

Urgent Humanitarian Appeal: Community Based Rehabilitation in Gaza

Thousands of wounded and disabled people in Gaza are trapped in a humanitarian catastrophe, with no access to critical rehabilitation and care. Juzoor for Health and Social Development is proposing an urgent Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) initiative to restore dignity, independence, and mobility to some of Gaza's most vulnerable – those suffering from life-altering amputations, complex injuries, and disabilities.

A Crisis Like No Other

Gaza's healthcare system is in shambles, struggling to cope with a massive surge in rehabilitation needs amid its ongoing collapse. After 15 months of relentless Israeli bombardment – followed by a fragile ceasefire on January 19, 2025 – only 16 of Gaza's 36 hospitals remain partially operational.¹ Nearly two-thirds of primary healthcare clinics remain closed,² and Gaza's only limb reconstruction and rehabilitation center is non-functional,³ making it nearly impossible to provide both urgent and long-term care for people in need of such care. Among those most affected are 30,000 individuals suffering from life-changing injuries,⁴ including amputations requiring immediate and sustained rehabilitation. The World Health Organization (WHO) warns that severe limb injuries are the key driver of the intensifying need for rehabilitation services, with many patients suffering from multiple, complex injuries. The systematic destruction of Gaza's health infrastructure – described as a *"human rights catastrophe...unfolding before the eyes of the world"* – has resulted in critical shortages of rehabilitation personnel and essential assistive devices such as wheelchairs and crutches.

Children are among the most affected – traumatized, displaced, orphaned, and suffering from severe disabilities. *"This is the biggest cohort of pediatric amputees in history,"* warn medical professionals,⁵ as thousands of children in Gaza have lost legs or arms, with harrowing accounts of many having been operated on without anesthesia. Even before this unprecedented genocidal campaign, tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza were living with chronic conditions and disabilities. The ongoing crisis has exponentially worsened their vulnerability, cutting them off from essential rehabilitation and healthcare. Immediate and coordinated intervention is critical to prevent further suffering of those in urgent need.

Gaza's Children

- At least 21,000 children sustained conflict-related injuries in 2024. Of these, over 5,230 require urgent and long-term rehabilitation – numbers that continue to rise daily.
- In 2024, explosive weapons in Gaza left an average of 475 children per month – or 15 children every day – with lifelong disabilities.
- An estimated 17,000 children in Gaza are now unaccompanied or separated from their families due to the loss of parents, detentions, and repeated forced displacement.
- By June 2024, more than 20,000 children were reported missing, detained, buried under rubble, or in mass graves.
- 90% of families in Gaza have been displaced multiple times, with 21% forced to flee six or more times.

Gaza is the deadliest place in the world for children – a generation at risk of being lost. These children are not just statistics; they are survivors of unimaginable trauma, urgently in need of protection, medical care, and stability. The world cannot look away.

¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1158741>

² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/11/1143697>

³ <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-09-2024-who-analysis-highlights-vast-unmet-rehabilitation-needs-in-gaza>

⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/gaza-health-water-sewer-rubble-hospital-a52e9d55316adb8681b96554835342cf>

⁵ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/the-children-who-lost-limbs-in-gaza>

Juzoor for Health and Social Development's Response

In response to this escalating emergency, Juzoor is proposing a Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) initiative in partnership with key stakeholders to provide essential support for the wounded – especially those with severe limb injuries – helping them heal, recover, and rebuild their lives despite the harsh conditions. CBR is a globally recognized, community-driven approach that empowers individuals with disabilities and their families, particularly in crisis settings where healthcare services are limited. Developed by the WHO in the late 1970s, CBR offers a holistic, sustainable, and inclusive model that integrates healthcare, social inclusion, economic support, and education at the community level. In Gaza, where medical infrastructure is under immense strain, CBR serves as a vital lifeline. Prior to the recent war, CBR programs had successfully operated in Palestine for decades, driven by persons with disabilities, their families, communities, and key service providers. CBR remains one of the most effective and sustainable solutions, leveraging local resources to provide care when medical systems falter. Studies confirm that even in conflict zones, CBR yields positive rehabilitation outcomes, fostering resilience and inclusion.

To ensure the initiative effectively meets the needs on the ground, Juzoor will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify service gaps, understand the specific challenges faced by affected individuals, and tailor interventions accordingly. The initiative will emphasize community engagement, mobilizing local networks and grassroots organizations to foster inclusive environments that support survivors' reintegration. Additionally, Juzoor will implement monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, measure impact, and ensure accountability, using data to improve and refine the initiative over time. Other key components of the initiative will include:

- Train and deploy community-based rehabilitation workers to provide localized care.
- Facilitate physiotherapy and occupational therapy sessions to help survivors regain mobility and functional independence.
- Ensure medical follow-up, including wound care, pain management, and long-term rehabilitation planning.
- Provide assistive devices such as prosthetics, wheelchairs, crutches, and medical kits.
- Offer mental health and psychosocial support to help survivors cope with trauma, including PTSD, and adjust to their new realities.
- Support caregivers with home-based rehabilitation training and psychosocial assistance to help them manage stress, provide better care, and strengthen their resilience.
- Provide psychological and emotional support for rehabilitation and healthcare workers through mental health programs, debriefing sessions, and self-care strategies to help them navigate the challenges of their work.
- Enhance local rehabilitation services and case management, ensuring long-term sustainability through coordinated efforts with healthcare providers, rehabilitation centers, and relevant health stakeholders.
- Strengthen capacity-building efforts by offering continuous training for local rehabilitation teams, ensuring they are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge for effective service delivery.
- Prepare rehabilitation teams for emergency response by equipping them with the necessary resources, strategies, and protocols to operate effectively in crisis situations.
- Foster collaboration with international rehabilitation experts to introduce advanced techniques, training opportunities, and technical support, enhancing the effectiveness and reach of the program on the long run.

About Juzoor for Health and Social Development

Juzoor is a leading Palestinian non-governmental organization committed to enhancing the health and well-being of Palestinian families. With over 30 years of field experience, it has built a strong reputation in community development, healthcare, and professional training, supported by an extensive network of partners. Over the past 15 months, Juzoor has delivered critical humanitarian aid throughout Gaza, serving as one of the primary healthcare providers in besieged northern Gaza, ensuring access to essential medical, mental health, and nutritional support for displaced vulnerable populations. Juzoor's unwavering commitment to health rights and its interdisciplinary approach uniquely position it to collaborate with local stakeholders in implementing a CBR program in Gaza.

Juzoor urgently appeals to the humanitarian community, donors, and partners to support these critical interventions, ensuring that Gaza's wounded and disabled can access their fundamental right to healthcare and rehabilitation.