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World Food Programme

WFP operations in the occupied Palestinian territory

Situation Report

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WFP operations in oPt

WFP has been providing food assistance to the oPt since 1991. The Country Office is located in Jerusalem, and is supported by an office in Gaza, two sub-offices (Nablus and Hebron) and one port office (Ashdod). WFP employs over 100 staff in the oPt, both national and international.

WFP's **PRRO** (Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation) started in September 2007 to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable non-refugees; it has covered both the West Bank and Gaza till December 08. Since January 09, following Operation 'Cast Lead' and the launch of WFP's Emergency Operation Lifeline Gaza (EMOP—see below), it has been assisting beneficiaries in the West Bank only. The PRRO consists of four main interventions: (i) Emergency relief for the destitute (in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA)); (ii) Livelihood support for vulnerable households (poor farmers, unemployed workers and vulnerable women most affected by poverty and who have only partial means to cope with food insecurity); (iii) School Meals in the most food-insecure areas through cash-for-work activities, (nutritious snacks are prepared by bakeries and women centres which receive food commodities and cash from WFP); and (iv) Food-for-Work and Food-for-Training to contribute to and promote self-reliance by preserving agricultural assets to restore livelihoods.

To respond to the high food prices, WFP launched in April 2009 a **Food Voucher EMOP**



in the West Bank covering approximately 5,500 families in urban areas, selected on the basis of two key studies conducted in 2008 (Safety Net Mission and Rapid Joint Food Security Assessment).

Following the military operation in Gaza, two new operations were launched in January 2009: the EMOP Operation Lifeline Gaza and the Logistics Cluster Special Operation (SO). In the aftermath of 'Operation Cast Lead' and until October 2009, the **EMOP** targeted 365,000 beneficiaries through general food distribution and school feeding, i.e., 80 percent of the non-refugee population in Gaza, aiming at meeting the immediate needs of the population affected by the conflict as well as improving the food consumption of families and individuals in need. As of November

and following cross-checking of beneficiary lists with the Ministry of Social Affairs and CHF, WFP has reduced the number of general food distribution beneficiaries. Over 358,000 beneficiaries are now assisted through General food distributions, school feeding and vouchers. 15,000 beneficiaries are receiving vouchers in urban areas of North Gaza, Gaza and Khan Younis. This enables them to access a range of various commodities including protein-rich food (dairy products and eggs) directly from small and medium-sized shop keepers while saving cash for other essential food and non-food commodities. WFP also thrives to maintain the enrolment of children in schools through the daily distribution of milk and biscuits to 92,000 schoolchildren.

WFP oPt at a glance (as of Dec 2009)

PRRO West Bank	<i>Planned beneficiaries</i>
- General food distribution	249,600
- School feeding	62,000
- FFW/FFT	29,000
EMOP Gaza	<i>Planned beneficiaries</i>
- General food distribution	251,500
- School feeding	92,000
- Cash voucher	15,000
EMOP Food Voucher West Bank	31,000
Current stock for Gaza (MT)	7,490*
Current stock for West Bank (MT)	10,676*
* Includes WFP stocks only	

Picture:

Mohamed El Jamaleh
WFP Gaza

Gas bottles lining up for refill in Gaza

Operational Update

In November 2009, WFP delivered 3,462 mt (84 trucks) of food commodities in the **Gaza Strip** and was able to distribute 2,358 mt of food to 164,517 beneficiaries in Gaza, in cooperation with CHF and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA).

In the **West Bank**, WFP delivered 3,705 mt (101 trucks) of food commodities during the reporting period and distributed 3,616 mt to 254,797 beneficiaries, in cooperation with the MoEHE, MSA, NEF, CRS and CHF.

Since 25 January the **Logistics Cluster** has delivered 6,812 pallets of humanitarian cargo to the Gaza Strip through Kerem Shalom crossing, on behalf of 33 cluster participants.



The number of trucks-per-day entering the Gaza Strip increased from 79 in October to 84 in November, but remains well below the operating capacity of 150 per day. 84 percent of the trucks are private.

"I was very excited when my husband received his first food ration coupon from WFP. I have two daughters and two sons, and we really need the food" says Safia Totah, an energetic Gazan housewife and one of WFP's beneficiaries. "We have many debts and school expenses have become a serious burden. My husband was a carpenter and we lived a luxurious life until the blockade. The workshop has stopped and we could not afford our children's needs anymore".

Safia is one of many Palestinian women whose husband is unemployed. "Our monthly income is zero, my family had lost hope and nothing seemed to change our reality". Safia holds a Bachelor degree and has been knocking on all doors for a job, in vain. She hopes for a better future for her children. Shadia is 9, Adnan 7, Omar 5 and Shahd is only 3 years old. They're smart and get good grades.

"We tried to find food assistance but most assistance goes to refugees. But poverty and blockade do not make a distinction between refugees and non-refugees. We are all the same victims. We are very grateful for WFP's assistance to the non-refugees. The chance for a better life is very limited here, the war and blockade have caused much suffering and people have very little hope for the future". Now we can save some money thanks to the free food and I can once again encourage my daughters to complete their studies. Shadia will surely become a lawyer one day".

Story:

Nisreen AlMadhoun
WFP Gaza

Picture:

Inas Sesalim
WFP Gaza

Within the framework of the Emergency Operation for Gaza, WFP and Oxfam GB implemented the urban voucher project (UVP) in October 2009.



Just like in the West Bank, where a UVP was launched in April 2009, the programme will ensure the protection of the already meagre livelihoods of urban, food insecure households while stimulating local markets and local production at the micro-level, as many of the commodities in the programme are produced locally.



Together with Oxfam, WFP is now bringing vouchers to 2,335 fami-

lies (or roughly 15,000 people) in North Gaza, Khan Younis and Gaza City. These beneficiaries can exchange the vouchers for commodities in determined retail shops located close to their homes.

The commodities in question include bread, milk, lebaneh, white cheese, yogurt and eggs. Commodities such as rice, pulses and vegetable oil have also been included, contrary to the West Bank.



The value of each voucher is slightly higher than in the West Bank (256 NIS/month compared to 200 NIS/month in the West Bank). This increased value and increased com-

modity base have been instituted to align the vouchers with commodities available under WFP's general food distributions.



The programme is being carried out on a pilot basis and followed a post-conflict feasibility study alongside regular market-price monitoring to ensure that the market infrastructure could support the programme.

WFP also took steps to ensure that the commodities which are commonly sourced through illegitimate channels were excluded from the programme.

In order to ensure that the programme is meeting its objectives, a mid-term review will be carried out in early 2010.

Pictures: Anne Valand/WFP Gaza

Ongoing and upcoming assessments

WFP, FAO and PCBS have carried out a quantitative **socio-economic and food security survey in the oPt**. The final reports for West Bank and Gaza have been widely distributed and are available on the WFP and OCHA websites (<http://www.wfp.org/foodsecurity.aspx>).

The results will be combined with a **Market study** that has been carried out in Gaza and the West Bank. The report is currently being finalized and will be available by mid-

December.. The results of the studies and assessments will be compiled into a **Comprehensive Food security and Vulnerability analysis** that will also be published in December. This will serve as the basis for the next WFP PRRO, expected to start mid-2010.

A **Food Security Atlas** is being prepared by WFP in collaboration with the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem and will be available in January 2010.

In the framework of the joint UNRWA/WFP **Bedouin assistance project in Area C** of the West Bank, UNRWA carried out a food security and nutrition survey in the areas of implementation, with the support of WFP and UNICEF. The data is being analyzed and the final report is expected in December.

Food security update: cooking gas shortage in the Gaza Strip

Cooking gas supplies (LPG) are running critically low in the Gaza Strip. The cooking gas shortage- if it continues- will put serious pressure on the food security situation and lead to increased hardship among the population in the Gaza Strip.

Approximately 1096 metric tons of cooking gas are recorded to have entered Gaza from 1-24 November compared to the monthly need of around 6,500 mt to meet the needs of the population (minimal needs to avert a crisis is 4,500 tons). In October 2009, only 1,700 metric tons of cooking gas entered the Gaza Strip. Reserves of cooking gas are already being consumed and are running critically low- especially in light of the falling temperatures in winter months.

Domestic use of cooking gas

The main use of cooking gas is for preparing food. 1.26 million Gazans (85% of the population) use cooking gas for food preparation/baking vs 0.4 percent for heating. In the absence of cooking gas the main fuels used for cooking are Kerosene (6.9 percent of the population), electricity (3.5 percent), wood (3.3 percent) and "Solar" (diesel) (2 percent).

WFP and UNRWA provide a food parcel containing wheat flour, sugar, oil, pulses, rice (UNRWA only) and salt. These commodities make up the basic diet for 1.1 million of Gaza's population - without cooking gas they are unusable.

The average stocks remaining are expected to last 7-10 days if the external supplies of cooking gas do not increase. Due to the current shortage in

as long as industrial fuel continues to be imported in sufficient quantities, there will be no decrease in baking capacity from this partner

There are 74 bakeries in the Gaza strip of which 45 produce bread. 20 of the 45 rely on cooking gas (18 rely on solar/diesel and 7 use electricity). All 45 of these bakeries are currently working normally. The 20 bakeries which operate on cooking gas need 25 metric tons of cooking Gas a week and currently have on average 7 days supplies remaining. As long as solar (diesel) and electricity supplies remain steady bakeries are not expected to close down as these alternative options remain available fall-backs. Nevertheless, there is a need to monitor the situation closely and be prepared for rapid action in case the energy shortage is exacerbated.

Impact on institutions

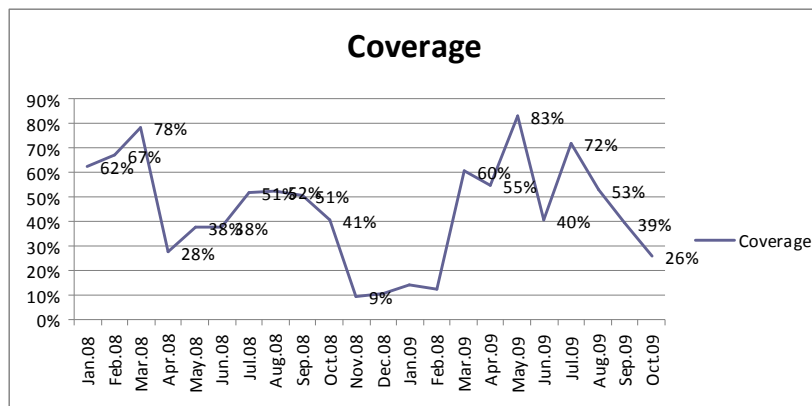
All 44 social institutions supported by WFP's feeding programme are facing a serious problem as they have already consumed all of their emergency supplies of gas. They will soon be forced to stop providing hot meals and cooked food, unless gas supplies increase.

The MoH has asked the petrol authority to provide the required quantities from the strategic reserves of the authority to the hospitals. MoH has stored a spare quantity of cooking gas; however it will be consumed in one week. The MOH requires cooking gas for cooking and also for other activities such as laundry. If hospitals are unable to do the laundry for the patients, this might have serious implications for hygiene levels in the hospitals.

Conclusion

While the cooking gas shortage has not yet triggered a crisis in the Gaza Strip, the situation is alarming and a rapid deterioration of the situation can be expected within the next weeks if the quantities of cooking gas reaching the Gaza Strip are not increased to meet at least the basic demand of the population. While coping strategies exist at the household level, among bakeries and among some of the institutions targeting vulnerable people, alternative sources of energy are also at risk of being in short supply during the coming months.

Coverage of Gaza cooking gas requirements, Jan 2008 to Oct 2009



Prices

The Gaza de-facto authorities control the price of cooking gas. The price of refilling a 12 kg cooking gas bottle in the market is around 52 NIS. On the black market the prices are unregulated. Gas (originating from Israel) is sold on the black market for 100NIS but is rarely available. The prices of cooking gas from Egypt currently sells for 250-260 NIS for a 14Kg bottle (including the bottle) which is unaffordable for many families. The black-market prices are expected to rise further as shortages continue.

cooking gas, households are forced to find other ways to manage. Some wealthier families have been able to prepare for such emergencies by keeping stocks in their homes. Other households switch to electricity or kerosene to cook their meals, provided that the external supply of fuel to the Gaza power plant is sustained. An estimated 60 percent of households have access to generators and the 40 percent of households who don't are considered to be the most vulnerable in the current situation.

Impact on bakeries

The monthly cooking gas requirement for bakeries is 230metric tons/month. The bakery currently under contract with WFP (Ajour bakery) uses electricity as its main form of energy; thus