

# PALESTINE HUMANITARIAN CRISES ANALYSIS 2020

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Each year, Sida conducts a humanitarian allocation exercise in which a large part of its humanitarian budget is allocated to emergencies worldwide. The allocation and subsequent disbursement of funds takes place in the beginning of the year to ensure predictability for humanitarian organizations and to allow for best possible operational planning. To truly adhere to the humanitarian principles, Sida's humanitarian assistance is grounded in the four humanitarian principles, and impartiality, with its compelling urge to ensure that humanitarian action is carried out based on **"needs alone"**, giving priority to the **"most urgent cases of distress"**. Therefore, Sida's allocation methodology is grounded in several objective indicators such as; the *scale* of humanitarian needs (number of people in need), the *severity* of humanitarian needs (including food insecurity/IPC levels), the *number of people* targeted for the humanitarian response, the *financial coverage* of the respective humanitarian appeal, *national capacities* to respond and underlying risks, as well as distinct indicators related to *forgotten crises*. Sida also strongly supports the humanitarian coordination structures. Besides this initial allocation, another part of the humanitarian budget is set aside as an emergency reserve for sudden onset emergencies and deteriorating humanitarian situations. This reserve allows Sida to quickly allocate funding to any humanitarian situation throughout the year, including additional funding to Palestine.

For 2020, Palestine is allocated an initial 80 MSEK. Close monitoring of the situation in Palestine will continue throughout the year and will inform possible decisions on additional funding.

## 1. CRISIS OVERVIEW

### 1.1. Man-made crisis

The civilian population in Palestine continues to suffer from the consequences of the longest ongoing military occupation in history and the intra-Palestinian divide between Fatah and Hamas. The lack of political progress on the Middle East Peace Process twenty-five years after Oslo (1993), the failure of Israel as occupying power to ensure its obligation under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the twelve years of Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip, have resulted in a gradual deterioration of the protection crisis with serious humanitarian consequences.

In Gaza, Palestinians continue to be disproportionately and routinely exposed to conflict and violence. Concerns about excessive use of force are long standing. Since 30<sup>th</sup> March 2018, these particularly concern the Gaza March of Return (GMR) demonstrations, where WHO has reported significant increase in loss of life and injury, which has serious long-term health, disability and psychosocial impact. A total of 324 Palestinians have been killed, including 45 children, and over 35,000 have been injured since the start of demonstrations and end of September 2019. GMR injured persons continued to experience delays and denials to exit Gaza via the Israeli-controlled EREZ crossing to access health care in Jerusalem, West Bank or outside Palestine. Injured persons with lifelong disabilities, including amputees and those undergoing limb reconstruction treatment, will need long-term health interventions.

The impact of the Israeli occupation continues to be felt in the form of construction and expansion of Israeli illegal settlements and the blockade of Gaza. Palestinians are facing restrictions on movement of people and goods, limited access to land and natural resources, denial of basic services, violence, attacks on education, and the continued demolition of Palestinian structures, some of which are Sweden and EU-funded humanitarian assets. The humanitarian situation in Gaza has steadily grown worse with a crumbling health care system along with the decay of other critical services, damaged infrastructure and crippling unemployment which increased from 43 per cent in 2018 to almost 47 per cent in 2019, with youth unemployment at 64 per cent. Some 46 per cent of the population live below the US\$5.5 poverty line and an estimated 62 per cent of households are severely or moderately food insecure.

Until late 2018, Gaza experienced power cuts of 18-20 hours a day which impeded on the delivery of services and crippled production activities. During 2019, the average electricity supply was 12 hours a day. There are still no longterm solution to sustainable and predictable supply. Hospitals, Coastal Municipal and Water Utility mandated to run water and sewage treatment facilities and solid waste collection services are almost

completely reliant on UN-coordinated emergency fuel to maintain essential services. Despite some slight improvement generated by the Qatari grant, the overall situation remains fragile, with the month of May witnessing the most serious outbreak of hostilities since the 2014 war on Gaza.

The Palestinian population in the West Bank, particularly in Area C, Seam Zone, H2 (Hebron) and East Jerusalem continues to be subject to an increasingly coercive environment generated by Israeli settlement expansion. United Nations resolution 2334 (2016.12.23), stated that Israeli settlements constitute “a flagrant violation under international law”. These violations generate humanitarian needs. The civilian population is at risk of forcible displacement and dispossession of land and housing triggered by multiple factors, including demolitions and confiscation of property, relocation plans, settler violence, military training exercises near residential areas, revocation of residency status, night raids, house searches by Israeli forces, restrictions on access to livelihoods and education facilities, or any combination of these factors.

In the absence of a conducive political development, there is increased resorting to negative coping mechanisms on the part of the vulnerable groups, especially children, as shown in the rise in school dropout rate, child labour and child marriage. Over 250,000 children suffer from severe or moderate mental health disorder; and more than half of the children in Gaza may be affected by post-traumatic stress disorder.

## **1.2. Geographical areas and affected population**

As per the UN 2018-2020 Palestine Humanitarian Response plan (HRP), 2.4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance out of a total population of 5.2 million in Palestine. Of these, 0.9 million are in the West Bank and 1.5 million in the Gaza Strip. The 2020 HRP targets 1.5 million people (1.2 million (80%) in Gaza, and 0.3 million (33%) in the West Bank).

The humanitarian context in Palestine impacts differently on men, women, boys and girls. Gender analysis is used in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle in order to identify groups of the affected population that should be prioritized in the humanitarian response, defining their humanitarian needs based on the differentiated impact, and ensuring gender responsive humanitarian interventions. The largest and most vulnerable group is the affected population living in Gaza, including men and women refugees, disabled, children and IDPs. In addition, there are other vulnerable groups consisting of 320,000 Bedouins, most of them registered as refugees in East Jerusalem, 40,000 Palestinians living in Hebron two (H2) which remains under Israeli control and 8,000 vulnerable people who live in the seam zones, including farmers who are subject to obtaining a permit by Israeli Authorities to live and farm on their own land.

## **1.3. Critical assumptions, risks and threats**

The main drivers of humanitarian vulnerability across Palestine are expected to remain largely unchanged in 2020. The current political situation in Israel/Palestine remains deadlocked with limited optimism that the political situation might change, including reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas. The longstanding political blockade on Gaza is expected to continue. Although the “Great March of Return” demonstrations are temporary suspended due to the tense security situation, they are expected to continue on a reduced scale, placing additional strains on an already overburdened health care system. Lack of reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas and lack of development funding, is creating humanitarian needs which are best addressed by structural political and development solutions. Unemployment and poverty coupled with lack of basic services and shortage of clean water, will be forthcoming.

The situation in West Bank, Israeli controlled part of Hebron (H2), including occupied East Jerusalem remains tense. After a decline in recent years, settler violence resulting in Palestinian casualties or in damage to property is increasing. Standards of living, economic growth and employment prospects in the West Bank continued to be undermined by limitations to access to land, natural resources and construction. A restrictive and discriminatory planning regime makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to develop adequate housing, infrastructure and livelihoods in Area C (some 60 per cent of the West Bank). Checkpoints deployed across the West Bank, particularly those controlling access into East Jerusalem, Israel and the “Seam Zone”, also have a disruptive impact on the operations of humanitarian organizations. In addition to political challenges and funding shortfalls, humanitarian organizations face an increasingly difficult operational

context and shrinking humanitarian and civic space, which will hamper their ability to assist and protect aid and protection to Palestinians throughout Palestine.

There is a risk for additional measures by the PA (Ramallah) to cut salaries of civil servants or reduce funding to cash transfer programs or other essential services including health care which might contribute to increased household tension and disputes and further resort to negative coping mechanisms. The American suspension of support to UNRWA, as well as to the network for East Jerusalem hospitals, has reduced the supply of much needed basic services and might lead to severe instability.

Implementation of humanitarian programmes in Gaza, Area C, the Seam Zone and East Jerusalem continues to be challenged by restrictive access policies. The projection by the humanitarian clusters is that high levels of food insecurity are expected to prevail in Gaza and the West Bank, and the continued Israeli restrictions will create more dependency on international assistance. It is estimated that the situation will remain as such until the occupation is ended.

#### **1.4. Strategic Objectives and Priorities of the Country Humanitarian Response Plan**

The goal of humanitarian assistance in Palestine is to protect the rights of vulnerable Palestinians, provide access to basic services for those who are acutely vulnerable and support the ability of households to cope with prolonged stresses to prevent a further deterioration in their situation, until more sustainable solutions are made possible. Three strategic objectives have been identified as part of the UN 2018-2020 Palestine HRP as well as some cross-cutting themes that include: 1: The rights of Palestinians living under occupation, including those living under the blockade and other restrictions, are protected, respected and promoted in accordance with IHL and IHRL, while duty-bearers are increasingly held to account (\$32 Million). 2: The basic needs of vulnerable Palestinians living under occupation are met through the provision of quality basic services and improved access to resources, in accordance with the rights of protected persons under IHL (\$86 Million). 3: The capacity of vulnerable Palestinians to cope with and overcome protracted crisis, including from environmental threats, is supported, while solutions to violations and other root causes of threats and shocks are pursued (\$230 Million). What is surprising is that \$214million is requested for food security sector out of the \$348 million.

## **2. IN COUNTRY HUMANITARIAN CAPACITIES**

### **2.1. National and local capacities and constraints**

Based on the Oslo peace agreement parameters from 1993, Palestine is divided into different geographical areas; A, B and C. The PA has often limited powers in only 38 per cent of the West Bank. 60 per cent is controlled by Israel (area C). Since 2007, Gaza is being controlled by Hamas (including as de facto authorities), but the PA is responsible for providing core services to the Palestinians, but assistance is delivered sporadically. While the Israeli occupation and blockade are major factors in restricting assistance delivery, Palestinian governance, the fiscal crisis, and lack of Fatah and Hamas reconciliation continue to play a role. The PA Ramallah government continues to impose the non-payment of salaries for civil servants in Gaza and has stopped payments for the supply of electricity through Israel while Hamas has not been able to respond to the deterioration situation.

In the West Bank, with the Oslo restriction in its service delivery in Area C and East Jerusalem, the Palestinian Authority has stepped up its engagement over the past three years and is implementing its National Policy Agenda for 2017 to 2022. The inter-ministerial committee for Area C, established in 2015 with the aim of establishing policies and priorities as well as overall monitoring of the work progress in Area C has limited results. Further, the coordination office for Area C, under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office and with support from Sweden, Austria and Norway, guides and coordinates the work of the PA, UN, INGO's, NNGO's and donors on priorities in Area C and recommends development interventions that compliments the humanitarian assistance has yielded limited results as well.

The international community continues to step in to alleviate the immediate consequences of the occupation. Until a political solution is found and considering serious protection needs, humanitarian support by Sweden is still required.

The national civil society's humanitarian community has the capacity to respond to humanitarian needs in addition to the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS).

## 2.2. International operational capacities and constraints

Palestine sees the presence of 19 UN agencies, as well as an umbrella of over 100 semi-active and 40 very active INGO's called the Association for International Development Agencies (AIDA) and different National NGO's coordination bodies. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), was established in 2008 while coordination arrangements were formalized in March 2009. OCHA facilitates the work of the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICG) that consists of the following six clusters/sectors: Protection Cluster, Food Security Sector, Education Cluster, WASH Cluster, Health & Nutrition Sector and Shelter & NFI's Cluster (the Gaza Strip and the West Bank). OCHA was established in 2003 with Sweden's support and has been preparing the Humanitarian Programme Cycle on behalf of the HCT, mobilizing humanitarian funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and acting as the manager of the local Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF) on behalf of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). UNRWA received a 20 million USD loan in March 2019 and was approved another 30 Million USD loan in November 2019 from CERF.

A good coordination structure exists in Palestine among donors, PA, UN, INGO's and NNGO's. Sida's assessment is still that the cluster coordination needs to be better strengthened in Gaza as the humanitarian needs in Gaza constitute \$263 Million (76%) compared to \$85 Million (24%) in West Bank in the 2020 HRP. ECHO and Sweden as Chair and co-Chair of the local Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) group are participating as observers in the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) or cluster meetings. A more pro-active process is ongoing to create strategic discussion between the GHD and HCT groups.

## 2.3. International and Regional assistance

At a time of increasing global needs, funding for Palestine remains low and decreasing. By end of November, some 209 million USD have been secured of the requested 351 USD million of the 2019 HRP which is significantly less than the 539.7 USD million for the 2018 HRP. The shortfall is mainly driven by the decline in contributions for UNRWA, whose projects constitute over 40% of the HRP overall requirements, following suspension of support from the United States, exacerbating the plight of the already vulnerable refugee population.

The UN 2020 HRP amounts to \$348 million (\$263 MUS for Gaza, 85 MUS West Bank). In 2019, 211 USD million have been funded of the HRP, representing 60.2%. This continues to be a low level of funding for Palestine compared to previous years.

**Table 1: Total funding per donor to projects listed in the 2019 Appeal as of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

Donor	Funding USD	% of Grand Total
Germany	79.0	37.4%
European Commission	17.4	8.3%
Qatar	13.0	6.2%
United Kingdom	8.1	3.8%
Sweden	7.3	5.2%
Switzerland	7.1	3.3%
Norway	6.5	3.3%
Canada	6.3	3.0%

The Humanitarian Response Plan 2020 presents a strategy budgeted at 348 USD million to implement 191 projects, 177 USD million in partnership with NNGO and Palestinian Authority institutions (122 projects), 235 USD million United Nations (of which 132 USD million for UNRWA), 93 USD million INGO's, and 20 NNGO's.

In terms of the geographical scope of the 2020 HRP requirements, projects covering only Gaza represent 263 USD million (76%) of requirements and 85 USD million (24%) for West Bank. The 85 USD million are divided into: 54 USD million Area C, 14 million Euros in Area A and B (food), 9 USD million East Jerusalem, and 8 USD million H2/Hebron. So far, no donor has shared its planned support for 2020.

## **2.4. Access Situation**

Humanitarian organizations are facing an increasingly difficult operational context and shrinking humanitarian and civic space, which is hampering their ability to assist and protect Palestinians. Access restrictions for humanitarian actors are imposed by Israeli authorities. This goes for the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza. The Israeli authorities also impose movement restrictions on Palestinians and by doing so restrict their access to basic services, livelihoods, family etc. Due to Israeli access restrictions, Sida has challenges to follow-up of projects and partners in the Gaza Strip since 2015.

## **3. SIDA's HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN**

### **3.1. The role of Sida**

Sweden is the co-Chair of the locally established GHD group with ECHO. Sweden is an active member of the West Bank Protection Consortium for Area C (WBPC) as well as Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF). Sweden is promoting synergies to longer term development by actively supporting a strategic shift towards longer term interventions that are clustered geographically and thematically and where local government units show increasing ownership. Since 2018, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) emphasised smaller and a more focused humanitarian HRP for 2019 and 2020 while acknowledging a wide range of needs of the population. The HC's message has been that development cooperation actors need to step up and start addressing those needs, which will be a focus for Sida and Sweden during 2020, including support from a Resilience Advisor.

Recent evaluations of individual Swedish supported programs, motivate continued support to humanitarian interventions if the political situation is not changed on the ground. Sweden supports, through its bilateral strategy for Palestine, the international NGO platform AIDA, gathering both humanitarian and development actors. Humanitarian advocacy remains important for Sweden and other humanitarian partners in Palestine. The causes of the on-going deterioration of the humanitarian situation need to be addressed through effective advocacy, by calling all parties to comply and respect IHL. One of the main lessons learned is that humanitarian assistance is not the solution to the man-made crisis in Palestine but contributes to alleviating the consequences. If the root causes of the conflict are not addressed and the international community continues to manage the conflict (i.e. to provide band aid), humanitarian needs will persist, and humanitarian organizations will continue to request – and need - humanitarian funding.

### **3.2. Response Priorities 2020**

It is assumed that Sweden's humanitarian strategy for Palestine will continue to focus on IHL/protection of the most vulnerable population groups, provide life-saving assistance, reduce vulnerabilities and uphold human dignity through multi-sectoral interventions including humanitarian advocacy based on GHD principles. Strategic partnerships with Swedish NGO's and UN are essential to mainstream protection and gender in the programmes.

Sweden will continue to actively support the Humanitarian Pooled Fund (HPF) as both a strategic and response instrument, including advocacy among donors. Sweden will continue to be active in the GHD meetings. Sweden will step down as co-Chair of the GHD group – leaving room for other donors to take their responsibility.

Under the protection priority, Sida will support actions that will respond to demolitions and settler violence related incidents, provide preventative measures against destruction of Palestinian assets and provide resilience to IHL violations through legal and material assistance. Sida's support for Palestine will be in the areas of protection, food security (including job creation and livelihoods), mental health, health, and WASH.

**3.3. Partners** further details on the humanitarian operations of respective agency will be provided following the submission of full proposals by end of January 2020. Below is based on respective organisations "Initial Submissions" provided end October 2019.

For 2020 minor changes in the portfolio are proposed. The following partners are proposed:

- **UNRWA:** unearmarked support for UNRWAs emergency appeal for the West Bank and Gaza under the HRP.
- **OCHA:** support for the OCHA office in order to continue promoting strong humanitarian coordination.
- **HPF:** being a relevant and strategic humanitarian fund with well-functioning structures continued high support is important.
- **Swedish Red Cross:** support for SKR focuses on access to responsive and quality pre- and post- hospital emergency care. Focus more on supporting health structures in Gaza, in collaboration with the national civil society.
- **ICRC:** In 2020 it will continue to work with the Israeli authorities regarding their obligations under IHL and to advocate for protection for civilians among Israeli and Palestinian weapon bearers. It will help Gazans, and people on the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, who lost their homes, strengthen their resilience, and will provide emergency assistance as acute needs arise. It will shore up provision of essential services, especially health care, in the Gaza Strip.
- **Islamic Relief:** Temporary employment opportunity with conditional but not restricted cash assistance for one member of 250 households for a period of 5 months (creating a total of around 27,000 paid working days and targeting a total of 1,425 direct beneficiaries) plus unconditional but restricted cash assistance will be provided to 750 households for a period of 6 months (4,275 direct beneficiaries). The most vulnerable groups will be prioritized, such as female headed households, families with chronic patient, elderly, People with disabilities (PWDs), etc. vulnerable households will be provided with income opportunities and improved food security. In addition to sustaining local food production, the targeted communities and hosting institutions will benefit from awareness campaigns focusing on inclusion and protection, with a specific focus on prevention of gender-based violence.
- **NRC:** The objective of the Sida-funded NRC program in Palestine is to ensure that vulnerable Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, affected by the occupation have access to assistance and protection. Specifically, the work aims to protect and assist Palestinians affected by, or threatened with, displacement through the ICLA program along with its complementary advocacy activities. Constitutes the Swedish contribution to the WBPC.

**3.4. Strategic Funding in Protracted Crises**

The UN Country team has developed a multi-year HRP 2018-2020. In 2020 Sida will conduct an evaluation of its strategic partners, therefore extension of existing agreements is foreseen for 2020. Humanitarian support for the SEAPPI programme is to be phased out in 2020 or earlier pending the Swedish Mission Council application to Civsam. Sida is positive to the multi-year planning by the HCT and will continue advocating for predictable and timely funding.

SIDA's HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO (Crises) in 2020		
<i>(Insert total sum allocated to country. If another sum is proposed, please indicate that sum with a second/separate table)</i>		
Recommended partner for Sida support	Sector/focus of work (incl. integrated or multi sectorial programming), financing modality (e.g. in-kind or cash-based)	Proposed amount (MSEK)
UNRWA	Emergency appeal/Multi sector	25
OCHA	Coordination	3
OCHA/CBPF	Multi sector	20
Swedish Red Cross	Protection and Health	4
ICRC	Protection	10
Islamic Relief	Emergency JCP – Gaza	10
NRC	Protection/Counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)	5
NRC /WBPC	Preventing the forcible transfer of vulnerable Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem through a protection-centred humanitarian response	3

	<b>TOTAL: 80</b>
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<b>ADDITIONAL MULTI YEAR RESILIENCE FOCUSED FUNDING</b>			
<b>Recommended partner for Sida support</b>	<b>Sector/focus of work (incl. integrated or multi sectorial programming), financing modality (e.g. in-kind or cash-based)</b>	<b>Multi-year support category B</b>	<b>Proposed amount (MSEK)</b>
Diakonia	Protection/IHL		5 (agreed 2017 within global method support)
ICRC	Resilience		100 MSEK for 2020 (Agreement until 2023. Amount will be decided at yearly basis.)
			<b>TOTAL: 105</b>

### 3.5 . Synergies and Nexus

Stronger linkages between humanitarian, recovery and long-term development will continue to be a priority for Sweden’s work in Palestine. The Community Resilience and Development Programme (CRDP) is coming to an end in 2019, and alternative modalities have been under discussion with the Resident Coordinator office, UNDP, AIDA and NRC. Sida HUM will support the ICRC appeal with a Gaza Strip focus with possible synergies to Sweden’s development cooperation strategy for Palestine. One of the major constraints to resilience in the Gaza strip is electrical power. With that understanding in mind, the ICRC will ensure that its interventions support the restoration of essential services and livelihoods, while also helping to strengthen resilience at the onset of the crisis. Two tracks have been initiated: focus on the public facilities and focus on communities.

Through intensive discussions and Sweden being at the forefront of nexus discussions – including urging the RC/HC to take more responsibility for the discussions, the UNCT has embarked on taking stock of work beyond humanitarian assistance, planning for 2020 including undertaking a comprehensive vulnerability assessment and analysis with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. As it is difficult to see where the traction and coherence lies, it’s important for Sweden and other like-minded donors to continue the dialogue on this issue.