

WFP State of Palestine
Country Brief

Highlights

- WFP assisted nearly 480,000 food insecure non-refugees in Gaza and the West Bank in May, through both cash-based transfers (CBT) - using an electronic voucher redeemable in local shops - and in-kind food assistance. Women and children accounted for 70 percent of those assisted.
- WFP is very concerned about the forthcoming interruption of food voucher assistance in Gaza, foreseen as early as July, at a time of growing humanitarian needs. The continuation of food assistance, especially after the end of Ramadan where people's vulnerabilities are at their highest, remains of utmost importance to support people's eroded livelihoods and fragile food security.

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)*
	210 m	**151.6 m**	**18.5 m (64%)**

*June – November 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.

Each month, WFP provides food assistance to nearly half a million poor food insecure Palestinians, the great majority living below the deep poverty line on less than USD 3.2 per person per day. WFP food assistance proved to be critical in meeting their daily food needs, but also in protecting their livelihoods and mitigating the devastating and accumulative impact of decades of conflict on their socio-economic status. In the current Gaza context, the need for relief is chronic and addressing it is important to ensuring a safety net for the most vulnerable.

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 in-kind food and cash-based transfer assistance (CBT), using an electronic food voucher. WFP also provides technical support towards programme design, beneficiary targeting, monitoring and evaluation to the Ministry of Social Development.

By purchasing the majority of its food supplies locally and using retail shops for the procurement and distribution of food assistance, WFP aims at strengthening the resilience of local food systems and the wider Palestinian economy to the protracted crisis. Since 2011 and to date, WFP has invested more than USD 230 million in the economy, including USD 145 million through CBTs and 85 million through local purchases. Approximately 96 percent of WFP food items available through CBTs are produced and/or processed locally.

Main Photo Credit: WFP/ Eman Mohammed
Caption: "Not just a card. We have a wallet with multiple options": Jamil and his mother Nuha collecting hygiene and sanitation materials they purchased at a local shop in Khan Yunis using their WFP SAHTEIN card. WFP e-voucher platform can be open for other humanitarian actors such as UNICEF and UNRWA to provide assistance other than food rapidly and efficiently

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.

Use of an "electronic wallet" made it possible for other organisations to deliver assistance through the same card. During the 2014 Gaza conflict, 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 card. CBTs are also effectively used in recovery contexts: since the conflict, 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. WFP together with the local NGO Ard El-Insan and UNICEF run nutrition education classes to 5,700 voucher recipients, the majority women. 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

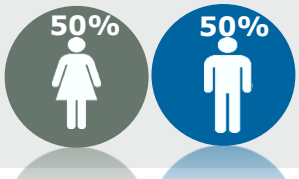
1.65 m food-insecure Palestinians in need of food assistance, including:

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

479,050
People assisted in May*

*including 40 percent through CBTs and 12,900 non-refugee IDPs.



May 2017

Operational Updates

- In May, WFP assisted 479,050 poor and food insecure people: 245,824 people in Gaza and 233,226 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 (food safety net).
- The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) delivered water, sanitation and hygiene products, using WFP's Common Card, to 2,747 poor and vulnerable families whose socio-economic situation had deteriorated. This is the third time this year that WFP lends its CBT platform to UNICEF in Gaza. The partnership is a stellar example of United Nations agencies joining forces and delivering as One to better help answer the various needs of the most vulnerable families in the Gaza Strip, ensuring a holistic humanitarian response.
- WFP and its implementing partners the Ministry of Social Development and Global Communities delivered cash-based transfers to nearly 200,000 people in Gaza and the West Bank. WFP increased the range of available food items by including tomato paste (processed locally) and Za'atar (milled locally) in the voucher food basket. These items were added based on their nutritional and monetary values, and beneficiary preferences.
- WFP has completed the mapping and created a roster of 229 CBT shops in Gaza that can be rapidly contracted and provide food and non-food relief items in emergencies. This will increase the scale-up, flexibility and efficiency of WFP's and other partners' emergency response in the event of another armed conflict.
- Due to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza owing to the shutdown of the sole Gaza power plant, WFP received an unprecedented number of calls through its Hotline (3,000 vs. 570 in April) from assisted people requesting additional entitlements, as well as from non-beneficiaries soliciting WFP for support.
- WFP is currently engaged in the formulation of its new five-year Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022) based on the findings and recommendations of the "National Strategic Review of Food and Nutrition Security in Palestine" commissioned by WFP to the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute. Under its new portfolio approach, WFP will target and prioritise assistance to all severely food insecure non-refugee populations in Gaza and the West Bank, Bedouins and herding communities in area C of the West Bank. Funding permitting, WFP will also aim at assisting the most vulnerable of the moderately food-insecure female-headed households across Palestine.

Challenges

- Due to lack of sufficient funding, and unless additional resources are secured, WFP will be forced to cease its voucher assistance in July, impacting 149, 000 people in both Gaza (92,000) and the West Bank (57,000).
- The disruption of WFP food assistance, at a time when the unfolding electricity crisis undermines the delivery of other basic services, would seriously undermine the food security and dire living conditions of the poorest segment of the population, most of whom live below the deep poverty line with less than 3.2 dollars a day, and further feed the exasperations of a population whose coping mechanisms have constantly been stretched and are now being exhausted. WFP needs USD 1.4 million per month in Gaza to avert a deepening of the current humanitarian crisis.

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: **114 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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