



WFP PALESTINE



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

GAZA MARKET MONITORING

FLASH UPDATE #6

2 Feb 2024

KEY FINDINGS

- The current conditions signify the continuation of severe shortage of food, essential items, and aid, leaving affected population, and especially vulnerable groups (e.g., children, older persons, pregnant, and breastfeeding mothers) grappling with high prices, insufficient supplies, and challenging circumstances.
- Shops revealed a significant shortage of basic food items, with most shops reporting depletion of key food items (dairy products, mineral water wheat flour, eggs, rice, and vegetable oil); others reporting availability of mainly vegetables, canned food, and pulses but in short supply, lasting no more than a week.
- The informal market in the Gaza Strip for both food and non-food items dominate; this underscores the urgent need for aid interventions and entry of commercial supplies into Gaza to address the scarcity of both essential food and non-food items to meet the growing demand for commodities.
- Between October 7 and January 24, about 9,548 trucks entered the Gaza Strip, around 6,422 carrying food. Among these, around 607 trucks of commercial cargo started entering between December 8 and January 19.
- The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) reports a 48.7 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI)¹ since the conflict's onset, which is a significant change. Specifically, the CPI for food and soft drinks has witnessed a notable rise of 75.5 percent, which diminishes the purchasing power of households in Gaza Strip. The recorded prices for essential food items in the Gaza Strip are higher than those recorded in neighboring countries in the region.

¹ CPI is a statistical tool used to measure the average changes in the prices of goods and services that households consume during two different periods: one called the base period and the other called the comparison period.

INTRODUCTION

Situation Overview

The ongoing insecurity coupled with the complete closure of Gaza has resulted in critical shortages of essential resources, including food, water, fuel, electricity, and medical supplies. These circumstances exacerbated living conditions, particularly in shelters, amplifying concerns related to protection, mental health, malnutrition, and the heightened risk of disease transmission. Moreover, critical infrastructure and essential services have sustained significant damage, compromising people's ability to maintain basic living standards and dignity.

UNRWA estimates that there are approximately 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Gaza, constituting nearly 75% of the population with an estimated 1.3 million residing in Rafah governorate alone². Many of these individuals have experienced multiple displacements, compelled to move repeatedly in search of safety. The Rafah governorate has become the primary refuge for the displaced, accommodating over one million people in an extremely overcrowded space. This influx intensified following heightened hostilities in Khan Younis and Deir el Balah, coupled with evacuation orders issued by the Israeli military.³

Shops and bakeries are either non-operating or lack sufficient stocks. While some shops provide limited food options like flour and canned food, crucial items including basic food commodities (e.g., canned meat, some vegetables, children's biscuits, canned tuna, sugar and cheese), baby formula, diapers, and cleaning materials remain unavailable in many areas. Pregnant women face additional challenges due to restricted access to special foods, medicines, and vitamins. The already challenging situation is exacerbated by the high prices of available goods, contributing to the hardships faced by the affected populations. Households are facing reductions in the number of meals consumed, posing challenges especially for pregnant and breastfeeding women and children in meeting their nutritional needs. Furthermore, the limited availability of cooking gas is compelling people to resort to cooking over fires. Visible signs of hunger are evident in the population as more people are relying solely on basic sustenance like soft bread, and oil. Widespread weight loss, diseases, and malnutrition prevail due to insufficient food supplies, intensifying the health crisis in Gaza Strip.⁴

FOOD AVAILABILITY IN GAZA STRIP

Food Availability in Gaza

The scarcity of food in the Gaza Strip, particularly in the northern region, is a pressing concern as household food stocks deplete faster than they are replenished through humanitarian aid. Despite the influx of aid from October 21 to January 24, it is inadequate to meet the population's needs. Prior to the conflict, an average of 500 commercial and humanitarian trucks entered daily in the first nine months of 2023, with approximately 150 designated for transporting food.⁵ Since the conflict began, 9,548 relief and commercial trucks⁶, carrying essential items such as food, water, and medicine, entered through the Rafah and Karem Salem crossings.

Table 1: Trucks entering Gaza Strip

	Total trucks	Food trucks
Daily Average Jan-Sep 2023	500	150
Total 7 Oct - 24 Jan	9,548	6,422
Daily Average (7 Oct - 24 Jan)	88	59

² OCHA Flash Update #104

³ OCHA Flash Update #100

⁴ WFP information that conducted from eight key informants that WFP conducted (Four interviews were held on January 11, and the remaining interviews were conducted on January 22-23).

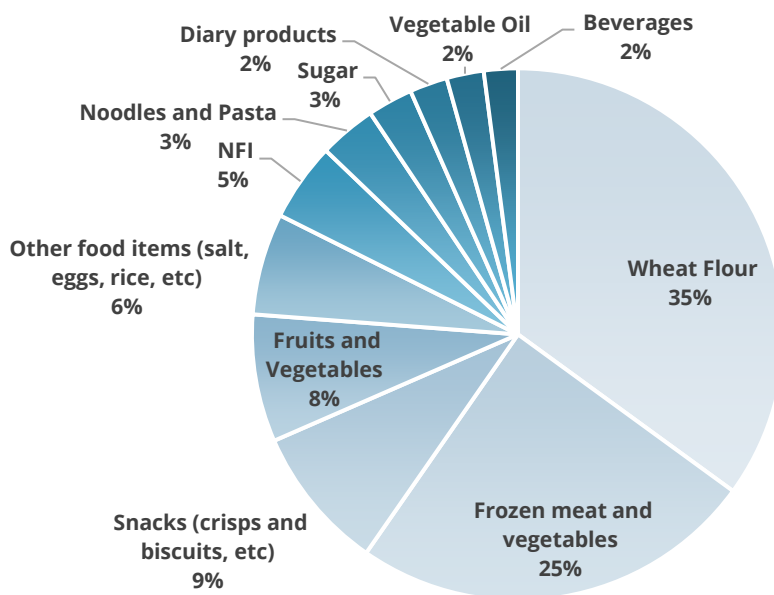
⁵ [IPC_Gaza_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Nov2023_Feb2024.pdf \(ipcinfo.org\)](#)

⁶ UNRWA supplies and dispatch tracking dashboard. Accessed January 24, 2024, and WFP Palestine VAM unit calculations.

Commercial Cargo

In addition to humanitarian trucks, starting from December 8, commercial cargo has gradually resumed entering Gaza, albeit in limited quantities. Between December 8 and January 19, approximately 18,904 pallets, equivalent to around 607 trucks of private sector cargo have entered the Gaza Strip. Of this cargo, 35 percent comprises wheat flour, while frozen meat and vegetables make up 25 percent.⁷ Reports from key informants in the Gaza Strip indicate that these items are being sold at inflated prices. The entry of humanitarian and commercial trucks into Gaza is significantly limited to the southern governorates, mainly Rafah. Conversely, there are very few items reaching the northern governorates and other areas in the rest of the south of Gaza Strip. The graph below illustrates the distribution of the commercial items that have entered Gaza.

Figure 1: The distribution of private sector items entered Gaza Strip 8 Dec 2023-19 Jan 2024



Food Availability in Contracted Shops

From 19 December 2023 to 21 January 2024, WFP sought to contact 72 shops but received a response from only 11 shops, of which 7 were operational. This limited response was attributed to frequent telecommunication disruptions in the Gaza Strip during the mentioned period. The primary focus was on Rafah, where 6 shops participated in the WFP survey on January 21, and one in Khan Younis.

Despite Gaza facing severe limitations in fuel stocks and electricity being cut off from the region, none of the responding shops reported having access to electricity through the network. Instead, all shops clarified that they rely on solar panels as their primary source of energy.

The interviewed shops are faced with a significant shortage of basic food items, with 81 percent indicating depletion. Furthermore, 19 percent highlighted that the available food items are in short supply, lasting no more than a week. This emphasizes the critical need to resume the flow of commercial goods to meet the increasing demand for commodities. Additionally, there has been a noteworthy surge in consumer goods prices, exceeding 30 percent.

⁷ UNRWA supplies and dispatch tracking dashboard. Accessed January 24, 2024, and WFP Palestine VAM unit calculations.

As essential food items rapidly disappear from retail shelves, individuals are resorting to drastic coping mechanisms, adapting to unconventional dietary choices, and significantly deviating from their usual eating patterns. Throughout the reporting period, a concerning trend emerged, indicating that many food items in Gaza were on the verge of complete depletion from shop inventories.

All surveyed shops reported a depletion of stocks in dairy products and mineral water, with 86 percent of shops running out of essential items such as wheat flour, eggs, rice, and vegetable oil. Additionally, vegetables, canned food, and pulses were scarce, available in less than 30 percent of the responding shops. Furthermore, the available stock for the majority of food commodities appeared to be severely limited, lasting less than one week. Notably, the shortage extended to non-food items (NFIs), which were the most abundant and accessible in the recent period with 86 percent of shops reporting no stocks available. This critical situation underscores the urgent need for wholistic and multi-sectorial interventions that include both relief aid and commercial cargo to enter Gaza at scale to address the scarcity of both essential food and non-food items in Gaza.

Figure 2: Food stock status

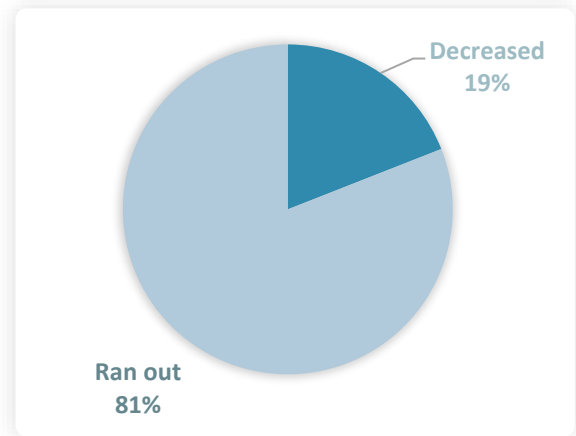


Figure 3: Changes to food stocks of key commodities at contracted shops as of 21 January (percent of respondents)

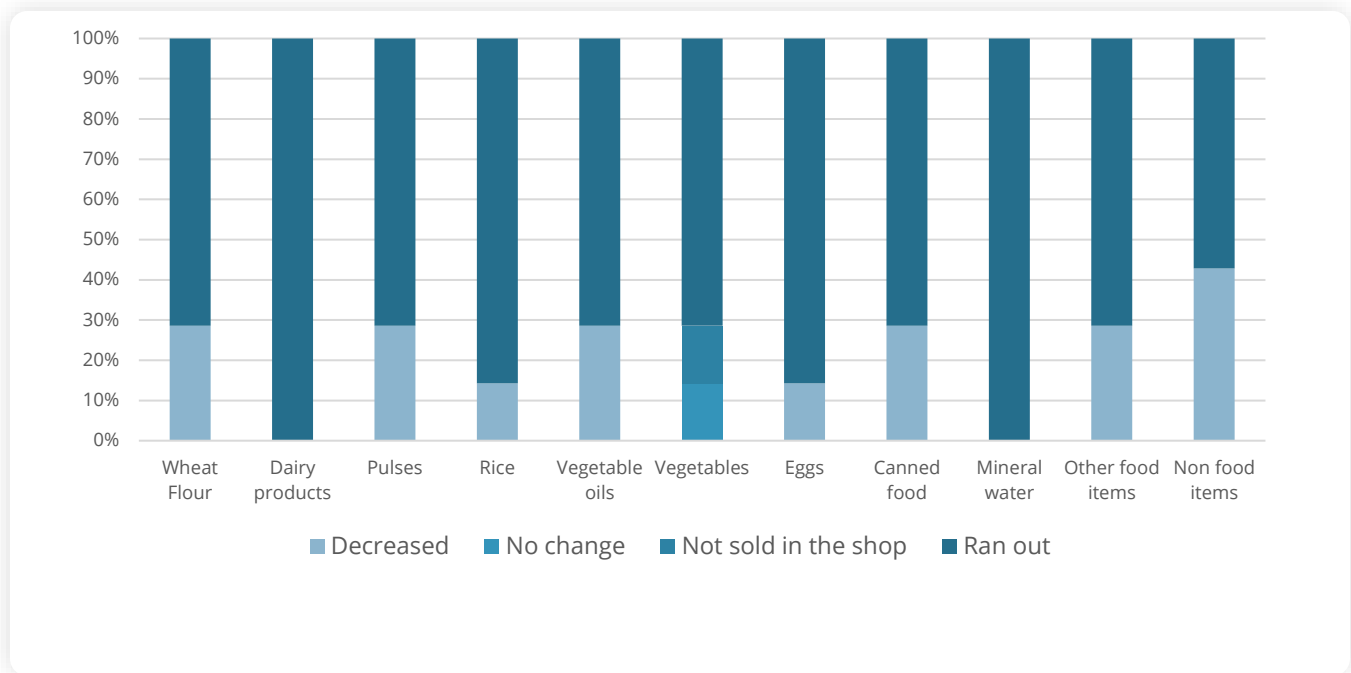
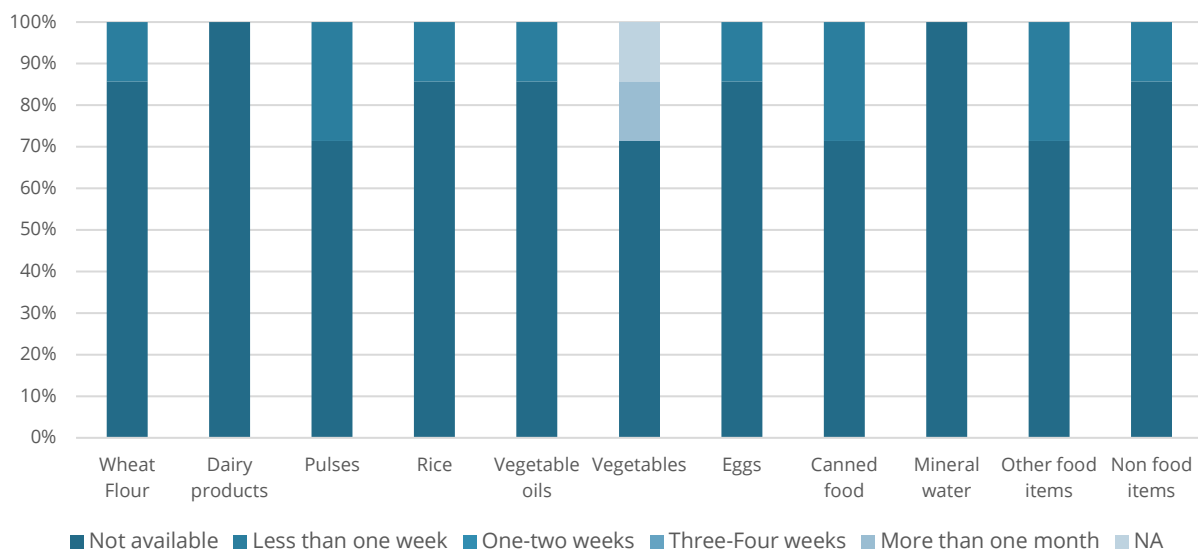


Figure 4: Stocks availability of key commodities at contracted shops as of 21 January (percent of respondents)



FOOD PRICES IN GAZA STRIP

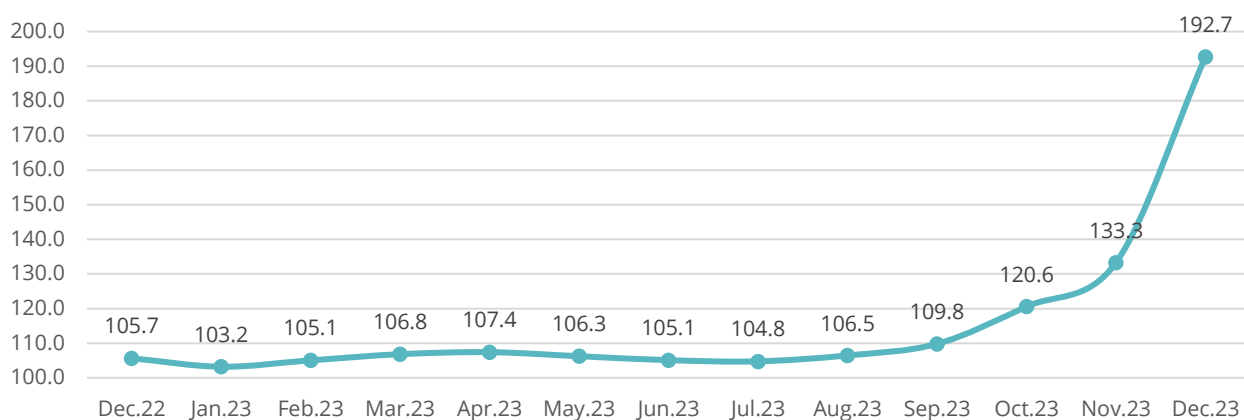
According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), there has been a significant increase in the consumer price index (CPI) by 49 percent between September and December 2023. The CPI for food and soft drinks has increased by 76 percent. These figures mark the highest recorded increase in the Gaza Strip. However, the price increases were significantly higher in essential commodity prices as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: inflation rates (September 2023 vs December 2023)

Category	Inflation Dec/Sep 2023 (%)
Headline Inflation	48.7
Food and non-alcoholic beverages inflation	75.5
Eggs	333.7
Wheat flour	768.4
Rice	16.1
Chicken	87.5
Vegetable oil	96.8
Salt	1200.0
Potatoes	416.8
Tomatoes	57.9

Source: PCBS

Figure 5: Food CPI in Gaza Strip Dec 2022-Dec 2023



In comparison to the West Bank and other countries in the region, over the same period, the Gaza Strip has witnessed an unprecedented surge in prices, exceeding those observed in both the West Bank and neighboring countries. The table below delineates a comparative analysis of price levels in the Gaza Strip as opposed to the West Bank and other countries in the region.

Table 4: Prices and inflation rates In Gaza Strip, West Bank, and neighboring countries

Country/Region	Year on Year headline inflation Dec2023/Dec2022 (%)	Year on Year food inflation Dec2023/Dec2022 (%)	Wheat flour price (USD/KG) in December 2023	Vegetable oil price (USD/KG) in December 2023	Cost of food basket (USD) in December 2023
Gaza Strip	54.1	82.4	4.5	6.9	83.7
West Bank	5.3	6.4	0.9	3.5	10.0
Jordan	1.6	2.2	0.9	2.1	30.4
Egypt	33.7	60.5	0.6	1.8	N/A
Iraq	4.0	4.1	0.7	1.8	31.0
Lebanon	192.3	207.6	0.8	1.5	34.9
Syria	N/A	120.2	0.6	1.6	13.0
Turkey	64.8	72.0	0.6	1.8	31.0

Source: PCBS and WFP market monitoring reports

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