



Palestine Situation Report

Food Insecurity

April 7, 2021

Background

Information about the current period of COVID-19, economic recovery, and sporadic violence is summarized in Anera's last [Situation Report \(December 10\)](#).

Details about the flooding in Gaza are available in Anera's [Gaza Flooding Situation Report \(January 25\)](#).

Overview

As Ramadan begins and Easter approaches, Palestinians face increased challenges trying to meet their families' nutritional needs during the holiday season. For Muslims, Ramadan is a time of fasting so a family's daily nutritional needs must be met through one shared iftar meal after sundown. For Christians, Easter brings families together in celebration too, often through shared meals. Unfortunately, many families in Palestine cannot afford the high costs of providing the holiday meals. That makes it harder to meet their nutritional needs.

In addition, celebrations often take place under threats of violence and instability. Despite the holidays, clashes continue between security forces and Palestinians and violence increases across the West Bank.

The increased violence and food insecurity create unique challenges for Palestinian Muslims and Christians and threaten their ability to fully celebrate two of the holiest times of year.

Violence and Insecurity

On March 25, UNOCHA released the Protection of Civilians Report for March 8-21, which details violence against civilians carried out by Israeli security forces. Between March 8 and 21, 222 Palestinians sustained injuries from forces in the West Bank, 37 of whom were children. Since the last UNOCHA Protection of Civilians Report, there has been a 60 percent increase in injuries. Of the reported 222 injuries, 190 occurred in Nablus and Qalqilya during demonstrations against the settlements. Nine injuries resulted from live ammunition, 28 resulted from rubber bullets. The majority of other injuries were caused by inhaling teargas. In addition, Israeli forces conducted 95

operations from March 8-21, leading to the arrest of 143 Palestinians, 12 of whom were children.¹

From March 8-21, UNOCHA also reported 21 settler attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank. So far in 2022, there have been 128 settler attacks, 113 of which resulted in property damage, and 15 of which resulted in casualties. In 2021, there were a total of 496 settler attacks, 126 of which resulted in casualties.²

Food Insecurity and Standard of Living of Christians in Gaza

In 2017, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported around 50,000 Christians live in Palestine, just over 3,000 of whom live in Gaza. Other studies, however, report the number of Christians in Gaza could be under 1,000. Each year, Gaza loses an average 5% of its Christian population as young Christians flee difficult living conditions caused by the blockade on Gaza.³

On November 24, 2021, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories announced that Israel would grant 500 permits for Christian Gazans to travel to the West Bank and East Jerusalem to visit family during the Christmas season. By December 22, authorities had approved 486 out of 824 submitted applications. Over one-third of the permits were granted to children under 16, despite calls for Israel to allow children to travel with their parents without a permit. Authorities denied or failed to respond to roughly 338 applicants. As a result, and some families were forced to spend the holidays apart. There were reports of children receiving permits while their parents were denied entry and some married couples with only one spouse receiving approval.⁴

A 2014 survey sponsored by the YMCA revealed that 41% of Christians in Gaza are graduates, and 60% of Christian graduates are unemployed.⁵

Restriction of Movement

Israeli forces are restricting movement at the main entrances to Burqa and Al Mas'udiya in the northern West Bank, where a settler was killed in December. The entrances are blocked with earth mounds and concrete blocks, forcing 8,000 Palestinians to use long detours and reducing their access to jobs and services. Israeli forces also blocked the main entrance to Sinjil Village in the Ramallah area on March 13 and 19. And they closed a road gate between An Nabi Salih Village and Road 60, an important thoroughfare for Palestinians. These closures disrupted access to jobs and services for around 7,000 Palestinians and forced them to rely on long detours.⁶

¹ [Protection of Civilians Report \(8-21 March 2022\) | UNOCHA](#)

² [Protection of Civilians Report \(8-21 March 2022\) | UNOCHA](#)

³ [Gaza's Christian minority: The hidden victims of Israel's occupation | The New Arab](#)

⁴ [Hundreds of Palestinians Christians in Gaza will mark another Christmas without their families | Gisha](#)

⁵ [Faithful few: can Gaza's Christian community survive? | The Guardian](#)

⁶ [Protection of Civilians Report \(8-21 March 2022\) | UNOCHA](#)

Impact of War in Ukraine

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is impacting food security in Gaza, since many products are imported from Ukraine and Russia. The director-general of the Gazan Ministry of National Economy announced that Gaza has a three-month supply of wheat but the general manager of the largest mill in Palestine reported only a one-month stockpile. Gaza, he said, might have to look elsewhere for wheat imports if the war continues. That would cause suppliers to raise the price of wheat due to the higher cost of importing from other countries. If Gaza were to rely on local flour rather than imports, the cost would also increase significantly due to the high tax on local flour.⁷ At a time when food insecurity is on the rise due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lasting effects of the May 2021 war, increased food costs will greatly impact the ability of vulnerable communities to meet their nutritional needs.

Anera's Response

Food Security during Ramadan

Anera launched its 2022 Ramadan program to help vulnerable families in Gaza and the West Bank access essential food supplies despite higher food costs. With funding from IRUSA, Anera is providing electronic food vouchers to 6,800 families in Gaza and 1,800 in the West Bank, which can be used to purchase fresh produce and groceries that will help cover a family's basic needs during the month of Ramadan. The e-vouchers distributed in Gaza are worth \$80. The e-vouchers in the West Bank are valued at \$100 to accommodate for higher inflation rates.

Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods Support

Anera not only provides immediate support to bolster nutritional needs of vulnerable Gaza families, but also delivers sustainable long-term programs to improve their livelihoods. We currently are implementing a food security and livelihoods support project in Gaza that is rehabilitating the agricultural assets of 340 small scale farmers so that they are better able to increase productivity and generate income.

⁷ [Gaza weary of Ukrainian crisis as wheat supplies dwindle | AI-Monitor](#)