

Gazan family regains hope

After waiting for three years, Ashraf and his family will finally have a house again. Their story was a sad one to tell but now hope and serious work are changing their reality.

Ashraf and his wife Nadia live in the north of Gaza, operation cast lead targeted their house like many others. They had to stay in a shelter, in one of the UNRWA schools, for several weeks. During the past two years, they lived in a tent and then to a family house. Everybody was affected by these attacks if it was not by direct injury or damage, financial, emotional damage was grave.

Ashraf's family lost everything during these attacks; their clothes, kitchenware, furniture, and most of their money. Ashraf is a Palestinian Authority (PA) employee with a salary of around USD714. By the time he completed building his original house he was in debt. The house vanished while the debts remained.

Ashraf was a beneficiary of a UNDP cash assistance programme funded by the PA in addition to the de-facto European funded assistance. However, these donations were primarily used to pay off his debt, and buy the basic items for their "home", the tent.



Ashraf's family standing by the construction site where their new house will be built, Photo: UNDP/PAPP image bank

Ashraf's new story is much brighter. He is one of 45 households who were selected for a self-help reconstruction project funded by the Gulf Cooperation Council for the Reconstruction of Gaza through the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). "We can finally breath" says Ashraf. " You can not imagine how difficult it is to live for three years with such a financial and emotional burden on our shoulders".

With bitterness in his voice, he told us about his wife who was diagnosed with cancer several months ago. Doctors estimated that it started after the attacks. While Ashraf was balancing between buying necessary items for his three kids and his wife, and paying off the debts, the illness of his wife was his first priority. They had to pay for the medicine that was not available at times in the public hospitals.

Ashraf's persistence to move on and cure his wife from cancer won. He is now restoring his life with his small family by rebuilding his home. He was the first to receive the second financial instalment. He has been very dedicated and worked hard with the contractors under the supervision of UNDP technical team. So far 35 families received their first instalment and started the work in their houses. The project is implementing houses between 90 square meters up to 160, depending on the original area of the house. The UNDP team conducts daily monitoring of the progress of the work to ensure quality and transparency of the process. The project is received with great relieve and optimism by the population of Gaza. UNDP is committed to expand such interventions as they bring the lives of the people back on track.