

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) PALESTINE

The activities proposed hereafter are still subject to the adoption of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2019/01000

AMOUNT: EUR 22 500 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2019/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annex is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO¹'s partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

1. CONTEXT

The humanitarian situation in Palestine continues to steadily deteriorate. Palestinians face an increasingly coercive environment with complex humanitarian and development needs, which also seriously hinders sustainable economic growth and erodes the resilience of the population. The majority of the Palestinian population face a protracted protection crisis with humanitarian consequences caused by restrictions on basic services and recurrent violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL), which affects their human dignity.

In 2018, civilians in Palestine were disproportionately exposed to conflict and violence, in particular during hostilities in Gaza, in which more than 200 Palestinians were killed and over 20 000 injured. On the Israeli side, one death and 37 injuries were reported since 30 March 2018.

The impact of the Israeli occupation continues to be felt in the form of construction and expansion of settlements. Vulnerable Palestinians are facing restrictions on movement of people and goods, limited access to land and natural resources, denial of basic services, violence, attacks on education, and the continued demolition of Palestinian structures some of which are EU-funded humanitarian assets. This, coupled to an extent with the intra-Palestinian divide, have resulted in continual deterioration of the humanitarian situation, with damaged infrastructure, crippling unemployment, access restrictions, and crumbling healthcare and other critical services.

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework (IAF) for 2018-2019 identified low humanitarian needs for the West Bank and high humanitarian needs for Gaza. It should be mentioned that the unique protection-related vulnerabilities in the West Bank are not fully captured by the standard vulnerability indicators used by the IAF. Overall the Vulnerability Index is 6.4 (10 being the highest)², the crisis index is 3 (3 being the

¹ Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

² <http://www.inform-index.org>

highest), lack of coping capacity is 4.5 (10 being the highest) and the human development index is 0.7 out of 1.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

1) People in need of humanitarian assistance

As per the UN 2018-2020 Palestine Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), 2.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance out of a total population of 4.95 million in Palestine. Of these, 0.9 million are in the West Bank and 1.6 million in the Gaza strip.

2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

In Gaza: The continued blockade of the strip, three wars in ten years, and the internal Palestinian divide have led to a state of de-development, with an aggravation of socio-economic vulnerabilities and with 1.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance³. The level of poverty has increased alarmingly since 2011.

The escalation of hostilities in March 2018 has compounded an already dire humanitarian situation, especially on the structurally weakened health sector. Beyond the immediate needs for emergency health care, a significant number of patients are in need of post-operative and rehabilitative care, both challenged by lack of local capacities, and restrictions to medical referrals⁴.

Restrictions on access and movements of people and goods in and out of Gaza have increased during 2018, and have negatively affected almost all humanitarian interventions, particularly in the area of Water, Sanitation, Shelter, Health and Livelihoods.

In the West Bank: Palestinians living in Area C, East Jerusalem and H2 (Hebron) continue to be subject to an increasingly coercive environment characterized by economic hardship and limited access to basic services. The civilian population is at risk of forcible displacement and dispossession of land and housing triggered by multiple factors, including demolitions and destruction of property, relocation plans, settler violence, military training exercises near residential areas, revocation of residency status, restrictions on access to livelihoods and education facilities, or any combination of these factors⁵. The legal and physical protection provided by humanitarian actors to civilians at risk of displacement is also increasingly being challenged, and further reduces the humanitarian space for international and national organisations to operate.

Palestine, Israel and Jordan are situated along the Dead Sea Fault (DSF) system, which is a tectonically active boundary plate. There are major seismic threats and hence developing an effective preparedness and response plan at **regional level** is of crucial importance to save lives. Developing a flood prediction system is equally important, as

³ UN OCHA – Humanitarian Needs Overview 2018.

⁴ WHO, Health Cluster - Situation Report oPt, Gaza (23 June – 4 July).

⁵ UN OCHA Fragmented Lives. Humanitarian Overview 2018.

the region has suffered from extreme weather events (e.g. flash floods) in both summer and winter seasons.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

The international community continues to step in to alleviate the immediate and chronic humanitarian needs resulting from the occupation.

In Gaza, further restrictive measures have been imposed by the Palestinian Authority, such as the non-payment of salaries for civil servants, and cessation of payments for the supply of electricity through Israel. These measures have taken a further toll on the socio-economic situation and negatively impacted all aspects of life including access to energy sources, purchasing power, employment, the provision of health services and referrals. The de-facto authority has been unable or unwilling to respond to the deteriorating situation.

In the **West Bank**, the Palestinian Authority has stepped up its engagement over the past two years and has developed a National Policy Agenda (2017-2022) to guide Palestine's development strategy for the next five years. The work of the inter-ministerial committee for Area C, established in 2015 with the aim of establishing the policies and priorities as well as overall monitoring of the work progress in Area C, continues.

2) International Humanitarian Response

According to OCHA's 4W mapping, 99 organisations are currently implementing 240 projects in Palestine, mostly focusing on protection, food security and health. The 2018-2020 UN Humanitarian Response Plan amounts to USD 539.7 million. As of October 2018, only 30 % has been funded.

In parallel, UNRWA has released its 2018 oPt emergency appeal for an amount of USD 399 million. Due to funding cuts by the US, UNRWA faces a significant financial shortfall. While it was able to continue delivering core services in health, education and food distribution, it suspended certain activities in Gaza and the West Bank and laid off national staff, which provoked some unrest.

The change in US foreign policy concerning financial support to Palestine has accelerated the decline in humanitarian and development aid, thus severely constraining the international response and the capacity of humanitarians to reduce shocks affecting the Palestinian population.

3) Constraints and DG ECHO response capacity

The blockade of the **Gaza strip** continues to be enforced through increased restrictions on access and movement of people and goods, in and out of Gaza. The operating environment in Gaza is also impacted by restrictions imposed by the de-facto authorities affecting, in various ways, the ability to deliver assistance in a timely and efficient manner.

In Area C of **the West Bank**, heavy administrative, legal and physical obstacles hinder assistance provided by humanitarian organizations. Consequently, the operational space for humanitarians and development actors alike has shrunk.

4) Envisaged DG ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

General

DG ECHO's strategy in Palestine will continue to focus on the protection of the most vulnerable population groups. It will seek to provide life-saving assistance, reduce vulnerabilities and uphold human dignity by focusing on multi-sectoral interventions, with the following priority sectors: health, water and sanitation, shelter, education in emergencies, livelihood support and humanitarian advocacy. DG ECHO's strategy will also seek to strengthen emergency preparedness and response.

Proposed interventions need to be based on updated needs assessments, informed risks, and well-identified targeting mechanisms. Joint programming and an integrated approach in response are highly encouraged to maximize the outcome of humanitarian interventions. Interventions targeting household, neighbourhood or community levels that extend for a multi-year period with specific yearly benchmarks of progress will also be considered. With regard to the modality of assistance, DG ECHO will continue prioritising cash-based interventions over in-kind assistance. Mainstreaming of protection (based on a protection risks analysis) will be a pre-condition for selection. Partners should ensure protection against violations of IHL and possibly prevent violations from happening, under the overall framework of IHL. In case of growing needs, partners are expected to scale up their emergency response with added emphasis on humanitarian advocacy.

DG ECHO will focus its assistance mainly on the following vulnerable segments of the population:

In Gaza,

- the most vulnerable households who reside in the Access Restricted Areas (ARAs);
- vulnerable households that remain displaced after the 2014 conflict;
- particularly vulnerable households, with difficult or no access to basic services;
- individuals with health needs resulting from conflict or natural disaster;
- households and communities particularly exposed to a military intervention and/or air strikes, and who may be at risk of displacement and/or loss of livelihoods.

In the **West Bank**, targeting will prioritize Palestinians living in Area C and East Jerusalem and Hebron H2, in particular

- communities at risk of forcible displacement, including Bedouin communities⁶ in the Jerusalem Periphery, the E1 block, as well as residents in and around Hebron;
- Palestinians⁷ residing in areas designated as “firing zones” (closed military zones for training) or living in the seam zone;
- vulnerable communities with little or no access to basic services;
- households affected by demolition and confiscation of private property and whose livelihoods are at risk.

Strategic partnerships are essential and will continue to be sought with DG ECHO partners who have the capacities and the mandate to consolidate efforts – *inter alia* in the form of consortia – to scale up emergency preparedness and response activities, when feasible, as has been done by DG ECHO since 2015.

Humanitarian Advocacy

Humanitarian advocacy is encouraged for DG ECHO's partners in Palestine: the causes of the on-going deterioration of the humanitarian situation can only be addressed through effective advocacy, by calling all parties to respect IHL. To ensure the effectiveness of proposed interventions, capable partners are encouraged to integrate in their action dedicated advocacy activities that aim at raising awareness of the humanitarian situation and strengthening accountability for IHL violations. Studies and analysis based on the concrete work of partners are encouraged to help feed into evidence based advocacy.

Livelihoods

DG ECHO interventions in the West Bank and Gaza will aim to focus on Nexus opportunities with other EU services and EU member states, targeting the most vulnerable segments of the population with income generating activities with potential for scale up at community level. Partners should assess opportunities to link humanitarian interventions with development interventions in order to reduce the dependency of target communities on humanitarian assistance.

Education in emergencies

DG ECHO will provide support to meet the mounting needs of children in conflict affected contexts that are out of school and risk education disruption. Within this HIP, projects addressing education and child protection will be funded, with a focus on highly vulnerable communities, safe access to education, the protection of education from attack and psycho-social support for children.

⁶ UN OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview 2016, June 2016.

⁷ UN OCHA Fragmented Lives. Humanitarian Overview 2016, May 2017.

Emergency preparedness

DG ECHO will be focusing on strengthening emergency preparedness and response mechanisms and improve the ability of Palestinians, specifically in the Gaza Strip, to cope with shocks (man-made or natural disasters). This will be done by enhancing capacities of local systems, addressing vulnerabilities at community level and strengthening coordination and emergency preparedness and response mechanisms (inside) and outside DES⁸ through joint needs assessments and response.

Disaster Preparedness and Resilience

The focus will be on emergency preparedness for response and early action in Gaza. Regional initiatives (between Palestine, Israel, Jordan) to strengthen early warning systems for floods and earthquakes will also be considered.

Gaza Strip

Considering the volatile situation in Gaza, DG ECHO will maintain a focus on emergency preparedness and response across critical sectors in Gaza.

DG ECHO will support interventions in the area of health, WaSH, shelter and livelihoods with protection mainstreaming across all operations. Particular attention will be given to the reinforcement of capacities to facilitate coordinated assistance to displaced communities during or after potential emergencies (also known as out-of-DES community-based interventions).

West Bank

In the West Bank, DG ECHO will continue supporting the most vulnerable populations who are exposed to a coercive environment, recurrent IHL violations and are at risk of forcible displacement.

DG ECHO's strategy will be implemented by reinforcing the response to demolitions, preventive measures against destruction of Palestinian assets and increased resilience to IHL violations by providing targeted legal and material assistance to communities most vulnerable to protection issues such as settler violence and forcible displacements. Strengthening socio-economic resilience will also be sought to improve living conditions and allow communities to remain in their current place of living.

Complementarity and alignment with other programmes that support transition strategies and sustainable programming are other key aspects to be considered.

Expected results of humanitarian aid interventions:

Humanitarian assistance in Palestine is expected to address immediate humanitarian needs arising from escalation of hostilities, demolitions of infrastructure and continued

⁸ Designated Emergency Shelters as agreed upon in the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group contingency plan for Gaza.

restrictions arising from policies of occupation. Complementarities with longer-term programming are expected to be pursued with the aim of improving the resilience of the population. Evidence-based advocacy, in coordination with humanitarian mechanisms in-country, should also remain a priority in 2019.

Most of the thematic priorities detailed in the HIP Technical Annex 2019 envisage their mainstreaming into enhanced quality humanitarian interventions and “do no harm” in the delivery of assistance.

4. Nexus, coordination and transition

1) **Other DG ECHO interventions**

In 2018, DG ECHO mobilized a total of EUR 36 million in humanitarian assistance to Palestine. To complement the initial allocation of EUR 21 million, additional funding was allocated in May and September 2018 to respond to critical humanitarian needs resulting from the mass demonstrations in the Gaza strip. In case of sudden onset disasters, and according to the needs, humanitarian actions could be financed through the instruments included in the Emergency Toolbox HIP.

2) **Other concomitant EU interventions.**

In line with the European Joint Strategy in Support of Palestine 2017-2020 – Towards a democratic and accountable Palestinian State - the three priority sectors identified by the Directorate General for European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) are *Pillar 1- Governance Reform, Fiscal Consolidation and Policy Reform; Pillar 4 - Access to Self-sufficient Water and Energy; and Pillar 5 - Sustainable Economic Development* as well as *Complementary support for civil society, while other Pillars are taken up by Member States*. In addition, DG NEAR contributes significantly to the programme budget of UNRWA and to the budget of the Palestinian Authority through the PEGASE mechanism.

Close collaboration with other Commission services and Member States will continue to be sought in order to promote the transfer, where applicable, of some DG ECHO funded interventions to more structural and sustainable funding mechanisms. This will be done in line with council conclusions on the operationalization of the humanitarian – development nexus⁹.

3) **Other donors availability**

DG ECHO engages with other key donors in Palestine to develop synergies and complementarity between humanitarian and development interventions. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, (also referred to as the international donor group for Palestine), which serves as the principal policy-level coordination mechanism for development assistance to the Palestinian people provided a key platform for exchange in 2018.

4) **Exit scenarios**

⁹ EU Council Conclusions on operationalizing the humanitarian – development Nexus – May 19, 2017.

The current context does not allow a full transition to development assistance. Humanitarian aid remains essential in addressing needs and vulnerabilities, including from IHL violations, and improving access of the population to basic services during emergencies by supporting local structures and by developing emergency response capacities.