

# West Bank and Gaza – Complex Emergency

JUNE 4, 2021

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<b>2</b> MILLION	<b>1.3</b> MILLION	<b>1.1</b> MILLION	<b>2.45</b> MILLION	<b>654,000</b>
Estimated Population of Gaza	Estimated Number of People in Need in the West Bank and Gaza Due to the May Hostilities	Palestinians Targeted for Humanitarian Assistance Through August 2021	Estimated Number of People in Need in the West Bank and Gaza in 2021	Estimated Number of People in Need of Food Assistance in the West Bank and Gaza
<i>UN – December 2020</i>	<i>UN – May 2021</i>	<i>UN – May 2021</i>	<i>UN – December 2021</i>	<i>UN – May 2021</i>

- Recent hostilities between Israeli security forces and Hamas sharply increased humanitarian needs in the West Bank and Gaza, where an estimated 1.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance due to the May conflict.
- Relief actors continue to stress the need for unimpeded humanitarian access through Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings from Israel into Gaza.
- The USG announced more than \$38 million in new humanitarian assistance for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza on May 25.



<b>TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING</b> For the West Bank and Gaza Response in FY 2021	USAID/BHA <sup>1</sup>	\$20,500,000
	State/PRM <sup>2</sup>	\$58,600,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$79,100,000</b>

*For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 6*

<sup>1</sup>USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### 11-Day Escalation Results in Mass Casualties, Severe Damage in Gaza

Heavy fighting from May 10 to 21—including Israeli airstrikes and shelling in Gaza, rockets and mortars fired into Israel by Hamas, and violence between Israeli security forces and Palestinians in the West Bank and Israel—resulted in civilian casualties, extensive damage to infrastructure, and widespread population displacement, exacerbating preexisting levels of humanitarian need, especially in Gaza. According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Israel's aerial bombardment resulted in the deaths of 256 Palestinians—including at least 128 civilians—and injuries to approximately 2,000 people in Gaza. Hamas rocket attacks and unrest in Israel resulted in the deaths of 12 people, including 11 civilians, and injuries to at least 800 people. In the West Bank, violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces resulted in the deaths of 27 Palestinians and injuries to approximately 6,400 Palestinians. While a May 21 ceasefire continued to hold as of June 4, clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces continued in the West Bank, resulting in two Palestinian deaths between May 21 and 27. The UN also reported an increase in Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank, with 22 attacks recorded in the first three weeks of May, compared to 12 attacks during April.

In addition to the high number of casualties, Israeli airstrikes in Gaza severely damaged or destroyed nearly 2,200 housing units, partially damaged a further 15,000 housing units, and damaged key civilian infrastructure, including nine hospitals, 19 health care facilities, and 58 schools, the UN reports. An estimated 113,000 people were sheltering with host families or in crowded emergency shelters at the height of hostilities, including approximately 77,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) sheltering at schools managed by State/PRM partner the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Following the May 21 ceasefire, the number of IDPs decreased to approximately 8,000 people by June 1, most of whom were sheltering with other households, the UN reports. The 8,000 IDPs are in addition to the estimated 4,000 people who remain displaced—as well as 16,000 people residing in damaged and unrepaired homes—due to heavy fighting between Hamas and Israeli forces in 2014. Humanitarian actors have underscored the urgent need for repairs to damaged houses and infrastructure to support the tens of thousands affected by the recent hostilities, as well as the approximately 1.6 million people in Gaza who required humanitarian assistance prior to the May hostilities.

### UN Releases Flash Appeal for \$95 Million to Meet New Humanitarian Needs

On May 27, the UN launched a flash appeal requesting \$95 million over the next three months to support humanitarian response efforts in Gaza and the West Bank. The figure includes \$89 million for activities in Gaza and \$6 million for activities in the West Bank. Overall, the UN has identified 1.3 million people in need of emergency assistance as a result of the May 10 to 21 hostilities, of whom the UN aims to reach 1.1 million with emergency assistance between June and August. The plan complements the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), released prior to the May escalation of violence, which requested \$417 million to address humanitarian needs; any additional needs beyond the three-month period covered by the flash appeal will be incorporated into the 2022 HRP.

The flash appeal requests \$38.3 million to support nearly 654,000 Palestinians with emergency food assistance, \$19 million to support approximately 54,500 Palestinians with shelter assistance and relief items, and \$10 million to support approximately 800,000 Palestinians with health and nutrition assistance. Additionally, nearly \$28 million is requested to support critical humanitarian protection services; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance; and coordination and support services. The USG continues to support these and other efforts to reach the most vulnerable Palestinians with

humanitarian assistance. Between May 17 and 24, USAID/BHA partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) provided critical relief items and COVID-19 assistance—including face coverings, sanitizer, and soap—to 3,000 people who fled damaged or destroyed homes. In total, CRS aims to utilize USAID/BHA funding to reach nearly 87,000 conflict-affected Palestinians with health and WASH assistance over the coming months.

### **Access Restrictions Impede Relief Efforts**

Restrictions on the movement of goods and people into and out of Gaza are hindering humanitarian response efforts, relief actors report. Though Israeli authorities temporarily reopened the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings from Israel into Gaza on May 21, enabling the entry of some relief commodities and humanitarian personnel, both crossings have largely remained closed since hostilities began on May 10, with minimal exemptions for relief commodities and supplies. The closure of Erez crossing had prevented at least 600 people referred for outside medical treatment from leaving Gaza as of June 1. Furthermore, Gaza's livestock and poultry sectors are at risk of collapse due to the inability to transport adequate supplies of animal fodder through Kerem Shalom, the UN reports. Along the Gaza–Egypt border, Rafah crossing has reopened, enabling some medical patients to seek treatment in Egypt's capital city of Cairo and facilitating the limited movement of goods, including fuel; however, the crossing does not have the capacity to compensate for the closure of Erez and Kerem Shalom, according to the UN. The USG, UN, and other relief actors continue to advocate for unimpeded, predictable, and sustained humanitarian access into and out of Gaza for relief staff, including international and local humanitarian personnel, and commodities; the unimpeded movement of commercial goods, including fuel, required for recovery and reconstruction efforts; and the movement of medical patients referred for treatment outside of Gaza.

### **Trauma Injuries, COVID-19 Strain Gaza's Health Care System**

Gaza's health care system is struggling to respond to the large number of trauma-related injuries following the recent escalation of hostilities due to chronic drug shortages, inadequate medical equipment, the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, and extensive damage to key health care facilities—including the destruction of a health care center that accounted for one-third of Gaza's total COVID-19 vaccination activities prior to the recent conflict—the UN reports. Health Cluster partners have identified trauma and emergency health care services—as well as mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS)—as priority health needs among Gaza's conflict-affected population. INGO Norwegian Refugee Council has expressed concern that the current level of MHPSS needs in Gaza significantly outstrips local capacity to respond, with at least 90 percent of the population requiring MHPSS services due to the intensity of the Israeli aerial bombardment; more than 1 in 10 people—an estimated 210,000 individuals—were already suffering from a severe or moderate form of mental illness in Gaza prior to the May hostilities due to previous escalations in violence, according to the UN World Health Organization (WHO). Relief actors are scaling up both remote and in-person MHPSS services to meet the increase in need.

A projected rise in new COVID-19 cases due to overcrowded conditions in group shelters and host family homes, as well as extensive damage to electricity and WASH infrastructure, is expected to further strain Gaza's health care system. According to the UN, 1.3 million people faced disruptions to sanitation services and 800,000 people faced reduced access to safe drinking water as of May 27, hampering existing COVID-19 mitigation measures and increasing the risk of disease transmission. The WASH Cluster—the coordinating body for humanitarian WASH activities, comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders—has identified an urgent need for household hygiene items, solid waste collection and removal, and water trucking services for affected communities. In addition, while

municipal and utility workers continue to rehabilitate WASH infrastructure and repair electricity networks, a lack of spare parts and equipment, as well as a fear of explosive remnants of war contamination, hinder recovery efforts, relief actors report. Health Cluster partners plan to prioritize the provision of staff, medicines, and medical supplies, as well as repairs to damaged health care facilities, in the effort to bolster local health response capacity over the coming months.

## **USG Announces More than \$38 Million in New Humanitarian Assistance**

On May 25, U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken announced more than \$38 million in additional USG humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people in response to the recent violence. This new funding includes \$5.5 million in immediate humanitarian assistance from USAID/BHA, as well as nearly \$33 million in support of UNRWA from State/PRM. New USAID/BHA funding will support humanitarian partners in Gaza to deliver critical health assistance, MHPSS services, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response activities, and cash assistance to help families purchase basic necessities from local markets. New State/PRM funding will help UNRWA provide food, health, MHPSS, humanitarian protection, shelter, and WASH assistance to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

### **KEY FIGURES**



**1.35 million**

Intended beneficiaries of USG-funded emergency food assistance in the West Bank and Gaza



**15,000**

Intended beneficiaries of USAID/BHA-supported MHPSS interventions in Gaza

## **U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

### **FOOD SECURITY**

Through funding to WFP and UNRWA, the USG is helping food-insecure Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza meet their basic food and nutrition needs. Utilizing funding from State/PRM and other donors, UNRWA plans to distribute food parcels to approximately 1.2 million Palestinian refugees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. USAID/BHA partner WFP aims to meet approximately 60 percent of the food and nutrition needs in the West Bank and Gaza by distributing emergency food vouchers to 125,000 Palestinians, prioritizing female-headed households, older persons, and persons with disabilities or chronic health conditions.

### **PROTECTION**

The USG supports a range of humanitarian protection programs for vulnerable populations in the West Bank and Gaza, with a focus on the particular needs of women and children. Through INGO partner International Medical Corps (IMC), USAID/BHA funding helps boost access to health care services and expand MHPSS support for conflict-affected Gazans, with a focus on psychological first aid and in-person counseling services. State/PRM partner UNRWA also supports children and families with MHPSS services in schools and health care centers, with an emphasis on the prevention of GBV.



**12,000**

Intended beneficiaries of  
USAID/BHA-funded  
MPCA in Gaza

## MULTIPURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE

With funding to UNRWA and one USAID/BHA implementing partner, the USG supports the distribution of multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to help households meet their basic needs in times of crisis. In 2021, UNRWA, with State/PRM and other donor funding, aims to reach more than 200,000 of the most vulnerable refugees in the West Bank and Gaza with MPCA, while one USAID/BHA NGO partner aims to support approximately 12,000 Gazans affected by the May 10 to 21 hostilities with three months' worth of MPCA.



**67,000**

Palestinians expected to  
receive critical IPC  
supplies through CRS-  
managed interventions

## HEALTH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM support health programming throughout the West Bank and Gaza in an effort to reduce the transmission of disease and bolster health care capacity. INGO partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) utilizes USAID/BHA funding to train health care staff and improve infection prevention and control (IPC) measures at health care centers, with a specific focus on preventing COVID-19 transmission. The INGO aims to reach approximately 87,000 Palestinians with COVID-19 risk mitigation messages and provide more than 67,000 Palestinians with critical IPC supplies via e-vouchers. USAID/BHA partner IMC also provides training to health care staff and provides trauma referral services at six health care centers in Gaza, helping ensure continuity of health care amid the recent escalation of conflict.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Protracted conflict, restricted access to basic services, and the health and socioeconomic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have generated significant humanitarian needs in the West Bank and Gaza. Nearly 2.5 million Palestinians—approximately 50 percent of the combined population of the West Bank and Gaza—were in need of humanitarian assistance as of December 2020, according to the UN. The figure includes approximately 1.4 million people with severe humanitarian needs, nearly 80 percent of whom reside in Gaza.
- On March 19, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Jonathan Shrier declared a disaster due to the urgent humanitarian needs resulting from the complex emergency in the West Bank and Gaza.
- Active conflict between Israeli forces and Hamas from May 10 to 21 exacerbated humanitarian needs and resulted in civilian casualties and population displacement in Gaza, as well as violence and unrest throughout Israel and the West Bank. The UN identified approximately 1.3 million people in need as a result of this escalation of violence, some of whom were already relying on some form of humanitarian assistance prior to the recent hostilities. On May 21, parties to the conflict implemented a ceasefire agreement, ending the 11-day period of active conflict.

## USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA RESPONSE IN FY 2021<sup>1</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
CRS	Health	West Bank and Gaza	\$6,000,000
IMC	Health, Protection	Gaza	\$3,100,000
Implementing Partner	MPCA	Gaza	\$2,400,000
WFP	Food Assistance - Vouchers, Local, Regional, International Procurement	West Bank and Gaza	\$9,000,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$20,500,000</b>
<b>STATE/PRM</b>			
UNRWA	Economic Recovery and Market Systems, Education, Food Assistance, Health, Logistics Support, MPCA, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	West Bank and Gaza	\$58,600,000
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING<sup>2</sup></b>			<b>\$58,600,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE WEST BANK AND GAZA RESPONSE IN FY 2021</b>			<b>\$79,100,000</b>

<sup>1</sup>Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of June 4.

<sup>2</sup>State/PRM provided an additional \$89,000,000 to UNRWA for their program budget, a portion of which may have been used in the West Bank and Gaza.

## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)