



Raising the voice for humanity

Architects for Gaza

Building Hope through Spatial Resistance

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Courtesy of Architects for Gaza, AFG

Architects for Gaza (AFG) emerged in November 2023 from the urgent need to respond to the destruction of Gaza through architecture, urbanism, and spatial practice rooted in justice. Co-founded by architects Yara Sharif and Nasser Golzari, the collective brings together architects, planners, engineers, academics, and built environment professionals from across the globe. Drawing on diverse international perspectives and extensive expertise, AFG from its inception has worked closely with the municipality of Gaza City as well as local partners and institutions in Gaza to address means for reconstruction, both urgent and in the visionary long-term. Building on the words of Yahya Sarraj, Gaza's mayor, AFG's aim has been to "turn a disaster into an opportunity" by bringing back the life, culture, and social practices that have characterized Gaza's coastal terrain for centuries.

While the subject of reconstruction is undeniably complex, especially in a context that is being targeted for erasure, we, as architects from Palestine and internationally, believe firmly that it is essential to begin this process of rebuilding now, without delay, and even amid genocide. Hopes and visions of the future must not be delayed; they are our fuel, and their dreams must start in the mind. This position is born from the heart of Palestine and Gaza itself, as the mayor has continuously stressed. It arises from the belief that Gaza has the right to a city, to homes, to neighborhoods and foremost, to the cultivation of hope, despite unprecedented and ongoing devastation.

We stand against the settler-colonial ideology that treats Gaza as a blank canvas on which to project and overwrite. Reconstruction cannot and must not erase; it should empower. It is exactly for this reason that AFG challenges the notion of a "one-size-fits-all" architecture, asserting instead the centrality of both tangible and

intangible heritage, the memory and cultural richness that make Gaza the city it is today. It is Gazans who hold the right to lead any reconstruction process. The role of architects, both within Palestine and abroad, is to use their voice and their profession to facilitate, to empower, and to ensure that Gaza's culture, memory, and 5000 years of history are marked, preserved, and carried forward.

AFG challenges the systematic erasure and "spaciocide" enacted on Gaza and its people. The collective operates on the principle that – following the immediate cessation of genocidal and destructive attacks on the area – the people of Gaza have the right to a reconstruction process in which they are key decision-making participants. As stated in our founding documents, Gaza deserves innovative

solutions that incorporate social and cultural processes and bring tangible and intangible cultural heritage, memories, and traces into a future urban imaginary.

The collective initially organized around two main clusters, Rebuild and Education, where the Rebuild cluster focuses on working with local communities and organizations by volunteering skills and knowledge for building in places where people have been taking refuge. The Education cluster facilitates the continuation and advancement of higher education in Gaza, responding to what Palestinian scholar Karma Nabulsi has termed "scholasticide," the deliberate annihilation of an educational system.

In December 2023, AFG launched the Gaza Global University (GGU) Call

In November 2025, a workshop in Cairo brought together Gazan students, architects, and academics to map Gaza's collective memory through design, capturing the intangible and the everyday.



for Action, mobilizing academics and practitioners in architecture, urbanism, planning, and spatial practice to support Gaza's higher education institutions and students. The response was formidable, gathering over 800 individuals, organizations, and institutions from almost 60 countries who offered to volunteer as tutors, mentors, and partners. This initiative wove together a network of solidarity across different geographies, resulting in a constellation of diverse skills, knowledge, and experiences.

In April 2024, AFG-GGU partnered with Al-Najah University in Nablus to provide Gazan students with opportunities to continue their education virtually through West Bank universities. The programs were designed to be recognized by students' home institutions in Gaza, ensuring that degrees would be awarded by those same institutions – a crucial decision that supported rather than undermined Gaza's universities. Students demonstrated remarkable determination, often traversing kilometers on foot and risking lives to reach points where they could join classes online.

AFG's reconstruction initiatives have worked in close partnership with local partners, institutions, architects, and

engineers on multiple projects. Despite ongoing assaults and whenever possible, the teams have developed self-build approaches and experiments that use rubble as construction material, directly challenging the erasure of Palestinian life in the city by reifying presence, inhabitation, and resilience. Our prototypes for building materials made from recovered materials are tested and ready to go. The drawings and images shared here demonstrate the projects we are currently developing to raise real funds; they have passed the consultation stages, but are unbuilt. We are also in regular conversation with UN Habitat to arrange construction with the Palestinian Authority. At this point it has been hard to build more permanent structures as a reality. Longer-term projects are regularly and consistently developed and discussed with the municipality, but realization is not possible at this time.

Moreover, alongside testing materials for reconstruction, the team is currently working on two key community-oriented projects with local partners to address community provisions in the city of Gaza. Through what we call an "atlas of available materials," AFG explores ways of transforming rubble and crushed

concrete into tools for rebuilding while encouraging, supporting, and amplifying local initiatives. This approach recognizes how Gazan families have long pioneered practices of salvaging and reusing materials – turning rubble, reinforcement bars, crushed concrete, sand, clay panels, corrugated metal, timber, and even discarded cardboard into essential components of (re) construction.

In February 2025, AFG co-organized a workshop in Cairo titled "Rebuilding Home, Street + Neighborhood" in cooperation with the two non-profit organizations: Office of Displaced Designers and Global Free Unit.¹ This brought displaced Gazan students and architects together with academics and scholars from Palestine, Egypt, the UK, and other countries to envision and articulate approaches to Gaza's recovery and rebuilding process that are rooted in the insights, memories, and aspirations of Gazans themselves.

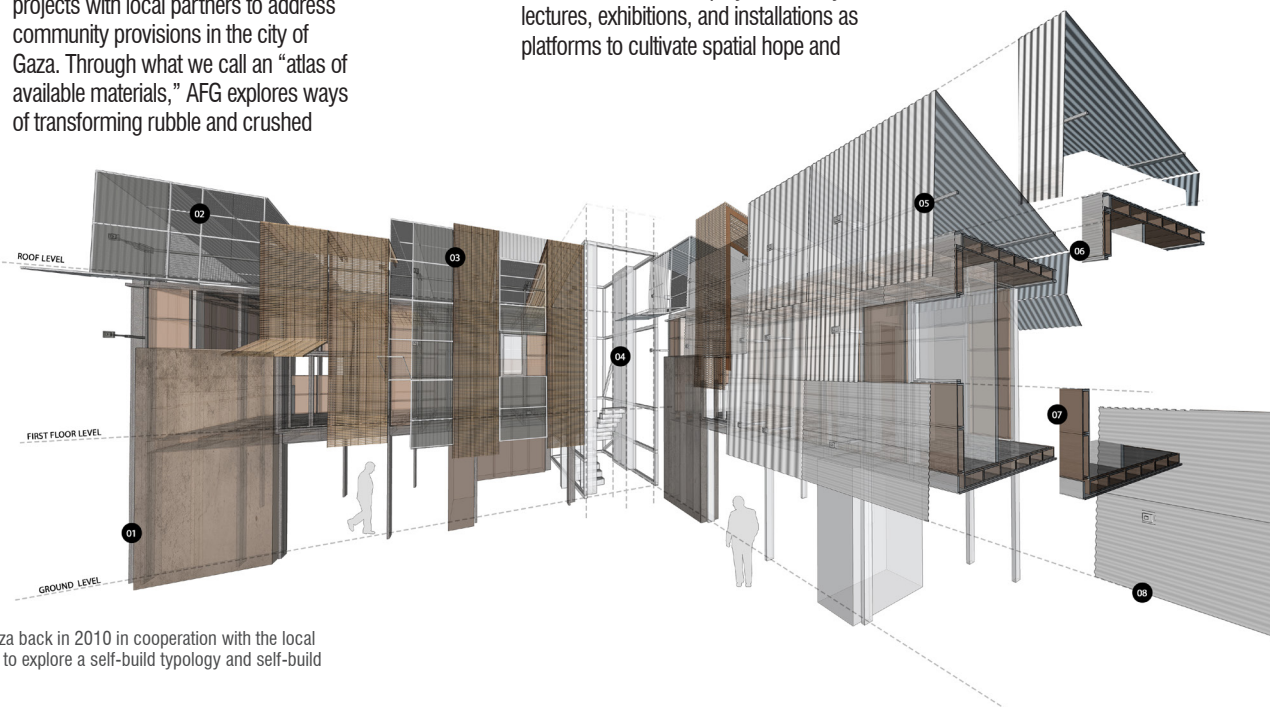
The AFG collective employs advocacy, lectures, exhibitions, and installations as platforms to cultivate spatial hope and

assert Gaza's rights. Our work is currently exhibited at the Venice Biennale 2025,² and we have held public programs across several academic and cultural institutions in London.³ In June 2025, AFG issued to the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) an open letter that has been signed by hundreds of professionals who are demanding that our professional network and key figures within the industry take an ethical stand and publicly condemn the ongoing destruction of Palestinian homes and infrastructure, and declare their support for Palestinian-led reconstruction efforts.⁴

AFG stresses that Palestinians have the right to rebuild their homes, neighborhoods, schools, and hospitals and the right to lead reconstruction processes, marshaling Palestinian projections and desires. We call for an end to the siege on Gaza, the lifting of all restrictions on the entry of food, electricity, building materials, fuel, and construction equipment, and demand immediate

GREEN LEARNING ROOM

- 01 RAMMED EARTH
- 02 WIRE MESH SCREEN
- 03 BAMBOO SCREEN
- 04 SERVICE CORE
- 05 REINFORCE BAR FRAMEWORK
- 06 1ST SKIN INSULATED STERLING BOARD
- 07 2ND SKIN CORRUGATED ALUMINIUM
- 08 3RD SKIN, INTERCHANGEABLE SKIN; Corrugate Aluminium, Wire mesh, Timber screen



The Green Learning Room typology was initiated in Gaza back in 2010 in cooperation with the local community. It is being developed collectively and aims to explore a self-build typology and self-build techniques that use available materials.



"Objects of Repair," an exhibition currently on display at the Venice International Architecture Biennale 2025, is an exploration of alternative methods of construction that use clay and crushed concrete as tools to create a cooling skin and an outer skin.

access for professionals, experts, and helpers who wish to enter Gaza and participate in self-help initiatives alongside Gazan residents and institutions.

Through our multi-faceted approach, AFG asserts that reconstruction cannot wait. We emphasize the empowerment of the local municipality, local actors, and the local community through the creation of multiple platforms that allow participants to engage and share ideas that can facilitate and realize projects. The collective continues to call upon built-environment professionals globally to join our endeavors, showing the way forward for the reconstruction of a socially just and environmentally responsible future for Gaza.

As individuals, we are devastated to witness the ongoing and unparalleled atrocities that continue to be enacted upon Gaza, and upon Palestinian lands and people. The statistics of destruction and the loss of life are no less shocking in their ever-rising omnipresence; the impacts of ecological, social, and cultural loss are yet to be calculated, likely impossible to measure. Yet coming together as AFG, we work hard to maintain a conscious position of engagement, action, and hope, precisely not to succumb, but

A work in progress, developed in partnership with the Municipality of Gaza, that focuses on specific sites to explore strategies for bringing life back. The brief is community driven and deeply rooted in efforts to address the urgent needs for re-building, water keep the text as one paragraph while taking into account Gaza's density as well as the preservation of memory and intangible heritage.



Everyday tools of repair, are displayed at the Venice International Architecture Biennale 2025, demonstrate the possibilities of construction with available materials.

All article photos are courtesy of Architects for Gaza.

rather to resist and address the brutal humanitarian crises. Gazans have the right to dream of and realize secure homes, thriving cities, restored lands. As a collective of architects, designers, and professionals in the built environment from Palestine and across the globe – we focus our capacities and marshal our professional energies towards a bold and free future for Gaza and Palestine as a whole.

As AFG states clearly: there is a future for reconstruction on the ground by and with Palestinians for Gaza. Through research, design, and collaborative

practice, Architects for Gaza strives to make architecture both pragmatic and visionary – meeting urgent needs while envisioning a just and thriving future for Gaza's communities.

For further details, visit architectsforgaza.com.

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¹ See Office of Displaced Designers, "Harnessing the power of design and design education to build inclusive and just societies."

² See British Council, "UK at the Venice Biennale: Objects of Repair."

³ See Architects for Gaza, "Cultivating Hope: Conversations on Palestinian Art and Architecture," January 22, 2024.

⁴ See Dezeen, "Architects for Gaza Demand RIBA Call for an Expulsion of Israel from International Union of Architects," June 19, 2025.