



World Food Programme

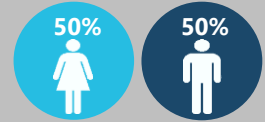
SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Palestine Country Brief July 2020

Photo Credit: WFP Khaled Abu Shabaan

In Numbers



345,855 people assisted
in July 2020

US\$4.4 m cash-based transfers made

376 mt of food distributed

US\$28.2 m six months (September 2020 – February 2021) net funding requirements

Operational Context

The outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis in Palestine has exacerbated the deteriorating health and socio-economic conditions of Palestinians, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable groups, including elderly people, persons with disabilities, woman-headed households and children. Necessary measures to contain the COVID-19 forced thousands of Palestinians out of their work, significantly impacting their livelihoods. The World Bank underlines that the COVID-19 crisis is damaging an already ailing economy struggling to emerge from liquidity crisis in 2019. The World Bank projects a year GDP decline of at least 7.6 percent and up to 11 percent due to restrictions related to COVID-19. Coupled with the rise in unemployment, poverty will increase in the West Bank from 14 percent to 30 percent and in Gaza from 53 percent to 64 percent. Moreover, a UN Women report shows that a staggering 95 percent of women-owned businesses are negatively impacted by COVID-19, and 27 women-owned businesses have already shut down.

Prior to COVID-19, the humanitarian context in Palestine has been 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 and periodic 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, but account to almost 20 percent of families suffering from extreme poverty. Adolescent boys and girls living in poverty have lower access to quality services.

WFP provides food assistance to the most vulnerable groups of the Palestinian non-refugee population. 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%) and non-refugee (45%) communities. More than 700,000 non-refugees are assessed to be food insecure in Palestine, 465,000 in Gaza and 235,000 in the West Bank.

The provision of WFP's assistance goes beyond enhancing people's ability to meet their immediate food needs; it supports community resilience in the face of repeated shocks and increased hardships, contributes to maintaining peace and stability, and stimulates the local economy. WFP also works with national institutions to enhance the capacity of existing social safety nets to assist the poor and vulnerable. Under 2018-22 Country Strategic Plan (CSP), WFP aims at providing food assistance to 426,000 of the most vulnerable non-refugees via in-kind food rations and electronic food vouchers. Assisted communities can redeem their entitlements in a network of 335 local retail shops across Palestine.

Poverty rate: 29%

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

Population: **4.9 m**

2019 Human Development Index: 110 out of 189

Operational Updates

- WFP Palestine provided food assistance through Cash Based Transfers (CBT) in the form electronic food vouchers to 333,955 poor and severely food insecure Palestinians, 20 percent of which are woman-headed households.
- Amongst the CBT recipients were 60,600 people, half of which are women and girls, affected by COVID-19. Most of the beneficiaries (99 per cent) reside in the West Bank.
- WFP continued providing an extra monthly USD 5 voucher top up to 170,000 of pre-COVID 19 beneficiaries to enable them to buy more food thereby offsetting some of their scarce resources to spend them on other essentials such as hygiene materials. Due to funding limitations, WFP will be suspending this assistance as of 1 August.
- As of September 1st, all support to COVID-19 new vulnerable people will cease due to funding shortages.
- In collaboration with UNRWA, WFP completed the in-kind food distributions to the remaining 11,900 Bedouins and herders living in Area C of the West Bank under the April-June distribution cycle, where in-kind food rations were distributed to nearly 37,000 Bedouins and herders in the cycle.
- WFP is preparing to launch a pilot Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) for 1,114 poorest households in Gaza in September and is currently collaborating with the Ministry of Social Development to finalize the list of beneficiaries. It is intended to enable most vulnerable households meet their essential needs on local markets according to their priorities. Multiple donors have pledged to support WFP's MPCA which will ensure sustainability of assistance and allow for proper oversight, monitoring, and evaluation to inform future scale up.
- The new "Nutrition Awareness and Cash Based Transfer" project was launched in July, targeting vulnerable pregnant and lactating women and children under five years in H2 area in Hebron City in the southern West Bank. Around 256 women and their families (1,583 beneficiaries) received a monthly transfer of USD 10.3 per capita for nutritious foods for pregnant and lactating women, redeemable at various local shops. Under this project, WFP launched Social Behaviour Change Communication activities which aim at improving the health and nutrition behaviours of the beneficiaries. Due to the current movement restrictions linked to COVID-19, WFP is sharing awareness messages through SMS and holding WhatsApp discussions with the targeted women.
- As the freeze in contact between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Authorities continues, the role of the WFP-led Logistics Cluster is essential; coordinating the movement of humanitarian assistance by humanitarian organizations and donors to Palestinians.

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WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

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

Strategic Outcome # 1: Non-refugees, poor and severely food-insecure people 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.

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: Technical support to national ministries and institutions on food security strategy; Provision of a CBT platform to multi-sectoral partners and Government

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)		Funding Requirements
Total Requirements (USD)	Allocated Contributions (USD)	
291 m	144.7 m	
2020 Requirements (USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (USD) (Sept 2020 - Feb 2021)	
71 m	28.2. m	

- In July, the Logistics Cluster has submitted 41 clearance requests for seven humanitarian actors including the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UNDP and INGOs MSF - Médecins Sans Frontières France, American Near East Refugee Aid (Anera) and Medical Aid to Palestinians (MAP-UK).

Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP CSP's sixth Budget Revision has been approved to reflect the increase in food security needs bringing the target number of non-refugee beneficiaries to 426,000 in 2020, up from 404,000 people in 2019.
- WFP has available funding to maintain food assistance to the regularly assisted beneficiaries in Gaza and the West Bank until early November 2020. **WFP needs an additional USD 22.3 million to be able to continue providing food assistance in the next six months.**
- The USD 22.3 million **includes USD 9.5 million that WFP needs to sustain assistance** in response to needs related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) until the end of January 2021.

Partnerships

- WFP is leveraging its technical expertise by providing its CBT platform to the Palestinian Authority, Islamic Relief Worldwide, UNICEF and UNRWA to support over 60,000 vulnerable men, women, boys and girls affected by COVID-19.
- Through the SDG Fund Joint programme "Towards a universal and holistic social protection floor for people with disabilities (PwD) and older people (oP)", WFP is working with ILO and UNICEF to support the Palestinian Authority on issuing a revised

disability law which is currently under review in the Prime Minister's Office. The project is also supporting the assessment of the social protection system to review the sensitivity of targeting mechanisms for cash benefits distributed through the National Cash Transfer Programme for PwD and OP. The findings, planned for wider dissemination in Q3 2020, will inform the design of an inclusive model for social protection, including cash-based benefits and essential social services, aimed at PwD and OP.

Monitoring

WFP continued monitoring at household level via telephone calls. Beneficiary Sample: the following results are based on a quarterly (April-June) post-distribution monitoring conducted by WFP Field Monitors based on a stratified random sample of 1,337 households.

- Findings show that the **Food Consumption Score (FCS)** of CBT beneficiaries **in Gaza** improved with 87 percent of surveyed people having acceptable FCS compared to Q1 (81%). The percentage of woman-headed households with poor FCS has noticeably decreased, from 10 percent in Q1 to 3 percent in Q2.
- In the West Bank**, the FCS of CBT beneficiaries showed a slight improvement from 69 per cent of surveyed people having acceptable FCS in Q1 compared to 71 per cent in Q2. Poor FCS decreased by 2 per cent for all households. This can be attributed to the USD 5 increase in voucher value given to around half of the beneficiaries (170,000) during May-July.
- When food was not available at the household level, **CBT beneficiaries continued to rely on negative coping strategies**. In Gaza, purchasing food on credit continued to be the highest coping strategy adopted by households (56%), followed by borrowing food or relying on help from relatives and friends (49%). In the West Bank, borrowing food or relying on help from relatives or friends (29% in Q2 compared to 32% in Q1) and consuming food of less quality (29% in Q2 compared to 31% in Q1) are the main strategies adopted by households followed by purchasing food on credit.
- Almost **all interviewed households expressed their satisfaction with the availability and variety of commodities in participating shops** and considered the voucher value as essential in supporting their livelihoods. In the West Bank, 47 percent and 46 percent of woman-headed and men-headed households respectively, believed that the voucher value partially covered their food needs. In Gaza, 95 percent and 98 percent of woman-headed and men-headed households respectively, believed that the voucher value partially covered their needs.
- Findings show that 60 percent and 35 percent of the surveyed people in the West Bank and Gaza respectively who usually go to shops to redeem their vouchers are women. Almost all of them (99 per cent) continued to do so even after the spread of COVID-19.
- Household concerns with the spread of COVID -19 in the West Bank varied among households. Comparison between women and men respondents show some differences as 44 percent of men reported their fear of losing their income, while women's highest concern (36%) is fear to go to the medical centers.
- Household concerns with the spread of COVID -19 in the Gaza strip varied. Almost half reported not having any concerns at all, followed by 39 percent who reported their fear of being unable to fulfill their food and non-food needs.

2020 Donors: Canada, France, DFID, Germany, the Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, ECHO, UN Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF), and private donors (Strategic Outcome 1). SDG Fund (Strategic Outcome 2). More information [here](#).