Press Release
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The European Union and the Ministry of Social Development celebrate Ramadan with vulnerable Palestinian households

The European Union and the Ministry of Social Development co-hosted yesterday the last Iftar dinner during the holy month of Ramadan with vulnerable Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza.

In total nine Iftars for families, children, and vulnerable Palestinians were organised in the following locations: al-Aqaba Village near Tubas, al-Waffa house of elderlies in Salfit, Shoab al-Battam near Yatta, Tulkarem, the SOS Children's village in Bethlehem, Jabal al-Baba in East Jerusalem, and in Gaza. The Iftars targeted the beneficiaries of the social allowances programme of the Ministry of Social Development. The EU provides 40 million Euros to support the Palestinian Authority in making the quarterly payments under this programme.

The Iftars included a theatre performance of traditional Palestinian folklore performed by Fadi al-Ghoul where children were invited to be part of the performance.

“Solidarity, respect, peace and serenity are values that resonate throughout the holy month of Ramadan. The European Union is delighted to celebrate these values through iftars with nine Palestinian communities across the West Bank and Gaza said **the Deputy Representative, Mr. David Geer**. By doing so we hope to demonstrate once more the European Union's continuing commitment – in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development - to the most vulnerable as part of our wider support for the Palestinian people," he added.

The European Union contributes nearly €40 million to this year's payment of social allowances to poor and vulnerable Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinian households living in extreme poverty receive assistance through the national cash transfer programme administered by the Ministry of Social Development. The programme provides a basic safety-net to the poorest and most vulnerable Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza through cash and in-kind assistance.

This contribution covers over 40% of the total cost of providing cash assistance to over 115,000 households living in poverty. Nearly 70% live in Gaza.

Background

Most of the European Union's assistance to the Palestinian Authority is channelled through PEGASE, the financial mechanism launched in 2008 to support the PA Reform and Development Plan (2008-2010) and subsequent Palestinian national plans. As well as helping to meet a substantial proportion of its running costs, European funds support major reform and development programmes in key ministries, to help prepare the PA for statehood. Since February 2008, around €1.8 billion have been disbursed through the PEGASE Direct Financial Support programmes. In addition, the EU has provided assistance to the Palestinian people through UNRWA and a wide range of cooperation projects.

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