

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP) PALESTINE¹

AMOUNT: 92 972 388

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2023/01000 (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 – 19 November 2023

A month and a half after the out-break of large-scale hostilities in the Gaza strip on 7 October 2023, the situation has become catastrophic. The complete siege of Gaza continues, and the humanitarian situation has dramatically deteriorated with very high numbers of casualties, injuries, a complete collapse of basic services and serious violations of International Humanitarian Law. While some trucks with life-saving supplies have been able to enter Gaza, the humanitarian space is extremely restricted. The surge of violence in the West Bank and the related humanitarian consequences continue to be also highly concerning.

An additional EUR 25 million has been allocated to address the dramatically deteriorating situation, notably in Gaza, but also in the West Bank, through the provision of assistance in particular for improving the access to basic services as well as the protection of the most vulnerable.

Second modification – 19 October 2023

Large-scale hostilities broke out in October 2023 in and around Gaza, causing a massive deterioration of the already dire humanitarian situation. The situation is also affecting humanitarian needs in the West Bank. All indicators point to an unprecedented dramatic situation and massive humanitarian needs of more than 2 million people in Gaza, largely exceeding local response capacity and requiring a substantial international aid operation. Ongoing hostilities have led to massive destruction in Gaza and left several thousands killed or injured. All public services, notably in the sector of health and water are affected by the complete siege of Gaza and are at the brink of collapse. Food supplies are

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).

interrupted. More than 1 million people are displaced. As a direct consequence of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza, the already very fragile and tense situation across the West Bank has also deteriorated, with several dozen people killed, and a notable increase in violence, movement restrictions, arrests and displacement of Palestinians. An additional EUR 40 million has been allocated to address the dramatically deteriorating situation, notably in Gaza, but also in the West Bank, through the provision of assistance in particular for improving access to health care, safe water, food, shelter/NFI as well as protection.

First modification – 7 July 2023

This modification entails two changes:

The first modification is intended to transfer EUR 2 332 388 to be allocated to the IFRC pilot Programmatic Partnership action ‘Accelerating local action in humanitarian and health crises’.

The second modification is a contribution of EUR 480 000 from external assigned revenue (Finland) and of EUR 960 000 (Spain) that have been added to this HIP. 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. While 2022 marked a five-year high in terms of the number of structures demolished and people displaced, this trend is continuing in 2023. In light of these continued and worsening conditions and trends, Finland and Spain have pledged to transfer to the European Commission's budget a contribution⁴ to support humanitarian assistance and protection for those in need.

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 the 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 H2⁵) continue to be subject to an increasingly coercive environment generated by the ongoing occupation

⁴ The full implementation of this version of the HIP is conditional upon the payment of the Member State's contribution of EUR 480 000 and EUR 960 000 to the EU budget as externally assigned revenue.

⁵ “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).

of Palestine, continued Israeli settlement activity⁶, and settler violence, resulting in a wide range of humanitarian needs. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is steadily 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 lack of recovery measures after the cycle of hostilities in May 2021 in Gaza, and the effects of the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine 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. Hostilities in August 2022 caused more loss of life and further damage to infrastructure and homes in Gaza.

DG ECHO's needs assessment for 2022-2023 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 Index⁷	4.6
Vulnerability Index	6.1
Hazard and Exposure	4.1
Lack of Coping Capacity	4.0
Global Crisis Severity Index⁸	
Projected conflict risk	7.0
Uprooted People Index	10.0
Humanitarian Conditions	3.2
Natural Disaster Index	3.3
HDI Ranking⁹ (Value)	0.70
Total Population¹⁰	5 300 000

⁶ “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).

⁷ INFORM is a global, open-source risk assessment for humanitarian crises and disasters

⁸ <http://www.inform-index.org/Global-Crisis-Severity-Index-beta>

⁹ Humanitarian Development Index (HDI) developed by UNDP <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/PSE>

¹⁰ UNOCHA – 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

1) People in need of humanitarian assistance

Out of a total population of 5.3 million, approximately 2.1 million people need humanitarian assistance, 0.75 million of which are in the West Bank and 1.33 million in the Gaza Strip¹¹.

	Palestine ¹²	Disaggregated data ¹³		
		Female	Children	People with Disability
People at risk of conflict, violence and displacement, including forcible transfer (Area C, H2, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip)	1.32 million	49%	37%	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	800 000			
Children with challenges in safely accessing inclusive, quality education	579 000	56%	97%	2%
IDPs in Gaza	7 600 ¹⁴			

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 forcible 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 and specialised protection services that respond to individual protection incidents such as gender-based violence (GBV), abuse and violence against children, women and men. In Gaza, prolonged conflict

¹¹ UN OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022 – oPt Dashboard (figures are rounded; PIN 2,075,542 - 747,420 WB and 1,328,122 GS)

¹² UN OCHA 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan

¹³ UN OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022– oPt Dashboard

¹⁴ Shelter Cluster – August 2022

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 blockade, Gaza has limited access to basic commodities and restricted freedom of movement. Protection risks affecting women, girls and boys, and marginalised communities including persons with disability remain pervasive.

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. The increase in violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has generated critical needs in mental health, psychosocial support and life-saving 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 May 2021 hostilities have added a layer of distress to 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 severe disruption of services, including the ability to conduct regular educational activities. Combined with their negative psycho-social effects, these factors have affected student and classroom well-being, performance, attendance and completion rates. For children affected by the crises, including those with disabilities, safe

access to education remains a challenge. In addition to disruption of education as a result of the above, COVID-19 has left a significant impact on the learning outcomes of children.

2.2.6 Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Risk Reduction

Local populations are exposed to a range of hazards of natural origin (earthquakes, floods, droughts, landslides) but even more importantly to human induced threats. The risk of conflict and escalation of violence remain high, especially in Gaza, while East Jerusalem and the West Bank see an increase in clashes and casualties resulting from direct confrontations. The health system remains insufficiently prepared to ensure adequate mass casualty management in case of large escalations while communities remain highly vulnerable to sudden onset disasters, compounded by the negative consequences of the occupation, rapid urbanisation, and the effects of climate change. Health and trauma preparedness have been identified as specific areas in need of further targeted DP support. Palestine is affected by many environmental challenges, among them waste management issues, unmet energy needs, water stress/ensuring access to water without over-extraction, as well as desertification and land degradation, with an overuse of pesticides and fertilisers.

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, the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and recurrent escalations 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 within the framework of the European Joint Strategy in support of Palestine 2021-2024, and the wider donor community.

The UN Humanitarian Response Plan for 2022 amounts to USD 510 million and focuses mostly on protection, access to basic needs, and health. As of October 2022, the HRP was funded at 66%. The UN oPt Humanitarian Fund (oPt HF) has a total of US\$ 7.1 million addressing urgent needs in the Gaza Strip (50%) and West Bank (50%), as of August 2022.¹⁵

¹⁵ UNOCHA – Humanitarian Key Facts and Figures – September 2022

Under the leading role of the UN Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator (HC/RC), UNOCHA provides Coordination and Support Services (CSS). The Humanitarian Country Team comprises representatives of UN agencies, international and local NGO networks while the Red Cross movement has a status of active observer. Cluster and Inter-Cluster systems operate in the West Bank and in Gaza.

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 and civic 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 implementation of the humanitarian–development nexus¹⁶, 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 EU (DG ECHO, DG NEAR, EEAS, FPI) and its 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. DG ECHO's HIP 2023 and

¹⁶ EU Council Conclusions on operationalising the humanitarian – development nexus – May 19, 2017.

the European Joint Strategy 2021-2024, recently approved, represent the key strategic and programmatic frameworks to guide the implementation of the nexus. Implementation of these strategies will be pursued from 2023 onwards. DG ECHO remains committed to working with relevant Commission Services and the EEAS, as well as EU Member States to implement the European Joint Strategy and to advancing on the triple nexus.

Cash assistance/social protection, health and WASH have been agreed by relevant EU services as priority sectors for the implementation of the nexus, with a particular focus on specific areas (Area Based Approach). DG ECHO intends focusing on preparedness and response to health emergencies, 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. This approach is already well established and will guide DG ECHO's funding decisions in 2023. 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 reduce its financial support to the delivery of cash addressing structural basic needs, which should become part of the shock-responsive element of a social protection scheme supported by more development-oriented donors. This remains however a medium term objective. 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. Increased self-reliance of the population in these and other areas helps to support the achievement of the triple nexus.

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 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 violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), drawing on the evidence-based information and advocacy tools developed by the UN for this purpose. 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 affected by shocks with a predicted *per capita* consumption below the national

‘deep poverty line’ using a Proxy Means Test Formula¹⁷ 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 escalations 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 IHL violations and protection risks 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 assessments by DG ECHO partners for continued evidence-based advocacy to prevent and contain IHL violations and protection risks, and preserve humanitarian space. Facilitation of access, referrals and support to specialised protection services to respond to child protection and gender-based violence might be considered. Given the sustained risks and protracted needs under this sector of intervention, DG ECHO will consider some actions for multiannual planning.

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 hostilities, coupled with the risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in Gaza and the West Bank, DG ECHO will focus on the delivery of essential MHPSS services with referral pathways established across sectors and protection actors in particular. In addition, proposed interventions could focus on the provision of 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. Given the weak waste management infrastructure, care should be taken to minimise waste generated by these activities, and any chemical and hazardous waste should be safely disposed of, in line with the minimum environmental requirements.

¹⁷ 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 and should be done with a sensitivity to water scarcity in the region.

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. Support to relevant common, integrated and targeted approaches and to inter-operable beneficiary platforms will be a priority and highly relevant for the nexus, with DG ECHO promoting the enhancement of the Government-led social protection system. DG ECHO's strong focus on cash transfer modalities and delivery of very specific services contributes to aid efficiency and effectiveness while minimising supply chain risks and obstacles.

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. With due consideration for Education in emergency sector frameworks, strategies for more pertinent, effective, coordinated, and harmonised programming will be considered. Assistance will be provided in complementarity with the support provided by other donors and EU services, including to UNRWA. This sector of intervention will continue to benefit from a multi-annual strategic perspective.

Disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction

Health and trauma preparedness have been identified as specific areas in need of further targeted DP support. 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 escalations of conflict, working especially at community level and including a strong focus on International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Integrated community DRR actions in very vulnerable communities of Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem will also be addressed while risk informed programming will continue to be supported through Crisis Modifiers in areas most at risk.

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.

In view of the importance of logistics for humanitarian operations, DG ECHO remains also committed to contribute to logistics operations, via funding or any other tool, such as the European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC), at its disposal. The EHRC is a global initiative, aiming at supporting the delivery of humanitarian assistance with a gap-filling approach. Under the EHRC the Commission has at its disposal several tools that can be activated in case of sudden onset disasters, e.g. a series of Common Logistics Services (including air operations, warehousing services, last-mile ground transportation, etc.), and a stockpile of emergency WASH and shelter items to be pre-positioned in regional warehouses worldwide.