



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Palestine Country Brief December 2020

In Numbers



391,238 people assisted

In December 2020

US\$4.2 m cash-based transfers made

965 mt of food distributed

US\$41.2 m six months (February – July 2021) net funding requirements

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 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.

Operational Updates

- In December, WFP provided food assistance through Cash Based Transfers (CBT) in the form of electronic food vouchers to 354,544 poor and severely food insecure Palestinians. Among the CBT recipients 83,544 are affected by COVID-19: 59,281 in the West Bank and 24,263 in Gaza. Every household received a monthly credit of USD 10.3 per capita on a magnetic card to purchase food of their choice at 335 local retailers across Gaza (200) and the West Bank (135).
- CBT assistance to the targeted 60,000 people affected by COVID-19 stopped at the end of December due to lack of resources. WFP provided this assistance to affected people since May 2020 to alleviate the impact of restrictive measures linked to the pandemic on their fragile livelihoods.
- With available donor funding, through the UN Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF), WFP will be able to sustain CBT assistance to a targeted 30,000 people affected by COVID-19 in Gaza until the end of the first quarter of 2021.
- WFP provided direct cash assistance to 975 families (6,244 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.
- In-kind food assistance under the October-December quarterly distributions were launched targeting 35,000 people Gaza and 37,000 Bedouins and herders in Area C of the West Bank. By the end of December, 16,450 people in Gaza and 14,000 in the West Bank received their food basket consisting of fortified wheat flour, vitamin-A rich vegetable oil, pulses and iodized salt.
- Under its Gender Transformative activities in Gaza, WFP and the cooperating partner Oxfam provided eight vulnerable households headed by women with agricultural assets such as greenhouses, barely breeding units, sheep and fodder and seedlings. This is aimed at giving these women an opportunity to build livelihoods and generate income. Also, WFP and Oxfam posted on social media a movie featuring the story of [Sabreen](#) who is successfully running her agricultural project with the support of WFP and Oxfam. The local communities were invited to express their views on the story.

Population: **4.9 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

Photo: WFP/ Ali Jadallah

WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)		Funding Requirements	
Total Requirements (USD)		Allocated Contributions (USD)	
291 m		172 m	
2021 Requirements (USD)		Six Month Net Funding Requirements (USD)	
48 m*		(February – July 2021)	41.2 m

*WFP will conduct a budget revision to reflect increase in needs and funding requirements.

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

- Throughout the month of December, WFP continued monitoring at household level via telephone calls. The beneficiaries sample included 180 interviews with beneficiary households in the West Bank and 254 interviews in the Gaza Strip. Thirty-two percent of the interviewed households are headed by women and 18 percent have at least one member with special needs.
- Findings show that 78 percent of sampled beneficiary households **in Gaza** and 72 percent of the sampled beneficiary households in the **West Bank** had an acceptable food consumption. Twenty-two percent of the sampled households in Gaza and 28 percent of the sampled households in the West Bank did not have access to adequate food, 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 and borrowed food or relied on help from relatives or friends (55 percent). Consuming food of less quality (41 percent) is also a common coping tool among surveyed families. In the West Bank, 39 percent borrowed food or relied on help from relatives or friends, 33 percent purchased food on credit and 28 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, 16 percent in Gaza and the West Bank reported that one or more members of the family stopped working or lost their jobs, the majority of whom are men.
- Most of the interviewed families in Gaza and the West Bank said that the food assistance from WFP covers their food needs partially: in Gaza, 81 percent of households headed by women and 93 percent of households headed by men; in the West Bank, 49 percent of households headed by women and 61 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 (64 percent vs. 36 percent) and the West Bank (67 percent vs. 32 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:
 - CBT 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.
- As early as January 2021, WFP stopped CBT assistance to the targeted 60,000 people who have been affected by COVID-19 in the West Bank. This assistance was provided since May 2020.
- Another 30,000 people affected by COVID-19 in Gaza are receiving CBT assistance since November 2020 and for approximately five months considering the available resources.
- WFP has been able to respond to new food needs thanks to donor funding but largely through two internal loans, in May and October. The total USD 10.3 million need to be repaid.
- WFP needs an additional USD 41.2 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), continue working with the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to enhance the social protection system to become more inclusive and accessible to older people, and persons living with disabilities, particularly women.
- WFP is partnering with the Applied Research Jerusalem Institute (ARIJ) in the West Bank and Oxfam in Gaza to implement the resilience strengthening activities.

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.](#)

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