



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## WFP Palestine Country Brief August 2020

### In Numbers

352,165 people assisted  
in August 2020



US\$3.4 m cash-based transfers made

603 mt of food distributed

US\$33 m six months (Oct 2020 – March 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. 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 regularly provides food assistance to the most vulnerable food insecure groups of the Palestinian non-refugee population. Since May, WFP scaled up food assistance to meet the needs of additional vulnerable non-refugees who have been affected by COVID-19. The majority of the targeted families are headed by women, with elderly people, persons with disabilities and high ratio of dependents. Already before the outbreak of COVID-19, the food insecurity in Palestine affected 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.

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. 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.

### Operational Updates

- WFP has ensured beneficiaries uninterrupted access to all participating shops (194) in the Cash-Based Transfer (CBT) programme in Gaza despite the lockdown and movement restrictions measures applied following the detection of the first COVID-19 cases inside communities on 24 August. In close coordination with technical staff at line ministries, including the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the Ministry of Development (MoSD), shops opened their doors allowing redemption of food vouchers while following strict precautionary measures including crowd management and use of Personal Protective Equipment (masks, gloves, hygiene materials).
- WFP is topping up the full voucher value on a monthly basis, instead of a bi-monthly voucher top up. This mitigation measure, effective as of 1 September, is intended to give beneficiaries the freedom to redeem their vouchers fully in one visit to the shop during the month hence decreasing the risk of leaving their homes and minimizing pandemic contagion.
- WFP and its implementing partner INGO Oxfam are preparing to launch in mid-September door-to-door in-kind food distributions to the targeted 35,000 people in Gaza. This aims at avoiding gatherings at distribution sites where WFP and Oxfam arrange the delivery of food rations to the targeted families every three months under normal circumstances.
- In-kind food distributions to Bedouin and herding communities in Area C of the West Bank started mid-August in collaboration with UNRWA reaching 19,128 people out of the targeted 37,000 people. Distributions are expected to be completed by mid-September.
- In support of the MoSD's response plan, which estimated that 70,000 families (420,000 people) have been affected by the spike in COVID-19 in Gaza, WFP will aim at providing food assistance to the non-refugees (125,000 people). WFP needs USD 4.5 million to provide CBTs (USD 10.3 per capita/month) to the targeted affected people for 3 months.
- Furthermore, WFP will aim at increasing the voucher value (USD 15.30 vs USD 10.30) to 123,200 people who regularly receive WFP's CBT assistance through the MoSD. Additional USD 2 million are needed to provide this extra assistance for three months.
- In August, WFP Palestine provided food assistance through Cash Based Transfers (CBT) in the form electronic food vouchers to 333,037 poor and severely food insecure Palestinians. Amongst the CBT recipients, more than 58,300, of which 55 percent are women and girls, are affected by COVID-19. Most of these newly registered beneficiaries (99 percent) reside in the West Bank where the impact of job loss linked to anti-COVID-19 closures and lockdowns was most pronounced.

Population: 4.9 million

2019 Human Development Index: 110 out of 189

Poverty rate: 29.2 per cent

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

# 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)	
<b>290.9 m</b>		<b>147.4 m</b>	
2020 Requirements (USD)		Six Month Net Funding Requirements ( USD) (October 2020 - March 2021)	
<b>70.9 m</b>		<b>33 m</b>	

### Funding and Pipeline update

- 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 26.2 million to be able to continue providing food assistance in the next six months.**
- The USD 26.2 million **includes USD 6 million that WFP needs to sustain current assistance** in response to needs related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) until the end of December 2020.
- WFP needs additional USD 4.5 million to provide CBTs to new people (125,000) affected by the spike in COVID-19 in Gaza and USD 2 million to give extra CBT top up to pre-COVID-19 beneficiaries (123,200) for three months.**

### Partnerships

- WFP is supporting the national Social Protection System by providing complementary food assistance to most vulnerable non-refugee communities enrolled in the National Safety Nets programme. Also, WFP is helping the MoSD to respond to emerging food needs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- WFP continues providing its CBT platform to a wide range of humanitarian actors to provide a variety of assistance to affected people. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, WFP opened its platform to UNICEF, UNRWA, INGO Islamic Relief Worldwide, INGO Action Against Hunger and INGO Terre des hommes.
- Through the SDG Fund Joint programme “Towards a universal and holistic social protection floor for people with disabilities (PwD) and elderly 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 selection and identification model for social protection, including cash-based benefits and essential social services, aimed at PwD and OP.

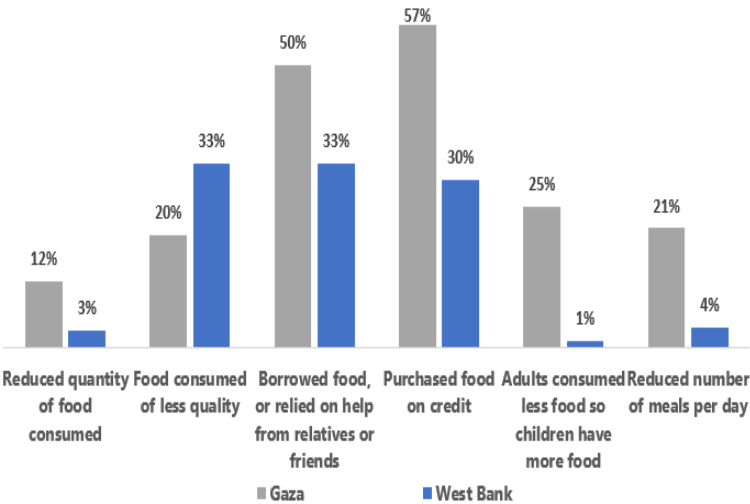
- WFP is partnering with Oxfam in Gaza and the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ) to implement the second phase of the resilience strengthening activities. Preparations are underway to provide 200 households in Gaza and in the West Bank agricultural assets such as wicking beds, hydroponics, and home gardens to improve their dietary intake and for income generation

### Monitoring

Throughout the month of August, WFP continued monitoring at household level via telephone calls.

Beneficiary sample: 162 interviews and 312 interviews with beneficiary households in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip respectively. 40 percent of the interviewed households are headed by women and 21 percent have at least one member with special needs.

- Findings show that the **Food Consumption Score (FCS)** of 75 percent of sampled beneficiary households in **Gaza** was acceptable, of 20 percent was borderline and 5 percent had a poor FCS. **In the West Bank**, 70 percent of the sampled beneficiary households had acceptable FCS, 25 percent borderline FCS and 5 percent poor FCS.
- Many families continued using **negative mechanisms** to cope with their incapability to fully meet their food needs. Purchasing food on credit and borrowing food or relying on help from relatives or friends were negative strategies used the most by the interviewed families: 57 percent of families in Gaza and 30 percent in the West Bank purchased food on credit and 50 percent in Gaza and 33 percent in the West Bank borrowed food or relied on help from relatives or friends. 33 percent of families in the West Bank consumed food of lower quality (20% in Gaza) and 25 percent of families in Gaza had their adult members consuming less food so children could have more.



- Almost **all interviewed households expressed their satisfaction with the quality (98%), availability and variety of commodities (96%) in the CBT participating shops** and considered the voucher value as essential in supporting their livelihoods.

**2020 Donors:** Canada, France, 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.](#)