

WFP State of Palestine
Country Brief

April 2018

In Numbers

USD 1.7 m cash based transfers (CBTs) made

USD 15.8 m six months (May-October 2018)

323, 000 people assisted in April

50% 50%

Operational Context

Food insecurity in Palestine affects 22.5 percent of the population – about 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 Israeli markets, 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 twelve-year economic -land, sea, air- blockade (since 2007), three armed hostilities (2008, '12,'14), the introduction of Israeli restrictions on the entry of goods with a dual civilian/military use (since 2010) limiting economic growth and post-conflict reconstruction, Egypt's closure of the smuggling tunnels annihilating the informal economy (since 2013), the pay cuts of Palestinian Authority public sector workers and the current energy crisis (2017-18): 53 percent are poor, at least 39 percent are food insecure, 49.1 percent are unemployed- the highest rate in the world. The U.N. foresees that Gaza will be "unliveable" by 2020.

Under the State of Palestine Country Strategy Plan (2018-2022), WFP aims at providing cash-based transfers (CBT), using an electronic food voucher (60 percent), and in-kind food assistance (40 percent) to up to 314,000 of the poorest and those most vulnerable to food insecurity in Palestine, primarily in Gaza and Area C in the West Bank where the prevalence of food insecurity is the highest. All WFP-assisted people live below the national deep poverty line on less than USD 3.7 per day. The CSP is aligned with Sustainable Development Goals 2 'Zero Hunger' and 17 'Partnerships for the Goals'.

Population: **4.9 million**	2016 Human Development Index: **114 out of 188**
Poverty rate: **25 percent**	Chronic malnutrition: **7.4 % of children between 6-59 months**

Main Photo

Credit: WFP /Asmaa Nassar
Caption: In April, WFP assisted 108,000 poor food-insecure people in Gazawith electronic food vouchers. The family of Ihab is able to redeem the food items of their choice in any of the 85 participating shops.

Operational Updates

- In April, WFP assisted 323,355 poor and food insecure people: 214,923 people in Gaza and 108,432 people in the West Bank with food and cash-based transfers (CBT). WFP food assistance was critical in meeting the immediate food needs of those most vulnerable and stabilising their dietary diversity. WFP assistance helps protecting livelihoods and mitigating the devastating and accumulative impact of increased hardships on their socio-economic status.

- The newly-released Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey conducted in 2017 revealed an increase in the prevalence of poverty in Palestine (29.2 percent) compared to the last evaluation in 2011 (25 percent). The increase at the national level is driven by the deterioration in living standards in Gaza where more than one in two people (53 percent) is considered poor, i.e. living with less than USD 4.7 per day, as opposed to 38.8 percent in 2011. Similarly, the proportion of those falling below the deep poverty line (USD 3.7 per day per person) is on the rise affecting 38.8 percent of the Gazan population compared to 21.1 percent in 2011. In the West Bank, poverty dropped from 17.8 to 13.9 percent over the same timeframe.

- In this context, WFP continues to prioritise assistance in Gaza. In the face of increased vulnerabilities as evidenced by the new poverty census, WFP has put on hold the implementation of the results of the re-targeting exercise that it conducted together with Global Communities last year. The widespread prevalence of poverty and record-high unemployment level in Gaza testify to a decline in people's purchasing power and restricted economic access to food.

- WFP used corporate multilateral funding to carry-forth its under-funded cash-based transfers interventions in the West Bank and meet the food needs of 78,000 extremely poor and severely food-insecure people. Flexible multilateral contributions have been instrumental to mitigate the impact of reduced and/or delayed donor support and ensure continuation of assistance to those most in need in Palestine.

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WFP Country Strategy

Total Requirement (in USD)	Confirmed Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
Country Strategic Plan (January 2018-December 2022)		
240.3 m	**24.7 m**	**15.8 m**

WFP Country Activities

SO 1	1. Provision of unconditional food assistance – including through cash-based transfers (CBT) and in-kind modalities – and nutrition information to poor and food-insecure households (Unconditional resource transfers to support access to food).
SO 2	2. Provision of technical support to national ministries and institutions for implementation of the food security strategy and National Food Safety Net reform (Institutional capacity strengthening activities). 3. Provision of a CBT platform to multi-sectoral partners and Government (Service provision and platforms activities).

Monitoring

- WFP and its cooperating partners conducted 578 and 221 household post-distribution and shop-monitoring visits respectively. The exercise aims to monitor the change in consumption patterns and dietary diversity of assisted populations, and assess the compliance of participating retailers with WFP operational and financial guidelines. In April, 99 percent of the surveyed beneficiary households in Gaza considered WFP assistance as important to meet their food needs.
- Purchasing food and other necessities on credit continues to be one of the major coping mechanisms of affected populations. WFP's monitoring findings in April showed that 70 percent of beneficiary households surveyed in Gaza are heavily indebted, with an average debt of USD 4,500 (15,800 New Israeli Shekels): USD 2,850 for electricity and water, USD 260 for groceries, and USD 1,340 worth of credit from friends and relatives.
- On average, the beneficiary heads of households surveyed in April worked 8 days as casual labourers and earned a monthly income of USD 140, i.e. significantly below the minimum wage of USD 410. A monthly wage of USD 140 for a family of five means that each household member lives with less than USD 0.9 per day, way below the deep poverty line of USD 3.7. The spiral of debts burden is inevitable.

Challenges

- Resourcing limitations continue to hamper WFP ability to meet the food needs and reduce the coping mechanisms of assisted households in trying to overcome increased hardships and a decline in their purchasing power (Strategic Outcome 1). When continuously provided, WFP food assistance is a fundamental safety net for the poorest whose ability to move out of poverty and social assistance is obstructed by the collapse of the economy and increased access restrictions to basic services.
- If no additional funding is secured, WFP will run out of resources and will be unable to continue its in-kind and voucher food assistance in Gaza beyond July and the West Bank beyond June.

Partnerships

- WFP and other humanitarian and development actors support the Palestinian National Authority in the provision of assistance to vulnerable segments of the non-refugee population. WFP works closely with the Government (Ministry of Social Development), non-governmental organisations (Global Communities, Ard El Insan, Palestinian Medical Relief Society) and the United Nations partner (UNRWA) to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable food insecure populations in Gaza and the West Bank.
- WFP food assistance interventions are aligned with national plans and strategies, namely the National Policy Agenda 2017 -2022 and the Social Development Sector Strategy 2017-2022 which have identified the provision of continued food assistance to poor and food insecure non-refugee populations and the strengthening of the Palestinian Authority's social protection system as a key priority to alleviate poverty.
- WFP's support to SDGs 2 and 17 is embedded within the 2018-2022 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and 2018-2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in Palestine.

Donors

- WFP is grateful for the support of Canada, European Union (ECHO), Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United States of America, Switzerland and multilateral and private donors (Strategic Outcome 1).

GENDER MARKER 2A