



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
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LIVES



WFP Palestine Country Brief March 2020

Operational Context

The humanitarian context in the State of Palestine remains directly tied to the impact of the Israeli occupation. Restricted movement of people, access to resources and basic social services, together with recurrent expropriation of land, settler violence, civil unrest and periodic large-scale armed hostilities have resulted in economic stagnation, high unemployment, poverty and food insecurity. The prolonged conflict has disproportionately affected women, men, girls and boys. Women headed households represent 11 percent of the total households in Palestine ;however, they account to almost 20 percent of families suffering from extreme poverty. Adolescent boys and girls living in poverty have lower access to quality services. Boys face higher rates of child labour and girls higher rates of child marriage.

WFP provides food assistance to the most vulnerable groups of the Palestinian non-refugee population while the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) assists Palestinian refugees. According to the latest national estimates (December 2018), food insecurity in Palestine affects nearly a third of the population – about 1.7 million people - and is driven by high poverty and unemployment rates. The number of food-insecure Palestinians is almost equally divided between the refugee (55 percent) and non-refugee (45 percent) communities. More than 700,000 non-refugees are assessed to be food insecure in Gaza (465,000) and the West Bank (235,000), including 404,000 in a severe state.

The provision of WFP's assistance goes beyond serving the purpose of enhancing people's ability to meet their immediate food needs; it supports community resilience and empowerment in the face of repeated shocks and increased hardships, contributes to maintaining peace and stability, and stimulates the local economy.

Under 2018-22 Country Strategic Plan (CSP) and in contribution to SDG 2 , WFP aims at providing food assistance to 404,000 of the most vulnerable non-refugees via in-kind food rations and electronic food vouchers topped up with a monthly credit of USD 10 per person. Assisted communities can redeem their entitlements in a network of 275 local retail shops across Gaza (200) and the West Bank (75). WFP also works with national institutions to enhance the capacity of existing social safety nets to assist the poor and vulnerable.

Population: **4.9 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **119 out of 189**

Poverty rate: **29.2 percent**

Severe and moderate malnutrition: **7.4 % of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers



305,807 people assisted
in March 2020

US\$3.2 m cash-based transfers made

1,026 mt of food distributed

US\$21.9 m six months (May - October 2020) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- In March, WFP assisted 239,392 and 66,415 poor food-insecure people in Gaza and the West Bank respectively, predominantly through electronic food vouchers but also through in-kind food parcels. WFP's CBT programme continued uninterrupted in Gaza and the West Bank. In-kind food distributions to Bedouin and herders in Area C of the West Bank have been carried out in close collaboration with UNRWA.
- During in-kind food distributions, WFP's implementing partners are following extra crowd management measures to prevent proximity between beneficiaries to ensure their safety. Voucher shoppers are recurrently using hygiene and sanitation materials to clean the shops and they request beneficiaries to use sanitizers placed at the entrance of the shops. WFP and implementing partners are discussing ways and tools to avoid crowds at distribution points and shops. Among the alternatives being discussed are home delivery of food which can be purchased from shops while using WFP CBT (electronic food voucher), and increasing the number of distribution points.
- WFP has supported the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) in formulating an emergency response plan to address the effects of COVID-19 on the poorest and most vulnerable people. WFP and the MoSD have identified 65,000 people under the national protection system consisting of elderly people, persons with disabilities, and pregnant and lactating women to be receiving monthly CBTs (USD 10.30 per capita). WFP will also provide 170,000 people from the existing beneficiary caseload an extra monthly top-up of USD 5 per capita to the monthly USD 10.30 entitlement. This is contingent to the availability of resources.
- WFP applied for an internal Immediate Response Allocation (IRA) worth of USD 5 million to respond to the identified additional needs emerging because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the COVID-19 Response Plan for the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), part of WFP immediate response (USD3 million) has been integrated under the Food Security component of such plan.
- WFP is working on contracting 54 shops in six governorates in the northern and middle parts of the West Bank in case of need to provide CBTs to affected people residing in these areas. Under its current operations, WFP targets beneficiaries in the southern areas of the West Bank where food insecurity is more prevalent.
- WFP has lent its CBT platform to INGO Terre des Hommes to provide food to 40 households in Gaza for six months starting from April 2020.

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)
268.4 m	125 m
2020 Requirements (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (May - October 2020)
48 m*	21.9 m

*WFP is working on a budget revision to factor S\$66 funding requirements in 2020

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food (SDG 2)

Strategic Outcome # 1: Non-refugees, poor and severely food-insecure people (primarily in the Gaza Strip and Area C of the West Bank) have improved dietary diversity by 2022

Focus area : Crisis response

Activities: - 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).

Strategic Result 2: Support to the implementation of the SDGs (SDG 17)

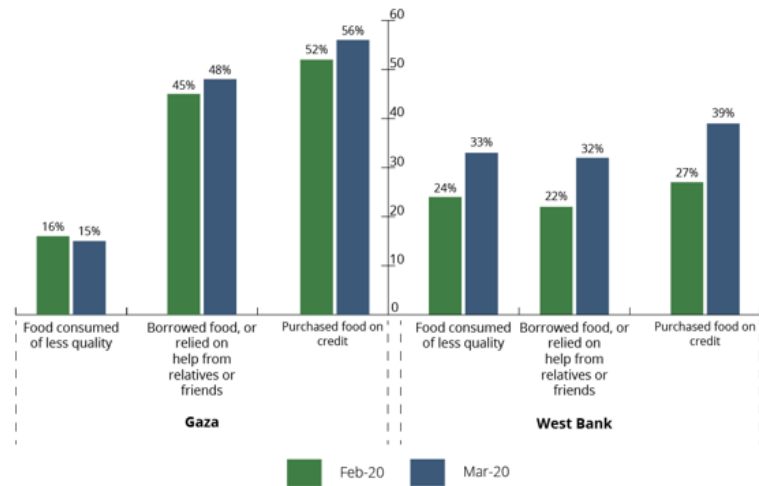
Strategic Outcome 2: State of Palestine institutions have enhanced capacities and systems to identify, target and assist food-insecure vulnerable populations by 2022

Focus area : Resilience-building

Activities: 1) Provision of technical support to national ministries and institutions for implementation of the food security strategy; 2) Provision of a CBT platform to multi-sectoral partners and Government (Service provision and platforms activities)

Monitoring

- In March, WFP conducted 307 household visits (88 via phone) in Gaza and 135 (28 via phone) in the West Bank. The average family size was 6 and 5 members, respectively. Women-headed households accounted for 25 percent of those visited. Around 29 percent of the families surveyed had at least one member with special needs, of whom 39.50 percent were women and girls. Monitoring findings showed an increase in beneficiaries' use of negative coping strategies compared to February, particularly in the West Bank. The percentage of families purchasing food on credit increased by 12 percents (39% vs 27%). More households consumed food of less quality (33% vs 24%) and borrowed food or relied on help of relatives and families (32% vs 22%). In Gaza, more households purchased food on credit (56% vs 52%) and consumed food of less quality (33% vs 24%). This increase is attributable to the impact of COVID-19. (see graph). In Gaza, around 88 percent of the beneficiaries had debts of an average USD 1,788 worth of unpaid bills for electricity and water, and 61 percent owed an average USD 1,795 to friends and relatives. Eleven (19) percent of those interviewed reported an increase in purchase of food on credit and 57 percent reported no change compared to the previous month. Thanks to WFP's assistance, 72 percent had acceptable food consumption (FCS) of different food groups during the 7 days preceding the survey, compared to 75 percent in February.
- In the West Bank, 47 percent of the interviewed families reported debts for electricity and water bills of an average USD 1,044 per family, and 56 percent said they have an average of USD 910 debts



to friends and relatives. Thirty-seven (37) percent of those interviewed reported an increase in the purchase of food on credit compared to February. Seventy-one (71) percent had acceptable FCS.

Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP needs USD 5 million to assist people affected by the COVID-19 crisis. This will enable WFP to provide CBTs to new 65,000 people and provide an extra top up to 170,000 people from the regularly assisted CBT beneficiaries in Gaza and the West Bank.
- For the current targeted beneficiaries, WFP is funded to distribute its electronic food vouchers to 272,000 people and in-kind food parcels to 72,000 people until the end of July 2020.

Partnerships

- WFP regularly supports the Palestinian Authority and provides food assistance to meet the essential needs of the poorest groups of the non-refugee population. Around 50 percent of the total people WFP assists- 174,200 (123,200 in Gaza and 51,000 in the West Bank) receive complementary food assistance from WFP on top of their national social benefits, including direct cash transfers. Due to funding limitations, the welfare system is facing financial constraints to support all those in need, resulting in an extensive waiting list.
- Through its other implementing INGO partners, Global Communities and Oxfam, WFP aims to reach 135,000 people among the most vulnerable and severely food-insecure, whose access to social protection had been curtailed. WFP also works with UNRWA to meet the food needs of mixed refugee and non-refugee Bedouin and herding communities in Israeli-controlled Area C of the West Bank (37,000 people).
- WFP and partners, Oxfam in Gaza and the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ) in the West Bank, have concluded the first phase of a pilot livelihood strengthening project. 200 families from Gaza and the West Bank received agricultural assets including wicking bed units, livestock, poultry, green houses and hydroponics to improve their calorie intake and to support potential income generation. While preparations for the second phase are underway, WFP is working on an evaluation of the first phase including a cost benefit analysis.

2019-2020 Donors: Canada, European Union (ECHO), France, Germany, Japan, Kuwait Red Crescent, Multilateral donors, the Russian Federation, South Korea, Spain, United Kingdom, United Nations Central Emergency Fund (CERF), UN Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF), and private donors (Strategic Outcome 1). SDG Fund (Strategic Outcome 2). More information [here](#).