WFP
World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Palestine
Country Brief
March 2019

In Numbers

50% 50%

327,406 people assisted in March 2019

US$ 2.3 m cash- based transfers made

734 mt of food distributed

US$ 27.9 m six months (April-September 2019) net funding requirements

Operational Context

The humanitarian context in the State of Palestine remains directly tied to the impact of the Israeli occupation. Restricted movement of people, access to resources and basic social services, together with recurrent expropriation of land, settler violence, civil unrest and periodic large-scale armed hostilities have resulted in economic stagnation, high unemployment, poverty and food insecurity.

WFP provides food assistance to the most vulnerable groups of the Palestinian non-refugee population while the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is mandated to deliver a wide range of relief and social services, including food, to Palestinian refugees. According to the latest national estimates (December 2018), food insecurity in Palestine affects nearly a third of the population – about 1.6 million people - and is driven by high poverty and unemployment rates. The number of food-insecure Palestinians is almost equally divided between the refugee (55 percent) and non-refugee (45 percent) communities. More than 700,000 non-refugees are food insecure in Gaza (465,000) and the West Bank (235,000), including 404,000 in a severe state.

The provision of WFP's assistance goes beyond serving the purpose of enhancing people's ability to meet their immediate food needs; it supports community resilience and empowerment in the face of repeated shocks and increased hardships, contributes to maintaining peace to stability, and stimulates the local economy.

Under its 2018-22 Country Strategic Plan (CSP) and in contribution to SDG 2 'Zero Hunger' , WFP aims at providing food assistance to 368,700 of the most vulnerable non-refugees via in-kind food rations and electronic food vouchers topped up with a monthly credit of USD 10 per person. Assisted communities can redeem their entitlements in a network of 160 local retail shops across Gaza (85) and the West Bank (75). WFP also works with national institutions to enhance the capacity of existing social safety nets to assist the poor and vulnerable. WFP launched its 2019 funding appeal and awareness -raising video campaign on Gaza's spiralling humanitarian needs.

Population: **4.9 million**	2018 Human Development Index: **119 out of 188**
Poverty rate: **29.2 percent**	Chronic malnutrition: **7.4 % of children between 6-59 months**

Contact info: Raphael du Boispean (raphael.duboispean@wfp.org)
Country Director: Stephen Kearney
Further information: **www1.wfp.org/countries/state-palestine**

Operational Updates

- In March, WFP assisted 239,866 and 87,540 poor food-insecure people in Gaza and the West Bank respectively, with a combination of food and cash-based transfers (CBT). Due to funding shortages, half of them (166,000) received reduced CBT entitlements, from USD 10 to 8 per person. WFP's food assistance is a fundamental safety net that enables poor households to meet a share of their daily food needs and prevents them from falling into deeper poverty. This support is all the more critical as the poorest segments of the population have not been receiving their national social welfare entitlements since November 2018. Read here how WFP is making a difference in the life of Raeda, a single female head of household in Gaza.
- WFP started its quarterly distributions of in-kind food parcels to 72,000 people across Gaza (35,000) and the West Bank (37,000). Each beneficiary household is to receive a package of wheat flour, vegetable oil and pulses that are meant to cover 60 percent of their daily caloric needs for the next three months. In Gaza, WFP and its implementing partner OXFAM introduced a new digital identification and benefit management system by which assisted beneficiaries could collect their entitlements via a magnetic card using a password authentication mechanism. These new electronic processes allowed for each transaction to be performed with a higher level of security, accountability and efficiency (see picture).
- As part of its preparedness and contingency planning, WFP pre-contracted 19 bakeries for the supply of fresh bread to internally displaced Palestinians who will have found refuge in emergency shelters in the event of a new armed conflict in Gaza. The bakeries have been selected based on their production and storage capacity, quality certification and control, hygiene standards and proximity to the shelters.
- A new independent study provides statistical evidence of the multiple socioeconomic benefits of WFP's CBT interventions. Using vouchers was found to be more effective than in-kind assistance in improving people's food security status, and trigger positive effects on sales, job creation and investment in the agro-industrial sector. Shop-owners, dairy producers, small-scale food production associations and cow farmers have been benefiting from additional market outlets and investing in their resilience with the support of WFP.

Photo Caption: Digital innovation in Gaza allows WFP to monitor and control all food distributions in real time. *WFP/Khaled Abu Shaaban*

WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)	
Total Requirements (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)
253.2 m	**66.5 m**
2019 Requirements (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (April - September 2019)
48.6 m*	**27.9 m**

* To undergo a budget revision to reflect the increase in severe food-insecurity levels recorded among the non-refugee population

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food (SDG 2)

Strategic Outcome # 1: Non-refugees, poor and severely food-insecure people (primarily in the Gaza Strip and Area C of the West Bank) have improved dietary diversity by 2022
Focus area : Crisis response

Activities:

- 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).

Strategic Result 2: Support to the implementation of the SDGs (SDG 17)

Strategic Outcome 2: State of Palestine institutions have enhanced capacities and systems to identify, target and assist food-insecure vulnerable populations by 2022
Focus area : Resilience-building

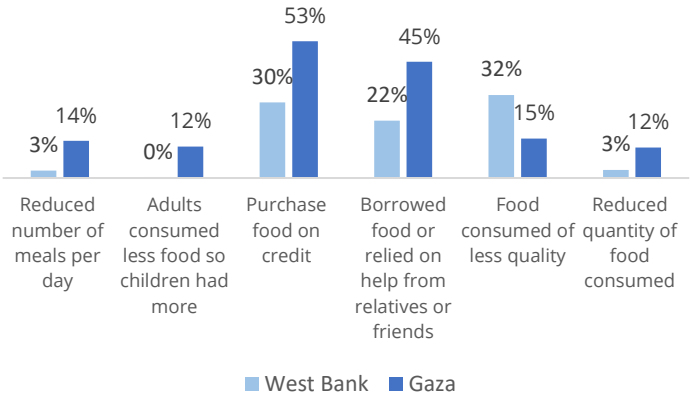
Activities:

- Provision of technical support to national ministries and institutions for implementation of the food security strategy
- Provision of a CBT platform to multi-sectoral partners and Government (Service provision and platforms activities)

Monitoring

- As a result of funding shortages, WFP has suspended the CBT entitlements of 27,000 severely food-insecure people in the West Bank since 01 January. A new WFP impact assessment found a sharp deterioration in the food security status of a representative sample of the population affected. The findings highlighted a significant decrease in the percentage of households with an acceptable level of food consumption from the last quarter of 2018 (70 percent) to the first quarter of 2019 (29 percent). The families surveyed increased their reliance on charity and credit, reduced the number of daily meals and consumed food in lesser quantity and of lower quality. See here how the cuts have impacted the livelihoods of one recipient family. These findings demonstrate the extreme vulnerability levels of assisted communities, as well as their strong dependency on WFP to meet their food needs.
- The beneficiary households surveyed this month in Gaza were comprised of six members. They reported having earned an average of USD 180 of income resources, an amount that is far below the national deep poverty line of USD 670. With limited economic opportunities, vulnerable communities have been resorting to negative coping mechanisms (see table) and falling into a cycle of indebtedness to meet their most pressing needs.

Food coping mechanisms of WFP beneficiaries (March 2019)



More than half (54 percent) had debts within a range of USD 2,700-4,260 worth of unpaid bills for electricity and water, grocery shopping, and line of credit with friends and relatives. The same pattern applies to poor families in the West Bank, where food prices are even higher.

- Almost all visited households expressed their satisfaction with the quality of WFP food assistance (99.3 percent), availability and variety of commodities in participating shops (95.6 percent) and considered the voucher value as essential in supporting their livelihoods or income (95.9 percent).

Challenges

- With the resources currently at its disposal, WFP is only able to distribute its electronic food vouchers to 260,000 people until the end of August.

Partnerships

- WFP provides food assistance and supports the Palestinian Authority in meeting the essential needs of the poorest groups of the non-refugee population. Around 166,000 people in Gaza (115,000) and the West Bank (51,000) receive complementary food assistance from WFP on top of their national social protection entitlements, including direct cash-transfers. Due to funding limitations, the welfare system is however unable to support all those in need, resulting in an extensive waiting list.
- Through its other implementing INGO partners Global Communities and Oxfam, WFP reaches 157,000 people among the most vulnerable and severely food-insecure whose access to social protection had been curtailed. WFP also works with UNWRA to meet the food needs of mixed refugee and non-refugee Bedouin and herding communities in Israeli-controlled Area C of the West Bank (37,000 people).
- Complementary to the provision of food assistance, WFP delivers nutrition and health education sessions all year round with local NGOs in Gaza and the West Bank.

Donors

- WFP is grateful for the support of: Canada, European Union (ECHO), France, Germany, Japan, Kuwait Red Crescent, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, the Russian Federation, Spain, the United States of America and multilateral and private donors (Strategic Outcome 1). More information here.