



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Palestine Country Brief April 2021

In Numbers

301,691 people assisted
In April 2021



USD 3.2 m in cash-based transfers made

722 mt of food distributed

USD 31.8 m six month (May – October 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, affected because 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 - 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%) 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.

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.

Under the 2018-22 Country Strategic Plan (CSP), WFP aims at providing food assistance to 435,170 of the most vulnerable non-refugees via in-kind food rations and Cash-Based Transfers in the form of electronic food vouchers and multi-purpose cash. In contribution to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, 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 April, WFP provided food assistance through Cash Based Transfers (CBT) in the form of electronic food vouchers to 278,797 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 to purchase food of their choice at 276 local retailers across Gaza (200) and the West Bank (76).
- WFP also provided cash assistance to 1,140 families (7,343 people) under its pilot Multi-Purpose Cash project in the Gaza Strip. Every family received direct cash assistance amounting to USD 336 to cover their essential needs according to their choice.
- After completing the distribution of in-kind food parcels to 70,742 people in Gaza and the West Bank for the January – March 2021 distribution cycle, WFP and implementing partners are preparing to launch the second quarterly food distribution for the April – June 2021 cycle. WFP provides regular in-kind food to 35,000 people in Gaza Strip and 37,000 Bedouins and herders living in Area C in the West Bank. Each family receives food rations consisting of fortified wheat flour, vitamin-A rich vegetable oil, pulses, and iodized salt.
- A Ramadan campaign for individual donations for vulnerable Palestinians through the innovative WFP [ShareThe Meal](#) platform reached its goal, securing more than USD 0.5 million. The campaign was launched on 11 April and ended on 8 May and will help WFP provide 1,045,567 meals for vulnerable people across Palestine.
- WFP has completed the second phase of its livelihood strengthening activity through which 100 households in Gaza and 123 households and 3 special care institutions in the West Bank received home-based agricultural assets and training to improve their dietary intake and enhance their livelihoods. Around one third (27 percent) of the targeted households are headed by women. The three institutions in the West Bank have planted their units for a third round, and their residents and staff are using the crops in their daily meals and distributing surplus products to other neighboring institutions. For example, the “Mehwar” Center, a shelter for women and female adolescents who were subject to gender-based violence produced 155 kg of cauliflower, 65 kg of cauliflower leaves, 25 kg radish, 20 kg of lettuce, and 15 kg of kohlrabi. Meanwhile, WFP is preparing to launch the third phase which will target 250 families and special care institutions in Gaza and the West Bank.

Photo caption: GBV survivors at al-Mehwar Centre in Beit Sahour collecting their yield from their wicking beds/green house (WFP/Yara Abdallah)

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Population: 5.2 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

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirements (USD)	Allocated Contributions (USD)
319 m	182 m
2021 Requirements (USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (USD) (May – October 2021)
76 m	31.8 m

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 April, WFP continued monitoring at household level via telephone calls. The sample included 206 interviews with recipients of cash-based transfers (electronic vouchers) and in-kind food in the **West Bank** and 348 interviews with recipients in the **Gaza Strip**. Twenty-two percent of the interviewed households are headed by women and eight percent have at least one member with special needs.
- In the Gaza Strip, most of the interviewed heads of household stated that the food assistance from WFP partially covers their food needs (84 percent of households headed by women; 87 percent of households headed by men). Meanwhile in the West Bank, most of the interviewed heads of households (61 percent of households headed by women; 55 percent of households headed by men) stated that food assistance from WFP does not correspond with their food needs.
- There has been a consistent trend of women constituting the primary decision makers on the use of the CBT. However, in April, more men than women redeem their families' vouchers in Gaza (71 percent men vs. 29 percent women) while in the West Bank more women than men redeemed the vouchers (73 percent women vs. 27 percent men).
- The impact of COVID-19 is further increasing hardships on a population whose livelihoods are already fragile. Of the surveyed families, 52 percent in Gaza and 16 percent in the West Bank reported that one or more members of the family stopped working or lost their job, the majority of whom are men.
- Given changes in food consumption patterns during the month of Ramadan, WFP did not collect data on food consumption and coping strategies.

- Monitoring results on **Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)** in the Gaza Strip from November 2020 until March 2021 show an increase in the number of interviewed households stating that they are 'mostly or 'fully able' to meet their food needs to 91 percent; 53 percent are 'mostly or fully able' to meet their shelter needs; and 78 percent are 'mostly or fully able' to meet their health needs.
- The findings show that MPCA enabled beneficiaries to access more market options and empowered them by offering choice: 89 percent reported an increased ability to buy food through various marketplaces, 77 percent reported an increased ability to purchase food from more preferred marketplaces, and 89 percent reported a higher ability to purchase better quality food.
- Improvements in household beneficiaries' food consumption status continued in terms of frequency of consumption, dietary diversity, and access to food; 94 percent of the interviewed beneficiaries stated that they have acceptable food consumption, 5 percent stated that they have borderline food consumption and 1 percent stated that they have poor food consumption.

Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP finalized a budget revision of its Country Strategic Plan (2018-2021) to reflect an increase in food needs. Under this revised budget approved in May 2021, WFP seeks to provide food assistance to 435,170 of the poorest and most food insecure non-refugee Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank and East Jerusalem. USD 76 million in funding are required to provide this assistance.
- Meanwhile, 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 (i.) CBT (electronic food voucher) assistance to 272,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank until the end of October 2021; (ii.) in-kind food assistance to 72,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank until the end of September 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 31.8 million to be able to continue providing food assistance in the next six months to all targeted vulnerable non-refugees (435,170 people).

Partnerships

- Humanitarian actors continued using WFP's CBT platform to provide different types of assistance effectively and efficiently to affected people over the past month. 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 food and other needs.
- In 2020-2021, WFP and UNFPA signed a service provision agreement for the use of WFP's CBT platform to provide food and non-food items to 2,000 women who have suffered from gender-based violence in the West Bank and Gaza. Every woman will receive USD 100 on a WFP electronic card to purchase food and non-food (hygiene) items from WFP's participating local retailers.
- UNICEF is using WFP's CBT platform to provide assistance to around 4,000 families in the West Bank Gaza. Every family receives 139 ILS (USD 42) to purchase hygiene items from WFP's participating local retailers.

Donors: Canada, ECHO, France, Germany, Japan, the Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, UAE, UK, UN Humanitarian Fund (HF), USA and private donors (Strategic Outcome 1). SDG Fund (Strategic Outcome 2). More information [here](#).