



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## WFP Palestine Country Brief January 2021

## In Numbers



**341,197 people assisted**  
In January 2021

**US\$ 3.7 m** cash-based transfers made

**1,325 mt of food** distributed

**US\$ 30.5 m** six months (February – July 2021) net funding requirements

### Operational Context

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis continues casting a shadow on the already deteriorating health and socio-economic conditions of Palestinians, particularly the most vulnerable groups, including elderly people, persons with disabilities, households headed by women, and children. The massive loss of jobs hits thousands of people, particularly women workers, affected with the informal employment sector being significantly impacted by closures and lockdowns. The World Bank projected an increase in poverty rate, the main driver to food insecurity, in the West Bank from 14 percent to 30 percent and in Gaza from 53 percent to 64 percent.

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. This number is projected to have increased to 2 million, or 40 percent of the population. The number of food-insecure Palestinians is almost equally divided between the refugee (55 percent) and non-refugee (45 percent) communities. More than 900,000 non-refugees are assessed to be food insecure in Palestine, 60 percent in Gaza and 40 percent in the West Bank.

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.

WFP regularly provides food assistance to the most vulnerable food insecure groups of the Palestinian non-refugee population. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, WFP scaled up food assistance to meet the needs of additional vulnerable non-refugees who have been affected. Most of the targeted families are headed by women, with elderly people, persons with disabilities and high ratio of dependents, 60 percent.

Under 2018–2022 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

- In January, WFP provided food assistance through cash-based transfers (CBT) in the form of electronic food vouchers to 294,019 poor and severely food insecure Palestinians both in the West Bank and in Gaza Strip, more than 70 percent are women, girls and boys. Every household received a monthly credit of USD 10.3 per capita on a magnetic card to purchase food of their choice at 335 local retailers across Gaza (200) and the West Bank (135).
- Through the UN OCHA's Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF), WFP continued supporting more than 24,000 new people who have been affected by COVID-19 in the Gaza Strip. WFP will be able to sustain CBT assistance to those targeted people in Gaza until the end of the first quarter of 2021.
- WFP extended its direct cash assistance to 1,440 families (7,332 people) under its pilot Multi-Purpose Cash project in the Gaza Strip. Every family received direct cash worth of USD 336 to cover their essential needs according to their choice.
- In-kind food distributions under the October-December quarterly distribution were completed in collaboration with Oxfam in Gaza and UNRWA in the West Bank. Around 33,400 people in Gaza and 37,000 people in the West Bank received a food basket consisting of fortified wheat flour, vitamin-A rich vegetable oil, pulses, and iodized salt.
- WFP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) signed an agreement to support the Government in adopting a gender-transformative approach and ensuring that the activities are comprehensive, cross-cutting, and well targeted. [Read more](#)
- WFP moved forward with the implementation of the second phase of the resilience activity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In Gaza, 95 households, 30 percent are headed by women, have been identified to receive climate-smart agricultural assets, such as hydroponics, wicking beds and livestock, together with training. An additional 123 households, 27 percent are headed by women, and three special caring institutions in the West Bank are already growing various types of agricultural products.

Population: **4.9 million**

2019 Human Development Index: 115 out of 189

Poverty rate: 29.2 per cent

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

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Photo: WFP/ Ali Jadallah

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)		Funding Requirements	
Total Requirements (USD)		Allocated Contributions (USD)	
291 m		172 m	
2021 Requirements (USD)		Six Month Net Funding Requirements (USD) (February – July 2021)	
48 m*		30.5 m	

\*WFP will conduct a budget revision to reflect increase in needs and funding requirements.

## 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

## Monitoring

- Throughout the month of January, WFP continued monitoring at household level via telephone calls. The beneficiaries sample included 197 interviews with beneficiary households in the West Bank and 252 interviews in the Gaza Strip. 22 percent of the interviewed households are headed by women and 16 percent have at least one member with special needs.
- Findings show that 79 percent of sampled beneficiary households **in Gaza** and 76 percent of the sampled beneficiary households in the **West Bank** had an acceptable food consumption. 20 percent of the sampled households in Gaza and 24 percent of the sampled households in the West Bank did not have access to adequate food, rich with protein, vitamins, and minerals.
- Many families, particularly in Gaza, continued using **negative mechanisms** to cope with their incapability to fully meet their food needs. 67 percent of families in Gaza consumed food of less quality or less preferred, and 57 percent purchased food on credit. Meanwhile 31 percent of families in West Bank consumed food of less quality or less preferred and 36 percent purchased food on credit.
- The impact of COVID-19 is still increasing hardships to populations whose livelihoods were already fragile. Of the surveyed families, 25 percent in Gaza and 12 percent in the West Bank reported that one or more members of the family stopped working or lost their jobs, the majority of whom are men.
- Most of the interviewed families in Gaza and the West Bank said that the food assistance from WFP covers their food needs partially: in Gaza, 63 percent of households headed by women and 95 percent of households headed by men; in the West Bank 47 percent of households headed by women and 43 percent of households headed by men.

- There has been a consistent trend in terms of decision on the use of the CBT with women constituting the primary decision makers. Yet, more men than women go to the shops to redeem their families' vouchers in Gaza (68 percent vs. 32 percent) while in the West Bank more women than men redeem the voucher (76 percent vs. 24 percent).

## Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP seeks to sustain food assistance to around 351,000 of the poorest and most food insecure non-refugees who regularly rely on this assistance for their survival. With available resources, WFP will be able to provide:
  - CBT (food voucher) assistance to 272,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank until the end of March 2021.
  - In-kind food assistance to 72,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank until the end of June 2021.
  - Available funding will allow continued assistance to 7,330 people under the pilot Multi-Purpose Cash project until the end of 2021 and through the first quarter of 2020.
- WFP needs an additional USD 30.5 million to be able to continue providing food assistance in the next six months to all targeted vulnerable non-refugees (426,000).

## 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 Ministry of Social Development (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 including UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs which are working in Palestine, to provide a variety of assistance to affected people.
- With financial support from the UN's Joint Sustainable Development Goal Fund, WFP, along with UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO), continue working with the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to enhance the social protection system to become more inclusive and accessible to older people and persons living with disabilities, particularly women.
- WFP is partnering with the Applied Research Jerusalem Institute (ARIJ) in the West Bank and Oxfam in Gaza to implement the resilience strengthening activities.
- To better support the State of Palestine to accelerate progress on gender equality and women's empowerment in line with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, WFP and UN Women have forged a partnership to enhance gender-transformative programming. The two agencies will support the Government in adopting a gender-transformative approach that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment through cash-based transfers and Multi-Purpose Cash assistance that gives people the freedom to use assistance towards rent, food, education, health and other household pressing needs. WFP and UN Women will plan and implement activities in close coordination, ensuring that the activities are comprehensive, cross-cutting, and well targeted.

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