

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 the best possible operational planning. Sida's humanitarian assistance is based on the four humanitarian principles, in particular **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.

For 2021, Palestine is allocated an initial 75 MSEK. Close monitoring and analysis of the situation in Palestine will continue throughout the year and inform possible decisions on additional funding.

## 1 Crisis overview

### 1.1 Humanitarian overview

The civilian population in Palestine continues to suffer from the consequences of the ongoing Israeli occupation. The intra-Palestinian divide between Fatah and Hamas; lack of political progress on the Middle East Peace Process, the failure of Israel as the occupying power to ensure its obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), combined with the physical and political fragmentation of Palestinian occupied territory have resulted in a deterioration of the living conditions of Palestinians. Recognising that the situation in Palestine is effectively a chronic protection crisis, protection concerns continue to be the primary drivers of humanitarian need. Palestinians face a range of protection threats, including threats to life, liberty and security, destruction or damage to homes and other property, forced displacement, restrictions on freedom of movement and on access to livelihoods, and lack of accountability and effective remedy. Critical challenges relate to the protection of civilians and forced displacement, access to essential services, and erosion of resilience with associated humanitarian consequences that translate into increased and aggravated humanitarian needs.

Palestinians living in the West Bank (including Area C, East Jerusalem and H2- Hebron Area 2 under Israeli military control) continue to be subject to an increasingly coercive environment generated by the ongoing occupation of Palestine and continued Israeli settlement activity considered illegal under International Law. The Government of Israel has expedited controversial settlement expansion plans and settlement infrastructure projects that will further fragment the West Bank, while putting more families at risk of dispossession, displacement, loss of shelter, loss of livelihood, poverty and food insecurity. The demolitions take place in spite of an unprecedented public health crisis, in which Palestinians needed their shelters for social distancing, quarantine and WASH structures to maintain adequate hygiene. The humanitarian community has during 2020 noted an increase in the use of Military Order 1797 in Area C, which allowed for the expedited demolition of new structures within 96 hours of construction, hindering the provision of humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, the Israeli Civil Administration established a new permit regime for access to the Seam Zone, which has been marked by an exponential increase in rejected permit applications further hindering the provision of humanitarian assistance.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is steadily deteriorating, resulting in a very fragile healthcare system which has struggled to cope with the recent COVID-19 outbreak, alongside the collapse of other critical services, degraded infrastructure, lack of electricity 12 hours a day on average, high unemployment (historical high of over 49 %), movement restrictions of goods and people imposed by Israel since 2007, and the constant possibility of further escalation of conflict. Gaza remains cut off from the outside world and the erosion of its productive economy makes it increasingly dependent on external aid.

## 1.2 Affected population

In 2021, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) estimates that approximately 2.45 million Palestinians will require some form of humanitarian assistance. Although this is only slightly more than the estimate for 2020 (2.41 million), due to the new developments detailed above, the number of people suffering from severe, as opposed to moderate, need has increased by 346,000. About 64 per cent of those in need of assistance, or 1.57 million people, live in the Gaza Strip and 36 per cent, 880,000 people, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The pandemic-related restrictions have also exacerbated the prevalence of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), including domestic violence, sexual abuse and forced marriage. About 270,000 children are suffering from severe, moderate or mild forms of mental disorders.

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2020-2021 identified that the vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be high in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The nature of humanitarian need and the assistance required can be grouped in three categories, according to the critical problems that underlie them: those related to lack of protection and displacement; limited access to essential services; and erosion of resilience and preparedness.

## 2 The humanitarian response

### 2.1 National and local response

Based on the Oslo peace agreement parameters from 1993, Palestine is divided into different geographical areas; A, B and C. The Palestinian Authority (PA) has 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, but the PA is responsible for providing core services to the Palestinians, however assistance is delivered sporadically. While the Israeli occupation and blockade are major factors in restricting humanitarian assistance delivery, also Palestinian governance, the fiscal crisis, and lack of Fatah and Hamas reconciliation continue to play a role. Coordination efforts to step up development to compliment the humanitarian assistance work in Area C, continue under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office and with support from different stakeholders.

The support from Sida to national NGOs are mainly channelled through OCHA's humanitarian fund. Through the pooled fund, national partners' relevance capacities are being assessed and monitored on a regular basis.

### 2.2 International response

The international community continues to step in to alleviate the immediate consequences of the occupation. Funding for Palestine, however, remains low and decreasing. According to the FTS, by December 02, 2020, some 232 million USD had been secured of the requested 420 million USD (55.3%) in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Germany ranked as the top humanitarian donor with \$64.9, CERF \$25.3, Japan \$24.7, Belgium \$15.9, EC \$15.0, and Sweden \$7.9. 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.

The 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) amounts to 417 USD million (294 USD million for Gaza, 123 USD million for the West Bank) to implement 186 projects, 167 USD million in partnership with national NGOs and Palestinian Authority institutions (112 projects), 301 USD million for United Nations (of which 173 USD million for UNRWA), 83 USD million to international NGO's, and 33 national NGO's.

In terms of the geographical scope and priorities of the 2021 HRP requirements, projects covering only Gaza represent 294 USD million (70%) of requirements and 123 USD million (30%) for West Bank. The 123 USD million are divided into: 70 USD million Area C, 31 million USD in Area A and B (food), 13 USD million East Jerusalem, and 9 USD million H2/Hebron.

An effective coordination structure exists in Palestine among donors, PA, UN, INGOs and NNGOs. Sida's assessment is still that the cluster coordination needs to be further 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. Belgium and UK 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.

### 2.3 Challenges and risks for the humanitarian response

In the Gaza Strip, the two million Palestinians who have been under an Israeli blockade for over 13 years, have been further isolated from the external world by COVID-19 related restrictions. The operating environment is also impacted by restrictions imposed by the *de facto* authorities affecting, in various ways, the ability to deliver assistance in a timely and efficient manner.

In Area C of the West Bank, heavy administrative, legal and physical obstacles hinder the provision of assistance by humanitarian organisations. Moreover, the operational space for humanitarian and development actors alike continues to shrink. Confiscation and destruction of donor funded humanitarian assistance continues in area C. The space is further shrinking as a result of continued creeping annexation of parts of the West Bank as well as the COVID-19 outbreak.

Humanitarian assistance became more politicized by Israel, PA, and Defacto Gaza Authorities, especially after COVID-19.

Sida's humanitarian partners, both international and local, have the experience and coverage needed to operate in the challenging contexts and the shrinking humanitarian space that characterises both the West Bank and Gaza. To maintain absorption capacity in Gaza, it is essential that the operational humanitarian space is protected and that partners ensure sufficient and adequate human resources.

## 3 Sida's humanitarian allocation

### 3.1 The role of Sida's humanitarian support

Programmes and projects funded by Sida has during 2020 focused on the areas of Education, Food Security, Health, Protection, Emergency Shelter & NFI, and WASH. Specifically, Sida's early disbursement to the humanitarian fund in 2020 contributed to support of the Health Cluster Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, which made possible for the World Health Organization (WHO) to rapidly procure critical health supplies essential to scale up testing, tracing, prevention and treatment for COVID-19 cases. Through the Sida support to the Country Based Pooled Fund in Palestine, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) decided to partially shift funding direction with an aim to further support combating the spread of the virus through supporting the Inter-Agency COVID-19 Response Plan.

In 2020, Sweden remained an active humanitarian actor in Palestine as a member of the locally established Good Humanitarian Donor (GHD), member of the West Bank Protection Consortium (WBPC) as well as having the pen holder role function as coordinator of ten donors plus ECHO. What is referred to as pen holder function is basically a coordination function for WBPC that collects all information on demolition, confiscations, stop working/demolition orders for a joint response among Donors with Israel. Sweden remains as an Advisory Board member in the Country Based Pooled Fund (CBPF).

A gender alert study conducted during 2020 financed by Norway, looked at different needs of women, girls, men and boys with the objective to mainstream gender needs in humanitarian assistance planning, implementation, and monitoring. Gender analysis in humanitarian programming bolsters human rights-based approaches and the ability to serve vulnerable populations. It's too early to present impact of the study. Study recommendations calls for humanitarian actors to apply a gender perspective to design, plan, assessment, implementation and monitoring of their programmes.

The causes of the on-going deterioration of the humanitarian situation need to be addressed through effective advocacy, by calling all parties to comply with 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 a band aid, humanitarian needs will persist, and humanitarian organizations will continue to request – and need - humanitarian funding.

## 3.2 Allocation Priorities 2021

Protection remains the main priority in 2021. A joint development-humanitarian needs analysis was planned to inform the HRP but was postponed due to COVID-19. The GHD group is in discussion with OCHA and Cluster Coordinators on including vulnerable population in Area A & B (446 000) under the 2021 HRP. Sweden and others are of the opinion that needs of this segment of the population are best addressed by the Palestinian Authority utilising development cooperation funds leaving humanitarian actors addressing more severe needs in hard to reach areas.

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 in Palestine will be mainly in the areas of protection and IHL with a contribution to address food security (including cash assistance), mental health, health, WASH, and education through the CBPF.

## 3.3 Partners

The following partners are proposed:

**UNRWA** will receive unearmarked support for UNRWAs emergency appeal for the West Bank and Gaza under the HRP only.

**CBPF Palestine** is a relevant and strategic humanitarian fund with well-functioning structures continued high support is important.

**ICRC** 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. ICRC will help Gazans, and people in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, who lost their homes, strengthen their resilience, and will provide emergency assistance as acute needs arise. It will scale up provision of essential services, especially health care, in the Gaza Strip.

**Islamic Relief’s** overall project goal is to contribute to enhancing food security of highly vulnerable non-refugee population affected by conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic in the Gaza Strip, by two essential components: Cash for work (CFW) opportunities, this will provide temporary employment opportunity with conditional but non restricted cash assistance for one member of 400 food-insecure households for five months creating a total of 44,000 paid working days. Food Vouchers: this will provide monthly unconditional but restricted monthly cash assistance to 1,200 households for a period of six months.

**Swedish Red Cross** in partnership with Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), support will focus on emergency health care, first aid, first response to injured and sick, and to provide targeted support to particularly vulnerable individuals among for example the previously injured in Gaza who became disabled, and to provide a more holistic support based on their needs.

**NRC’s** objective for the Sida-funded 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 and West Bank Protection Consortium humanitarian window.

Sida’s humanitarian allocation to the Palestine crisis in 2021		
Recommended partner for Sida support	Sector/focus of work	Proposed amount
UNRWA	Emergency appeal/Multi Sector	20 000 000
OCHA/CBPF	Multi sector	20 000 000
ICRC	Protection	11 000 000
Swedish Red Cross	Protection & health in emergencies	5 500 000
Islamic relief	Food security	10 000 000
NRC	Protection/Counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)	5 500 000
NRC/WBPC	Preventing the forcible transfer of vulnerable Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem through a protection-centred humanitarian response	3 000 000
		<b>Total: 75 000 000</b>

### 3.4 Strategic humanitarian funding and longer-term assistance

Stronger linkages between humanitarian, recovery and long-term development will continue to be a priority for Sweden’s work in Palestine. The Nexus process has so far proven to be the vehicle to shape a more comprehensive and effective donor (mainly European) response to the protracted Palestinian crisis.

Humanitarian partners uses the evidence base from NGO operations in Palestine to monitor aid obstruction trends and advocate for enhanced access, movement, safety and operational space to ensure the delivery of principled, effective, timely and unimpeded assistance. Humanitarian and political advocacy continues to be one of the core issues in order to promote accountability among duty bearers.

# Humanitarian Crisis Analysis 2021

Sida's humanitarian unit's planned support the ICRC resilience project in Gaza provide 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 intervention support the restoration of essential services and livelihoods, while also helping to strengthen resilience at the onset of the crisis.

Another potential is the planned support to the West Bank Protection Consortium administered by NRC with the aim to support resilience targeting the most vulnerable Palestinians in geographical areas being identified in Sweden's country strategy for Palestine as a priority focus.

The EAPPI programme allows for continued presence of 25-30 ecumenical companions on the ground, serving for three months in accompanying and offering the Palestinian population protective presence and documenting protection violations.

For 2022, the consolidation of the portfolio will continue.

## 4 References

OCHA HNO 2020

OCHA HRP 2020

ECHO/HIP 2020

ICRC Appeal 2020