



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Palestine Country Brief May 2021



In Numbers

352,417 people assisted

In May 2021



USD 4.4 m in cash-based transfers made

14.8 mt of food distributed

USD 23.8 m six-month (June – November 2021)

net funding requirements

Operational Context

The month of May has witnessed the most intense military hostilities in Gaza since 2014 at the backdrop of a large-scale unrest in East Jerusalem and across the West Bank. A ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian armed groups went into effect in Gaza on 21 May and is still holding. However, the security situation remains volatile. In addition to the loss in life during the 11-day period of fighting, the humanitarian consequences in Gaza have been devastating, exacerbating the impact of almost 14 years of Israeli blockade, internal Palestinian political divisions, recurrent escalations and the unabating impact of COVID-19 pandemic. At the height of the escalation, 113,000 displaced people sought shelter and protection at UNRWA schools and hosting communities. An estimated 17,092 housing units have been affected, including 1,148 destroyed and 1,1026 severely damaged.

Already before the outbreak of the recent unrest and hostilities and the 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 was projected to have increased to 2 million, or 40 percent of the population early 2021. 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.

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.

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

Operational Updates

- In May, WFP provided food assistance through Cash Based Transfers (CBT) in the form of electronic food vouchers to 335,351 poor and severely food insecure Palestinians both in the West Bank (64,208) and in Gaza Strip (271,143). Of the total people assisted in the Gaza Strip there were 42,229 new beneficiaries that had been affected by May hostilities. Every household received a monthly credit of USD 10.3 per capita to purchase food of their choice from 276 local retailers across Gaza and the West Bank. 51,546 of the people rely on regular WFP e-voucher assistance and the ones who have been affected by May hostilities received an extra USD 10.30 or USD 5 per capita to alleviate their hardships. WFP's 200 contracted shops across the Gaza Strip remained operational throughout the hostilities and in the aftermath. None of the shops reported shortages of food commodities.
- WFP is providing its CBT platform service to UNICEF, UNFPA, INGOs and the Bank of Palestine to provide food and hygiene items to vulnerable people. Through this innovative platform, more than USD 4 million in assistance by different humanitarian and development actors was transferred to affected people and the local economy in 2020-2021.
- Since 23 May, WFP has continued to provide ready-to-eat food rations (RTEs) to IDPs who still take shelter in two UNRWA schools, one in North Gaza and another in Gaza City. In addition to canned tuna, which was available in WFP's emergency food stocks in Gaza, WFP provides fresh bread and UNRWA provides canned sardines.
- On 21 May, WFP was prepared to provide bread and canned tuna to 60,000 IDPs who were present at 58 UNRWA schools. Upon the declaration of the ceasefire, most IDPs returned to their homes or to hosting families. WFP distributed the bread which was produced by its 17 contracted bakeries to 27,000 affected people who came to the 200 WFP contracted shops.
- WFP is regularly assessing the food assistance needs to inform its assistance during the recovery period. WFP and FAO are planning to conduct an Emergency Rapid Food Security Assessment. Under the inter-agency efforts, WFP is working with the UN Country Team, the World Bank and EU to conduct a Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment for the upcoming reconstruction projects in Gaza. Meanwhile, WFP has assessed market prices of ready-to-eat foods for possible additional prepositioning of emergency food stocks to ensure a rapid response in case of any new deterioration in the security situation in Gaza.

Photo caption: Neda, after purchasing food using WFP voucher, is preparing a meal for her children in the family's kitchen which sustained severe damages during May hostilities in al-Shajae'iyya neighborhood in Gaza City. (WFP/Ali Jadallah)

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WFP Country Strategy



Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)	
Total Requirements (USD)	Allocated Contributions (USD)
319 m	182 m
2021 Requirements (USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (USD) (June – November 2021)
76 m	23.8 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

- WFP conducted face-to-face telephone monitoring interviews throughout May. The sample included 173 interviews with recipients of cash-based transfers (electronic vouchers) and in-kind food in the **West Bank** and 173 interviews with recipients in the **Gaza Strip**. Twenty-three percent of the interviewed households are headed by women and 15 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 (58 percent of households headed by women; 81 percent of households headed by men). However, 42 percent of households headed by women and 19 percent of households headed by men said the food assistance did not fully meet their needs and requested an increase to the voucher value to cover all their food needs. Meanwhile in the **West Bank**, around half of interviewed heads of households (46 percent of households headed by women; 51 percent of households headed by men) stated that food assistance from WFP does not correspond to their food needs.
- There has been a consistent trend of women constituting the primary decision makers on the use of the CBT. However, in May, more men than women redeem their families' vouchers in Gaza (79 percent men vs. 21 percent women) while in the West Bank more women than men redeemed the vouchers (68 percent women vs. 32 percent men).
- The impact of armed hostilities in Gaza and continued impact of COVID-19 is further increasing hardships on a population whose livelihoods are already fragile.** According to recent monitoring

findings existing WFP beneficiaries and newly affected people show increasing needs for food and other basic items. Some 75 percent of the surveyed households stated that their houses were partially destroyed, while 25 percent reported that their homes were fully destroyed. 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.

During the May hostilities, the main identified needs were food, water, clothes, mattresses, and blankets. After the ceasefire, most of the reported needs are for re-construction and, to lesser extent, food and clothes. Almost half of the interviewed (49 percent) are currently unemployed, and some of them lost their source of income and livelihoods.

- Monitoring results among Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) recipients in the Gaza Strip in May show an increase in the needs of surveyed households, particularly pertinent to repair of damages to their houses. Sixty-one percent of the surveyed households reported on partial destruction of their homes. Sixty-four of the interviewed households had to leave their homes, seeking shelter at either relatives' houses or UNRWA shelters. Most of the surveyed households (83 percent) had acceptable level of food consumption which means an acceptable access to food rich with vitamins and minerals. All surveyed households reported withdrawing their cash entitlements during the first week of May, before the outbreak of hostilities. None of the interviewees reported facing issues with the ATMs.

Funding and Pipeline update

- 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 throughout 2021, and USD 23.8 million over the next six months (June-November 2021).
- 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 2021; (iii.) available funding will allow continued assistance to 7,330 people under the pilot multi-purpose cash project until the end of 2021.
- To respond to increasing needs following the recent crisis, WFP urgently requires USD14 million to be able to provide emergency and recovery assistance over the coming three months in Gaza and the West Bank. In Gaza, as reflected under the interagency Flash Appeal issued on 27 May, WFP's emergency and recovery activities are targeting affected people who are displaced, staying at hosting family, and/or have lost their livelihood assets. Assistance will be provided to up to 160,000 affected people through e-vouchers, 7,300 affected people through multi-purpose cash assistance and 500 households through cash for work activities including vocational educational training and employment opportunities, particularly for youth and women, in the local economy.

Partnerships

- WFP and UNFPA have signed a partnership agreement to support women and girls who were subject to Gender Based Violence or otherwise vulnerable through WFP's CBT platform and contracted retailers. UNFPA will use WFP's existing cash-transfer platform to provide 5,300 women, including 4,000 in Gaza and 1,300 in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, USD 100 loaded onto an electronic card for every woman. They can use the card to buy diverse food, personal hygiene and household hygiene products from WFP's 300 shops across Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. See joint [press release](#).

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](#).