates emergency teams and provides only marginal services.

►While signs of governance exist, a lack of governance is evident, especially regarding the distribution of the humanitarian aid that reaches the Gaza Strip through the crossings. Even though the police apparently monitor the entry of the trucks carrying humanitarian aid, its distribution is disorderly, and no one stops gangs from robbing the trucks before they reach their destination, or stops the Hamas operatives who forcefully take control of the goods intended for the civilian population. Apparently no reconstruction has been carried out, mainly due to the lack of aid and resources.

►Despite the evidence that Hamas is making efforts to regain its control and influence on the ground, the overall picture is unclear because of the complex situation in the Gaza Strip and the presence of IDF forces. In addition, the northern and southern Gaza Strip are almost completely disconnected from one another, making any form of central control difficult. For now, it is hard to gauge whether the activity is carried out under the direct guidance of the Hamas leadership, which indeed still functions, possibly indicating the capabilities of the Hamas government and its ability to adapt its activities to the situation on the ground, or whether it is mainly an initiative of the local leadership.

Hamas Governance by District

The northern Gaza Strip

►During the first days of the fighting, and especially from the beginning of the IDF's integrated ground maneuver, and throughout the entire period that the IDF forces were in

the northern Gaza Strip, the local Hamas government institutions in the north, most of whose residents were displaced to the south following the fighting, were virtually inactive. The signs of the return of governance to the area were seen almost at the same time as the departure of the IDF forces.

►Although the IDF forces continue to carry out targeted operations and the majority of the population is absent, according to a "Hamas source" who spoke anonymously, it was the Hamas leadership that gave the instructions to restore order in those parts of the northern Gaza Strip from which the Israeli forces withdrew (AP, February 3, 2024). "Informed sources" said that Hamas asked local officials to manage the work of government in the northern Gaza Strip, adding that the officials contacted senior figures in the ministry of finance, the ministry of the interior and civil security forces such as the police, and ordered them to return to work, each in his field and according to his abilities, to prove that Hamas still existed, was capable of controlling the territory and to prevent chaos. An advance payment of \$200 was paid to each government employee (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 2, 2024).

►The police and other security forces received instructions to return to their jobs in accordance with existing capabilities and the security situation on the ground, and as a result, warrants were issued for thieves who tried to rob abandoned houses and shops, and for merchants who were accused of hoarding food and exploiting the situation (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 2, 2024). According to the statements of Palestinians who remained in the northern Gaza Strip, uniformed police tried to enforce the order and fought people who exploited of the lack of food and basic necessities (Arabi21 website, January 27, 2024).

►For example, on January 27, 2024, a web surfer wrote that his father, who lived in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood in Gaza City, told him that the police were currently in the northern Gaza Strip, trying to impose their authority and pursue every exploiter and thief (Arabi21 website, January 27, 2024).



Hamas police deployed in the northern Gaza Strip (al-Arabi, December 15, 2023)

►At the same time, an attempt was also made to reorganize Hamas' military wing the northern Gaza Strip. Its headquarters issued orders to appoint battalion commanders, lieutenants and field commanders to replace those who had been killed (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 2, 2024).

Gaza City

►In Gaza City, where most of the Hamas government institutions and the international organizations were located, the government institutions hardly operated once the integrated ground maneuver began. With the withdrawal of the IDF forces in mid-January 2024, the Hamas government began to reactivate several services. According to local residents and a Hamas official, police were deployed throughout the city and the Hamas government paid salaries to some of the public service employees. Abd Albar, a Gaza City resident, said his cousin had received \$200 from an improvised Hamas office set up to distribute payments to government employees, including police and municipal employees (AP, February 3, 2024).

►Even when IDF forces operated in the area, Hamas police, both uniformed and in plainclothes, were deployed near the police headquarters and other government offices, including near Shifa Hospital.

Rafah

►The city of Rafah, which in addition to its permanent residents currently houses about 1.4 million displaced persons from around the Gaza Strip, was until now a "safe and protected area" where Hamas governance was prominent. The municipality, whose director is Hamas-affiliated Dr. Ahmed al-Sufi, functions normally and takes care of solving various problems, including the problems of the displaced persons. The local police are active both overtly and covertly. They patrol the markets and enforce public order, and also secure UNRWA's distribution centers and the trucks that enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah Crossing.

The central Gaza Strip

►In the central Gaza Strip, Hamas' effort to demonstrate governance is evident. In the area of Deir al-Balah, where the IDF forces did not operate, Hamas rule was maintained throughout the months of the war. In the areas where the forces operated and then left (al-Bureij, al-Maghazi and Nuseirat), residents were found returning to their homes and life began to return to normal.



The crowded Nuseirat refugee camp market. Life returns to normal (Shehab's X account, February 5, 2024)

Khan Yunis

►Despite the IDF activity in recent weeks in the south and west of the city, Hamas still continues to control the center of the city. The Hamas-controlled Khan Yunis Municipality continues to provide its regular services to the residents. In addition, from the beginning of the war Hamas police were continuously present at the Nasser Hospital entrance and the compound, until recently, when the IDF began operating inside the hospital.



The Hamas police secure Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis. The blue van parked at the entrance belongs to the police (Shehab X account, February 5, 2024)

Activity of Hamas Government Ministries

The ministry of health

►Since the beginning of the war, the Hamas-controlled ministry of health has operated continuously. Many hospitals in the Gaza Strip still operate fully or partially, although they are very overcrowded and there is a noticeable lack of equipment. Every day, and sometimes twice a day, the ministry publishes data about the number of dead and

wounded. It publishes daily lists of those who need treatment outside the Gaza Strip and instructions on when to arrive at the Rafah Crossing. **Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra**, spokesman for the ministry, usually issues a message every few days detailing the state of the ministry's services, the state of the hospitals and hardships and shortages. Dr. Al-Qidra, whose permanent residence was in Gaza City, used to update from his home. As the fighting progressed he moved to Rafah from where he continues to hold periodic press conferences from the Tel al-Sultan Maternity Hospital, in the west of the city.



Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra holds a press conference at the maternity hospital in Rafah (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, December 19, 2023)

► **Dr. Yusuf Abu al-Rish, the deputy minister of health**, also moved to the southern Gaza Strip for work. He met and hosted delegations at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis before the IDF activities began, and at the European Hospital in eastern Khan Yunis. For example, on December 31, 2023, when James McGoldrick, coordinator of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), together with a World Health Organization delegation, visited Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, he was accompanied by Dr. Yusuf Abu al-Rish and senior members of the ministry of health in Gaza (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, December 31, 2023).



The UN Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs in Palestine (OCHA) visits Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, December 31, 2023)

Government media office

►The Hamas government media office of Hamas, chaired by **Salama Marouf**, has been operating continuously since the beginning of the war and reports on its Telegram channel about the activities of the IDF, the state of the hospitals and the humanitarian situation, and provides data on losses and damages in the Gaza Strip. Additional information is published on the Telegram channel of the al-Ra'i Agency, which is headed by **Isma'il al-Thawabata**, the director general of the government media office.

►Salama Marouf used to hold daily press conferences at the Shifa Hospital medical complex in Gaza City. The most recent was held on November 9, 2023. After that, he was interviewed by phone with the al-Jazeera channel on November 26, 2023; since then all traces of him have disappeared. His Facebook page and X account are only updated as far as November 10, 2023. Isma'il al-Thawabata, the director general of the bureau, on the other hand, maintains his Facebook page and especially his X account, and uses them to publish government media office announcements along with his personal opinions.



Right: A government media office infographic marking the 100th day of the war, detailing casualties and damage (Palinfo, January 14, 2024). Left: Update of the casualty situation in the Gaza Strip (government information office Instagram account, January 6, 2024)

Ministry of national economy

► Since the beginning of the war, through its various branches, the ministry of national economy, has played a significant role in the organization of humanitarian aid and the distribution of supplies, especially after the representatives of all the international humanitarian organizations, with the exception of UNRWA, left the Gaza Strip at the beginning of the war. In addition, the ministry deals with the supervision and monitoring of the situation in the markets and price levels. It determines the prices of the basic products, sends inspection teams to the markets, bakeries, and gas and fuel filling stations. Its Facebook page is active and updated.

► Even before the IDF's integrated ground maneuver began, and apparently in preparation for it, the ministry's employees inspected a large number of markets, bakeries and gas stations. For example, between October 22 and 28, 2023, the ministry conducted 714 inspections of markets, stores and gas stations throughout the Gaza Strip (ministry of national economy in Gaza Facebook page, November 1, 2023). Even after the entry of IDF forces into the Strip, its activity continued. For example, on January 7, 2024, a notice was published regarding the supervision mechanism for the sale of basic goods, stating that the ministry's teams monitored prices in the markets and were responsible for them. The police also monitor the prices of goods in the markets.



The staff of the ministry of national economy in Gaza inspects a supermarket and bakery before the start of the IDF ground maneuver (ministry of national economy in Gaza Facebook page, October 19, 2023)



The ministry staff audits a gas station in the Gaza Strip (ministry of national economy in Gaza Facebook page, October 19, 2023)



Right: Representative of the ministry of national economy examines and audits a market (ministry of national economy in Gaza Facebook page, November 1, 2023). Left: Ministry of national economy staff visits a bakery (ministry of national economy in Gaza Facebook page, October 24, 2023)

The ministry of the interior and national security

►The Hamas ministry of the interior and national security has updated its Facebook page throughout the war, and regularly updates its Telegram channel as well. Since the beginning of the war, the vast majority of the publications are reports accompanied by documentation of the activities of the police forces and the civil defense teams for clearing rubble and rescuing and evacuating casualties. Sometimes the operatives of the directorate of military medical services are also mentioned in these reports, along with the civil defense teams.² ID cards are currently not being issued and the population registry is not being updated.

² For further information, see below.

►A communication platform on Facebook, Telegram and X (called "The Homeland - Gaza Strip," which the ministry launched on May 9, 2023 (Palestine Online, May 9, 2023), **was active for several days at the beginning of the war** (Facebook page and X account until October 12, 2023, and the Telegram channel until October 19, 2023). The platform published announcements on behalf of various institutions and bodies about the termination of their work (such as the Supreme Judicial Council and, the Islamic University of Gaza) or switching to work in an emergency situation (UNRWA), announcements from the ministry of the interior spokesman about damages and casualties resulting from the activities of the Israeli Air Force, data from the ministry of health on the number of casualties, and instructions for the residents (such as the emergency numbers, to avoid answering calls and text messages from unknown numbers, not to approach places that have been attacked).

►**On February 6, 2024, the platform began operating with new links on the three social networks.** Prominent among the new publications are political updates, such as the issue of the hostage deal, daily lists of the wounded who are expected to leave the Strip through the Rafah crossing, instructions to the residents not to listen to the Israeli reports about ground action in Rafah, guidelines for preventive behavior that will protect the home front, a call to the residents of Khan Yunis to avoid al-Bahar Street (Sea Street) due to the presence of Israeli snipers and a call not to answer calls from international phone numbers asking about the situation in Gaza.

►A call was also issued to displaced Palestinians to register by the evening of February 15, 2024, using the gazaaid.info link, launched by the ministry of social development, to verify and update data about displaced residents (Telegram channel of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip's home front platform, February 7, 2024). The link states that its purpose is to record the data of the displaced persons in all districts of the Gaza Strip to improve the conditions of the shelter centers and camps, adding that the data will also be used to facilitate relief operations for the displaced persons, wherever they are located (Account X of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip's home front platform, February 8, 2024).

►During the first month of the war, **Iyad al-Buzum, spokesman for the ministry of the interior in Gaza**, published announcements and held regular press conferences at the Shifa Hospital medical complex. On November 7, 2023, he held his last press conference, and as it began, a Palestinian walked behind him, raised his bandaged hand and shouted, "Allah willing, there will be a reckoning with Hamas. I will complain about you to Allah, oh Hamas"

(al-Arabiya TV X account, November 7, 2023). After that, one more statement was published in his name (ministry of the interior in Gaza Facebook page, November 11, 2023), and since then he has not been seen in public and his name has not been mentioned in the media. His X account is updated as far as October 29, 2023, and his Facebook page is unavailable.



**Iyad al-Buzum's press conference; behind him is a Gazan who insults Hamas
(al-Arabiya TV X account, November 7, 2023)**

Ministry of education and higher education

►The ministry of education and higher education in the Gaza Strip has been inactive since the beginning of the fighting. On the morning of October 7, 2023, the ministry announced the suspension of classes in all schools in the Gaza Strip until further notice (ministry of education Telegram channel, October 7, 2023). The Facebook pages of some of the education departments in the various districts are active (the Facebook page of the education department in the central Gaza district is the most active and the most up-to-date), however, since October 7, they have published messages and mourning notices for those killed in the war (Facebook page of the education department in the central Gaza district, January 28, 2024). Most of the educational institutions in the Gaza Strip, especially those of UNRWA, have become shelters for displaced residents.



Displaced persons' tents at a government school in Rafah (al-Jazeera.net, November 27, 2023)

►Although the official school year has not begun, various events do take place at the informal education level. For example, a soccer tournament was organized for children at a government school in Khan Yunis (Salman Adan Abdullahi's X account, November 12, 2023). It was also reported that the people in charge of the shelter center at the Shfaram school in Rafah, where thousands of displaced people are sheltering, held a festive ceremony to honor more than 40 boys and girls who had memorized parts of the Qur'an (Arab21 website, February 15, 2024). The ceremony was apparently held by the Dar al-Atakan Association for Qur'an memorization, which belongs to the Ibn Baz Salafi charitable association.



A soccer tournament organized for displaced children at a government school in Khan Yunis (Salman Adan Abdullahi's X account, November 12, 2023)



Pictures from the Qur'an-memorization ceremony (Right: Arab'21 website, February 15, 2024. Left: Palinfo X account, February 14, 2024)

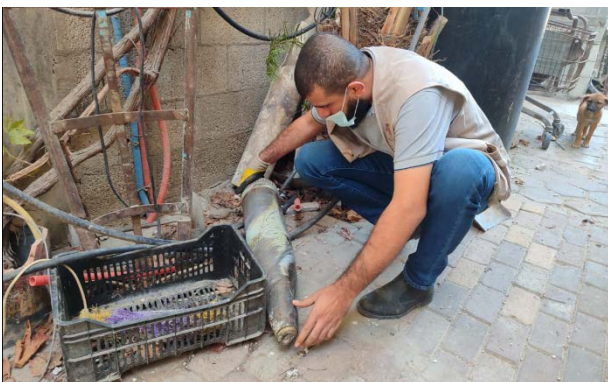
Hamas Security Forces

Police

►The Hamas police force in the Gaza Strip has functioned regularly since the beginning of the war. It uses its Facebook page for posts regarding public performance and conduct. A large part of its work is related to evacuating victims and directing rescue vehicles. For example, the police published posts showing its operatives directing rescue vehicles evacuating casualties close to and inside hospital premises. Police teams also assist medical teams in the hospitals to transport casualties. In addition, police engineering teams continue to treat and clear unexploded ordnance, and investigation teams apprehend thieves (Hamas police in Gaza Facebook page, undated).



A recently published post of the performance of the police despite the destruction. "This is Gaza... still [here] despite the destruction" (Hamas police in Gaza Facebook page, January 21, 2024)



Hamas police bomb squads remove unexploded ordnance (Hamas police in Gaza Facebook page, November 7 and 25, 2023)



**Police direct rescue vehicles near the hospitals in Gaza
(Hamis police in Gaza Facebook page, October 27, 2023)**

Rafah District police

►The Rafah District police force maintains an updated Facebook page which it uses for information about its current activities. The police move in Rafah through the main streets, some in uniform and some in plainclothes, holding batons, and their role is mainly to maintain public order. They also inspect markets to locate merchants who overcharge, their personnel secure UNRWA distribution centers, secure the activity on the Palestinian side of the Kerem Shalom Crossing, catch thieves, etc. For example:

- ◆Information about receiving over 4,570 calls from civilians since the war began. Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed al-Arkan, the director of joint operations at the Rafah police, announced that the joint operations room handled all the calls and referred the applicants to the relevant authorities (Rafah District police force Facebook page, January 30, 2024).



**Lieutenant Ahmed al-Arkan, director of joint operations at the Rafah District police
(Rafah District police force Facebook page, January 30, 2024)**

►Information about the arrest of four thieves from Khan Yunis who broke into shops and apartments. The stolen property found in their tents was valued at approximately NIS 23,000

(about \$6,400) (Rafah District police Facebook page, January 28, 2024). The police detained a Khan Yunis resident who stole NIS 3,000 (about \$830) from a store (Rafah District police force Facebook page, January 28, 2024).



Right: Stolen property found in the tents of members of a gang of thieves (Rafah District police force Facebook page, January 28, 2024). Left: Stolen money which was confiscated (Rafah District police force Facebook page, January 28, 2024)

►Information of the arrest of a drug dealer. Hashish and bullets were found in his possession (Rafah District police force Facebook page, January 30, 2024).



Drugs found in the possession of a drug dealer in Rafah (Rafah District police force Facebook page, January 30, 2024)



Right: Rafah police secure a UNRWA distribution center (Rafah District force Facebook page, February 5, 2024). Left: Rafah plainclothes police holding batons (Rafah District police force Facebook page, February 3, 2024)



Right: Police inspect the markets to locate merchants who are overcharging customers (Rafah District police force Facebook page, February 4, 2024). Left: Police secure and manage the activity on the Palestinian side of the Kerem Shalom Crossing (Rafah District police force Facebook page, February 7, 2024)

Civil Defense

►The role of Gaza's Civil Defense is identical to the role of the Israel Fire and Rescue Services. It has been operating continuously since the beginning of the war. Its Facebook page is updated and it reports on its operations throughout the Strip. Its operatives extinguish fires, and rescue and evacuate victims from ruins and targets attacked by IDF forces. Due to the high volume of casualties, Civil Defense is active throughout the Gaza Strip and its operatives play a central role in helping those who have been injured in the Gaza Strip (Civil Defense Facebook page, February 8, 2024).



Civil Defense operatives in Gaza rescue Gazans trapped in Jabalia (Civil Defense Facebook page, January 24, 2024)



**Civil Defense operatives rescue victims in Beit Lahia
(Civil Defense Facebook page, January 10, 2024)**

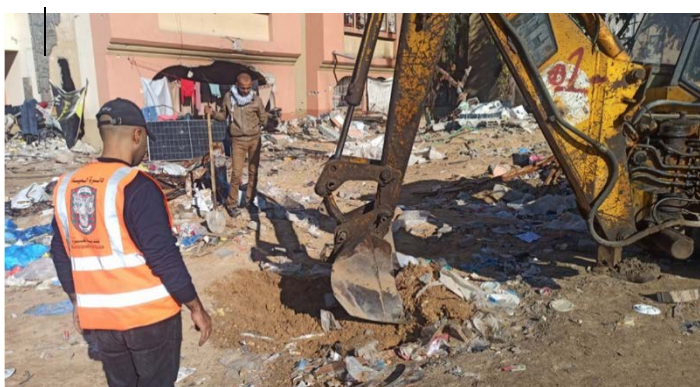
Local Authorities

►Despite the war and Hamas' claims of fuel shortages, most of the large municipalities in the Gaza Strip, with the exception of the Gaza City Municipality, continue to function normally and provide services to local residents. They include the municipalities of Jabalia, Nuseirat, Khan Yunis and Rafah. The Gaza Municipality, on the other hand, announced the termination of its services on December 24, 2023 and operates an emergency committee which provides local residents with a limited range of services.

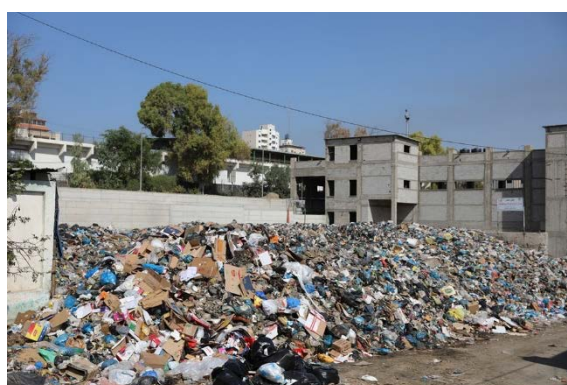
The Gaza Municipality

►The Gaza Municipality is considered the largest municipality in the Gaza Strip. Before the war, it employed more than 2,000 workers and provided services to approximately half a million residents. On December 24, 2023, about two months after the start of the IDF's integrated ground maneuver, the municipality announced the collapse of all the services due to a lack of fuel. **Yahya al-Saraj, head of the municipality**, claimed that since October 7, 2023, the municipality had not been supplied with fuel and therefore was unable to operate its fleet of vehicles to collect garbage or for routine operations. He claimed it also could not operate the water wells and water pumps that treat the drainage basins and sewage. On January 20, 2024, he sent a formal communiqué to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres relating to the hardships of the local authorities in the Gaza Strip caused by the war, and in particular the Gaza Municipality, which he claimed was unable to function due to a lack of fuel (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, December 24, 2023, January 20, 2024).

►The Gaza Municipality's Facebook page is regularly updated. The municipality uploads posts, videos and messages to residents, and also updates information about its hardships. Regarding garbage collection, dozens of tons of garbage have piled up on the city streets and near the hospitals. Regarding drainage ponds and sewage, the main pond in Sheikh Radwan is inactive and rainwater and sewage flow from it into the neighborhood. The municipality also regularly issues updates regarding damage caused in the city by IDF attacks, including in the municipality building. Given its collapse, the municipality operates an emergency committee that provides limited services, such as clearing rubble and connecting water pipes.



Right: The Gaza Municipality building, destroyed by IDF strikes (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, January 8, 2024). Left: Gaza Municipality emergency team trying to solve a water supply problem (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, January 6, 2024)



Garbage piled up throughout the city (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, January 15, 2024)

►An example of the municipality's inability to function was evident at the end of January 2024 when the municipality announced that the B7 sewage treatment plant in the Zeitoun neighborhood in the southeast of the city was destroyed by IDF activities, causing sewage to flood and leak into nearby areas, which was liable to become a public health hazard and an environmental disaster (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, January 26, 2024). Residents of the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood complained about sewage and drainage from Gaza's

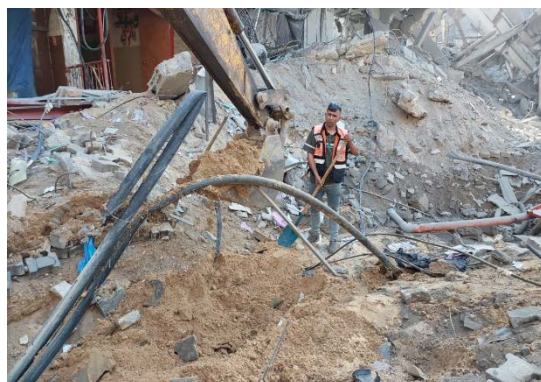
main pond leaking into the neighborhood because the pumps were not working (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, January 25, 2024)



Right: Sewage treatment plant B7 in the Zeitoun neighborhood, which was damaged during the IDF's activity and no longer active (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, January 26, 2024). Left: A local resident complains about the leakage of sewage and drainage water (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, January 25, 2024)

The Jabalia Municipality

►The Jabalia Municipality Facebook page is updated as of December 19, 2023. Until then, the municipality published posts and photos documenting the municipality's teams continuing to work. The municipality dealt with garbage and waste collection near the hospitals and shelter facilities in the city, cleared rubble, and repaired water and electricity networks (Jabalia Municipality Facebook page December 18 and 19, 2023). The municipality also announced activities to restore water pipes which were destroyed by attacks (Jabalia Municipality Facebook page, December 18, 2023).



Restoring water pipes in Jabalia (Jabalia Municipality Facebook page, December 18, 2023)

The Nuseirat Municipality

►The municipality is apparently functioning, as evidenced by published photos that documented municipal teams collecting garbage from the streets and neighborhoods of the Nuseirat refugee camp (Sanad News Agency, February 5, 2024).



Garbage collection in the Nuseirat refugee camp (Sanad News Agency, February 5, 2024)

►Earlier, on January 8, 2024, the municipality published photos on its Facebook page documenting the emergency committee teams of the municipality inspecting the water facilities in the city's neighborhoods. On December 31, 2023, according to the municipality's Facebook page, technical teams of the Palestinian Water Authority, the water service of the Coastal Municipalities, the Nuseirat Municipality emergency committee and the Deir al-Balah Municipality had repaired damage caused to the line carrying the water from Bani Sayid, which supplies water to all areas of the central district (Nuseirat Municipality Facebook page, January 8, 2024).



The municipality teams repair a water pipe damaged by IDF strikes (Nuseirat Municipality Facebook page, January 8, 2024)

The Khan Yunis Municipality

►The Khan Yunis Municipality continues to provide city residents with services despite the IDF's activity in recent weeks and the thousands of displaced persons in the area. The municipality operates an updated Facebook page where it reports on its various activities,

which include garbage collection, street cleaning, distributing water to residents, maintaining sewage reservoirs and operating water pumps (Khan Yunis Municipality Facebook page, January 20, 2024).



Right: A municipal garbage truck removes garbage (Khan Yunis Municipality Facebook page, February 6, 2024). Left: Garbage collection in Khan Yunis (Khan Yunis Municipality Facebook page, January 20, 2024)



The municipality operates wells for the benefit of the residents (Khan Yunis Municipality Facebook page, February 3, 2024)

The Rafah Municipality

►An examination of the Rafah Municipality Facebook page and the Palestinian media websites indicates that the municipality continues to provide a variety of services, not only to the residents of the city but also to the thousands of displaced residents living in the area. It works to open blocked streets and clear rubble, collect garbage, supply cooking gas, prepare areas for the erection of a field hospital and assist in establishing it, erect tent camps for displaced persons from around the Gaza Strip, repave roads and streets, open bakeries for displaced families and distribute equipment and blankets to displaced persons (Rafah Municipality Facebook page, February 6, 2024). The municipality also took measures against shop owners who rented them to displaced persons from the northern Gaza Strip at

exorbitant prices and rewarded shop owners who hosted displaced persons for free (Mahmoud Abu Ziyada's Telegram channel, February 7, 2024).

►On February 6, 2024, **Dr. Ahmed al-Sufi, mayor of Rafah and chairman of the central emergency committee**, met in Rafah with representatives of the government emergency committee. A number of decisions were made, including the upcoming publication of an electronic link to register for filling cooking gas canisters, increasing supervision of businessmen to ensure compliance with the prices of goods transported through the commercial crossing, increasing police and security activity to locate cases of damage to public and private property, advising merchants and importers in an attempt to bring in essential goods that the citizens need (Rafah Municipality Facebook page, February 6, 2024).

►Dr. Ahmed al-Sufi said that before October 7, 2023, about 300,000 people lived in Rafah, but now, due to the war, their number has increased to close to a million in an area no larger than 20 square kilometers. He pointed out that overcrowding, which included many displaced persons, was a heavy burden on the Rafah Municipality. As part of dealing with the situation, **the municipality opened school complexes, centers, event venues and other areas as living quarters for large families. In addition, tents were erected in the areas between buildings** (al-Shorouk, December 7, 2023).



Right: Municipality teams repave streets and roads in Rafah. Left: The municipal teams remove garbage (Rafah Municipality Facebook page, February 6, 7, 2024)



Right: The municipality's teams prepare land near the Kuwaiti Hospital for the erection of a field hospital. Left: The municipality's teams prepare land for the establishment of a tent camp for displaced persons (Rafah Municipality Facebook page, February 6, 2024)



The mayor of Rafah inaugurated a bakery in the Tel al-Sultan neighborhood (West Rafah) which will bake pitas for the displaced families living in the city (Rafah Municipality Facebook, February 7, 2024)



Right: A municipality worker collects garbage (Rafah Municipality Facebook page, January 25, 2024). Left: Routine maintenance of garbage trucks at the municipality's garage (Rafah Municipality Facebook page, December 25, 2023)

Mosques and Religious Institutions

► During the war, little activity was seen in the mosques and religious institutions in the Gaza Strip, and what activity there was focused mainly on collecting donations. On February 9, 2024, for the first time since the beginning of the war, the Friday prayer was held in the heart

of the Jabalia refugee camp. Thousands of people gathered for prayer in the square from which the ruins had been cleared for the purpose of prayer (al-Arabi TV website, February 9, 2024; X account of the home front platform of the ministry of interior in Gaza, February 9, 2024). The sermon was delivered by Sheikh Mursi Salman, head of waqf in the northern Gaza Strip (al-Jazeera website, February 9, 2024).



Friday prayer in Jabalia (al-Arabi TV website, February 9, 2024)



The preacher, head of the waqf in the northern Gaza Strip, Sheikh Mursi Salman (al-Jazeera website, February 9, 2024)