

COUNTRY STRATEGY

WFP's vision is to use new and innovative approaches to build food security sustainably in partnership with the Palestinian Authority. In 2015, WFP aimed to reach 566,940 of the most vulnerable, food insecure non-refugees in Palestine who have been affected by the ongoing conflict and occupation, a fiscal crisis and a steady decline in living standards. The Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), launched in 2015, combines operations in the West Bank and Gaza to coherently address food insecurity needs in Palestine. In addition, WFP has a Special Operation (SO) supporting the Food Security Sector. WFP has been present in Palestine since 1991.



OPERATIONS

	Project Duration	Planned number of people	Total requirements (in USD)	Total received (in USD)	Total Funded (%)	6 Months Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*	Top 5 Donors
PRRO 200709 - Food Assistance for Food-Insecure Populations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	Jan 2015– Dec 2016	566,940	148,275,358	79,303,208	53%	25,714,043	USA, Canada, Japan, Russian Federation, and the European Commission
SO 200560 - Strengthening the Food Security Coordination Platform in the State of Palestine	Jun 2013 - March 2016	n/a	1,257,892	827,779	66%	n/a	Canada and the European Commission

*January-June 2016

Summary of WFP assistance:

WFP addresses urgent food needs, resilient livelihoods, economic activity and emergency preparedness. Supporting enhanced food security is a task shared by the Palestinian Authority, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and WFP, with close links to activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNICEF and other partners.

WFP targets 566,940 people for assistance through general food distributions (GFD), electronic vouchers, food assistance for assets, food for training and schools meals. It has three main objectives: i) meeting food needs; ii) supporting the re-establishment of livelihoods and food security of communities most affected by conflict through conditional e-vouchers and school meals; and iii) supporting the Palestinian Authority's national safety net by strengthening the Government capacity. WFP's purchasing power supports local production and reinforces the Palestinian economy.

WFP's "one card" Cash Based Transfer system has served as a platform for a range of humanitarian and development interventions, including:

- Food assistance 164,000 people assisted by WFP and 47,000 people assisted by UNRWA
- Support about 14,000 elderly people and for those with health related issues through two NGO partners
- Access to hygiene products through e-vouchers for more than 5,000 people in Gaza with Oxfam GB
- Water and sanitation assistance for 84,000 people with UNICEF
- Education support for 42,000 students with UNICEF

Since 2012, WFP has injected more than USD 170 million in the local economy, of which USD 100 million was through e-vouchers and USD 70 million through local purchases of food. This supports 252 local stores in the West Bank and Gaza which has provided USD 772,000 of investments and 225 new jobs in stores and at producer levels (2014 WFP Secondary Impact study).

WFP co-leads, with UNRWA and FAO, the Food Security Sector which strengthens food security analysis and response and links humanitarian and developmental interventions for the Palestinian Authority. A total of 45 organisations participate in the Food Security Sector.

WFP's assistance in Palestine is aligned with the National Development Plan, the Ministry of Social Affairs' Business Plan and the Social Protection Sector Strategic Plan. WFP's work contributes to five of the six pillars of the 2014-2016 UN Development Assistance Framework and the annual Humanitarian Programme Cycle.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

ACHIEVEMENTS	ISSUES/CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thanks to ongoing donor support, WFP managed to continue its vital food assistance in Palestine in 2015. Between October and December, WFP reached over 190,000 people in the West Bank with food assistance including more than 100,000 people with e-vouchers for food and 90,000 people with food distributions. In Gaza, WFP reached over 240,000 people with food assistance between October and December including 70,000 people with e-vouchers and 170,000 through food distributions. WFP is implementing an e-voucher for 15,000 people impacted by the 2014 conflict in Gaza. Households receive voucher values based on their vulnerability level. The pilot reflects vulnerability levels identified by the new Socio-Economic and Food Security survey (SEFSec) methodology, e.g., <i>severely food insecure, moderately food insecure and marginally food insecure</i>. Results of the pilot will inform WFP's future programme design and implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WFP suspended its e-voucher assistance with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA) in the West Bank for five weeks, between early November and mid-December, due to resource constraints. The suspension affected more than 57,000 food insecure people. E-voucher assistance resumed on 15 December. WFP monitored the gap in food voucher assistance through field surveys with beneficiaries whose e-voucher was suspended. The survey results showed a deterioration in food consumption scores within two weeks after the suspension – the percentage of households with poor food consumption went from four percent to an alarming 48 percent. Funding shortfalls continue to pose an operational challenge for WFP. In the West Bank 68,000 food insecure people will receive a reduced food entitlement consisting only of wheat flour between January and June 2016. This includes more than 33,000 vulnerable Bedouin and herders living in severe hardship condition. Additional funding shortfalls will impact food assistance to 89,000 people in Gaza as soon as May 2016.

PARTNERSHIPS

WFP continues to expand its partnerships and is working with the following partners:

- WFP and UNICEF will distribute a new one-off voucher transfer in January 2016, using WFP's voucher system and targeting 60,000 of WFP's e-voucher beneficiaries in Gaza with vouchers for hygiene assistance, and more than 8,000 school children with e-vouchers for school uniforms.
- WFP and UNICEF are providing joint Nutrition Awareness sessions for people receiving WFP's e-vouchers in Gaza, reaching 2,000 women and 1,000 men.
- WFP and Oxfam GB worked together providing e-vouchers for hygiene products for more than 5,000 people in Gaza.
- WFP and UNRWA run a joint programme in the West Bank, providing food assistance to 30,000 Bedouin and herders each month, and are implementing a voucher programme for 47,000 people in 11 governorates of the West Bank in more than 110 shops. WFP is acting as a service provider to UNRWA using its existing e-voucher system.

COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Palestine is a lower middle income territory with significant income disparities. Average purchasing power per person in Palestine is USD 5,167 while Israel is USD 29,966 (2014 Human Development Index using the Purchasing Power Parity measure). Due to long lasting restrictions on movement, access and trade, private sector activity has been severely constrained and private investment levels are amongst the lowest in the world. Unemployment levels are high and reached 41.5 percent in Gaza in 2015 and 15.4 percent in the West Bank. According to the World Bank, donor support to Palestine has significantly declined in recent years and economic growth has started to slow since 2012.

Results of the 2014 Socio-Economic and Food Security Survey showed food insecurity remained at high levels, with more than one fourth of the population – 27 percent or 1.6 million people – food insecure. In Gaza, food insecurity levels reached 47 percent and in the West Bank 16 percent. In Palestine, around one fourth of the households headed by men are food insecure as compared to one third of female-headed households. In the West Bank, female-headed households are disproportionately affected by food insecurity with 25 percent of the female-headed households facing food insecurity, as opposed to 15 percent of the male-headed households. Although food is available in Palestine, prices are too high for poor households, who spend approximately half of their income on food. High food insecurity and vulnerability are a result of severe restrictions on livelihoods and economic activity. The blockade of Gaza, recurrent conflict, the occupation of the West Bank and the separation barrier, have resulted in high levels of protracted humanitarian needs, interrupted economic activity and further restricted movement and access. Peace talks on a two-state solution were suspended in 2014, followed by a 51-day conflict in Gaza that devastated the lives of many people and caused widespread destruction to infrastructure and livelihoods. In 2015, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Israel were hit by violent incidents increasing an already volatile situation.

