



# WFP State of Palestine Country Brief

June 2018

## Operational Context

Food insecurity in Palestine affects 22.5 percent of the population – about 1.3 million people- and is driven by limited economic access to food, arising from restrictions of movement, trade and investment, and high unemployment rates. Food prices are driven by Israeli markets, where people's average purchasing power per person is six times higher than in Palestine, and therefore too high for poor families to afford. As poor and vulnerable Palestinians spend more than half of their income on food, WFP's assistance is critical to meet their food needs and prevents further deteriorations in their food security and livelihood status.

Gaza continues its trajectory of de-development. All socio-economic indicators and humanitarian conditions continue to deteriorate, owing to the cumulative effects of a twelve-year economic -land, sea, air- blockade (since 2007), three armed hostilities (2008, '12,'14), the introduction of Israeli restrictions on the entry of goods with a dual civilian/military use (since 2010) limiting economic growth and post-conflict reconstruction, Egypt's closure of the smuggling tunnels curtailing the informal economy (since 2013), the pay cuts of Palestinian Authority public sector workers and the current energy crisis (2017-18): 53 percent are poor, at least 39 percent are food insecure, 49.1 percent are unemployed- the highest rate in the world. The U.N. foresees that Gaza will be "unliveable" by 2020.

Under the [State of Palestine Country Strategy Plan \(2018-2022\)](#), WFP aims at providing cash-based transfers (CBT), using an electronic food voucher (60 percent), and in-kind food assistance (40 percent) to up to 314,000 of the poorest and those most vulnerable to food insecurity in Palestine, primarily in Gaza and Area C in the West Bank where the prevalence of food insecurity is the highest. All WFP-assisted people live below the national deep poverty line on less than US\$ 3.7 per day. The CSP is aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 2 'Zero Hunger' and 17 'Partnerships for the Goals'.

Population: **4.9 million**

2016 Human Development Index:  
**114 out of 188**

Poverty rate: **25 percent**

Chronic malnutrition: **7.4 % of children between 6-59 months**

**Main Photo**

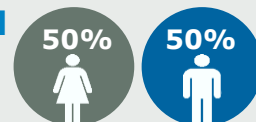
Credit: WFP /Wissam Nassar  
Caption: Maram, a six-year-old girl, lives with her 7 siblings in Gaza city. She was two when her family's house was bombed during the 2014-armed hostilities and re-built thanks to charity organisations.

## In Numbers

**USD 2.6 m** cash based transfers (CBTs) made

**USD 20.6 m** six months (July-December 2018)

**351, 000 people assisted** in June



## Operational Updates

- In June, WFP assisted 351,153 poor and food insecure people: 241,024 people in Gaza and 110,129 people in the West Bank with food and cash-based transfers (CBT). WFP's food assistance enables poor households to meet a share of their daily food needs and alleviates the decline in their purchasing power. It is a fundamental safety net that keeps them from falling into deeper poverty, as well as a critical form of economic transfer allowing families to spend their meagre resources on other essentials.
- Hardships in Gaza have reached an unprecedented peak with the lives of the most vulnerable at breaking point. Behind a façade of normalcy, people's plights and negative coping mechanisms are greater than what they have ever been, including during and in the aftermaths of the last armed hostilities (2014). Poverty is entrenched affecting 53 percent of the population, marking a 35 percent increase compared to 2011 (39 percent), as per the latest poverty assessment. Unemployment keeps growing and has reached a record-high of 49 percent while it was at 45 and 47 percent in 2014 respectively before (Q2), during and after (Q3) the conflict.
- As a result of the above, more people are food-insecure and eligible for WFP assistance. To meet the increased needs, WFP has enlisted 10,000 new CBT beneficiaries and now assists a total of 245,000 people. It was able to do so by relying on [multilateral contributions](#) and re-prioritising available funds in Gaza to ensure that the most acute needs are addressed, to the expense of other areas in the West Bank.
- Food insecurity, which is driven by poverty and lack of employment, is expected to have significantly increased compared to 2016 levels when the last assessments were carried out (39 percent). The 2017 Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey (SEFSec) is currently in preparation under the lead of the Food Security Sector: results are expected to be released in the last quarter of the year.
- WFP completed the first round of its bi-annual nutrition awareness sessions with 4,000 women, 1,500 men and 2,000 children trained on best nutritional and health practices in all five Gaza governorates.

**Contact info** : Raphael du Boispean  
([raphael.duboispean@wfp.org](mailto:raphael.duboispean@wfp.org))

**Country Director**: Daniela Owen

Further information: <http://www1.wfp.org/countries/state-palestine>

The classes also addressed topics on the prevention of gender-based violence and provided life-skills and women empowerment sessions aiming to enhance their personal development and resilience against increased deprivations, psychological trauma, marginalisation and other forms of anxieties driven by patriarchal norms.

## WFP Country Strategy

Total Requirement (in USD)	Confirmed Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) *
<b>Country Strategic Plan (January 2018-December 2022)</b>		
<b>240.3 m</b>	<b>33.3 m</b>	<b>20.6</b>

\*July-December 2018

## WFP Country Activities

### SO 1

1. Provision of unconditional food assistance – including through cash-based transfers (CBT) and in-kind modalities – and nutrition information to poor and food-insecure households (Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food).

### SO 2

2. Provision of technical support to national ministries and institutions for implementation of the food security strategy and National Food Safety Net reform (Institutional capacity strengthening activities).

3. Provision of a CBT platform to multi-sectoral partners and Government (Service provision and platforms activities).

## Monitoring

- Findings showed that WFP household beneficiaries continued to adopt negative food strategies to cope with the degradation of their living standards; they have been skipping meals (20 percent), reducing the quality (35 percent) and quantity (22 percent) of food items, seeking support from friends or relatives (33 percent) and relying on credit to purchase food (38 percent). These mechanisms are persistent for an acutely vulnerable population whose dwindling resources are on the verge of exhaustion.
- 76 percent of the beneficiary households surveyed this month were found to be heavily indebted, with an average accumulated debt of USD 4,320: USD 2,768 for electricity and water, USD 255 for groceries, and USD 1,293 worth of credit from friends and relatives.
- On average, WFP beneficiaries’ heads of households have reportedly been able to work 6 days this month – mostly as casual labourers- and earned a monthly income of USD 137, significantly below the minimum wage of USD 410. A monthly wage of USD 137 for a family of seven (the average family size surveyed) means that each household member lived with less than USD 0.65 per person per day.

This is significantly lower than the national deep poverty line of USD 3.7, which reflects a family’s minimum budget to cover expenditures on food, clothing and housing.

## Challenges

- Resourcing limitations continue to hamper WFP’s ability to meet all food needs without discontinuation and reduce the coping mechanisms of assisted households (Strategic Outcome 1). When continuously provided, WFP food assistance is a fundamental safety net for the poorest and most vulnerable people, whose ability to move out of poverty is obstructed by increased access restrictions to basic services.
- In today’s challenging funding environment, WFP is prioritizing its resources to deliver assistance in Gaza as per the greatest needs. Without additional contributions, WFP will be forced to suspend its food assistance in Gaza as early as of September 2018. This will impact the food security of 245,000 extremely poor and severely food-insecure people. In the West Bank, 78,000 are at risk of being deprived of their CBT entitlements from July onwards if no donations are forthcoming.

## Partnerships

- WFP and other humanitarian and development actors support the Palestinian National Authority in the provision of assistance to vulnerable segments of the non-refugee population. WFP works closely with the Government through the Ministry of Social Development, non-governmental organisations, such as Global Communities, Ard El Insan, Palestinian Medical Relief Society, and UNRWA, to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable food insecure populations in Gaza and the West Bank.
- WFP food assistance interventions are aligned with national plans and strategies, namely the National Policy Agenda 2017 -2022 and the Social Development Sector Strategy 2017-2022. These guidelines have identified the provision of continued food assistance to poor and food insecure non-refugee populations as a key priority to alleviate poverty, as well as contributing to the strengthening of the Palestinian Authority’s social protection system.
- WFP’s support to SDGs 2 and 17 is embedded within the 2018-2022 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and 2018-2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in Palestine.

## Donors

- WFP is grateful for the support of Canada, European Union (ECHO), Japan, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, the United States of America, and multilateral and private donors (Strategic Outcome 1). More information [here](#).