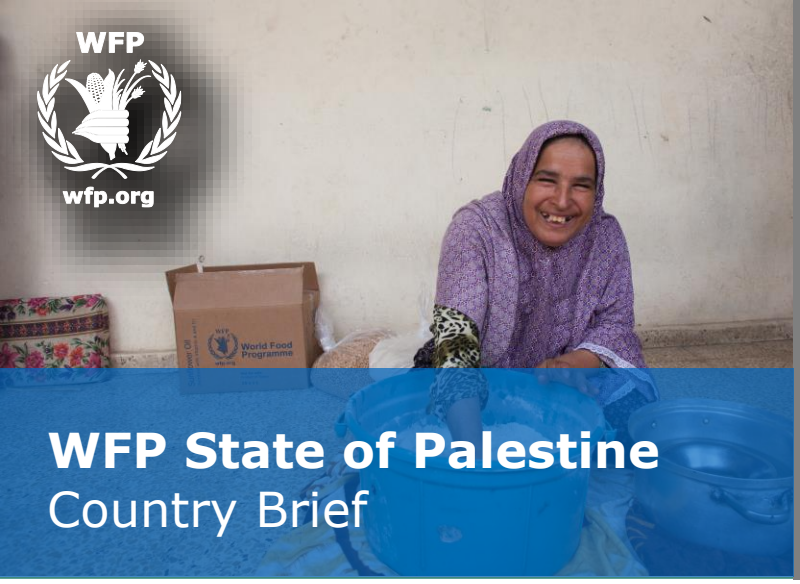


WFP State of Palestine
Country Brief

Highlights

- Thanks to donor support, WFP assisted nearly 470,000 food insecure non-refugees in Gaza and the West Bank in February, through both cash-based transfers (CBT), using an electronic voucher redeemable in local shops, and direct food assistance. Women and children accounted for 70 percent of those assisted.
- Funding constraints forced WFP to reduce its voucher value by 20 percent in February, from USD 10.3 to USD 8. This affected the food security of nearly 180,000 people in both Gaza and the West Bank.

WFP Assistance

Food Assistance for Food-Insecure Populations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip PRRO 200709 (Jan. 2015 – Dec. 2017)	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
	209.5 m	**143.6 m (69%)**	**1.4 m (5%)**

*March - August 2017

GENDER MARKER 2A PRRO 200709

The Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200709, with an approved budget of USD 210 million over 2015-2017, WFP has three objectives: 1) meeting urgent food needs and enhancing the food consumption and dietary diversity of the most vulnerable non-refugee populations; 2) supporting livelihoods, fostering early recovery and enhancing the resilience and coping mechanisms of fragile communities in the face of socio-economic hardships; 3) supporting the Palestinian authority's capacity to deliver cost-effective and protective national safety nets, and strengthening its readiness to respond to external shocks, in collaboration with United Nations agencies.

The Palestinian Authority is WFP's primary partner in Palestine. WFP supports the Ministry of Social Development in the development and delivery of an integrated and needs-based National Food Safety net, reaching 214,000 people with food and CBT assistance. WFP also provides technical support towards programme design, beneficiary targeting, monitoring and evaluation. WFP works in partnership with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics on food security analysis, needs assessments and multi-stakeholder coordination in the framework of the Food Security Sector, which gathers more than 40 organisations.

WFP links its food assistance to local production and uses its purchasing power to foster agricultural development and connect small-scale producers, food-processors, retailers and consumers. Since 2011, WFP has invested more than USD 215 million in the Palestinian economy, including USD 135 million through CBTs. Approximately 96 percent of WFP food items available through CBTs are produced and/or processed locally.

In 2009, WFP Palestine pioneered the first CBT assistance modality in the Middle-East. The platform has since been upgraded, taking advantage of new technologically-advanced systems and processes. WFP's CBT platform allows for a flexible, rapidly-scalable and multi-stakeholder humanitarian response in times of crisis, fostering aid complementarity, cost-effectiveness and impact.

Main Photo Credit: WFP/ Eman Mohammed
Caption: WFP's in-kind food basket is adapted to local eating habits and its ingredients are fortified with vitamins and minerals. Assisted people, particularly those living in rural areas like Hana, receive wheat flour, chickpeas, lentils, vegetable oil and salt.

Use of an "electronic wallet" made it possible for other organisations to deliver assistance through the same card. During the 2014 Gaza war, WFP reached more than 300,000 people in less than two weeks with CBTs, including 84,000 who received complementary water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) assistance from UNICEF through the WFP Common Card. CBTs are also effectively used in recovery contexts; since the war, WFP continued to partner with UNICEF and teamed-up and/or shared its CBT technology to Oxfam, Help Age and Médecins du Monde in Gaza. In the West Bank, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has been using WFP's voucher platform to deliver its food assistance to 47,000 refugees since 2015.

WFP's activities in Palestine promote and support women's empowerment and gender equality in all its interventions. Food distribution points and partner retailers are easily accessible for women and are located in areas close to women-headed households. To strengthen the nutritional impact of its CBTs, WFP together with the local NGO Ard El-Insan and UNICEF run nutrition education classes to 5,700 voucher recipients, including 3,200 women, 1,500 men and 1,000 primary school kids in Gaza. Interactive sessions have been instrumental to strengthen women's role as autonomous decision-makers and promote a common understanding of the importance of a healthy diet. The programme is critical as 50 percent of the population suffers from more than one micronutrient deficiency. The sessions have a long-term positive impact on levels of nutritional and dietary knowledge and healthy cooking habits among participants. Since 2011, more than 8,000 women and their families have benefitted from the training.

In Numbers

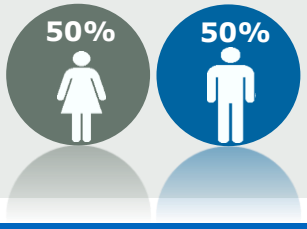
1.65 m food-insecure Palestinians in need of food assistance, including:

745,000 non-refugees in need of food assistance

60,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Gaza following the 2014 war, including **16,800** non-refugees

469,305
People assisted in February*

*including 40 percent through CBTs and 8780 non-refugee IDPs.



February 2017

Operational Updates

- In February, WFP assisted 469,305 poor and food insecure people: 236,135 people in Gaza and 233,170 people in the West Bank with food and CBTs. Approximately 214,000 (45 percent) were assisted in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development under the Palestinian Authority's Social Protection System.
- WFP is preparing to further scale-up its CBT assistance in March in Gaza and provide vouchers to 10,000 people currently receiving food rations through the Ministry of Social Development. This transition is aligned with WFP's strategy to provide a diversified diet to its beneficiaries, support the Government national plan and food security objectives and boost the local economy by using retail shops for distribution of locally-produced food commodities.
- As part of a wider United Nations inter-cluster response, WFP provides emergency food assistance to families whose houses have been demolished and/or who have been forcibly evicted or subject to settler violence in area C of the West Bank. In February, WFP provided emergency voucher assistance to 28 people for a total of USD 483, following OCHA's recommendations and WFP's assessments. Since the beginning of the year, WFP assisted 116 people with emergency vouchers.
- WFP and UNICEF partnered to deliver joint WASH/food assistance through WFP's Common Card to 620 families in Gaza. They received USD 130 credited onto their voucher card to purchase water, sanitation, hygiene and winterisation items in WFP contracted shops.
- WFP has assigned the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute to conduct a national Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security in Palestine. The review's findings and recommendations will guide WFP's response which will be articulated in a Country Strategic Plan (CSP) over the next five years (2018-22). The CSP will define WFP's portfolio of assistance in Palestine and responds to the country-specific needs and Government priorities. It will be aligned with the Palestinian Authority's National Policy Agenda and the new Social Development Sector Strategy, covering the period 2017-2022.
- In Gaza, WFP is participating in joint emergency preparedness activities with other agencies such as UNDP, OCHA, and local partners that, among other objectives, will setup an inter-agency emergency operations centre and train public shelter managers on emergency food security assessment and response for internally displaced persons.

Challenges

- Insufficient and inflexible funding is hampering WFP's ability to operate and meet all of the immediate food needs of a highly-vulnerable population. WFP was constrained to reduce the voucher entitlements by 20 percent for 177, 000 people in February. Additional support is required to build on achievements and prevent a deterioration in the food security and nutrition status of the poorest Palestinian people.

Country Background & Strategy

Decades of occupation coupled with severe restrictions on the movement of people and goods have undermined the living conditions and reduced access to livelihoods for Palestinians. Food insecurity in Palestine 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 Israel, where people's average purchasing power per person is six times higher than in Palestine, and therefore too high for poor families to afford.

The impact of the 2014 conflict in Gaza continues to be devastating to the Palestinian people and economy. Against this backdrop, more than 27 percent of the population – or 1.6 million people – suffers from food insecurity. In Gaza, one in two people are food insecure, and one in three is severely affected by food insecurity. As poor and vulnerable Palestinians spend more than half of their income on food, WFP's assistance is critical to meet their food needs. This prevents further deteriorations in their food security and livelihood status, and prevents them from engaging in negative coping mechanisms, such as selling their assets.

WFP targets nearly 500,000 of the most vulnerable, food insecure non-refugees in Palestine who have been affected by the ongoing conflict and occupation, a fiscal crisis and a steady decline in living standards. PRRO 200709 combines ongoing operations in the West Bank and Gaza to coherently address urgent humanitarian needs in Palestine, while supporting early recovery and sustainable, long term food security for non-refugees.

Population: **4.8 million**	2015 Human Development Index: **113 out of 188**
Income Level: **Lower middle**	Chronic malnutrition: **7.4 % of children between 6-59 months**

Partnerships

Supporting enhanced food security is a task shared by WFP, the Palestinian Authority, UNRWA and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with close links to activities of UNICEF and other partners. WFP works closely with the Government, NGOs (Global Communities, Ard El Insan) and United Nations partners (UNRWA) to successfully deliver food and cash-based assistance in Gaza and the West Bank. WFP co-leads, together with FAO, the Food Security Sector which aims to strengthen food security analysis and response, and link humanitarian and development interventions for the Palestinian Authority.

Donors

WFP is grateful for the unwavering support of its longstanding partners, namely: Belgium, Canada, ECHO, France, Italy, Japan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Norway, OCHA, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA, multilateral donors.

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