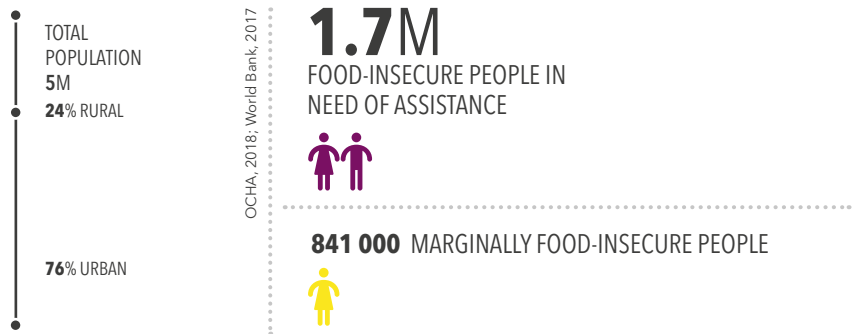


# PALESTINE

## ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY

2018



2017-18 CHANGE

▶ The number of food-insecure people in need of urgent action **remained stable** mainly as a result of the protracted crises and recurrent conflict

2019 FORECAST

Needs in food security and livelihood support will remain significant.

## DRIVERS OF FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION



**Conflict/insecurity**



**Economic shocks**



**Displacement**

- After a decline in recent years, violence increased in 2018, resulting in Palestinian casualties and damaged property.
- The 11-year blockade and three escalations of conflict in about a decade in Gaza have severely damaged the economy, infrastructure, livelihoods and public services.
- Unemployment reached its highest levels in two decades at 54 percent in Gaza during the second quarter of 2018.
- High levels of poverty (46 percent in Gaza) and indebtedness limited households' ability to afford basic food and living needs.
- Farmers and herders are denied access to fertile and grazing lands, and they lack control over and access to water resources.

## MALNUTRITION INDICATORS



**1.2%** children under five years acutely malnourished, of whom **0.3%** affected by SAM.

MICS 2014



**40%** of children aged 6-23 months received 'Minimum Acceptable Diet' for growth and development.

MICS 2014



**38%** of households have access to improved water (35% in the West Bank versus 90% in Gaza Strip) (MICS 2014).

MICS 2014



Increased electricity cuts have disrupted access to safe water and sanitation and delivery of health services.



**39%** of infants (up to 6 months old) exclusively breastfed.

MICS 2014



**7%** of children aged 0-59 months stunted (2.5- <10% = low).

MICS, 2014

## DISPLACEMENT



**16 500** persons remained internally displaced in Gaza.

OCHA, Dec 2018



**2.2M** refugees, including 1.36 million in Gaza.

OCHA, Dec 2018



More than **5.4M** Palestinian refugees were registered in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank, and in the Gaza Strip in 2018, in addition to almost **580 000** other registered Palestinians.

UNRWA, Jan 2018

## BACKGROUND

Palestine's protracted humanitarian crisis continues to cause repeated shocks, restrictions on movement of people and goods, limited productive capacities and lack of economic opportunities that have reduced the resilience of families and their capacity to cope.<sup>399</sup> Following Israel's 11-year blockade of the Gaza Strip, the economy has spiralled downwards with high levels of unemployment and poverty.<sup>400</sup> Palestinians continue to face complex political, socio-economic and development issues and high dependency on humanitarian assistance.

## ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY OVERVIEW

According to the 2018 Socio-Economic and Food Security Sector Survey (SEFSec), approximately 1.7 million Palestinians (32.5 percent of the population) were severely or moderately food insecure. Food insecurity levels continued to be alarmingly high in Gaza where 68 percent of households were severely or moderately food insecure, in contrast to 12 percent in the West Bank.<sup>401</sup> Comparing with the 2013 SEFSec Survey, the prevalence of food insecurity in the West Bank was 18.6 percent (a reduction of seven percentage points in 2018) and 61 percent in Gaza (an increase in 7.5 percentage points). Food insecurity increased particularly in Hebron, the Middle Area and Rafah governorates with over 20 000 more people becoming food insecure in each governorate.<sup>402</sup>

In 2018, there were about 1.4 million Palestine registered refugees residing in Gaza, and around 837 000 in the West Bank. Palestine refugees accounted for 43 percent of the total population - or 70 percent of the population of Gaza and 33 percent of the population of the West Bank. In Gaza, 67 percent of refugees and 70 percent of non-refugees were food-insecure, and in the West Bank 11 percent of refugees and 14 percent of non-refugees were food-insecure.<sup>403</sup>

Other populations particularly vulnerable to food insecurity included female-headed households and pregnant and lactating women. Farmers and herders were also vulnerable because of their exposure to conflict and dependence on small-scale production to meet their food needs.<sup>404</sup>

399 PCBS, The Levels Of Living In Palestine, 2017

400 HNO 2019 Palestine

401 HNO 2019 Palestine using CARI

402 HNO 2019 Palestine and HNO 2018 Palestine (comparing figures between different governorates).

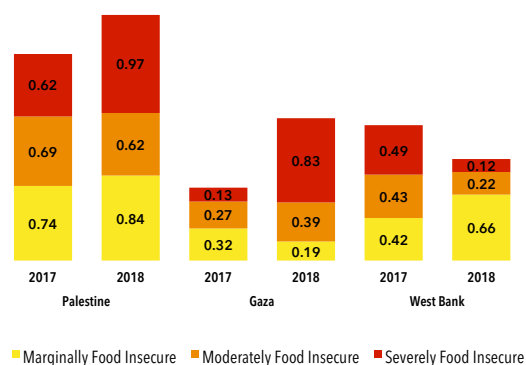
403 SEFsec 2018 Preliminary Results PCBS Ramallah, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018

404 HNO 2019 Palestine



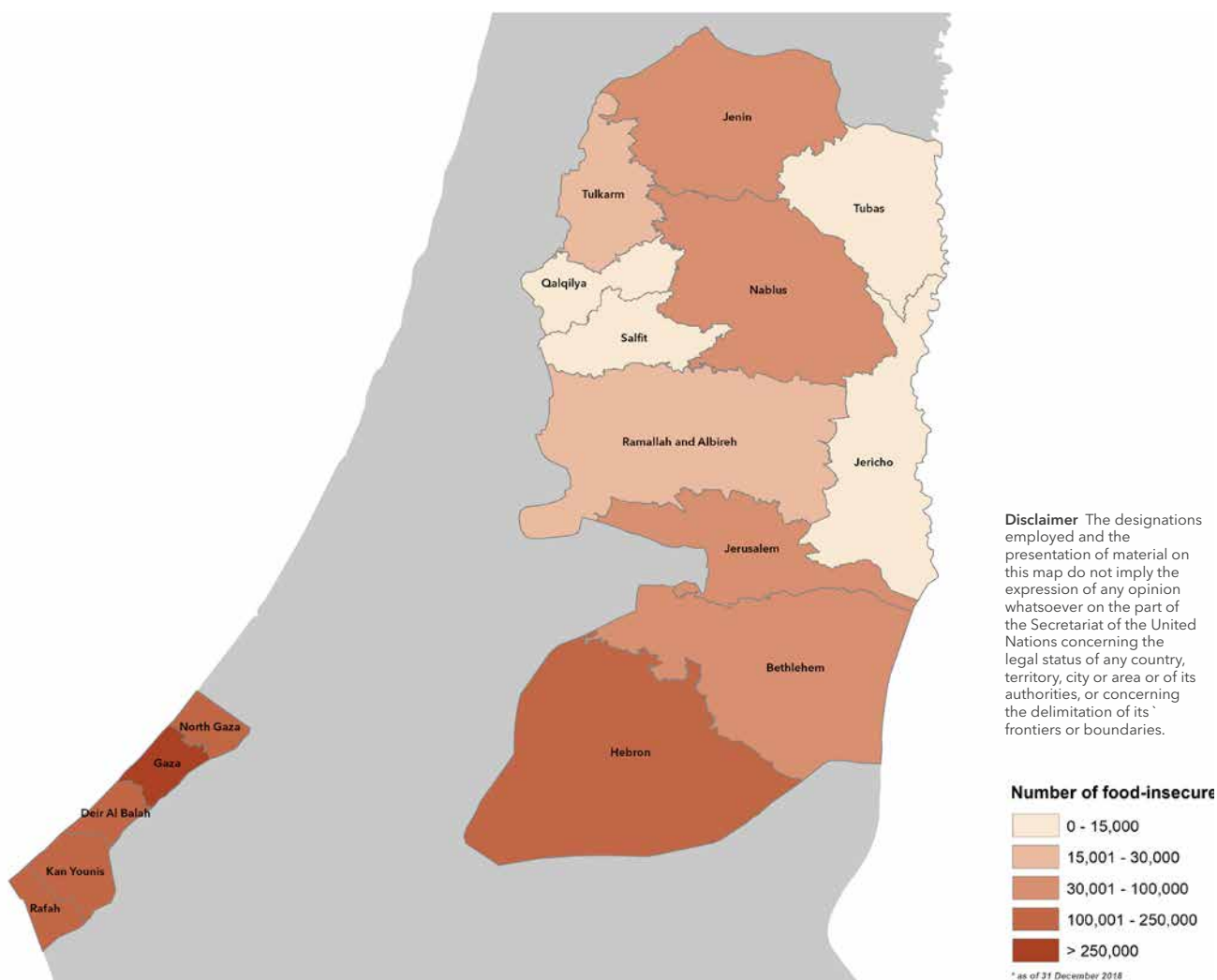
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**Figure 19** Palestine, Number of people (millions) in 2017-2018



Source: WFP

Map 36 Palestine, Number of food insecure people by governorate, 2018



Source: WFP, 2018

## FACTORS DRIVING ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY

### Conflict/insecurity

The economy, infrastructure, livelihoods and public services have all been severely damaged by the three escalations of conflict in the Gaza strip since late 2008. Although the economic situation in the West Bank was not as dire as Gaza, the demolition of residential, livelihood and service infrastructure, on the grounds of a lack of Israeli-issued permits, continued throughout the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem.<sup>405</sup>

The agricultural sector, which accounts for about 6.7 percent of Palestinian employment,<sup>406</sup> has been greatly compromised by the conflict. Farmers and herders have been denied access to fertile grazing lands, and they lack control over and access to water resources.<sup>407</sup>

405 HNO 2019 Palestine

406 PCBS. Percentage Distribution of Employed Individuals Aged 15 Years and Above from Palestine by Sex, Economic Activity and Place of Work. 2017.

407 UNCTAD. The Besieged Palestinian Agricultural Sector, 2015.

## Economic shocks

The poverty rate across Palestine was estimated at about 24 percent, with a large disparity seen between Gaza (46 percent) and the West Bank (nine percent).<sup>408</sup> According to a survey conducted by WFP in November 2018, 59 percent of beneficiary households in Gaza had an average debt of about 5 100 USD and 66 percent of households in the West Bank reported an average debt of about 4 500 USD, borrowed from family and friends for electricity and food.<sup>409</sup>

Unemployment reached its highest levels in two decades in 2018. In Gaza, the unemployment rate was 54 percent in the second quarter of the year, substantially higher than the relatively stable rate of about 18 percent in the West Bank over the past five years.<sup>410</sup> With heads of households in Gaza and the West Bank reporting an average of 6.4 and 8.8 days of work in the month of November 2018, households were only earning an average of 177 USD in Gaza and 320 USD in the West Bank.<sup>411</sup>

In Gaza, power cuts of 18-20 hours a day impeded the delivery of basic services and crippled productive activity. The coastal aquifer, Gaza's sole water source, has been virtually depleted by over-extraction and the intrusion of seawater, forcing the people to buy trucked water, often of poor quality, at up to 20 times the expense of water from the network.<sup>412</sup>

Although food prices did not increase much in Palestine overall in 2018 (by 0.01 percent between June 2017 and June 2018<sup>413</sup>), persistent poverty, low purchasing power and debt have limited households' ability to afford their basic food and living needs. Consequently, households reported using negative coping strategies to compensate for the gap in their food needs, even for those receiving food assistance.<sup>414</sup>

## DISPLACEMENT

There are 1.4 million Palestine refugees<sup>415</sup> in Gaza, representing 70 percent of the total Gaza population, and almost 837 000 in the West Bank, representing 33 percent of the total population. Poverty levels are rising and the number of refugees requiring food assistance has been continuously increasing. Challenges are particularly acute for the nearly 253 245 Palestine refugees who reside in the 19 refugee camps in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.<sup>416</sup>

Around 16 500 people remain internally displaced since the 2014 conflict in Gaza. With Gaza's restricted movement of people and goods, widespread loss of livelihoods from the 2014 crisis and the recent water and electricity shortage crisis, the number of refugees requiring humanitarian assistance, including for food, has increased.<sup>417</sup>

## NUTRITION OVERVIEW

The rates of acute malnutrition among children under five are very low (1.2 percent), rising slightly to 1.7 percent in the West Bank. Stunting is also low at 7.4 percent.<sup>418</sup>

The Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO 2019) reports that 92 430 children under the age of five remain vulnerable to micronutrient deficiencies and illness, including about 10 000 cases of rickets and 36 000 cases of watery or bloody diarrhoea, due to the sewage crisis and deteriorating access to safe drinking water.<sup>419</sup> Recurrent conflict has damaged water and sanitation infrastructure and delivery. Electricity cuts also disrupt access to safe water and sanitation and interrupt delivery of health services.

408 World Bank. 2018. Economic Outlook October 2018. 2016/2017 poverty rates

409 WFP. 2018. Palestine Country Brief November 2018

410 World Bank. 2018. Economic Outlook October 2018

411 WFP. 2018. Country Brief November 2018

412 HNO 2019

413 MAS 2018. Food Security Bulletin Summer 2018

414 WFP Palestine Country Brief November 2018

415 Palestine refugees are defined as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict." <https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>

416 HNO 2019

417 Ibid

418 UNICEF MICS survey 2014

419 HNO 2019 Palestine