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PALESTINE FOOD SECURITY SECTOR

GAZA Update #13

19 JANUARY 2024

GROWING RISK OF FAMINE FOR 2.2M PEOPLE

The risk of famine grows daily due to ongoing hostilities and limited humanitarian access. Around 1.9 million people are displaced, many having been relocated multiple times. The scarcity of food in the market and insufficient food aid entering Gaza are expected to worsen food insecurity.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- **Increased displacement**: As of January 12th, nearly 1.4 million displaced people are currently seeking shelter in 154 UNRWA facilities and with host communities throughout the Gaza Strip. A crisis is unfolding in the Al-Manara area, with thousands of families evacuating due to the risk of sewage submersion caused by the nearing capacity of the Sheikh Radwan Pond. The lack of suitable accommodations for the displaced, a malfunctioning pump, and fuel shortage add complexity to the situation. Urgent international intervention is vital to address the ongoing challenges with sewage pumping and drainage, averting the current humanitarian crisis, minimising the risk of imminent epidemics, and mitigating the increased spread of diseases resulting from large-scale displacement..
- **Flour and Fuel Shortages still Impact Bread Supply**: Bread is the most urgently requested food item in Gaza, as many families lack cooking means, and it helps address the calorie deficit in the population. Fortified flour used to make bread also provides essential vitamins and minerals. Despite at least a hundred bakeries in northern Gaza, few are willing to operate due to significant challenges. The main obstacle is the persistent shortage of flour, other bakery inputs, and fuel. In early January, the World Food Programme (WFP) began supporting 12 bakeries in Rafah and Deir El Balah with resources, enabling them to produce subsidised bread for the communities.
- **Limited Operativity in the North**: Transporting humanitarian aid to northern Gaza via the "coastal road" faces consistent denials and delays, posing numerous challenges. Frequent interruptions, especially at the Wadi Gaza IF checkpoint, often lead to self-distribution when trucks are halted. A striking example is the UNRWA convoy transporting WCK food on January 14th, where only two out of ten trucks reached their intended destination due to lengthy waits at the checkpoint. These delays have allowed hundreds of people to gather around convoys, resulting in spontaneous self-distribution. Nonetheless, some convoys have managed to reach northern Gaza successfully, with two WFP assistance convoys reaching populations north of Wadi Gaza on January 11th and 13th.
- **Shortfall is supplies in the Khan Younis and Deir al Balah**. Despite pressing needs, the Middle Area is experiencing a shortfall in supplies, intensifying the perception that essential support is not reaching the governorates. This underscores the critical importance of prioritizing food delivery to the high-demand northern areas. The delayed arrival of supplies to the Middle Area not only contributes to the prevailing challenges faced by the local population but also highlights the urgency of addressing logistical barriers and enhancing the distribution process to ensure that assistance reaches those in need in a timely and efficient manner.

PARTNERS RESPONSE: reporting period 8-14 January

- **Northern Gaza:**
  - Hot Meals for IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in DES (Displacement Emergency Sites): 13,000 people reached.
  - Hot Meals for IDPs Outside DES: 12,500 people reached.
- **Southern Gaza**:
  - Ready-to-Eat Rations: 21,270 people reached.
  - Hot Meals for IDPs in DES: 19,000 people reached.
  - Hot Meals for IDPs Outside DES: 60,674 people reached.
  - Flour Distribution for IDPs Outside DES: 185,080 people reached.
  - Other Food Security Sector (FSS) Activities (including RTE, hot meals, bread): 266,585 people reached.
  - Emergency Food Baskets for IDPs Outside DES: 54,926 people reached.
  - Emergency Food Baskets (general distribution): 82,690 people reached.
  - Hot Meals (general distribution): 11,850 people reached.

- **UNRWA: Since the 21st of November**, **277,907 families** (approximately **1.4 million people**) have been reached with flour distribution in the Middle Area and Southern governorates.
- **Since the beginning of January, WFP r**eached approximately **644,776** people inside and outside shelters, distributing food parcels, wheat flour, hot meals, and bread through bakeries.
  - Community kitchens were supported in providing hot meals to IDPs. Around 69,000 people received hot meals from 46 locations across the five governorates of the Gaza Strip.
  - Over 900 metric tons of wheat flour and other resources were delivered to nine Rafah and Deir El Balah bakeries. This support enabled these bakeries to produce bread at a subsidised price, benefiting approximately 250,000 people.
  - For the first time in six weeks since the humanitarian pause, WFP delivered 200 mt of food supplies to around 15,000 people in Gaza

The Food Security Sector is committed to supporting the daily food needs of Gaza's 2.2 million people. Yet, partners' operational space and delivery access are greatly hindered.

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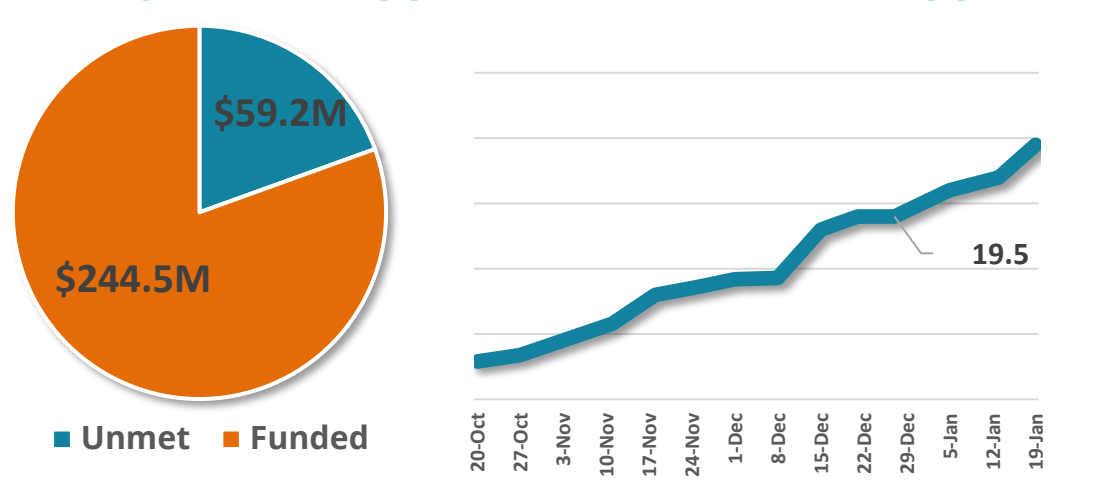
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24 OPERATING PARTNERS

ACF
ACTED
American Friends Service Committee,
AFS
ANERA
Beit Lahia Development-
CRS
DCA
FAO
Islamic Relief Palestine
Middle East Children's Alliance
IHH
Mercy Corps
NRC
OXFAM Novib
PAEEP
PARC
PUI
Save the Children
Secure Islamique France
Taawon
UNRWA
UPA
WFP
WCK

FUNDING MOBILIZED



FOOD PRODUCTION OUTLOOK

- The persistent conflict in Gaza has caused extensive damage to its agriculture and food production sectors. Consequently, there is an urgent requirement to maintain the flow of aid and commercial supply chains. It is crucial to assist farmers and alleviate the economic repercussions on Gaza's agriculture sector. The key aspects of the situation can be outlined as follows:.
- **Agriculture Sector:** A significant portion of agricultural land, encompassing orchards, greenhouses, and farmlands, notably in northern Gaza, has suffered extensive destruction. This devastation extends to approximately 70% of Gaza's fishing fleet, exacerbating the already severe food crisis. Farmers struggle to acquire essential inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides. These challenges hinder planting and cultivation and are likely to result in financial losses due to the inability to transport agricultural products to markets. Moreover, inflation has increased prices for agricultural inputs, including fuel and equipment. This cost surge places a substantial financial burden on farming operations, particularly impacting small-scale farmers.
- **Fishery sector:** Fishermen continue facing life-threatening risks due to naval patrols and restrictions on fishing areas, restricting Gaza's fishing area to just six miles off the coast and enforcing this limit with patrols and naval commandos. Fishermen report being under constant threat of gunfire, even within the permitted fishing limits and face severe consequences if they cross these boundaries.
- **Livestock Sector:** the conflict and its consequences have resulted in the death of many ruminants and small ruminants due to a combination of direct conflict-related incidents, such as bombings or destruction of farms, and indirect factors like stress, lack of proper care, and injuries. The remaining livestock, crucial for milk production, faces a severe fodder shortage, and the impossibility of entering it makes the situation dire. The recovery of the livestock sector will be a long-term challenge. It requires not only the re-establishment of supply chains for feed and veterinary supplies but also the rebuilding of infrastructure, such as barns and milking facilities, that may have been destroyed Livestock farming faces challenges in securing adequate feed due to disrupted supply chains, which could impact the availability and quality of livestock products.
- **Impact on Milk Production:** These animals' lack of adequate nutrition directly impacts their health and milk-producing capacity. This situation affects the livelihoods of farmers dependent on dairy production and contributes to the broader issue of food insecurity and starvation. Milk and dairy products are essential components of the local diet, and their scarcity has nutritional repercussions, especially among vulnerable populations like children and the elderly.

MARKET OUTLOOK

- **Gaza's Consumer Prices Surge** During the three months of the war, the Consumer Price Index witnessed a significant 35% increase compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. The cost-of-living index for Palestine rose by 10% since the onset of the aggression, with increments of 2.57% in October 2023, 3.50% in November 2023, and 3.49% in December 2023. In December 2023, the Consumer Price Index in the Gaza Strip surged by 12.21%, driven by soaring prices of essential commodities due to the ongoing aggression. Table salt prices rose by **680%**, sugar substitutes and other sugars by 199.66%, solid fuel prices by **179.71%**, potato prices by **136.36%**, and various other essentials witnessed substantial price hikes.
- **Gaza Citizens Struggle with Economic Downturn:** The purchasing power of Gaza citizens declined by 33% over the three-month aggression period, with reductions of 11% in the first month, 16% in the second month, and 11% in the third month. Average price increases were observed for various commodities, including Basmati rice, short-grain rice, Salam flour, Cerlac baby cereals, pasteurized milk, lamb, veal, chicken, eggs, olive oil, sunflower oil, corn oil, oranges, clementines, pomelo, cucumbers, tomatoes, cauliflower, lemon, zucchini, eggplant, cabbage, sweet green peppers, dry onions, potatoes, crushed lentils, dry chickpeas, canned beans, white sugar, table salt, yeast, coffee, coal, gasoline, diesel, and baby diapers.

As the conflict persists, the Gaza Strip faces a looming threat of severe economic disruption. Scarcity, disrupted supply chains, insufficient aid, and uneven distribution have created conditions ripe for the black market. These economic challenges affect a wide range of essential items, including flour, bread, oil, sugar, salt, yeast, fresh fruits, rice, coffee, liquid fuel, gas, medicines, and health supplies. The situation is precarious, and urgent attention is needed to mitigate the potential economic distortion that could have long-lasting consequences for the region.

Info related to the Market Outlook, comes from PCBS

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HUMANITARIAN AID OUTLOOK

Under normal circumstances since 7 October, approximately 39000 trucks should have entered Gaza by now.

As of 18th oj January, 8,572 aid trucks have entered since the war – 17% of the usual entrance.

Part of the trucks entered are carrying human food items, is around 5,256. However, the quantity is still not sufficient to address the basic needs of 2.2 million people daily, thus considering the food value chain completely disrupted, nonoperational markets and the double of the population in need.

As of January 18th, the Rafah crossing remains the main entry point for truck entries into Gaza, with a total of 6,751 trucks recorded. In contrast, the Kerem Shalom crossing, a pivotal conduit for the inflow of supplies into the Strip, since its reopening on December 17th, has had 1,821 trucks enter sporadically, accounting for 21% of total trucks entering the Gaza Strip. It is worth mentioning that less than 8% of the trucks entering Gaza since 13 December were from the private sector.

The situation underscores **the pressing need for uninterrupted and secure humanitarian corridors** for delivering critical aid across Gaza, allowing more trucks from the private sector.

Immediate provision of fuel and cooking gas is imperative. These resources are crucial for sustaining humanitarian efforts and maintaining the operation of essential services such as mills and bakeries. Furthermore, they provide the necessary means for individuals to prepare the limited food available to them.

