

Lighting the Path for Orphaned Children in Gaza – A Call to Action



Because a society that protects
its orphans rebuilds its future.

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Foreword and Acknowledgements

This report documents the orphan crisis in Gaza where **58,554 documented orphans (representing 6% of all children in Gaza) have lost one or both parents since the Israeli attacks on Gaza began in October 2023.**¹

Behind every statistic in this report, is an orphaned child, a story of survival, a family extended beyond its means, a community refusing to abandon its youngest members. Yet this report also bears witness to an extraordinary response: countless initiatives and acts of solidarity by Palestinian society and international partners, proving that even in the deepest darkness, compassion still finds its light.

Taawon has worked in Palestine and Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon for over four decades. We have worked specifically with orphan care in Gaza since 2008 - bearing witness during previous crises and supporting recovery through targeted programming. The current situation is, however, dramatically different in scale and urgency.

This report is our **call to action: a shared national commitment to Gaza's orphans.** We must transform fragmentation into coordination, relief into recovery, and programs into child-centered systems. **We call for a comprehensive framework** that belongs to all and **unites every actor in the child's ecosystem of need.** It is an invitation to collective action: to donors, policymakers, humanitarian organizations, faith-based institutions, and Palestinian civil society.

Our deepest gratitude goes to the social workers, caregivers, and volunteers in Gaza who, despite enduring their own trauma and loss, remain steadfast in serving orphaned children. We extend our sincere thanks to the orphan care organizations, who shared their time and insights amid overwhelming operational pressures. We also wish to recognize our Taawon team in Gaza, led by Maha Muhaisen, for conducting this assessment under often dangerous and personally devastating conditions. Finally, we express heartfelt appreciation to Roba Ghadban, who generously volunteered her time and expertise to help draft this report.

We extend our sincere gratitude to **Visualizing Palestine** for generously allowing the use of their infographics from their outstanding campaign, **Questions from Palestinian Children in Gaza documented by the Palestine Trauma Center.**

This report is dedicated to Gaza's orphaned children, and to those who refuse to let them face the future alone.

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¹ Palestinian Ministry of Health, **منظومة صحي الإلكترونية (Sehatty Electronic System)**, accessed November 4, 2025.

Executive Summary

In just over two years, 58,554 children in Gaza have lost one or both parents, representing 6% of all children in Gaza. This concentration of parental loss is unprecedented due to the extreme population density, and complete isolation, demanding coordinated response at unprecedented scale.

The Challenge: Mobilization Without Coordination

Palestinian society has mounted an extraordinary response. Major civil society programs support tens of thousands of children with financial assistance, healthcare, education, and psychosocial services. Faith-based institutions channel zakat resources. Extended families absorb orphaned relatives despite their own displacement, loss and trauma. Yet these initiatives operate without coordination architecture. The Ministry of Social Development holds legal mandate but functions with decimated capacity. No unified registry tracks which children receive what support. Organizations operate independently, each with separate systems, leading to duplication of services and missed opportunities to identify and close critical gaps. The result: fragmentation persists, comprehensive models struggle to scale, and children risk losing essential support once funding cycles end.

The Solution: Evidence-Based Coordination

Evidence from Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Ukraine demonstrates that sustainable systems emerge when government coordinates, civil society delivers services, unified data prevents duplication, and financing is assured long-term. This report proposes the introduction of an orphan care framework such as Taawon's Orphan Care 360° Framework. It provides a coordination architecture organizing existing efforts through five pillars: (1) unified child registry ensuring every child is visible; (2) support for family-based care; (3) comprehensive services integrating financial, educational, health, and psychosocial support; (4) coordinated actors with clear roles; and (5) sustainable financing replacing short-term, small-scale projects.

What's Required

Three investments enable transformation: unified registry infrastructure, restored Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) coordination capacity, and scale-up of comprehensive care models. This requires Palestinian Authority leadership establishing coordination mechanisms, donor funding for systems with multi-year commitments, civil society data and information sharing, and UN agencies enabling and empowering Palestinian ownership.

Children orphaned in October 2023 are now two years older. Current approaches, despite the demonstrated commitment of the range of stakeholders, cannot ensure systematic protection. Coordination requires first steps: MoSD convening stakeholders, donors committing to basket funding; organizational commitment to piloting systems integration.

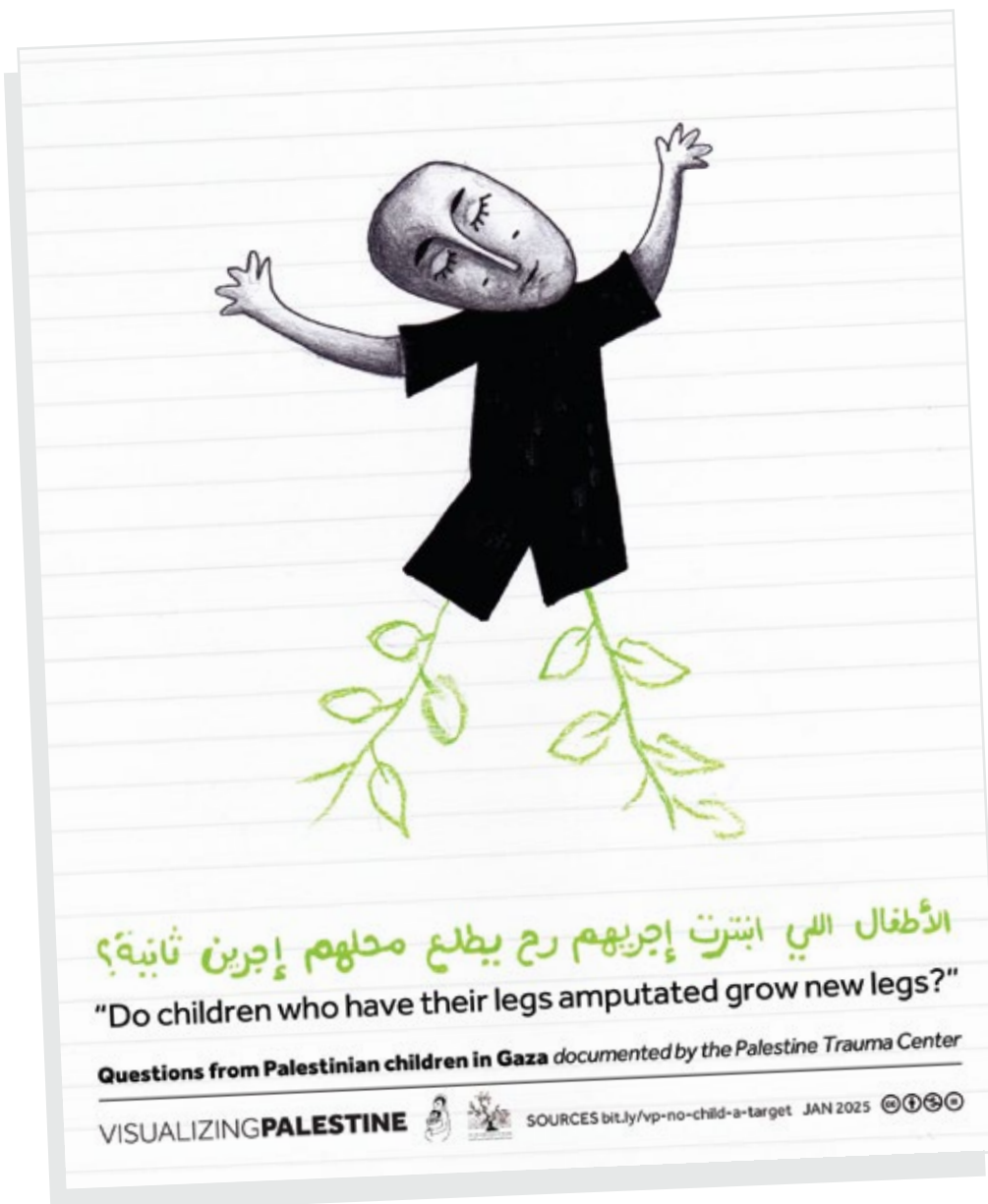
The evidence exists. The framework is proposed. The moment is now.

Background

Following what the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry has determined to be a genocide having begun in October 2023, records as of November 2025 have documented 58,554 children in Gaza having lost one or both parents – that is 6% of all children in the Gaza Strip.² While numerous humanitarian initiatives have mobilized to provide support, these efforts remain largely fragmented, with limited coordination, inconsistent data systems, and significant service gaps. This report provides an evidence-based analysis of Gaza's orphan care crisis and recommends a coordination framework for systematic response. The report:

- Documents the scale and nature of the crisis.
- Maps existing care systems, structures, and coordination challenges.
- Examines international best practices in child protection and social protection.
- Recommends a comprehensive framework based on evidence from global practice.

The resulting analysis is intended for Palestinian policymakers, UN agencies, donors, civil society organizations, and all stakeholders involved in Gaza's humanitarian response and reconstruction planning.



² UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, September 16, 2025.

Methodology

This report draws on multiple data sources collected between June 2024 and August 2025:

Primary Data:

- In-person assessment mission in Gaza by Taawon.
- Key informant interviews with UN agencies, Palestinian ministries, NGOs, faith-based organizations, and community leaders.
- Participation in Protection Cluster and Child Protection Working Group meetings.

Secondary Data:

- Review of humanitarian reports, population data, and orphan care program documentation.
- Analysis of Taawon's programmatic experience (Wajd, Mustaqbali, and Noor programs).
- International case studies of child protection systems in conflict settings.

Scope and Limitations:

This report focuses specifically on orphans - children who have lost one or both parents - rather than the broader category of unaccompanied or separated children. The assessment was conducted under significant constraints including ongoing military operations, limited access, and continuous displacement. Orphan population estimates vary across sources due to different definitions and collection methods. The findings represent a time-bound snapshot intended to inform immediate and longer-term planning.



1. The Orphan Crisis in Gaza

1.1 Introduction: Context and Magnitude

Following what the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry has determined to be genocide beginning in October 2023, 58,554 children in Gaza have lost one or both parents - representing 6% of all children in the Strip, or roughly 1 in every 17 children. This is the number as of November 4, 2025, however, deaths from starvation and violence continue, putting upward pressure on the number of orphaned children.

This orphan emergency is compounded by broader humanitarian collapse. More than 90% of Gaza's residents have been displaced, over 80% of homes damaged or destroyed, and virtually all children now rely on humanitarian assistance for survival.³ The Ministry of Social Development has lost much of its operational capacity due to destroyed facilities, data loss, and staff displacement, severely limiting its ability to register and support orphaned children.⁴

The Collapse of the Child's Ecosystem: This crisis has fractured both pillars of the child's ecosystem. Institutionally, the formal systems meant to protect children - government registries, social services, schools, healthcare facilities, and legal mechanisms - have been decimated or rendered non-functional. Simultaneously, the informal care structures that traditionally absorb orphaned children in Palestinian society - extended families, kinship networks, and community support systems - are themselves under extreme duress. Extended families who would normally step forward to care for orphaned relatives are now displaced, traumatized, and struggling to feed their own children. This dual collapse means orphaned children risk falling into a void where neither formal institutions nor family networks can adequately care for and protect them, creating an urgent need for a coordinated framework that can rebuild and unite both systems around the child.

1.2 Defining the Orphan

1.2.1 Palestinian Legal Framework

Palestinian law provides multiple definitions of orphanhood, each serving different administrative and religious purposes:

Palestinian Civil Law (2004): Defines an orphan as "a minor heir who has no legal representative, among those under 18 who are incapacitated, missing, absent, or under guardianship."⁵

Ministry of Social Development: Traditionally defined an orphan as a child up to age 18 who has lost his or her father, with services extending beyond 18 for ongoing education, illness, or disability.⁶

³ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Gaza Humanitarian Snapshot," 2025.

⁴ Ministry of Social Development, Gaza, internal operational reports, 2025.

⁵ Palestinian Civil Law, Law No. 4 of 2004.

⁶ Ministry of Social Development, Gaza, "Policy Guidance on Orphan Definition During Emergency," internal memorandum, 2025.

Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs: Defines an orphan in religious terms as any male or female who has lost their father before reaching puberty (0-18 years), aligned with Islamic jurisprudence on kafala (guardianship) and inheritance.⁷

While the **Palestinian Child Law No. 7 of 2004 (amended 2012)** does not explicitly define orphans, Article 7 obligates the State to "protect, care for, and assist children in all circumstances," including during armed conflict.⁸

1.2.2 International Standards

Globally, there is no single universal definition of "orphan." International organizations adopt operational definitions for data collection and programming:

Table 1.1: International Definitions of Orphanhood

Framework	Definition	Age Range	Key Features
UNICEF/WHO	Child who has lost one or both parents (single orphan: one parent; double orphan: both parents).	Under 18	Standard global reference for data collection and programming.
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)	Any child "temporarily or permanently deprived of family environment" (Article 20)	Under 18	Broadens focus from parental death to deprivation of care
UN Guidelines for Alternative Care (2009)	Children without parental care due to death, disappearance, displacement, illness, or poverty	Under 18	Introduces "social orphans"; prioritizes family-based care over institutionalization
ICRC/UNHCR (Emergency Response)	Children who lost parents or are separated due to armed conflict or disaster	Under 18	Emphasizes family tracing and reunification in humanitarian emergencies

Sources: UNICEF (2025); UN CRC (1989); UN General Assembly (2009); ICRC (2013); UNHCR Emergency Handbook.⁹

⁷ Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, Gaza, "Religious Guidelines on Orphan Care and Kafala," 2024.
⁸ Palestinian Child Law No. 7 of 2004 (amended 2012), Article 7.
⁹ UNICEF, "Orphans and Vulnerable Children: Definition and Measurement," 2025; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Article 20; UN General Assembly, "Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children," A/RES/64/142, 2009; ICRC, "Children in Armed Conflict: Protection Principles," 2013; UNHCR, "Emergency Handbook: Unaccompanied and Separated Children."

These frameworks reflect an important evolution in how orphanhood is understood. Traditional definitions have focused narrowly on parental death, but contemporary child protection recognizes a broader spectrum of vulnerability:

War-Related Orphanhood: Children who have lost parents as a direct consequence of armed conflict, including death, disappearance, detention, or permanent separation due to hostilities.¹⁰ These cases are typically concentrated in time and geography, linked to specific conflict events – as is the case in Gaza.

Poverty-Related or "Social" Orphanhood: Children who have living parents but are deprived of parental care because of poverty, illness, displacement, or abandonment. These children are often included in administrative or faith-based orphan registries, especially in protracted crises.¹¹ Social orphanhood typically accumulates gradually over extended periods and requires different programmatic responses focused on family preservation and economic support.

1.2.3 Gaza Context: Emerging Definitions and Legal Complications

War-Related Orphanhood (Official Classification): In Gaza (2023–2025), orphanhood is almost entirely war-related - directly attributable to conflict fatalities. This contrasts with contexts like Yemen or Syria, where administrative registries combine war-related cases with poverty-related "social orphans" accumulated over years. Gaza's clear causal attribution - 58,554 children orphaned in the span of two years between 7 October 2023 and 5 November 2025.

Emerging Humanitarian Terminology (Non-Legal):

"WCNSF" - Wounded Child, No Surviving Family: Medical workers coined this acronym in November 2023 for children arriving at hospitals injured with no surviving caregivers.¹² This is a descriptive medical/humanitarian term with no legal status or implications. It identifies a protection emergency but does not trigger specific legal procedures or establish guardianship rights.

Administrative Classifications with Legal Implications:

"Sole Survivor" (Palestinian Administrative Term): Palestinian organizations and the Ministry of Social Development use "sole survivor" for children whose entire immediate and extended families have been erased from civil registries.¹³ UNICEF reports at least 17,000 children are unaccompanied or separated.¹⁴ Unlike WCNSF, the sole survivor classification has direct legal implications requiring formal documentation and guardianship procedures.

The Legal Identity Crisis: The systematic destruction of government buildings and civil registry offices has left thousands of children without legal proof of identity or family relationships. This prevents:

- Their access to services requiring identification.
- establishment of their inheritance rights.
- legal registration of guardianship or foster care.
- protective measures to avert statelessness.

Reconstructing legal identity for sole survivors requires coordinated action amongst Palestinian authorities, humanitarian actors, and international legal mechanisms - a challenge compounded by ongoing violence and administrative collapse.

¹⁰ UNICEF, "Children in Armed Conflict," 2025; ICRC, "Children in Armed Conflict: Protection Principles," 2013.

¹¹ UNICEF, "Social Orphans and Child Protection Systems," 2017; World Bank, "Children Without Parental Care in Protracted Crises," 2018.

¹² Loveluck and Taha, "Wounded Child, No Surviving Family," The Washington Post, February 29, 2024.

¹³ Abu Haniyeh, "مبادرات دعم الأيتام" [Orphan Support Initiatives], Institute for Palestine Studies, October 2025.

¹⁴ UNICEF, "Stories of Loss and Grief," October 2025.

1.3 Scale and Measurement of the Crisis

1.3.1 Current Estimates

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health's Sehatty Electronic System, as of October 7, 2025, 58,554 children in Gaza have been orphaned since the genocide began in October 2023. This official count represents the most comprehensive documentation of orphaned children, tracked through Gaza's healthcare and civil registry systems despite extraordinary operational challenges.

Table 1.2: Orphan Statistics - Gaza Ministry of Health (Sehatty System)

Category	Number	Description
Total Orphans	58,554	All children who lost one or both parents
Lost one parent	55,861	Children who lost either father or mother
Lost both parents	2,693	Children who lost both parents
Lost father only	49,758	Paternal orphans
Lost mother only	6,103	Materna orphans
Orphan families	20,966	Total numbers of families with orphaned children (lost 1 or both parents)
Widows	22,057	Women who lost husbands

Sources: Palestinian Ministry of Health, Sehatty Electronic System (November 2025).

Key Observations:

- **Scale:** The 58,554 orphaned children represent approximately 6% of all children in the Gaza Strip, or 1 in every 17 children.
- **Gender disparity:** The significantly higher number of paternal orphans (49,758) compared to maternal orphans (6,103) reflects higher male fatality rates, consistent with targeting patterns documented throughout the conflict.
- **Double orphans:** While 2,693 children have lost both parents, this number likely underestimates the true scale of "sole survivors" whose entire extended families have been killed, as the destruction of the civil registry makes comprehensive family tracking extremely difficult.

- **Family impact:** The 20,966 orphan families refers to households containing at least one orphaned child. With 58,554 orphans across 20,966 families, this indicates an average of approximately 2.8 orphaned children per affected household - meaning siblings are typically orphaned together. This household-level data is critical for service delivery and resource allocation, as aid programs must reach families as units rather than individual children. The high number of affected families indicates how deeply the orphan crisis has penetrated Gaza's social fabric, with approximately one in every 10-15 families now caring for orphaned children.
- **Widows:** The 22,057 widows recorded corresponds to the 49,758 paternal orphans, with an average of 2.2 children per widow. These widowed mothers now face the dual burden of caring for orphaned children while coping with their own grief, displacement, and the collapse of economic support systems. The widow count has significant implications for family economic stability and the capacity of surviving mothers to provide for their children amid ongoing humanitarian crisis.

Methodological Clarity:

Unlike protracted conflicts where orphan registries combine war-related and poverty-related cases accumulated over years, Gaza's figures (2023–2025) are almost entirely attributable to direct conflict fatalities and systematic family destruction. This clear causal attribution - 58,554 children orphaned in just over two years of intensive violence - makes Gaza's data particularly significant for humanitarian analysis.

1.3.2 Measurement Methodologies

Ministry of Health (Sehatty Electronic System): The Palestinian Ministry of Health tracks orphan statistics through the Sehatty Electronic System (منظومة صحي الإلكتروني), Gaza's primary healthcare information system. The system compiles data from hospitals, healthcare facilities, and civil registries to document children who have lost one or both parents. The October 2025 statistics represent the most comprehensive official count, tracking 58,554 orphaned children with detailed breakdowns by type of parental loss (father only, mother only, or both parents). The Sehatty system's integration with civil registries enables real-time tracking of orphanhood as deaths are officially recorded, though the destruction of registry offices and documentation has created significant data gaps for children whose entire families were killed.

Ministry of Social Development (MoSD): MoSD maintains operational registries updated through district-level social workers, zakat committees, and community-based organizations. Traditionally, MoSD defines an orphan as a child having lost her or his father, consistent with Islamic jurisprudence governing inheritance and support obligations. However, during the current crisis, this definition was flexibly expanded to include maternal loss, reflecting the exceptional scale of family destruction and the recognition that surviving fathers are often unable to provide care due to injury, detention, or displacement. MoSD registries serve operational purposes - identifying families requiring cash assistance, psychosocial support, and social services - rather than pure demographic information.

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS): PCBS measures orphanhood through Indicator 2546025 ("Number of Orphaned Children"), defined as children under 18 who have lost one or both parents. Data are compiled from multiple sources including MoSD operational records, Ministry of Health vital statistics, civil registries, and household surveys, then validated against population estimates.¹⁵ PCBS data provide the official statistical baseline for national planning and international reporting.

¹⁵ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Statistical Methodology for Child Welfare Indicators," 2022.

Note on "Unaccompanied and Separated Children" (UASC):

International humanitarian organizations, particularly UNICEF and the IRC, use the broader framework of "unaccompanied and separated children" (UASC) rather than focusing solely on orphans. UASC includes children who have lost parental care temporarily or permanently, encompassing orphans but also children separated from parents due to displacement, detention, hospitalization, or other circumstances. UNICEF's estimate of 17,000+ UASC represents the protection caseload requiring immediate intervention from 2024 and has probably increased since.

While UASC data serves critical humanitarian protection purposes, this report focuses specifically on orphan statistics (children who have permanently lost one or both parents through death) for several reasons:

- Orphanhood requires long-term care solutions beyond emergency family tracing.
- Legal identity, inheritance, and guardianship issues are specific to orphans.
- Sustainable social protection systems must distinguish temporary separation from permanent parental loss.
- Palestinian administrative and religious frameworks are organized around orphan care rather than the broader UASC category.

The distinction matters for programming: separated children need family reunification services, while orphaned children require permanent alternative care arrangements, legal guardianship, and long-term psychosocial and economic support.

1.4 Regional and Global Context

1.4.1 Regional Comparisons

While conflicts across the Middle East have produced large numbers of children who have lost one or both parents, Gaza's crisis is distinct in both its speed and density. As shown in Table 1.4, Syria's orphanhood levels - estimated at roughly one million children over more than a decade of conflict - reflect cumulative losses across a large national territory. Yemen's figures are similarly shaped by prolonged conflict, poverty, and family fragmentation accumulated over nine years. In contrast, Gaza has reached an estimated 58,500 orphaned children in less than two years, within one of the most densely populated and most constrained territories in the world. This makes Gaza's rate of child orphanhood among the most accelerated and concentrated in recent conflicts globally.

Table 1.4: Regional Comparison of Orphan Crises

Context	Orphaned Children	Type	Years	Ratio	Territory (km ²)
Syria	~1,000,000 ¹⁶	War-related	13 years (2011–2024)	~1 in 10	185,000
Yemen	1.1–1.2 million ¹⁷	Mixed (war + poverty)	9 years (2015–2024)	~1 in 10	527,000
Gaza	~58,500	Almost entirely war-related	<2 years (2023–2025)	~1 in 17	365

¹⁶ UNICEF (2017). UNICEF Syria Crisis Updates, 2016–2017 orphanhood assessments.

¹⁷ UNICEF (2024). Yemen Humanitarian Situation Report. World Bank (2024). Yemen Poverty and Household Fragmentation Data.

Syria reached its ratio of 1 in 10 children orphaned after more than a decade of war. Yemen's figures include both conflict deaths and poverty-related family abandonment accumulated over nine years. In contrast, Gaza reached its current ratio of 1 in 17 children orphaned in just over 1 year, within one of the most densely populated and blockaded areas in modern history.

1.4.2 Global Context: Data Limitations and Comparative Insights

Comprehensive orphan statistics for other major 21st-century conflicts are notably scarce, revealing a critical gap in humanitarian data collection. Most conflict zones report child displacement, casualties, and humanitarian needs, but rarely provide systematic orphan enumeration comparable to Gaza's datasets. Available evidence from other major conflicts illustrates the scale of child protection crises globally:

- **Ukraine (2022–2024):** Russia's full-scale invasion has led to almost 1,800 Ukrainian children becoming orphans, with over half of Ukraine's 7.5 million children displaced within the first month of war.¹⁸ However, Ukraine's total child population exceeds 7 million across 603,000 km², resulting in a significantly lower geographic concentration per capita than Gaza.
- **Sudan (2023–2025):** Sudan faces the world's largest child displacement crisis, with 4 million children displaced and 24 million at risk.¹⁹ However, Sudan's territory spans 1.86 million km² - 5,000 times larger than Gaza. In South Sudan, approximately 60% of 1 million displaced children are orphans, though these figures reflect protracted displacement since 2011 rather than rapid family annihilation.²⁰
- **Afghanistan (2021–2024):** Approximately 1.6 million orphan children exist in Afghanistan, accumulated over four decades of conflict across 652,000 km².²¹ Following the Taliban takeover, operational orphanages declined enormously leaving thousands of orphans without shelter. While absolute numbers are high, they represent long-term accumulation across a vastly larger territory.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** The DRC has approximately 800,000 orphaned children from decades of conflict across 2.34 million km² - 6,400 times the territory of Gaza Strip.²²

What the Data Reveal

Gaza's crisis is distinctive in three dimensions:

1. **Measurement clarity:** Gaza's verified, disaggregated orphan statistics from official Palestinian health systems are exceptionally rare in active conflict settings.
2. **Unparalleled concentration:** No other 21st-century conflict has documented a comparable ratio (1 in 17 children orphaned) within such densely inhabited geography.
3. **Unprecedented density and isolation:** While Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, and DRC have produced larger absolute numbers, Gaza's combination of population density and isolation (complete blockade preventing family dispersal) makes Gaza's orphan crisis categorically unique in the 21st century.

¹⁸ UNICEF Ukraine, "Children Under Attack," 2024.

¹⁹ UNICEF Sudan, "Sudan's Children Face Catastrophic Crisis," 2025.

²⁰ UNICEF South Sudan, "Humanitarian Situation Report," 2024.

²¹ UNICEF Afghanistan, "Children in Afghanistan," 2024.

²² UNICEF Democratic Republic of Congo, "Humanitarian Action for Children," 2024.

1.5 Current Response Efforts

1.5.1 The Baseline Challenge

As of October 2025, 58,554 children in Gaza have been orphaned. The response has mobilized diverse governmental, civil society, faith-based, and international actors - but without unified coordination, comprehensive data sharing, or systematic coverage mapping. While the scale of mobilization is significant, critical questions remain unanswered:

- How many of the 58,554 orphans are currently receiving sustained support?
- How many are supported by multiple organizations simultaneously?
- How many receive no formal assistance at all?
- What types of support do children receive, and what critical gaps remain?

The absence of a unified registry means these questions cannot be definitively answered - illustrating precisely why coordinated systems are essential.

1.5.2 Major Response Actors

Governmental Authority: Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)

MoSD is the lead governmental authority for orphan registration, protection, and welfare in Palestine. Prior to October 2023, MoSD maintained district-level registries, coordinated with zakat committees, and provided cash assistance to registered orphan families.

However, the war has severely constrained MoSD's capacity. Office buildings and welfare centers have been damaged or destroyed, civil registry and data systems lost, and staff displaced, injured or killed. Coordination with other ministries and humanitarian actors is frequently interrupted by communication blackouts and movement restrictions.

Despite these constraints, MoSD continues operating through those local networks that have survived. The Ministry's July 2025 estimate of approximately 50,000 orphans - predating the more comprehensive October Sehatty count of 58,554 - demonstrates the Ministry's commitment to maintaining accurate records despite impending systemic collapse. MoSD's institutional recovery, digital data restoration, and coordination capacity will be critical for any sustainable national care system.

Major Civil Society and Faith-Based Programs

Field research and organizational reporting identify several major orphan sponsorship programs operating in Gaza. However, **critical data limitations must be noted:** these figures represent organizational claims of sponsorship capacity or enrollment, not verified unique beneficiaries. Significant overlap likely exists, with some children receiving support from multiple sources while others receive none.

Largest Comprehensive Programs (by claimed coverage):

Taawon's Noor Program currently sponsors 20,863 orphans through partnership with Bank of Palestine Group. Noor provides comprehensive services including financial aid, healthcare, education, psychosocial support, and shelter when needed through a private sponsorship program costing the subscriber \$167 per month per child. The program emphasizes holistic, long-term care through partnerships with local civil society organizations implementing interventions throughout Gaza.²³

Islamic Relief operates one of the largest faith-based orphan sponsorship programs, currently supporting approximately 18,300 orphans at \$70 per month. The program provides essentials including water, food, shelter, healthcare, and psychological support through one-to-one sponsorship model.²⁴

Palestinian Orphan Home Association reports sponsoring 13,000 orphans at \$100 per month, focusing on financial support combined with educational assistance through community partnerships.²⁵

Human Appeal UK currently sponsors 11,619 orphans at \$50 per month with integrated education, nutrition, and psychosocial support.²⁶

Interpal operates a one-to-one sponsorship for 10,000 children at \$30 per month, though this includes both orphans and children with disabilities, making the exact number of orphans sponsored unclear. The program focuses on financial aid to support essential needs through a strong local partnership network.²⁷

Additional significant programs:

Baitulmaal (1,500 orphans at \$400/month, the highest sponsorship level, recently opened Hope School for displaced children), **Inash Al Usra** (currently 1,331 orphans, targeting 5,000 at \$100/month), **Muslimi Humaniti** (3,000 orphans at \$50/month), **Orphans in Need UK** (2,556 orphans at \$40/month), and **United Hands Relief & Development** (targeting 2,500 orphans at \$65/month).²⁸

International and UN Agencies

UNICEF, UNRWA, Save the Children, and the International Rescue Committee provide psychosocial support, child protection services, and family tracing through the Child Protection Sub-Cluster. These agencies focus primarily on emergency humanitarian response rather than long-term care systems:

- **UNICEF** provides mental health services, temporary learning spaces, and coordinates child protection actors. Estimates at least 17,000 children are unaccompanied or separated (a broader category than orphans).
- **UNRWA** operates emergency shelters and provides basic services to displaced families, though its mandate is for Palestinian refugees broadly rather than orphan-specific programming.
- **Save the Children & International Rescue Committee (IRC)** deliver psychosocial support, protection monitoring, and advocacy. IRC's modeling suggests potential orphan caseloads could reach 51,000 when accounting for inaccessible areas - a projection rather than verified count.²⁹

These agencies contribute technical expertise and coordination mechanisms, but programs remain primarily short-term humanitarian interventions without structured integration into Palestinian national systems.

²³ Taawon, Noor Orphan Care Program documentation, 2024-2025.

²⁴ Islamic Relief, Gaza orphan sponsorship program data, 2025.

²⁵ Palestinian Orphan Home Association, program reports, 2025.

²⁶ Human Appeal UK, Gaza orphan program data, 2025.

²⁷ Interpal, orphan and vulnerable children program data, 2025.

²⁸ Various organizational reports and interviews, 2024-2025.

²⁹ International Rescue Committee, "Unaccompanied and Separated Children in Gaza," January 2025.

1.5.3 Coverage Analysis: What We Know and Don't know

The Double-Counting Problem:

If we sum the claimed sponsorships from major programs listed above, the total exceeds 80,000 children - significantly more than the 58,554 documented orphans. This variance in numbers is indicative of several potential issues:

- **Definitional variations:** Some programs include non-orphans (separated children, vulnerable children, children with disabilities) in their counts.
- **Double or triple coverage:** Some children likely receive support from multiple organizations simultaneously and are therefore counted more than once.
- **Data quality challenges:** Organizations may report enrollment capacity, pledged sponsorships, or historical figures rather than current verified beneficiaries.
- **No unified registry:** The lack of a unified registry and 'one-door' intake and tracking increases the occurrence of inaccuracy.

What This Means:

- We cannot confidently state how many of the 58,554 orphans receive sustained support.
- Some children may be over-served while others have fallen through system gaps.
- Resources may be inefficiently distributed due to overlapping coverage.
- The most vulnerable children - those without community connections or in inaccessible areas - are more likely to be overlooked and hence not receive services.

1.5.4 Identified Gaps and Coordination Challenges

Service Gaps:

Even assuming optimal coverage by existing programs, critical gaps remain:

- **Legal identity restoration:** Few programs address civil documentation, birth certificates, or family registry reconstruction - leaving thousands of children legally 'invisible' in what concerns alignment to official databases.
- **Guardianship formalization:** Emergency kinship care arrangements lack legal recognition, creating vulnerability for children's inheritance rights and long-term stability.
- **Specialized care:** Children with severe disabilities, chronic illnesses, or complex trauma receive limited appropriate services due to the lack of detailed surveying of needs.
- **Adolescent support:** Most programs focus on young children; older orphans (15-18) fall through gaps despite unique needs for education, vocational training, and accompaniment in their transition to adulthood.
- **Geographic inequity:** Northern Gaza and besieged areas have restricted access to humanitarian programs due to the security situation, meaning orphans in these areas receive sporadic or limited support.

Coordination Challenges:

Field observations and stakeholder interviews reveal systemic coordination failures:

- **No unified beneficiary registry:** Organizations cannot verify whether a child is already enrolled elsewhere.
- **Fragmented data systems:** MoSD, civil society organizations, and UN agencies maintain separate databases with no interoperability.
- **Duplicate assessments:** Families report being assessed repeatedly by different organizations without receiving services.
- **Competition for visibility:** Some organizations prioritize demonstrating impact to donors over coordinating with others, leading to duplicated efforts in accessible areas while remote areas remain underserved.
- **Short-term funding:** Most programs operate on 3-12 month donor cycles, preventing long-term commitments to children who need 10-18 years of consistent support.
- **Weak linkages between emergency relief and development:** Humanitarian actors and Palestinian institutions operate on parallel tracks with limited integration.

Voices from the Field:

"We don't know if the child sitting in front of us is receiving support from three other organizations or from no one. We have no system to check. We do our assessment, they do theirs, UNICEF does theirs. The family is exhausted, and meanwhile children in Jabalia [northern Gaza] can't even be reached."

- Social worker, Gaza-based orphan care organization, July 2025.³⁰

1.5.5 Why the current approach is insufficient

The extraordinary mobilization of resources demonstrates Palestinian society's deep commitment to protecting orphaned children. Civil society organizations' community embeddedness, social trust, and rapid response capacity have been essential for immediate survival.

However, the current fragmented approach cannot meet the long-term needs of 58,554 children who require sustained, comprehensive support through adolescence and into adulthood:

- **Sustainability crisis:** Donor-dependent programs on short funding cycles cannot guarantee 15+ years of continuous support.
- **Inefficiency:** Duplicated coverage in some areas, gaps in others, and redundant administrative systems waste scarce resources.
- **Lack of accountability:** Without unified data, no actor can be held accountable to ensure that every child is reached.
- **Vulnerable to collapse:** If major programs lose funding or face operational disruptions, thousands of children could lose support overnight with no safety net.
- **No pathways to adulthood:** Emergency programs address immediate needs but don't **prepare children for self-sufficiency, family formation, or economic independence.**

The crisis demands a transformation: from fragmented emergency response to a coordinated, nationally-owned care system with clear accountability, unified data, complementary roles for all actors, and long-term sustainability mechanisms.

³⁰ Field interviews conducted by Taawon assessment team, July 2025.

1.6 Understanding Gaza's Distinctive Operational Context

A note on context, not comparison: Having documented Gaza's crisis in detail throughout Chapter 1, it is essential to synthesize the specific operational conditions that distinguish this crisis and inform system design. This analysis is not intended to claim exceptionalism or diminish the suffering of children in other conflicts, but to identify the operational and systemic challenges that explain why standard humanitarian models require significant adaptation. Every child deprived of parental care deserves protection and support, regardless of context. Understanding Gaza's particular conditions helps explain the programmatic imperatives discussed in Chapter 2.

1.6.1 Four Defining Conditions

Gaza's orphan crisis operates under conditions that distinguish it from other humanitarian emergencies and constrain standard response models:

1. **Extreme concentration:** 58,554 orphaned children confined within 365 km² with no geographic dispersion possible. Service providers face overwhelming caseloads in confined space where extended family networks are themselves decimated.
2. **Unprecedented velocity:** The crisis reached current scale in just over one year, overwhelming the child protection infrastructure designed for gradual growth. Community care mechanisms had no time to organize; only rapid-deployment models were able to respond.
3. **Total system collapse:** All protection pillars - governmental, community, legal, and economic - degraded simultaneously. Unlike post-conflict settings with some functional structures, Gaza must rebuild from near-zero institutional capacity while managing acute emergency.
4. **Complete isolation:** Sealed borders mean children remain entirely dependent on local systems. International fostering, cross-border placements, and evacuation strategies used in other crises have subsequently been made impossible. Gaza's solutions must be locally sustainable from the outset.

1.6.2 Implications for System Design

These distinctive characteristics demand specific adaptations to global child protection frameworks:

1. **High-density response models:** Services need to be designed for concentrated caseloads in confined space, with no geographic dispersion options.
2. **Rapid-deployment:** Protection mechanisms must scale immediately rather than gradually, given the compressed timeline and ongoing emergency.
3. **System-building from collapse:** With all protection pillars degraded simultaneously, response must focus on rebuilding foundational infrastructure while delivering emergency services simultaneously given that no stable platform currently exists.
4. **Local capacity as sole option:** Given Gaza's complete isolation, sustainable response depends entirely on strengthening Palestinian institutions and community networks.
5. **Coordination as survival strategy:** Multiple actors in confined space makes coordination essential for preventing duplication and ensuring coverage.

Understanding these operational realities provides the foundation for examining evidence-based frameworks in Chapter 2. The global frameworks discussed there provide proven principles, but their application must account for Gaza's unique operational context documented throughout Chapter 1.

2. Evidence-Based Frameworks

Given the operational realities documented in Chapter 1, particularly Gaza's extreme demographic density, rapid onset total system collapse, complete isolation, and pervasive fragmentation of the response effort, the forward vision must be grounded in evidence-based frameworks and effectively adapted to local context. This chapter examines global best practices and comparative experience to identify principles for transforming fragmented emergency response into sustainable systems.

2.1 Global Frameworks and Standards

Over the past two decades, global experience has demonstrated that effective child protection systems function as integrated ecosystems linking policy, services, and community action through coordination, data, and accountability. Five key frameworks offer relevant guidance for Gaza's approach:

1. **UNICEF Child Protection Systems Strengthening Framework (2019)** promotes national coordination across laws, services, and communities, emphasizing government leadership, child-centered policies, comprehensive community-level service delivery, and shared data systems for monitoring and accountability. This framework provides the architecture for linking Gaza's fragmented initiatives into a coherent system under MoSD leadership.³¹
2. **UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (2009)** establishes global standards for children deprived of parental care, prioritizing family- and community-based solutions over institutional care through the "necessity principle" (children remain with family whenever possible) and validated kinship care models. This validates Palestinian cultural emphasis on extended family care while providing standards for formalizing and supporting these arrangements through economic assistance, legal recognition, and psychosocial support.³²
3. **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)** establishes universal rights to survival, development, protection, and participation, forming the foundation of child-centered systems. Palestine is a CRC signatory, providing normative framework for harmonizing fragmented Palestinian definitions (Civil Law, MoSD, Family Law, Ministry of Awqaf) into unified, rights-based standards encompassing life and development (Article 6), best interests as primary consideration (Article 3), family relations (Article 9), protection from violence (Article 19), and rights to education, health, and adequate living standards.³³
4. **World Bank Social Protection Delivery Chain (2018)** provides operational guidance for outreach, registration, benefit delivery, and monitoring within social welfare systems. The Framework's components—unified databases with interoperability, needs assessment protocols, efficient payment mechanisms, and outcome tracking, offer practical guidance for transforming separate sponsorship programs into a unified delivery system from identification through service provision to accountability.³⁴
5. **Inter-Agency Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2019)** defines service and coordination standards for emergency contexts, ensuring interventions are consistent, ethical, and aligned with national systems. Standards covering coordination mechanisms, case management with referral pathways, protection services, psychosocial support, and family tracing provide immediate operational guidance while establishing the foundation for transition from emergency response to sustainable development.³⁵

³¹ UNICEF, "Child Protection Systems Strengthening Framework," 2019.

³² UN General Assembly, "Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children," Resolution A/RES/64/142, February 24, 2010.

³³ United Nations, "Convention on the Rights of the Child," 1989.

³⁴ World Bank, "The State of Social Safety Nets 2018," 2018.

³⁵ Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, "Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action," 2019.

These frameworks converge on core principles: national government leadership, family-based care, unified data systems, comprehensive services, and coordinated action. Their application to Gaza requires adaptation to the operational context documented in Chapter 1.

2.2 Comparative Global Experience

Large-scale orphanhood is not unique to Gaza. From Rwanda to Ukraine, major conflicts and disasters have produced generations of orphaned and separated children. Examining how different societies confronted this challenge - moving from emergency welfare to structured, systemic care - reveals critical lessons.

Table 2.1: Comparative Orphan Crises

Country / Crisis	Scale of Orphanhood	Primary Approach	Context/Timeframe
Rwanda (1994)	~500,000 orphans	Family-based and community reintegration; national ownership through government-led coordination	Post-genocide reconstruction (1994–2004); transition from emergency to national system over 10 years
Sierra Leone (1991–2002)	~60,000 orphans/separated children	Systematic tracing and community case management; partnership between government and NGOs	Post-conflict recovery (1991–2002 war; 2002–2012 reconstruction); protracted system-building
Syria (2011–present)	~1 million orphans	Predominantly faith-based and NGO sponsorship programs operating independently	Ongoing conflict (2011–present); accumulated over 13+ years
Yemen (2015–present)	~1.2 million orphans (mixed: war + poverty)	Zakat- and waqf-funded welfare through Islamic institutions	Protracted conflict and poverty (2015–present); mixed war-related and poverty-related cases over 9+ years
Ukraine (2022–present)	Tens of thousands separated/displaced	Digital child registry and real-time tracking systems; government-maintained databases	Active conflict (2022–present); digital infrastructure enabled rapid response
Gaza (2023–present)	Over 58,500 orphans	Multiple sponsorship programs (\$30–\$400/month); emergency humanitarian response	Active genocide (Oct 2023–present); reached current scale in <2 years in unprecedented velocity and demographic density

Sources: UNICEF country reports (Rwanda 1996, 2004; Syria 2018, 2024); Save the Children (Sierra Leone 2002, 2009); World Bank (Yemen 2023); Ukraine government reports (2023–2024); Gaza data from Palestinian Ministry of Health Sehaty System (November 2025).³⁶

³⁶ UNICEF, "Rwanda Country Reports," 1996, 2004; UNICEF, "Syria Crisis Humanitarian Situation Reports," 2018, 2024; Save the Children, "Sierra Leone: Children and Post-Conflict Recovery," 2002, 2009; World Bank, "Yemen Social Protection Assessment," 2023; Ukraine Ministry of Social Policy, "Child Protection Reports," 2023–2024; Palestinian Ministry of Health, Sehaty Electronic System, November 2025.

Core Lessons from Global Experience:

Across diverse crises, sustainable orphan-care systems succeed when compassion is organized into structure whereby data, families, and institutions work together under shared accountability. Following are examples of lessons from global experience:

1. **From Charity to Systems:** Fragmented aid becomes sustainable only through coordinated, government-led frameworks. Rwanda's transformation from emergency relief to a national family-based care system demonstrated that well-resourced programs remain vulnerable without institutional integration and government ownership. Sierra Leone's government-NGO partnership model showed that coordination mechanisms with clear roles prevent duplication and gaps. The lessons to be taken for Gaza would be to prioritize a shift from fragmented initiatives to a nationally-led, integrated system formalizing coordination between MoSD, major programs (Taawon Noor, Islamic Relief, Palestinian Orphan Home Association), and smaller providers under unified standards.
2. **Family and Community First:** Children thrive best in safe family and community settings, not institutions. Rwanda's emphasis on community reintegration and Sierra Leone's systematic family tracing both produced better developmental and psychosocial outcomes than institutional care. Ukraine's approach prioritized keeping children with relatives even amid active conflict. Lessons for Gaza: Strengthen kinship, foster- and community-based care as the response backbone, providing economic and psychosocial support to extended families caring for orphans - formalizing the traditional Palestinian cultural emphasis on family care.
3. **Unified Data and Case Management:** Shared registries and referral systems make every child visible and prevent duplication. Sierra Leone's systematic case management prevented children from falling through gaps during protracted recovery. Ukraine's digital registry enabled real-time tracking even amid ongoing conflict and massive displacement. On the other hand, Syria lacked unified data, resulting in a fragmented response where children were registered multiple times or alternatively remain invisible due to lack of comprehensive system. Lessons for Gaza: Establish a national child registry linking MoSD, PCBS, NGOs, and faith-based actors; address the inconsistency in official versus CSO reporting.
4. **Linking Relief to Development:** The strongest systems connect humanitarian aid with national social protection. Rwanda successfully transitioned from emergency response to sustainable national welfare systems over a decade. Yemen serves as cautionary example of perpetual emergency response without transition to sustainable structures, leaving children dependent on volatile donor funding. Ukraine maintained government-led systems even during active conflict, ensuring continuity. Lessons for Gaza: Align orphan support with broader social welfare and recovery frameworks, transitioning from donor-dependent sponsorships to nationally owned social protection programs with sustainable financing through zakat integration, government budgets, and structured international partnerships.

Gaza's Distinctive Challenge:

While these global examples provide crucial lessons, Gaza's context - 58,554 orphaned children concentrated in 365 km² within two years, total system collapse, and complete isolation - creates unprecedented urgency. Unlike Rwanda's decade-long reconstruction or Sierra Leone's gradual system-building, Gaza must deploy rapid-response mechanisms while simultaneously rebuilding collapsed institutions. Unlike Ukraine's maintained government infrastructure or Yemen's functioning Islamic welfare networks, Gaza must reconstruct from near-zero institutional capacity. The transition from fragmented charity to integrated system is not an option - it is fundamental to the survival or the social protection and service response.

3. A Shared National Commitment to Gaza's Orphans

3.1 The Defining Moment

In the space of just over one year, 58,554 children in Gaza have lost one or both parents. Behind each number is a child who witnessed their family killed, who survived bombardment, suffering, starvation alone. These are children who have lost not just parents, but homes, schools, neighborhoods, community and friends - the fundamental human architecture of childhood.

Yet alongside this unprecedented crisis, Palestinian society has mobilized with extraordinary compassion: major organizations supporting tens of thousands of children, extended families absorbing orphaned relatives despite their own trauma and displacement, faith-based institutions channeling resources, community networks refusing to abandon the youngest among them, and international partners recognizing the moral urgency of this moment.

The question before us is not whether Gaza can care for its orphaned children. The question is whether we have the collective will to organize our compassion into systems, our commitment into coordination, and our resources into lasting protection.

This is a defining moment – for Gaza and for Palestine. How we respond to almost 60,000 orphaned children will define who we are as a society and what future we build from the devastation of genocide.

3.2 A Vision: Every Child Visible, Protected, Supported

No orphaned child left behind. This is not rhetoric - it is an achievable commitment grounded in evidence from Gaza's own programs and global experience. It means:

- **Every child visible:** Known to the system, registered in a unified database, tracked through their journey from childhood to adulthood.
- **Every child protected:** Safe in caring families, shielded from exploitation, with legal identity and guardianship ensuring their rights.
- **Every child supported:** Receiving comprehensive, consistent and quality care through programs that ensure their education, healthcare, trauma healing, and preparation for independent adulthood.

This vision requires transformation: from fragmented charity to integrated systems, from emergency relief to sustainable social protection, from ad hoc coordination to structured partnerships with clear accountability.

It requires a framework that honors Gaza's strengths - the resilience of extended families, the power of community networks, the generosity of Islamic social finance, the commitment of Palestinian civil society - while building the institutional architecture that makes these strengths efficient and sustainable.

3.3 The Missing Coordination

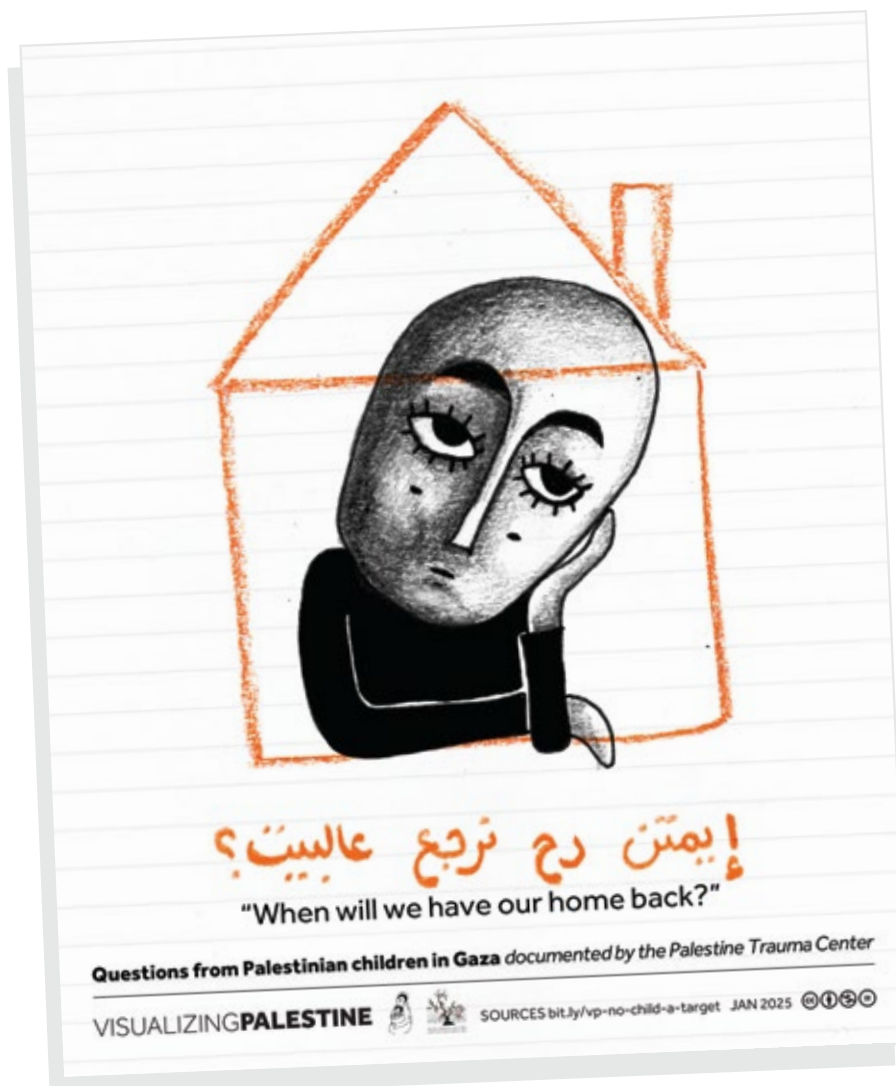
Consider a seven-year-old girl in Khan Younis. She lost both parents when their building collapsed. Her aunt takes her in - already caring for three children in a damaged home with no income. A faith-based organization provides \$50 monthly cash assistance. The aunt is grateful but desperate: the child has nightmares, cannot focus, needs trauma counseling. The organization only provides cash. Another organization three blocks away offers psychosocial support but doesn't know this child exists - their beneficiary list is separate. The school the child attended no longer functions. The local clinic lacks pediatric care. MoSD's office was destroyed; the case was never registered in any government system.

This child is "supported" but still falling through gaps. Not because her aunt lacks love. Not because organizations lack commitment. Not because donors lack generosity. But because the system - or rather, the absence of system - ensures her needs cannot be met.

This pattern repeats across Gaza. Extended families provide love but need economic support. Civil society organizations have resources but cannot see the full picture of who serves which children. MoSD has legal authority to coordinate but lacks operational capacity. UN agencies have technical expertise but create parallel systems. Donors provide funding but cannot assess what gaps remain. Faith institutions channel zakat but operate independently of formal structures.

Every actor is essential. Every actor is trying. But without coordination connecting them, their collective effort does not add up to systematic protection. Some children receive services from three organizations; others receive none. Some families access comprehensive care; others get only cash while educational and health needs go unmet. The girl in Khan Younis represents thousands—visible to one actor, invisible to all others, falling through the cracks between good intentions.

What Gaza needs is not more projects but rather a framework enabling existing programs to see the big picture, the whole child, coordinate their efforts, and collectively ensure no child falls through gaps.

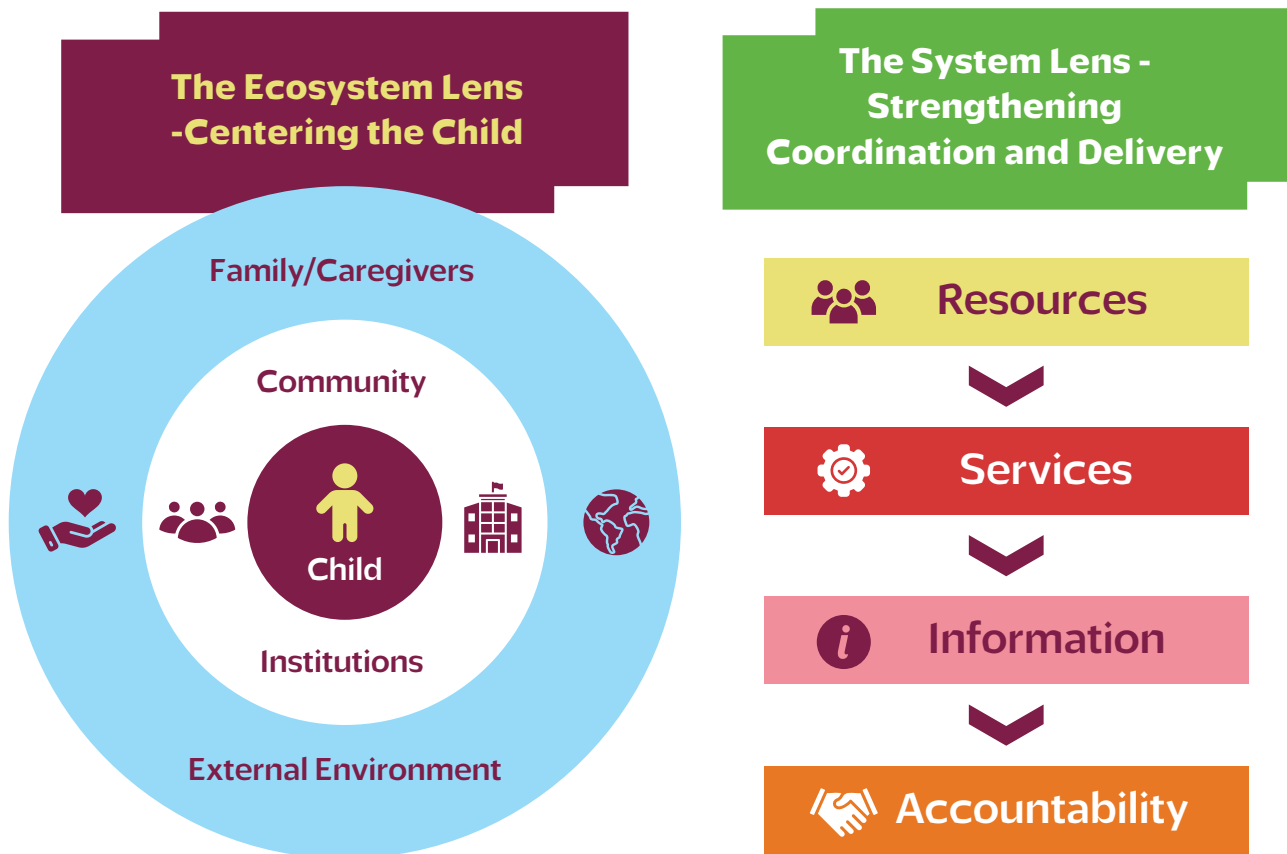


3.4 Orphan Care 360°: A Proposed Framework

Drawing on 15+ years supporting Gaza's orphans and extensive consultation with Palestinian stakeholders, this report proposes the **Orphan Care 360° Framework** - a coordination approach designed specifically for Gaza's realities.

The framework is called '360°' because it requires seeing the complete picture: the whole child in their whole ecosystem, supported by a coordinated system connecting every actor (See Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: The Orphan Care 360° Model



How This Framework Was Developed

The concept emerged from two sources:

- Taawon's programmatic experience through Wajd, Mustaqbali, and Noor programs spanning successive Gaza crises.
- Evidence from global child protection frameworks that successfully transitioned from emergency fragmentation to coordinated systems.

The framework offers a shared architecture for collective action - providing common language, clear principles, and a roadmap all stakeholders can rally behind.

Five Pillars of the Proposed Framework

The framework identifies five core commitments that, if adopted collectively, would transform Gaza's orphan care from fragmented charity to coordinated system:

Table 3.1: Five Pillars of the Orphan Care 360° Framework

Pillar	Core Principle	Vision
1. Every Child Visible	No child invisible, no child forgotten	A system where every orphaned child has a name in a registry, a case manager who knows them, and a coordinated care plan ensuring comprehensive support. Without knowing who children are and what they receive, they fall through gaps or get counted multiple times. Visibility is protection. Data serves dignity.
2. Families at the Foundation	Children thrive in families, not institutions	A system that supports families rather than replacing them. Extended families already care for thousands of orphaned children - they need economic assistance, psychosocial support, legal recognition, and connection to services. Family care is the norm, fostering the exception, institutions the last resort. This is Palestinian culture, Islamic principle, and proven best practice.
3. Comprehensive Care	From survival to recovery to thriving	A system where every child receives a continuum of care appropriate to their age and needs. Cash feeds children today. Education prepares them for tomorrow. Healthcare keeps them alive. Psychosocial support helps them heal. They need all of it, coordinated, not whatever random combination they happen to access. Comprehensive support becomes the standard, not the exception.
4. Coordinated Actors	Every actor is essential, no actor alone is sufficient	A system where MoSD coordinates, civil society delivers services, faith institutions integrate zakat, UN agencies provide technical support, and donors align funding. Each actor is essential; none is sufficient alone. Clear roles replace competition with collaboration. Shared data enables mutual accountability. Fragmentation wastes collective power.
5. Sustainable Beyond Emergency	From charity to social protection	A system where orphan care is Palestinian social protection entitlement, not charity depending on donor goodwill. Orphaned children need support for 15 years, not 6-month project cycles. Islamic social finance, government budgets, and international partnerships create diversified, stable funding. Today's emergency response becomes tomorrow's permanent system.

Source: Framework developed by Taawon based on Taawon's programmatic experience (2009-2025) and global child protection system-strengthening models (UNICEF 2019, UN Guidelines 2009, World Bank 2018).

These five pillars define direction, not detailed operations. They say: Here are the collective commitments we need. Here is what success looks like. Now let us build it together.

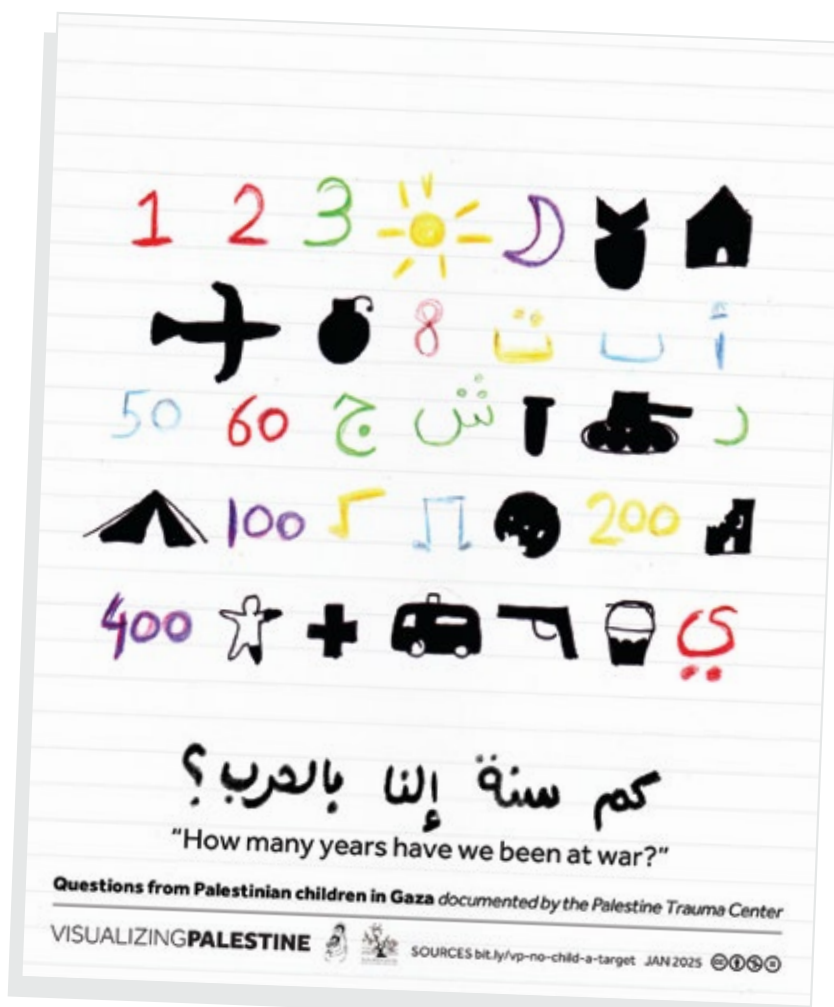
The framework is intentionally flexible. How MoSD coordinates, how civil society delivers services, how faith institutions integrate resources, how donors align funding - these operational details emerge through the collective leadership and partnerships this report calls for, adapted to Gaza's evolving realities.

3.5 From Framework to Action: What Success Requires

The Orphan Care 360° Framework defines the destination. Reaching it requires three foundational investments and collective commitment from all actors.

Three Foundational Investments

1. **Data Infrastructure:** A unified child registry connecting MoSD, PCBS, and all service providers. Every orphaned child registered with unique identifier. Real-time visibility into who receives what support from whom. This prevents the current reality where children register with multiple providers or remain entirely invisible.
2. **Institutional Capacity:** Restored MoSD operational capacity to fulfill coordination mandate. Training for 500+ social workers and case managers. Functional coordination mechanisms convening all actors. Technical systems for monitoring and quality assurance. Palestinian ownership requires Palestinian capacity.
3. **Comprehensive Care at Scale:** Expansion of proven comprehensive models beyond current reach. Support for extended families caring for orphans. Integration of financial assistance with education, healthcare, and psychosocial services. This addresses immediate needs while coordination architecture develops.



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الكلاب اللي أكلت جُثث الشهداء بتتحول لإنسان؟

"Do the dogs that eat the martyrs' bodies
turn into humans?"

Questions from Palestinian children in Gaza documented by the Palestine Trauma Center

VISUALIZING PALESTINE



SOURCES bit.ly/vp-no-child-a-target JAN 2025





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