



WFP State of Palestine Country Brief

May 2018

Operational Context

Food insecurity in Palestine affects 22.5 percent of the population – about 1.3 million people- and is driven by limited economic access to food, arising from restrictions of movement, trade and investment, and high unemployment rates. Food prices are driven by Israeli markets, where people's average purchasing power per person is six times higher than in Palestine, and therefore too high for poor families to afford. As poor and vulnerable Palestinians spend more than half of their income on food, WFP's assistance is critical to meet their food needs and prevents further deteriorations in their food security and livelihood status.

Gaza continues its trajectory of de-development. All socio-economic indicators and humanitarian conditions continue to deteriorate, owing to the cumulative effects of a twelve-year economic -land, sea, air- blockade (since 2007), three armed hostilities (2008, '12,'14), the introduction of Israeli restrictions on the entry of goods with a dual civilian/military use (since 2010) limiting economic growth and post-conflict reconstruction, Egypt's closure of the smuggling tunnels curtailing the informal economy (since 2013), the pay cuts of Palestinian Authority public sector workers and the current energy crisis (2017-18): 53 percent are poor, at least 39 percent are food insecure, 49.1 percent are unemployed- the highest rate in the world. The U.N. foresees that Gaza will be "unliveable" by 2020.

Under the [State of Palestine Country Strategy Plan \(2018-2022\)](#), WFP aims at providing cash-based transfers (CBT), using an electronic food voucher (60 percent), and in-kind food assistance (40 percent) to up to 314,000 of the poorest and those most vulnerable to food insecurity in Palestine, primarily in Gaza and Area C in the West Bank where the prevalence of food insecurity is the highest. All WFP-assisted people live below the national deep poverty line on less than USD 3.7 per day. The CSP is aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 2 'Zero Hunger' and 17 'Partnerships for the Goals'.

Population: **4.9 million**

2016 Human Development Index:
114 out of 188

Poverty rate: **25 percent**

Chronic malnutrition: **7.4 % of children between 6-59 months**

Main
Photo

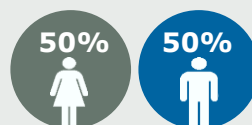
Credit: WFP /Wissam Nassar
Caption: Poverty is entrenched in Gaza. The family of Hassam, 4 years old, is jobless and entirely dependent on WFP's assistance to meet their food security needs.

In Numbers

USD 2.6 m cash based transfers (CBTs) made

USD 11.6 m through to the end of 2018 (June-December 2018)

> 350, 000 people assisted in May



Operational Updates

- In May, WFP assisted 350,475 poor and food insecure people: 242,000 people in Gaza and 108,475 people in the West Bank with food and cash-based transfers (CBT). WFP food assistance was critical in meeting the immediate food needs of those most vulnerable and stabilising their dietary diversity, contributing to their micro-nutritional intake. WFP assistance helps protect livelihoods by mitigating the devastating and accumulative impact of increased hardships on their socio-economic status.
- Living conditions in Gaza are deteriorating at an alarming and unprecedented rate. Record high levels of unemployment have compounded the widespread prevalence of poverty, significantly reducing people's purchasing power and further restricting their access to food. Through monitoring and food security assessments, WFP has found that households continue to adopt negative strategies in an attempt to cope with the deterioration of their living standards. Skipping meals, buying less expensive food products that are often of poorer quality, and sending children to school without food or money for lunch are pervasive means of stretching dwindling resources.
- The recurrent power and water shortages continue to add to the daily hardships of poor households. Without electricity, beneficiaries of WFP's assistance find themselves unable to cook or store their food items in refrigerators and increasingly focus on purchasing dry goods, often resorting to cook over a fire or spend the last remaining funds on half a cylinder of gas. The lack of job opportunities and income is preventing an increasing number of families and women to attend WFP's nutrition awareness sessions or send their children to school, as they are unable to afford transportation fees.
- The shop owners participating in the distribution of WFP's assistance are affected by the collapse of the economy and decline in people's income and consumption. Most have reported a significant drop in turnover and profit, reduced their expenses (including by reducing staff), have lost perishable items despite applying reduced prices, and procured their goods on credit from their suppliers.

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WFP Country Strategy		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Confirmed Contributions (in USD)	Seven Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) *
Country Strategic Plan (January 2018-December 2022)		
240.3 m	29.1 m	11.6 m

*June 2018-December 2018

WFP Country Activities

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|-------------|---|
| SO 1 | 1. Provision of unconditional food assistance – including through cash-based transfers (CBT) and in-kind modalities – and nutrition information to poor and food-insecure households (Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food). |
| SO 2 | 2. Provision of technical support to national ministries and institutions for implementation of the food security strategy and National Food Safety Net reform (Institutional capacity strengthening activities).
3. Provision of a CBT platform to multi-sectoral partners and Government (Service provision and platforms activities). |

They have supported resilience by allowing purchases on credit, a practice that exposes them to risk of payment default.

Monitoring

- All beneficiaries surveyed since the beginning of the year reported a sharp decline in their purchasing power and increase in the use of coping strategies, such as skipping meals (20 percent), buying less-expensive or reducing the quantity of food items (22 percent), seeking support from friends or relatives (44 percent and relying on credit (75 percent). The beneficiary households surveyed are heavily indebted, with an average debt of USD 4,295: USD 2,820 for electricity and water, USD 260 for groceries, and USD 1,215 worth of credit from friends and relatives.
- On average, WFP beneficiary heads of households have been able to find work 5.5 days per month as casual labours and earned a monthly income of USD 187, i.e. significantly below the minimum wage of USD 410. A monthly wage of USD 187 for a family of six (the average family size surveyed) means that each household member lives with less than USD 1.04 per person and per day. This is significantly lower than the national deep poverty line of USD 3.7, which reflects a family's minimum budget to cover expenditures on food, clothing and housing.

Challenges

- Resourcing limitations continue to hamper WFP's ability to meet food needs and reduce the coping mechanisms of assisted households in trying to overcome increased hardships and a decline in their purchasing power (Strategic Outcome 1). When continuously provided, WFP food assistance is a fundamental safety net for the poorest and most vulnerable people, whose ability to move out of poverty is obstructed by increased access restrictions to basic services.
- In today's challenging funding environment, WFP is prioritizing its resources to deliver assistance in Gaza as per the greatest needs. Without additional contributions, WFP will be forced to suspend its food assistance in Gaza as early as of August 2018. This will impact the food security of 245,000 extremely poor and severely food-insecure people. In the West Bank, 78,000 will be deprived of their CBT entitlements from July onwards if no donations are forthcoming.

Partnerships

- WFP and other humanitarian and development actors support the Palestinian National Authority in the provision of assistance to vulnerable segments of the non-refugee population. WFP works closely with the Government through the Ministry of Social Development, non-governmental organisations, such as Global Communities, Ard El Inisan, Palestinian Medical Relief Society, and UNRWA, to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable food insecure populations in Gaza and the West Bank.
- WFP food assistance interventions are aligned with national plans and strategies, namely the National Policy Agenda 2017 -2022 and the Social Development Sector Strategy 2017-2022. These guidelines have identified the provision of continued food assistance to poor and food insecure non-refugee populations as a key priority to alleviate poverty, as well as contributing to the strengthening of the Palestinian Authority's social protection system
- WFP's support to SDGs 2 and 17 is embedded within the 2018-2022 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and 2018-2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in Palestine.

Donors

- WFP is grateful for the support of Canada, European Union (ECHO), Japan, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, the United States of America, and multilateral and private donors (Strategic Outcome 1).

