

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) PALESTINE¹

The full implementation of this version of the HIP is conditional upon the payment of the Member State's contribution.

AMOUNT: EUR 26 588 797

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2022/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annexes² is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO³'s partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

Third modification – 2 December 2022

Settlement activity, demolitions and settler violence continue unabated contributing to an increasingly coercive environment for Palestinian communities in Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with many people having limited or no access to basic services and at constant risk of being forcibly displaced. 2021 marked a five-year high in terms of the number of structures demolished and people displaced, with this trend continuing in 2022. In light of these continued and worsening conditions and trends, Finland, France and Spain have pledged to transfer to the European Commission's budget a contribution⁴ to support humanitarian assistance and protection for those in need.

The following contributions, for a total of EUR 1 680 000 from external assigned revenue, have been added to this HIP: EUR 480 000 (Finland), EUR 720 000 (France), EUR 480 000 (Spain).

This modification concerns also the indicative amount of EUR 2 million initially allocated to Palestine for Disaster Preparedness which has been transferred to another HIP as the needs in Palestine are covered by the IFRC pilot Programmatic Partnership action 'Accelerating local action in humanitarian and health crises'.

¹ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

² Technical annex and thematic policies annex

³ Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

⁴ The full implementation of this version of the HIP is conditional upon the payment of the Member State's contribution of EUR 1 750 000 to the EU budget as externally assigned revenue minus a 4% management fee.

Second modification – 5 August 2022

This modification is intended to transfer EUR 1 428 797 to be allocated to the IFRC pilot Programmatic Partnership action ‘Accelerating local action in humanitarian and health crises’.

First modification – 29 June 2022

Settlement activity, demolitions and settler violence continue unabated contributing to an increasingly coercive environment for Palestinian communities in Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with many people having limited or no access to basic services and at constant risk of being forcibly displaced. 2021 marked a five-year high in terms of the number of structures demolished and people displaced, with this trend continuing in 2022. In light of these continued and worsening conditions and trends, Italy has pledged to transfer to the European Commission's budget a contribution⁵ to support humanitarian assistance and protection for those in need.

A contribution of EUR 480 000 from external assigned revenue (Italy) has been added to this HIP.

1. CONTEXT

The Palestinian civilian population continues to suffer from the consequences of Israel's prolonged occupation. The lack of political progress on the Middle East Peace Process, the failure of Israel as the occupying power to comply with its obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL), combined with the physical and political fragmentation of Palestinian territory, has accelerated the deterioration of what has been a protracted protection crisis with grave humanitarian consequences.

Palestinians living in the West Bank (including Area C, East Jerusalem and H2⁶) continue to be subject to an increasingly coercive environment generated by the ongoing occupation of Palestine, continued Israeli settlement activity⁷, and settler violence, resulting in a wide range of humanitarian needs. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is steadily

⁵ The full implementation of this version of the HIP is conditional upon the payment of the Member State's contribution of EUR 500 000 to the EU budget as externally assigned revenue.

⁶ “Israel exercises direct control over 20 per cent of Hebron City, known as H2, which is home to some 33,000 Palestinians and a few hundred Israeli settlers. This area has witnessed multiple cycles of violence in the context of continuing settlement activities, which are in contravention of international law” (UNOCHA – H2 Spotlight – April 2019).

⁷ “In Resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council reaffirmed that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, had no legal validity and constituted a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. In the same resolution, the Council reiterated its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respects all its legal obligations in that regard” (Security Council Report, 18 June 2020).

deteriorating, resulting in a very fragile healthcare system alongside the collapse of other critical services, massively degraded infrastructure, lack of electricity, crippling unemployment, movement restrictions of goods and people, 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.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the escalation of Israeli-Palestinian hostilities in May 2021 have further exacerbated humanitarian needs in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank, while generating additional socio-economic needs which must be addressed jointly with development actors.

DG ECHO's Integrated Analysis Framework for 2021-2022 identified high humanitarian needs in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The vulnerability of the population affected by the crisis is assessed to be high.

	Palestine
INFORM Risk Index⁸	
Vulnerability Index	6.4
Hazard and Exposure	5.4
Lack of Coping Capacity	4.1
Global Crisis Severity Index⁹	
Projected conflict risk	3
Uprooted People Index	3
Humanitarian Conditions	3.5
Natural Disaster Index	3.1
HDI Ranking¹⁰ (Value)	0.708
Total Population¹¹	5 200 000

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

1) People in need of humanitarian assistance

Out of a total population of 5.2 million, approximately 2.45 million people need humanitarian assistance, 0.88 million of which are in the West Bank and 1.57 million in the Gaza Strip¹².

	Palestine ¹³	Disaggregated data ¹⁴
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⁸ INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters

⁹ <http://www.inform-index.org/Global-Crisis-Severity-Index-beta>

¹⁰ Humanitarian Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/PSE>

¹¹ UNOCHA – 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview

¹² UN OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021 – oPt Dashboard

¹³ UN OCHA 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview

¹⁴ UN OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021 – oPt Dashboard

		Female	Children	People with Disability
People facing critical problems relating to protection and forced displacement (Area C, East Jerusalem, H2)	2.1 million	52%	50%	5.8%
People facing critical problems relating to access to essential services (Area C, East Jerusalem, H2, Gaza Strip)	1.5 million	51%	68%	5.8%
People living under the poverty line	1.5 million			
Children with challenges in safely accessing inclusive, quality education	489 000	48%	97%	2%
IDPs in Gaza	8 250			

2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

2.2.1 Protection

In the West Bank (including East Jerusalem and H2) Palestinians are at increased risk of forced displacement and dispossession of land and housing at both household and community level. This is triggered by multiple factors, including the increase in settlement expansion, the destruction and demolition of property, forced evictions, increased settler violence, military activities near residential areas, revocation of residency status, and restrictions on access to essential services, including education. In Gaza, prolonged conflict and occupation are directly impacting the lives and livelihoods of the population and denying them safety and access to essential services, such as health care, safe drinking water and education. Under a 15-year closure, Gaza has limited access to basic commodities and restricted freedom of movement. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing protection risks, most notably in areas of gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection (CP). The escalation of violence in May 2021 has placed further pressure on overstretched and insufficient protection services and resources.

2.2.2 Health

The health care system in Gaza is structurally poor and on the verge of collapse. Limited access to essential health services is compounded by shortages in essential drugs and equipment, specialised medical staff, seriously restricted medical referrals outside Gaza, a chronic electricity crisis and lack of availability of potable water. In the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, the health care system is also heavily impacted by the spread of COVID-19. Specific needs also include support to mental health, psychosocial support and trauma services.

2.2.3 WaSH and shelter

Lack of access to potable water remains a major challenge for many communities in the West Bank, compounded by increased demolition of WaSH infrastructure. In Gaza, in addition to a chronic shortage of safe water, the lack of electricity to run the sewage treatment plant results in a higher risk of water contamination (for both underground and coastal aquifers). Inadequate shelter poses both health and protection risks. The already dire situation has been exacerbated after the May 2021 military hostilities, which caused extensive damage to critical infrastructure and WaSH facilities in Gaza.

2.2.4 Livelihoods/basic needs

In Gaza, the most vulnerable and poorest households, with no access to regular income and high levels of dependency, must be provided with alternatives to resorting to negative coping strategies, like incurring significant debts to meet basic needs and access services. The recent conflict has added a layer of distress on the livelihoods of farmers, fishermen, small businesses, and daily workers. Increasing resilience to emergencies through a basic needs approach remains essential amidst declining socio-economic indicators and reduced employment opportunities.

2.2.5 Education in Emergencies

There are highly vulnerable communities in Palestine that require safe access to education, with education facilities requiring protection from attack and psycho-social support for children and teachers. The use of force in and around education facilities, exposure to settler intimidation and settler violence, demolition and confiscation of school structures remain a reality in the daily lives of Palestinian children in the West Bank. The situation in the Gaza Strip is marked by severely disrupted services, including the ability to conduct regular educational activities. Combined with their negative psycho-social effects, these factors have affected student well-being, performance, and completion rates. For children affected by the crises, including those with disabilities, safe access to education remains a challenge. COVID-19 has further reduced access to education and has had significant impact on the education system and on the well-being and learning outcomes of children.

2.2.6 Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction

The local populations is exposed to a range of hazards and threats, notably risks of earthquakes, floods, droughts and landslides, and man-made hazards, including violent conflict, stress on natural resources, and environmental degradation, compounded by rapid and unregulated urbanisation as well as climate change. Health and community disaster preparedness have been identified as key areas needing further support.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

1) National/local response and involvement

In its National Policy Agenda (2017-2022), the Palestinian Authority (PA) envisages, among its different priorities, national unity with one land and one people. These priorities remain unachievable for a variety of reasons, including unilateral political decisions and restrictions imposed by Israel on the PA, the intra-Palestinian divide, the postponement of

the Palestinian elections, and the fiscal crisis. These factors, coupled with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and recurrent escalation of hostilities, restrain Palestinian economic and institutional development, which limits the PA's already vulnerable fiscal autonomy and stability. In the Gaza Strip, the ability of central and municipal authorities to exercise basic governance in public sectors is sharply reduced. Overall, national preparedness and response capacities are facing enormous challenges.

2) International Humanitarian Response

The EU provides humanitarian assistance to help meet Palestinians' basic needs and is coordinating closely with EU Member States and the wider donor community.

The standard UN Humanitarian Response Plan for 2021 amounts to USD 417 million and focuses mostly on protection, access to basic needs, and health. As of October 2021, the HRP was funded at 68 %.

In response to the escalation of hostilities in May 2021, several appeals were launched, including the Inter-Agency Flash Appeal for USD 95 million (70% funded as of October 2021), the UNRWA Flash Appeal followed by the Updated Humanitarian and Early Recovery Appeal for USD 164 million, and the ICRC Appeal for CHF 10 million.

3) Operational constraints *in terms of*:

i.) access/humanitarian space:

In the West Bank, heavy administrative, legal, and physical obstacles hinder the provision of assistance by humanitarian organisations. The continued settlement activities as well as attacks, and the threat thereof, against humanitarian field personnel further restricts the humanitarian space. The closure of the Gaza Strip continues to be enforced by Israel through increased restrictions on movement of people and goods, in and out of Gaza. 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.

ii.) partners (presence, capacity), including absorption capacity on the ground:

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. The absorption capacity and efficiency of operations of partners is satisfactory. However, partners operate in two entirely different operational contexts: operations in the West Bank are presently considered more efficient than in Gaza, where the closure leads to import, access and movement restrictions, as well as limited investments. To maintain absorption capacity in Gaza, it is essential that the operational humanitarian space is protected and that partners ensure the deployment of adequate human resources.

4. HUMANITARIAN – DEVELOPMENT – PEACE NEXUS

In line with the Council Conclusions on the operationalisation of the humanitarian–development nexus¹⁵, close collaboration with other Commission services and EU Member States will continue to be sought to promote linkages and complementarities between respective interventions and to plan for longer-term structural and sustainable funding mechanisms. DG ECHO partners will continue to be encouraged to work through local partners and, where needed, to strengthen their operational and administrative capacity.

In 2020-21, the Commission (DG ECHO, DG NEAR, EEAS, FPI), the EU Member States and like-minded partners, such as Switzerland, jointly identified several priorities to initiate the implementation of the nexus approach in alignment with the European Joint Strategy in support of Palestine. Joint analyses and roadmaps for implementation were drafted in 2021 in sectors such as water/WaSH, health and social assistance. This HIP and the European Joint Strategy 2021-2024 document are the key strategic and programmatic frameworks to guide the implementation of the nexus for 2022 and beyond. It is hoped that, in time, this work can lead to a fully-fledged Joint Humanitarian-Development Framework and to advancing on the triple nexus.

Cash transfers, health and WaSH have been identified as a priority to implement the nexus in 2022 by building complementarities and synergies, in particular with other EU services. In this context, DG ECHO intends focusing on preparedness and response to health emergencies, such as those arising from the May 2021 hostilities, and on access to safe water through emergency rehabilitation and purification systems while other services address structural/long term issues such as the development of the Gaza Central Desalination Plant. DG ECHO also aims to further explore opportunities to align short-term humanitarian cash transfer projects to the Palestine-wide social protection programme supported through the European Union's PEGASE support programme. In the medium term, however, DG ECHO still aims to gradually exit from the delivery of cash addressing structural basic needs, which should become part of the shock-responsive element of a social protection scheme, and should in principle be supported by more development-oriented donors. Further development of the link between humanitarian cash transfers, social protection and access to livelihood/graduation will be sought as will opportunities to broaden interest in cash transfers among a wider group of donors.

DG ECHO will continue encouraging development actors to focus on the water infrastructure and sector reform in health and WaSH, on financing essential social services, as well as on livelihoods and income generation opportunities to promote the graduation approach, from aid dependency to self-reliance, which is central to longer-term development goals

5. ENVISAGED DG ECHO RESPONSE AND EXPECTED RESULTS OF HUMANITARIAN AID INTERVENTIONS

5.1 Envisaged DG ECHO response

DG ECHO's strategy in Palestine will continue to focus on the protection of the most vulnerable population groups. It will seek to provide life-saving assistance, reduce

¹⁵ EU Council Conclusions on operationalising the humanitarian – development nexus – May 19, 2017.

vulnerabilities, and uphold human dignity by focusing on integrated, multi-sectoral interventions, in the priority sectors described below where the overall aim of all operations is a protection outcome. DG ECHO will continue to highlight and advocate against recurrent violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Complementarity and alignment with other programmes that support transition strategies and sustainable programming would be favorably considered.

In the Gaza Strip, DG ECHO will mainly focus its assistance on the most vulnerable households with a predicted *per capita* consumption below the national ‘deep poverty line’ using a Proxy Means Test Formula¹⁶ or commonly identified needs-based vulnerability criteria; households with difficult or no access to basic services and demonstrated severe negative coping strategies; individuals with health needs as a result of escalation in violence, disease outbreaks or possible natural disasters. In the West Bank, targeting will prioritise Palestinians living in communities vulnerable to annexation or forced displacement, including families in East Jerusalem neighborhoods, Bedouin communities in the Jerusalem periphery, residents in and around Hebron or residents of areas designated as closed military zones; vulnerable communities with little or no access to basic services; households affected by settler violence, demolition and confiscation of private property and whose livelihoods are at risk.

Protection

In the West Bank, DG ECHO’s strategy will focus on reinforcing the response to demolitions, setting up preventive measures against the destruction of Palestinian assets and increasing resilience to IHL violations. This will be achieved by providing targeted legal aid, material assistance and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) to those communities who are the most vulnerable to protection violations such as settler violence and forced displacement. Strengthening socio-economic resilience will be sought to improve living conditions and allow communities to remain in their current residence. In Gaza, the focus should be on preparedness to shocks, a basic protection package, such as medical, MHPSS and legal support, to respond to protection violations and mitigating the use of dangerous coping strategies. These actions will be coupled with sustained evidence-based advocacy to prevent and contain IHL violations and preserve humanitarian space.

Health

DG ECHO will prioritise interventions aimed at providing lifesaving healthcare assistance to victims of violence, including emergency, post-operative and rehabilitation care. With the increased demand generated by the increased hostilities coupled with the continued COVID-19 pandemic in Gaza and the West Bank, DG ECHO will focus on the delivery of essential medical equipment to support emergency health care systems, including trauma services in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This approach will also guide the work on the nexus where DG ECHO will focus on emergency response and preparedness.

¹⁶ The concept of proxy means testing is usually understood as using observable characteristics of the household or its members to estimate their incomes or consumption, when other income data (salary slips, tax returns) are unavailable or unreliable.

WaSH

Interventions should aim to maintain a minimum level of WaSH and Shelter emergency response capacity that also includes protection mainstreaming. The ability to maintain capacity to respond as needed to uphold minimum standards need to be ensured. Safe access to water is an area with potential for a nexus approach.

Basic Needs Approach

DG ECHO will continue with the prioritisation of cash transfers over vouchers and in-kind assistance as the default modality and with appropriate safeguards to help the most vulnerable groups meet their most pressing needs. DG ECHO will support multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) to cover basic needs and education in emergencies. Support to relevant common, integrated and targeted approaches and to inter-operable beneficiaries' platforms will be a priority and highly relevant for the nexus, with DG ECHO promoting the enhancement of the Government-led social protection system.

Education in emergencies

The focus will remain on safe access to protected learning environments, including the protection of education from attacks, ensuring learning continuity in crises, and addressing the psychosocial support needs of children in highly vulnerable communities in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Assistance will be provided in complementarity with the support provided by other donors and EU services, including to UNRWA.

Disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction

DG ECHO will focus on strengthening health emergency preparedness and response capacities, with protection mainstreamed across all operations. Particular attention will be given to the reinforcement of health capacities to prevent and mitigate the impact of recurrent escalation of conflict, working especially at community level and including a strong focus on International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

5.2 Other DG ECHO interventions

The Emergency Toolbox HIP may be drawn upon for the prevention of, and response to, outbreaks of epidemics. Under the Emergency Toolbox HIP, the Small-Scale Response, Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT) and Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) instruments may also provide funding options.