

WFP State of Palestine
Country Brief

Highlights

- WFP assisted 366,800 food insecure non-refugees in Gaza and the West Bank in October, through both cash-based transfers (CBT) - using an electronic card redeemable in local shops - and in-kind food assistance. Women and children accounted for 70 percent of those assisted. Due to funding shortfalls, WFP was forced to interrupt its in-kind food assistance to 68,000 people in the West Bank in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development.
- WFP needs additional resources to be able to plan for and provide sufficient and timely food assistance to all severely-food insecure people in the West Bank and Gaza during the first quarter of 2018.

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)	4 Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
	210 m	**166.4 m (79 %)**	**13 m (60%)**

*November 2017 – April 2017, and based on projected requirements for the planned CSP

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.

The Palestinian Authority is a core WFP 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 244 million in the economy, including USD 156 million through CBTs and 88 million through local purchases. Approximately 96 percent of WFP food items available through CBTs are produced, processed and/or packaged locally.

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. CBT platforms 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 female-headed households. WFP together with the local NGO Ard El-Insan and UNICEF run nutrition education classes to selected WFP beneficiaries. 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.

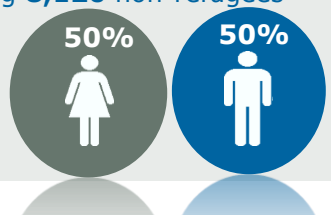
In Numbers

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

745,000 non-refugees in need of food assistance

29,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Gaza following the 2014 war, including **8,120** non-refugees

366,800
People assisted in October
Including 40 percent through CBTs and 3,609 non-refugee IDPs



Main Photo Credit: WFP/ Samar Abuelouf
Caption: "Now I know that behind every healthy child a healthy mother". Siham learns at WFP Family Nutrition Education sessions the best practices of caring for her baby girl Suha as well as how to avoid herself health risks. As the status of various micronutrients deteriorated in Palestine, particularly amongst pregnant women, lactating women, 6-59 months' children, and elderly, family nutrition awareness is a top priority for WFP

October 2017

Operational Updates

- In October, WFP assisted 366,800 poor and food insecure people: 184,500 people in Gaza and 182,300 people in the West Bank with food and CBTs. WFP food assistance was critical in meeting their immediate food needs and stabilising their dietary diversity, but also in protecting their livelihoods and mitigating the devastating and accumulative impact of decades of conflict on their socio-economic status.
- In both Gaza and the West Bank, all WFP beneficiaries receiving cash-based transfers have been given the choice and flexibility to redeem their entitlements in all participating shops instead of being assigned to a dedicated one. As in the West Bank, WFP enabled shop retailers in Gaza to move away from fixed prices and apply market prices onto all commodities purchasable with WFP's voucher. These initiatives were implemented to foster competition and increase people's freedom of choice and purchasing power.
- The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and WFP signed a new partnership agreement which foresees the distribution of water, sanitation and hygiene products, using WFP's Common Card, and training on best health practices to 4,250 poor and vulnerable families whose socio-economic situation has deteriorated. This is the fourth 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 under SDG 17 to better help answer the various needs of the most vulnerable families in the Gaza Strip, ensuring a holistic humanitarian response.
- WFP, together with other United Nations agencies, also provides emergency assistance to those whose houses have been demolished. In October, WFP provided emergency voucher assistance to 36 people for a total of USD 600, following OCHA's recommendations and WFP's assessments. Since the beginning of the year, WFP assisted 294 people with emergency vouchers for a total value of USD 4,900.
- WFP's 2018-22 Palestine Country Strategic Plan (CSP) will be presented to WFP's Executive Board for approval in November. The CSP foresees a reduction of 35 percent in the number of beneficiaries assisted compared to the PRRO, from 496,000 in 2017 down to 314,000. Donor conditions allowing, 65 percent of WFP's assistance is to be delivered under the form of cash-based transfers and 35 percent with in-kind food. WFP Palestine is currently engaged in assessment to define the most severely-food insecure people eligible to WFP assistance.

Challenges

- WFP did not receive the needed resources to implement the last tranche in 2017 of its in-kind food distributions with the Ministry of Social Development in the West Bank, leaving 68,000 people without assistance over October-December. In Gaza, as a result of lack of sufficient donor funding, WFP will distribute reduced entitlements to 69,000 people over the same timeframe.
- Looking into 2018, WFP is in urgent need of resources to be able to procure and plan for the distributions of food and cash-based transfers to poor severely food insecure families during the first quarter of next year.

Country Background & Strategy

Food insecurity in Palestine affects 27 percent of the population – or 1.3 million people- and 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. As poor and vulnerable Palestinians spend more than half of their income on food, WFP's assistance is critical to meet their food needs and prevents further deteriorations in their food security and livelihood status. Gaza continues its trajectory of de-development. All socio economic indicators and humanitarian conditions continue to deteriorate, owing to the cumulative effects of a ten-year economic -land, sea, air- blockade (2006), three armed hostilities (2008, '12,'14), the introduction of Israeli restrictions on the entry of goods with a dual civilian/military use (2010) limiting economic growth and post-war reconstruction, Egypt's closure of the smuggling tunnels annihilating the informal economy (2013), the pay cuts of Palestinian Authority public sector workers and the current energy crisis (2017): 40 percent are poor, 39 percent are food insecure, 44 percent are unemployed. The U.N. foresees that Gaza will be "unliveable" by 2020.

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 and a steady decline in living standards. PRRO 200709 combines ongoing operations in the West Bank and Gaza to address urgent humanitarian needs, while supporting early recovery and sustainable, long term food security.

Population: **4.9 million**	2016 Human Development Index: **114 out of 188**
Income Level: **Lower middle**	Chronic malnutrition: **7.4 % of children between 6-59 months**

Partnerships

Humanitarian and development actors, including WFP, support the national authority in the provision of assistance to vulnerable segments of the non-refugee population. WFP works closely with the Government, NGOs (Global Communities, Ard El Insan, Palestinian Medical Relief Society) and United Nations partners (UNRWA) to deliver assistance in the form of in-kind food entitlements and cash-based transfers 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 and private donors.

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