



Palestine Situation Report

February 15, 2021

Background

The immediate background to the current period of COVID-19, economic recovery, and sporadic violence is summarized in Anera's last [Situation Report \(December 10\)](#). Information on the current flooding in Gaza is available in Anera's [Gaza Flooding Situation Report \(January 25\)](#).

Overview

Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza continue to face challenges due to clashes with security forces, increased poverty and food insecurity, and the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the UN OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2022, 2.1 million Palestinians are in need of assistance in 2022. The most common need is protection, with 1.8 million Palestinians in need, followed by health, WASH, food security, shelter, and education.¹

Conflict

At the end of December, the first exchange of fire in several months occurred along the Gaza perimeter fence. After a civilian was wounded, Israel responded with tank fire that wounded three Gazans.² On January 1, Hamas fired rockets that landed in the Mediterranean Sea. It is unclear whether the launch was intended to be a test or to target Israel, but no casualties were reported, and the sirens did not sound. In response, the Israeli military launched air attacks on what it claimed to be a rocket manufacturing site and military posts. According to a spokesperson from Hamas, the airstrikes also targeted agricultural land. Other than an incident in September, this was the first incidence of cross-border rocket fire since the signing of the ceasefire in May. While no civilians were directly harmed in the rocket fire, conflict and rising tensions threaten the fragile stability of Gaza, which is still in the process of reconstruction from the May hostilities.³

In the West Bank, residents have faced increased settler attacks over the past few months. On December 20, a settler rally became violent, and soldiers used tear gas and rubber bullets on Palestinians. That night, hundreds of settlers attacked the village of

¹ [Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022- oPt | UNOCHA](#)

² [Three Palestinians wounded by Israeli tank fire on Gaza | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

³ [Israel hits Hamas positions in Gaza after rocket attacks | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

Burqa, dozens of whom attempted to enter the homes of Palestinians. According to the Palestine Red Crescent Society, 42 Palestinians sustained rubber bullet injuries, 83 sustained suffocation injuries due to tear gas, and one girl went into shock after settlers attacked her home. Soldiers also targeted two ambulances with tear gas canisters and stun grenades.⁴

Between January 11 and 24, three Palestinian men died as a result of military operations. The first, an 80-year-old man, died on January 12 after being detained, blindfolded, and handcuffed for about an hour during a search operation in Jilijliya village in Ramallah. On January 5, a Palestinian activist was run over by a tow truck during a police seizure of unlicensed cars in Umm al Kheir in Hebron. The 65-year-old man died from his injuries on January 17. Another Palestinian man, a 57-year-old, died after forces at the Qalandiya refugee camp in Jerusalem fired tear gas canisters, as well as rubber bullets and live ammunition, at Palestinians throwing stones at them. Several canisters landed near a UNRWA health center, where the Palestinian man inhaled tear gas. He died several hours later. Six additional Palestinians sustained rubber bullet injuries. In response to this incident, UNRWA released a statement calling for an investigation. According to the statement, staff had requested a halt in shooting in order to evacuate patients. During the same period, 135 Palestinians sustained injuries during clashes in the West Bank. Out of those injured, 22 were children.⁵

Food Security

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 and the May escalation in Gaza, food insecurity has increased in Palestine, leaving 1.75 million Palestinians in need of food security assistance.⁶ According to the latest data from the World Food Programme (WFP), 32.7% of Palestinians are food insecure. The number is even higher in Gaza, where 68.5% of people face food insecurity.⁷

In December, the price of potatoes increased by 31.15%, marking the highest increase in the West Bank. Potatoes also had the highest price increase in Gaza, rising by 14.17%. From December 2020, Gaza experienced increases in the prices of wheat flour, lentils, and corn oil, at 14.29%, 20.45%, and 32.35% respectively. While the overall food inflation rate in Palestine decreased by 0.79% from November to December, it increased by 1.60% from December 2020.⁸

Waste

⁴ [Israeli settlers attack village in occupied West Bank | Al Jazeera News Network](#)

⁵ [Protection of Civilians Report \(11-24 January 2022\) | UNOCHA](#)

⁶ [Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022- oPt | UNOCHA](#)

⁷ [Palestine | World Food Programme](#)

⁸ [WFP Palestine Monthly Market Dashboard | Food Security Cluster](#)

In Gaza, most households rely on battery power due to regular power outages. Batteries are used to power almost everything, including lights, internet routers, and storing energy from solar panels. Because of the widespread reliance on batteries, used batteries are beginning to pile up in several locations in Gaza. The batteries pose a threat to public health and the environment, as they are stored in the open air and often leak liquids such as sulfuric acid that seep into the soil and the water aquifer. According to estimates, some 25,000 tons of old batteries are piled up around Gaza. Gaza cannot dispose of these batteries safely, as it does not have any recycling facilities and cannot ship them abroad due to the blockade.⁹

COVID-19

The new year has brought an unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases. Every day, the average number of daily cases in Palestine reaches a new high. As of February 1, Palestine reported a new peak of 10,400 new cases. An average of 6,651 new cases are reported each day. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Palestine has reported 535,160 COVID-19 cases and 5,104 cumulative deaths. So far, it has administered more than 3,425,379 vaccine doses, which is enough to vaccinate around 36.6% of the population.¹⁰

Anera's Response

Medical Donations

In order to limit and combat effects of the pandemic, the medical donations team has begun distribution of a shipment from Direct Relief which contained 24,000 3-ply masks and 6,000 protective isolation face shields in the West Bank. In Gaza, the medical donations team is set to receive a shipment of 300,000 masks donated by International Health Partners which arrived at port at the end of January. In addition, a previous offer from Direct Relief for the West Bank containing 840,000 KN95 masks has turned into a shipment. The shipment is currently awaiting authority approvals before the donor ships.

The medical donations team has also received a shipment of ostomy supplies donated by the Friends of Ostomates Worldwide. The shipment contained a large quantity of ostomy supplies which will be distributed to Anera's beneficiaries in Gaza. Furthermore, a shipment containing hypertension medication donated by International Health Partners is set to arrive at Anera's distribution center in early February. The medical donations team has also accepted a large offer of canagliflozin from the Catholic Medical Missions Board which is worth 17.7 million USD. The large quantity of canagliflozin offered will have a large impact on Anera's beneficiaries as it is used to treat Type 2 diabetes – a chronic health condition.

⁹ [Gaza's old battery pileups pose risk to health, environment | AP News](#)

¹⁰ [Palestinian territories: the latest coronavirus counts, charts and maps | Reuters](#)

Food Security

Beginning in October 2021, Anera's Food Security and Livelihood Assistance program is increasing the access to food security and basic needs for vulnerable Gazans. With funding from Islamic Relief USA, Anera is restoring agricultural activity for 240 families and rehabilitating livestock barns for 100 families. In addition, Anera has distributed \$70 food vouchers to 2,500 vulnerable families. The food vouchers can be redeemed at local supermarkets to meet the families' food and nutrition needs. Overall, the program will serve 15,620 Gazans vulnerable to food insecurity.

Education

When kindergarteners returned to in-person classes in August, Anera launched a back-to-school program to support their return. Anera made alterations and upgrades to classrooms in 10 kindergartens across Gaza and provided supplies, including reading and literacy packs for 1,000 children. The goal of the program is to enable children to overcome social, emotional, and cognitive difficulties resulting from the conflict in Gaza, to build resilience, and to develop coping mechanisms. In addition to its back-to-school program, Anera completed the construction of three new preschools in the West Bank communities of As Sammu, Abu Dis, and Deir Qaddis. The schools provide stimulating, inspiring learning environments for young children who otherwise might not be able to attend preschool at all.

Livelihoods

With funding from Humanity First UK, Anera launched a rooftop gardens project to support the food security of vulnerable families in Gaza and enable them to sell their surplus produce to earn additional income. Anera is providing eight families with hydroponic gardens, which require no soil. Because they do not need soil to grow, hydroponic gardens can be built on rooftops and can thrive without the use of Gaza's heavily-polluted soil.

Anera also has an ongoing livelihood program, Women Can, which provides vulnerable Palestinian women heads-of-households with economic and livelihood opportunities. Women Can 2.0 began in September 2020 with funding from IRUSA. It has since empowered 113 women in the West Bank to run small businesses by training them on COVID-19 awareness, social empowerment, and starting and running a business during a pandemic. Anera provided the materials and equipment needed for the women beneficiaries to start or grow a business. Since the beginning of the first Women Can program in September 2019, Anera has provided 222 women livelihood opportunities. Women Can 2.0 will allow Anera to target a total of 122 additional women, 30 of whom reside in Gaza.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

In order to address Gaza's ongoing water crisis, Anera is installing reverse osmosis (RO) desalination units at healthcare facilities, schools, and community centers. The RO units provide safe, potable water at a low cost to address the limited accessibility and high salinity of water in Gaza. Anera recently installed six RO units in three different Gaza governorates and is in the process of installing two more at healthcare facilities.

In addition to the installation of RO units, Anera conducts a long-term WASH program, funded by Islamic Relief USA. Through the WASH IV program, Anera is rehabilitating water and sewage networks, repairing wells, and installing stormwater drainage systems that direct water to Gaza aquifer. Anera is also conducting health awareness sessions to teach best practices to prevent water-borne illnesses despite the difficult circumstances. Currently, Anera has three ongoing projects under the WASH program that will benefit more than 20,000 Gazans upon their completion in January 2022. Through the WASH emergency response, Anera serves 89 families at the household level by installing solar hot water units and rehabilitating kitchens and toilets. By the end of the program in August 2022, WASH IV will directly benefit more than 70,000 Gazans.