World Food Programme
Programme Alimentaire Mondial
Programa Mundial de Alimentos
برنامج الأغذية العالمي

SAVING LIVES
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WFP News Release

19 December 2018

FUNDING CRUNCH FORCES WFP TO REDUCE FOOD ASSISTANCE IN PALESTINE DESPITE RISING NEED

JERUSALEM – The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is facing a severe funding shortfall in Palestine that will affect some 193,000 of the poorest people in Gaza and the West Bank as of January 2019.

As WFP prioritises its operations based on available funds, 27,000 people in the West Bank stand to receive no further assistance while the rest are set to receive only 80 percent of their monthly entitlement.

WFP is concerned that these cuts may have a devastating effect on the food security, livelihoods and welfare of the people it serves in Palestine.

WFP needs US$57 million to maintain the current level of support to 360,000 people in 2019. In the absence of additional contributions, further cuts in assistance will have to be made.

"WFP's assistance has been a lifeline to tens of thousands of people who have exhausted all their meagre resources while trying to cope with unabated and mounting hardships," says WFP Representative and Country Director in Palestine Stephen Kearney. "As the gap between rising food needs and available resources continues to widen, WFP has no alternative but to take these difficult decisions."

Food insecurity is on the rise, affecting one third of Palestine's population and is worst in Gaza where nearly 70 percent of the population are food insecure, according to the preliminary results of a recent national survey on food security.

WFP assistance goes to the poorest and most food-insecure communities who are classified as facing deep poverty. Most of them struggle to live on less than US$1 per day and are unable to meet their basic food, clothing and housing needs. The withdrawal and reduction of food entitlements may cause them to skip more meals, take on additional debts and withdraw their children from school. These measures risk aggravating the prevailing humanitarian crisis and instability in Gaza.

"We call on the international donor community to strengthen its support and help us prevent even more hardship," said Kearney.

The cuts in assistance threaten to exceed the immediate impact they may have on people's lives and their ability to meet immediate food needs. With its monthly electronic food vouchers, WFP injects US$3 million of additional income into the local economy through a network of 185 shops in

Gaza and the West Bank. The vouchers have been found to boost job creation and investment in the agro-industrial sector, benefiting small businesses, local dairy producers and small farms.

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The United Nations World Food Programme - saving lives in emergencies and changing lives for millions through sustainable development. WFP works in more than 80 countries around the world, feeding people caught in conflict and disasters, and laying the foundations for a better future.

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