



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## WFP Palestine Country Brief November 2020

## In Numbers

WFP SAYS  
NO to  
GENDER  
BASED  
VIOLENCE

US\$4.1 m cash-based transfers made

US\$27 m six months net funding requirements (January- June 2021)

335,018 people assisted in November 2020



### 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 most vulnerable groups, including elderly people, persons with disabilities, woman-headed households and children. Restrictive measures forced thousands of Palestinians out of their work, significantly impacting their livelihoods. 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 to 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

- Under the national 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence (GBV), WFP has carried out various activities aiming at raising awareness amongst its partners, staff and the general public about GBV, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The activities include interactive sessions with the participation of experts in GBV. In collaboration with UN Women, WFP has distributed communication products such as posters and leaflets, including at all shops participating in WFP Cash-Based Transfer (CBT) programme.
- In November, WFP provided food assistance through CBTs in the form of electronic food vouchers to 328,808 poor and severely food insecure Palestinians. This included 57,940 people who started receiving the CBT assistance after the outbreak of COVID-19.
- WFP provided direct cash assistance to 975 families people (6,287 people) under its pilot Multi-Purpose Cash project across the Gaza Strip. Every family received direct cash worth of USD 336 to cover their essential needs according to their choice. The distribution of ATM cards was carried out together with sensitization activities on the targeting criteria, the objectives of the project and how to access the assistance either as cash through ATMs or at shops.
- The quarterly in-kind food distributions (October-December 2020) to 35,000 people in Gaza and 37,000 Bedouins and herders in Area C of the West Bank will start in December.
- WFP continued the implementation of the second round of resilience strengthening activity in the West Bank, where 100 families were selected from five governorates: Tubas, Nablus, Jenin, Hebron and Bethlehem. An additional 40 families from the first round of the project are also receiving this assistance alongside three special caring institutions. The targeted households and institutions received climate-smart agricultural assets, such as wicking beds and hydroponics, and training to improve their dietary intake and for income generation.
- WFP provided its CBT platform service to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to provide a one-time assistance of food and other essential needs to 600 women and girls who have been subject to Gender Based Violence in Jerusalem and the peripheries of the City. INGO Action against Hunger used WFP CBT platform to provide food and other essential needs to 128 families in Khan Yunis governorate in the Gaza Strip. Also, INGO the Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) is providing food to 1,243 families across the Gaza Strip using WFP CBT platform.

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

## Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated contributions (in USD)
<b>291 m</b>	<b>169 m</b>
2021 Requirement (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) Jan- June 2021
<b>48 m</b>	<b>27 m</b>

### 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 the implementation of the SDGs (SDG17)

**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; and Provision of CBT platform to multi-sectoral partners and Government.

## Monitoring

- Throughout the month of November, WFP continued monitoring at household level via telephone calls.
- Beneficiary sample:** 183 interviews and 226 interviews with beneficiary households in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip respectively. 29 percent of the interviewed households are headed by women and 13 percent have at least one member with special needs.
- Findings show that over 76 percent of the sampled beneficiary households **in Gaza** and 71 percent of the sampled households in the West Bank had an acceptable food consumption. 24 percent of the sampled households in Gaza and 29 percent of the sampled households in the West Bank did not have access to adequate food which is 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. Nearly six out of each ten of surveyed families purchased food on credit (57 percent). Borrowing food or relying on help from relatives or friends (46 percent) and consuming food of less quality (39 percent) are common coping tools among surveyed families. In the West Bank, 32 percent borrowed food or relied on help from relatives or friends, 27 percent purchased food on credit and 25 percent consumed food less quality.
- The restrictive measures linked to COVID-19 have increased hardships to population whose livelihoods were already fragile. Of the surveyed families, 30 percent in Gaza and 23 percent in the West Bank reported that one or more members of the family stopped working or lost their jobs, the majority being men.
- Most of the interviewed families in Gaza and the West Bank said that the food assistance from WFP partially covers their food needs: in Gaza 81 percent of households headed by women and

93 percent of households headed by men; in the West Bank 46 percent of households headed by women and 54 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. Also, more women than men go to the shops to redeem their families' vouchers in Gaza (68 percent vs. 32 percent) and the West Bank (77 percent vs. 23 percent).

## Funding and Pipeline update

- WFP sustains food assistance to 346,000 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:
  - Cash-Based Transfer assistance to 274,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank until the end of February 2021.
  - In-kind food assistance to 72,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank until the end of March 2021.
- Beyond December 2021, WFP does not have the needed resources to maintain the assistance to additional 65,000 people who have been affected by COVID-19 in the West Bank and are receiving CBT assistance since May.
- Considering the available resources, WFP will be able to assist for approximately five months another 30,000 people affected by COVID-19 in Gaza who are receiving CBT assistance since November 2020.
- WFP has an outstanding repayment of USD 10.3 million which was utilized to support new emerging needs in May and October.
- WFP needs an additional USD 27 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 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), continues working with the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to enhance the social protection system so that it is more inclusive and accessible to older people, and persons with disabilities, particularly women.
- WFP in partnership with the Applied Research Jerusalem Institute (ARIJ) in the West Bank and Oxfam in Gaza continues to implement the resilience strengthening activities.

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