



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Palestine Country Brief February 2021

In Numbers



303,834 people assisted

In February 2021

US\$3.6 m cash-based transfers made

0 mt of food distributed

US\$39.1 m six months (April – September 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, woman-headed households, and children. The massive loss of jobs hits thousands of people, particularly women workers, with the informal employment sector being significantly impacted by closures and lockdowns. The Palestinian economy is in a precarious situation with a record contraction of 11.5 percent in economic activity according to the World Bank. A United Nations report, described 2020 as a year of setbacks for the Palestinians, their institutions, and their economy owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and an unprecedented fiscal crisis.

Already before the outbreak of COVID-19, the food insecurity in Palestine affected nearly a third of the population – about 1.7 million people - 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%) and non-refugee (45%) 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, limited 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 2018-22 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 276 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.

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

Operational Updates

- In February, WFP provided food assistance through Cash Based Transfers (CBT) in the form of electronic food vouchers to 303,834 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 276 local retailers across Gaza (200) and the West Bank (76).
- The CBT assistance included 265 families (1,616 people) who live in H2 area of Hebron City in the southern West Bank, through the "Nutrition Awareness and Cash Based Transfer" project. Targeting vulnerable pregnant and lactating women and children under five years in H2 area, the assistance is provided alongside Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) activities through different virtual tools such as WhatsApp sessions. The high engagement of participating women was demonstrated through a cooking competition which WFP organized. A message was sent to them to send recipes of their best vegetarian meal which should also be rich in iron. WFP received several recipes; their nutritional values were reviewed, analyzed, and rated. The winning recipe, a creative meal made of cauliflower leaves stuffed with chickpeas, rice, tomatoes, and parsley, was made by three different women*.
- WFP provided 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.
- Under the resilience strengthening activity implemented in the Gaza Strip by 100 vulnerable households, WFP and implementing partner Oxfam completed: the installment of 50 greenhouses; five poultry farms; 15 sheep farms; 28 wicking beds units and planted them; 10 composting greenhouses; one hydroponic unit and one Aquaponic testing unit. Meanwhile in the West Bank where the activity targets 123 families and three institutions, the planting units provided for the families produced a total amount of 23,782.5 kgs of different kind of vegetables of which 14.9 percent were consumed by the beneficiary families. The rest of vegetables were sold at a market value of 78,201.85 new Israeli Shekel (NIS), around 23,500 US\$.

**One of the three winning contestants Sara Abu Turki (43), featured in the picture above, cooked cauliflower leaves stuffed with chickpeas, rice, tomatoes, and parsley. Sara, who lives in H2 area in Hebron, grows cauliflowers in a small garden right next to her house.*

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Photo: WFP/Nizar Khadder

WFP Country Strategy



Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022) Funding Requirements	
Total Requirements (USD)	Allocated Contributions (USD)
291 m	175 m
2021 Requirements (USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (USD) (April – September 2021)
48 m*	39.1 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 February, WFP continued monitoring at household level via telephone calls. 207 interviews were conducted with beneficiary households in the **West Bank** and 375 interviews in the **Gaza Strip**. Nineteen percent of the interviewed households are headed by women and thirteen percent have at least one member with special needs.
- Findings show that 81 percent of sampled beneficiary households in **Gaza** and 79 percent of the sampled beneficiary households in the **West Bank** had an acceptable food consumption. 19 percent of the sampled households in Gaza and 21 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. Sixty-nine percent of families in Gaza consumed lower quality or less preferred food, and 63 percent purchased food on credit. Meanwhile 34 percent of families in West Bank consumed lower quality or less preferred food and 37percent purchased food on credit.
- The impact of COVID-19 is still increasing hardships to population whose livelihoods were already fragile. Of the surveyed families, 21 percent in Gaza and 14 percent in the West Bank reported that one or more members of the family stopped working or lost their jobs during the monitoring period, the majority of whom are men.
- In Gaza, 74 percent of households headed by women and 88 percent of households headed by men reported that WFP food assistance partially covers their food needs; in the West Bank 36 percent of households headed by women and 43 percent of households headed by men reported that WFP food assistance partially covers their food needs.

- There has been a consistent trend in terms of decision on the use of the CBT with women constituting the primary decision makers both in Gaza and West Bank. Yet, more men than women go to the shops to redeem their families' vouchers in Gaza (76 percent vs. 24 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. WFP needs an additional USD 39.1 million to be able to continue providing food assistance in the next six months to all targeted vulnerable non-refugees (426,000).

Partnerships

- Following up on the recent partnership, WFP and UN Women are discussing cooperation on different thematic areas related to Cash Based Transfers (CBT) and Multipurpose Cash (MPC). Cooperation will include exchanging technical guidance, conducting workshops with stakeholders, and enhancing analysis related to the food security of women and girls.
- In partnership with ARIJ Institute in the West Bank and Oxfam in the the Gaza Strip, WFP continues implementing the resilience activity under the project "Economic Empowerment and Building Livelihood Resilience of Vulnerable men and women headed households in the West Bank and Gaza Strip". The project targets 123 families in the West Bank in addition to three institutions, and 100 families in the Gaza Strip.
- 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 to provide a variety of assistance to affected people. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, WFP opened its platform to UN agencies, INGOs and NGOs which are working in Palestine allowing more rapid and efficient response to affected people's food needs and other essentials needs.
- 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.

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.](#)