

## **Gaza Chamber of Commerce efforts to regulate the market in Gaza Strip (01/01/2025 – 28/02/2025)**

### **1. Introduction**

The period from January to February 2025 witnessed intensive efforts by the Gaza Chamber of Commerce to support the private sector and economic recovery in Gaza Strip. These efforts continued despite of difficult circumstances resulting from the ongoing war, and the economic repercussions of the war. The Chamber's interventions focused on enhancing cooperation with governmental agencies and international organizations in order to provide technical, logistical and legal support to business owners and traders. Identifying economic needs and assessing the extent of damage resulting from the current war was also a part of these interventions. The Gaza Chamber worked on developing a vision for recovery focusing on restoring the economic facilities that are capable of returning to work with little support. Advocacy, mobilizations and campaigning were cornerstones to attracting support for restoration. The Chamber is also implementing promotional campaign to promote using of E-Wallets and other electronic payment methods among traders, shop owners and citizens raising awareness about the importance of using them. The Chamber also worked to launch the legal clinic project to help its members obtain the necessary legal consultancy services and provide advice for their continuation of work.

### **2. Enhancing cooperation with local agencies:**

- Hold a meeting between the Chamber of Commerce and Gaza Municipality at the municipality headquarters to discuss ways to enhance cooperation and develop markets.
- It was agreed to reactivate the market contractor's system and provide the markets with basic services (electricity, water, internet) in order to facilitate commercial transactions and encourage electronic payment methods.
- It was agreed to hold periodic meetings between the joint committees to study proposals to reactivate markets such as (Stalls Market and Yarmouk Market), and to implement projects to promote urban agriculture, to improve the food security.



### 3. Facing economic and logistical challenges

- held a meeting with representatives of the commercial, services and industrial sectors as well as transportation companies to discuss the repercussions of the restrictions imposed on the movement of imports, and their impact on the cessation of industrial and commercial activities.
- The Chairman of the Board of Directors stressed the need to allow the entry of raw materials and agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers, agricultural tools) to restart factories and enhance local production.
- formed a central emergency committee for the Chambers of Commerce to coordinate and follow up on commercial activities and overcome logistical and other obstacles.
- The Chamber conducted an inspection tour in Al-Zawiya Market and Omar Al-Mukhtar Street to inspect shops and assess the damage caused by the war, while directing merchants to reduce prices and facilitate sales operations through electronic payment applications.



### 4. Supporting the private sector through international partnerships

- The Chamber received a mission from Oxfam to discuss the ways of supporting the private sector and economic recovery, and the urgent needs of economic facilities were reviewed.
- The Chamber also received a mission from the International Labor Organization (ILO) to discuss ways to support economic recovery and provide the necessary support to the commercial sector.



- A meeting with WFP was conducted to follow up on the rehabilitation of grocery shops project and the related surveys. Joint efforts to promote e-wallets were also discussed. Dissections also included an assessment of the work of bakeries supported by WFP and ways to enhance their work.
- The Chamber participated in a meeting with the Union for the Mediterranean (UFM) in cooperation with the European Institute of the Mediterranean, where the Chairman of the Board of Directors presented proposals for reconstruction projects, such as removing rubble and using it to build a port or artificial island, or just for land reclamation.
- The Chamber also participated in an international meeting with representatives of UNDP, the World Bank, the European Union and the Palestinian National Authority to discuss the recovery strategy for the commercial and industry sector.



## 5. Initiatives and programs supporting economic recovery and digital transformation

- The Chamber launched the national campaign "Cash Bilzamnash"<sup>1</sup> to promote and encourage the using of electronic payment and improve the efficiency of financial transactions in light of the liquidity crisis. The results of the survey and its analysis are shown below.
- On the level of merchants, the results show that the majority of merchants (about 89.4%) accept electronic payment, while the remaining 10.6% do not accept it. the refusal of these merchants to use electronic payment methods is attributed to their lack of bank accounts or to a lack of liquidity. The most prominent challenges facing users were internet and electricity problems.



Status	Number of merchants	Percentage %	Most common problems	Location
Accepting electronic payment	471	89.37%	Internet, Internet, Internet + electricity	Khan Yunis - Al-Dahra, Khan Yunis, Deir al-Balah - Street
not accepting electronic payment	56	10.63%	No bank account, no liquidity, no Internet	Al-Thalathini Street, Al-Sahaba Street, Al-Saftawi

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/people>

- Several meetings were held with the Palestine Monetary Authority to improve financial inclusion of people as prerequisite towards digital transformation. These efforts has lead to the acceptance of PMA to open bank accounts for any person who has an economical activity even if it was as small as a grocery stall. The Chamber has advertised and launched google forms surveys to allow people register for a bank account request.
- The Chamber launched “Emergency Digital Legal Clinic” in cooperation with UNDP and the Palestine Monetary Authority, to provide immediate legal support to small and medium-sized enterprises affected by the war.
- The Chamber is working on digitizing its services through its website and a special mobile application to allow its members getting the needed services remotely.

## 6. Signing MOUs and Strategic Partnerships

Many of MOUs have been signed with specialized local associations/entities to enhance joint cooperation and coordination in various sectors. These partnerships come within the Chamber’s vision to unify efforts and support the private sector, with a focus on facilitating licensing procedures and regulatory facilities to ease the burden of the crisis on merchants.

- Garment Traders Syndicate.
- Spare Parts, Cars and Heavy Equipment Traders Association.
- Hajj and Umrah Companies Owners Association.
- Private Transport Association.
- Tourism and Travel Agents Association.
- Palestinian Agency for Restaurants, Hotels and Tourism Services.



Participation of the Chamber of Commerce in the meeting of the Coordination Council of the Southern Governorates with His Excellency the Governor of the Monetary Authority to discuss the challenges of the private sector.



Chambers of Commerce in Gaza discuss with ILO fact finding mission the repercussions of war on economy and employment.



The Chamber of Commerce receives a mission from ILO to discuss ways to support economic recovery through wage subsidy to laborer's and also supporting the capacities of the Chambers of Commerce in Gaza Strip through conducting Institutional Assessments.

The Chamber of Commerce seeks to enhance cooperation with UNICEF to support the private sector in desalinating water and to promote the use of electronic wallets. Discussions included using private sector services in procuring stationary and hygiene materials.

