



United Nations

**CENTRAL
EMERGENCY
RESPONSE FUND**



A SOUND HUMANITARIAN INVESTMENT

**RESIDENT / HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR
REPORT ON THE USE OF CERF FUNDS
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY
RAPID RESPONSE
CONFLICT-RELATED DISPLACEMENT**

RESIDENT/HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR

Mr. James Rawley

REPORTING PROCESS AND CONSULTATION SUMMARY

- a. Please indicate when the After Action Review (AAR) was conducted and who participated.

An After Action Review was not completed in this case since this was a grant for one agency.

- b. Please confirm that the Resident Coordinator and/or Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) Report was discussed in the Humanitarian and/or UN Country Team and by cluster/sector coordinators as outlined in the guidelines.

YES NO

The report was shared with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) for comment.

- c. Was the final version of the RC/HC Report shared for review with in-country stakeholders as recommended in the guidelines (i.e. the CERF recipient agencies and their implementing partners, cluster/sector coordinators and members and relevant government counterparts)?

YES NO

As above.

I. HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

TABLE 1: EMERGENCY ALLOCATION OVERVIEW (US\$)		
Total amount required for the humanitarian response: US\$ 13,584,066 ¹ fourth round of food distribution (CAP project total US\$ 74,703,000)		
Breakdown of total response funding received by source	Source	Amount
	CERF	3,000,000
	COMMON HUMANITARIAN FUND/ EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND (if applicable)	0
	OTHER (bilateral/multilateral)	10,584,066
	TOTAL	13,584,066

TABLE 2: CERF EMERGENCY FUNDING BY ALLOCATION AND PROJECT (US\$)			
Allocation 1 – date of official submission: 28-Aug-13			
Agency	Project code	Cluster/Sector	Amount
UNRWA	13-RR-RWA-005	Food Security Sector	3,000,000
TOTAL			3,000,000

TABLE 3: BREAKDOWN OF CERF FUNDS BY TYPE OF IMPLEMENTATION MODALITY (US\$)	
Type of implementation modality	Amount
Direct UN agencies/IOM implementation	3,000,000
Funds forwarded to NGOs for implementation	0
Funds forwarded to government partners	0
TOTAL	3,000,000

¹ This amount reflects the final actual cost of food commodities distributed during January – March 2014. As mentioned above, final unit cost were lower than initial budget.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

The ongoing blockade of Gaza, now in its eighth year, has led to the 'de-development' of Gaza for its 1.7 million inhabitants, with deteriorating living conditions, depletion of livelihood opportunities, and a serious decline in the quality and accessibility of essential services. Compounding longstanding Israeli policies, the already dire economic situation deteriorated further following the Egyptian government's closure of the vast majority of the smuggling tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border. The halt in tunnel trade has most harshly affected the imports of fuel and construction materials, which were until recently representing the bulk of influx from Egypt. Prices of construction materials had consequently surged forcing contractors to pause or cancel most projects and lay off an estimated 20,000 labourers. This was an extremely concerning development since construction has recently been the only sector generating jobs in the Gaza Strip (half of all jobs created in Gaza in 2012 were in the construction sector) and thousands of food insecure families relied on construction labour as their only source of income. The unemployment rate in Gaza increased from 32.5 per cent in the third quarter to 38 per cent in the last quarter of 2013 and continued to raise in the first quarter of 2014 to 40.8 – the highest unemployment rate recorded in Gaza since the third quarter in 2009. The total number of unemployed has almost doubled in the space of nine months (July 2013 – March 2014), soaring from 108,075 to 180,175.

As a consequence of high unemployment, price increases, repeated shocks and erosion of coping mechanisms, Gaza families are struggling to cover their basic food needs. The destruction of the tunnels and the devastation of the job market have increased household vulnerability, further exacerbating an already serious humanitarian crisis.

The rapid decline in the Gaza situation (economic decline and volatility) has the potential to have an impact on the political and security situation in Gaza. In this regard, humanitarian agencies have noted that assistance programmes in Gaza need to be scaled up – therefore in such a situation, at least maintaining current programmes is crucial.

Palestine refugees, especially those living in camps, remain among the most vulnerable groups in Gaza. According to the recent socioeconomic and food security survey carried out in 2012², food insecurity levels among the refugee population raised from 41 per cent in 2011 to 56 per cent in 2012. In addition, even before the marked deterioration in the economic and employment situation described above, unemployment rates were higher among refugees compared to non-refugees.

Given the pre-existing vulnerability of refugees in Gaza, negative developments in the economic situation in Gaza have had an acute effect on this population, further decreasing their already limited coping mechanisms. This is especially true for those families already qualified as abject poor, many of whom have already exhausted their coping mechanisms (taking out loans, cutting back consumption etc.) and are now highly vulnerable to small price increases and fluctuations caused by economic downturn. Especially given the high rates of food insecurity and unemployment, one of the greatest humanitarian needs among the refugee population in Gaza is for food assistance to enable families to meet their minimum caloric requirements.

II. FOCUS AREAS AND PRIORITIZATION

Recent socioeconomic surveys³ show that food insecurity was already on a steep rise before the Egyptian crisis: the overall share of food insecure households had surged from 44 per cent in 2011 to 57 per cent in 2012, a trend accompanied by an increase of households' cash income spent on food (now 50 per cent), a deterioration in dietary diversity and a severe erosion of existing coping mechanisms. The surveys also indicated that households were already heavily relying on aid to meet their most basic needs and that they would not be able to cope with a substantial reduction of assistance: any interruption in The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) commodities' distributions would constitute a catastrophic scenario with serious consequences for the poorest refugees in Gaza.

More than 800,000 Palestine refugees – half of the population of Gaza – rely on UNRWA food support. Food assistance constitutes the Agency's largest emergency intervention in Gaza. In its role as the responsible agency for Palestine refugees (who make up 70 per cent of the population of Gaza), UNRWA's strategic focus area was, and continues to be, the prevention of the further deterioration in food security among the most vulnerable refugees – i.e. preventing a humanitarian crisis. Disruption in the distribution due to any delays in food procurement could precipitate a worsening humanitarian situation of the poorest refugees in Gaza to levels beyond which they could not have coped. According to a recently published survey, an interruption of assistance to households living under such circumstances would result in "a survival deficit of 3 per cent, meaning the beginning of outright hunger". This has not been observed in

² 2012 Socio-Economic and Food Security survey- State of Palestine'

³ 2012 Socio-Economic and Food Security survey- State of Palestine', 2013, and 'HEA livelihood baseline report- Occupied Palestinian Territories: Gaza Strip', 2013.

the recent history of the Gaza Strip – primarily as a result of the large-scale humanitarian response deployed since the beginning of the second intifada and over the last six years of blockage. UNRWA would have not been in a position to prevent such a large scale crisis if the critically needed USD 6 million (including the USD 3 million from CERF) were not secured by 15th September 2013.

CERF funds were used to cover distributions throughout all 12 UNRWA distribution centres, covering a subset of the Emergency Food Assistance total caseload. EA beneficiaries are normally targeted on the basis of the absolute and abject poverty lines, those who live on US\$ 3.63 and US\$ 1.5 pp/pd respectively). CERF funds were used to target a fraction of abject poor beneficiaries: approximately 116,553 Palestine refugees living on less than 0.85\$ pp/pd. This group was prioritized as one of the poorest subsections of the food-insecure caseload assisted by UNRWA.

III. CERF PROCESS

The humanitarian consequences of not being able to meet the nutritional needs of the poorest population, at a moment when the number of people in need was likely to increase, prompted this CERF application. Conversations with the UN Country Team took place explaining the potential repercussions (both in terms of food security, but also socially) if UNRWA were not able to distribute the full food basket to those families most in need. Informal discussions also happened with WFP (Food Security Sector co-lead) and other key agencies working on food distribution in the Gaza Strip. The food assistance intervention in Gaza for Palestine refugees is directly implemented by UNRWA's Gaza Field Office, through its Relief and Social Services Programme (RSSP) and Logistics department, hence the decision to submit a single-agency CERF application.

The proposal was developed by the Donor Relations and Projects Office team at UNRWA's Gaza Field Office, describing the overall programme and specific needs for the following food distribution round. The food distribution was set to take place at a time when the effects of the halting of the informal tunnel economy would start to show (as proved by the increasing unemployment rate reaching its peak during the first quarter of 2014).

The prioritisation of needs for CERF funds to the most vulnerable refugees, abject poor refugees subsisting on less than US\$ 0.85 pp/pd, was based on the Consolidated Appeal Process' 2nd Strategic Objective: *'Help improve the food security of vulnerable and food-insecure communities in the oPt by improving economic access to food, supporting access to a greater variety of food or providing direct food assistance'*. This Strategic Objective also relates directly to the total requirement of \$13.6 million for the Emergency Food Assistance programme, which is needed to provide direct food assistance to a larger population of over 731,000 food-insecure refugees in the Gaza Strip

UNRWA prioritized the use of CERF-funded to assist a subset of abject poor (those living on\$.85 pp/pd) refugees as they are the most vulnerable. Even if these beneficiaries were to spend all their money on food, they would only cover 57 per cent of their calorie requirements. Given the erosion in coping mechanisms in the Gaza Strip (including the most severe ones), an interruption in food assistance to these families may not only lead to malnutrition, but also result in a deficit in food energy intake ("undernutrition").

While UNRWA's current system prioritises poverty levels over gender, the Agency is working to set up systems so female-headed households are responsibly tracked and managed by the system. Female headed households continue to make up the most vulnerable and marginalised category of the population, with further limited access to land, credit and decent work than their peers, according to the inter-agency report on food insecurity.

Current household eligibility criteria give particular consideration to the situation of female-headed households and their children – especially those not officially divorced and instead considered 'abandoned' – so as to ensure that their access to food is protection. However, UNRWA has, since the beginning of the year, initiated a comprehensive reform of its poverty targeting system, one dimension of which is to address issues that are specific to female headed household's access to food. Good progress has been achieved overall, but given both technical issues and cultural sensitivities that UNRWA is working to address, the reformed system will only be completed next year.

IV. CERF RESULTS AND ADDED VALUE

TABLE 4: AFFECTED INDIVIDUALS AND REACHED DIRECT BENEFICIARIES BY SECTOR				
Total number of individuals affected by the crisis: 731,000 food insecure Palestine refugees.				
The estimated total number of individuals directly supported through CERF funding by cluster/sector	Cluster/Sector	Female	Male	Total
	Food Security Sector	57,111	59,442	116,553

BENEFICIARY ESTIMATION

The food assistance intervention in Gaza for Palestine refugees is directly implemented by UNRWA's Gaza Field Office, through its Relief and Social Services Programme (RSSP) and Logistics department.

The UNRWA RSSP team includes more than 200 social workers responsible for assessing each family applying for food assistance, or re-assessing the status of those already considered eligible, through the "poverty survey" questionnaire. Each family applying for food assistance is carefully assessed through a home visit during which the social workers gather basic information on the family (family composition, asset ownership and professional activity), review their circumstances and fill in a poverty survey form. The form is then entered into a computer application that generates an estimation of the family's consumption. According to this system, surveyed families are then classified in one of three categories: (a) abject poor, (b) absolute poor, or (c) non-poor. Only families considered poor (either abject or absolute) are eligible for receiving food assistance.

They are supported by Poverty Survey focal points, most of whom are experienced social workers who supervise and ensure the accuracy and consistency of data collection. Notification of assessment outcome and management of the appeal process is also the responsibility of the RSS programme, the team responsible for generating the list of final beneficiaries for each distribution round. The number of beneficiaries directly supported through CERF funding has been calculated as a pro-rata from the total beneficiaries reached by the programme during the distribution round, taking into consideration the actual unit prices paid for the commodities distributed in the January -February 2014 round, the proportion of different family size during the round, and quantities distributed to the poorest families as per their size.

TABLE 5: PLANNED AND REACHED DIRECT BENEFICIARIES THROUGH CERF FUNDING		
	Planned	Estimated Reached
Female	51,496	57,111
Male	53,804	59,442
Total individuals (Female and male)	105,300	116,553
Of total, children <u>under</u> age 5	33,000	33,893

CERF RESULTS

Upon confirmation of the CERF contribution, in September 2013, UNRWA launched an international tender (as per its procurement policy and programme's work plan) for the purchase of the six commodities that constitute the food basket, namely flour, rice, sugar, oil, powdered milk and canned meat. Offers were received in the first week of October and letters of award issued late that month. Delivery of food to UNRWA's warehouse in Gaza started in mid-December 2013, which allowed for the distribution round to start in early January 2014, as per schedule. Each distribution round lasts for three months, the needed time to provide the food baskets to the entire caseload (129,353 families) through the twelve distribution centres.

As a result of this CERF funding, the targeted food insecure families in Gaza, among them, the poorest of the poor, i.e. those living in extreme poverty (less than USD 0.85 per person per day), were maintained as UNRWA was able to directly reach 116,553 abject poor Palestine refugees in Gaza, which is slightly over the target of beneficiaries targeted in the original submission. Families considered abject poor are found unable to fully meet their most basic calorie requirements with their current income, and crucially rely on UNRWA assistance to bridge the gap. The higher number of beneficiaries reached was due to lower basic commodities prices upon procurement.

The food rations distributed to the beneficiaries included flour, rice, sugar, oil, powdered milk and canned meat, distributed in quantities covering 76 per cent of the daily calorie requirements for the abject poor.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip during the implementation period did not dramatically change, although the crisis in Gaza is slowly deteriorating further, which made this in-kind food distribution intervention all the more relevant and needed.

Through CERF funding, UNRWA was able to provide the quantities showed below to each abject poor family, preventing the humanitarian situation from deteriorating even further.

Family Size <i>No. members</i>	Flour <i>kg</i>	Rice <i>kg</i>	Sugar <i>kg</i>	Oil <i>lit</i>	W/Milk <i>kg</i>	Corned beef <i>can</i>
15+	420	48	48	40	16	36
13 – 14	360	42	42	34	14	32
11 – 12	300	33	33	28	12	24
9- 10	240	27	27	24	10	20
7 – 8	180	21	21	18	8	16
5 – 6	120	15	15	14	6	14
3 – 4	90	9	9	8	4	8
1 – 2	60	3	3	4	2	4

CERF's ADDED VALUE

CERF funds allowed UNRWA to meet time critical needs and continue the procurement process for full food baskets to be distributed in the fourth round (starting in January 2014) which otherwise would not have been possible. As the procurement started 10 weeks ahead of the distribution itself, securing funds in September 2013 was critical. At the time of the submission of the CERF proposal, UNRWA had a shortfall of US\$6 million for its Emergency Food Assistance programme for the fourth and last distribution round of food to poor Palestine refugees. The Agency had already had to cut its Supplementary School Feeding Programme (which fell under the same CAP project), to reduce its deficit for the Emergency Food Assistance Programme.

Not being able to procure the full basket would have had serious consequences for the poorest refugees in Gaza, as each family would have received a lesser quantity, thus preventing beneficiaries from accessing their full minimum caloric requirement.

a) Did CERF funds lead to a fast delivery of assistance to beneficiaries?

YES PARTIALLY NO

The CERF contribution made it possible for UNRWA to continue with the regular procurement processes of all the food necessary for the January – March 2014 distribution. If insufficient funds had been available in September 2013, it would have been necessary to initiate the procurement process for lower quantities. Had other funding become available at a later stage (which was very unlikely, and did not happen) this would have necessitated revising the procurement document, thus provoking delays in the food distribution.

b) Did CERF funds help respond to time critical needs⁴?

YES PARTIALLY NO

If the CERF contribution had not been secured, the food basket would have been reduced, meaning that the poorest families would not have accessed their minimum caloric requirement. UNRWA's monitoring activities have found that food distributed to the poorest families is already consumed within two months, instead of three as per design. A reduction in the basket would have implied a longer period in which these families would have to depend on their own (scarce) resources to access food. Oxfam's Household Economic Approach report, mentions that if assistance were to be cut to the poorest in Gaza, these people would fall below the survival threshold.

c) Did CERF funds help improve resource mobilization from other sources?

YES PARTIALLY NO

Its timing meant that the CERF contribution was one of the last contributions received for the Emergency Food Assistance programme. The initial gap remaining after receiving these funds was only covered with further savings from other emergency interventions, as well as lower-than expected prices in the food commodities.

Nevertheless, the receipt of CERF funding sends a message to other donors that the situation in Gaza is considered a humanitarian crisis and the importance of providing in-kind food assistance to avoid a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

d) Did CERF improve coordination amongst the humanitarian community?

YES PARTIALLY NO

The overall humanitarian response to food insecurity in the Gaza Strip is the responsibility of the Food Security Sector (FSS) of which UNRWA is an active and engaged member. The Agency currently co-chairs the food sub-group.

UNRWA intensively coordinates its food distribution intervention in the Gaza Strip with the World Food Programme (WFP). Given that all food insecure refugees are receiving food aid from UNRWA while the remaining non-refugee food insecure population is served by WFP, close cooperation between the agencies is paramount to avoid duplications and work towards a progressive harmonisation of targeting approaches and assistance packages, as well as commodity cost projections.

e) If applicable, please highlight other ways in which CERF has added value to the humanitarian response

N/A

V. LESSONS LEARNED

TABLE 6: OBSERVATIONS FOR THE CERF SECRETARIAT

Lessons learned	Suggestion for follow-up/improvement	Responsible entity

⁴ Time-critical response refers to necessary, rapid and time-limited actions and resources required to minimize additional loss of lives and damage to social and economic assets (e.g. emergency vaccination campaigns, locust control, etc.).

TABLE 7:OBSERVATIONS FOR COUNTRY TEAMS

Lessons learned	Suggestion for follow-up/improvement	Responsible entity
<p>Exceptional CERF grants help respond to time critical needs such as this. However, a coordinated CERF application creates the strong value-added in the sense that it lends itself to coordination, cooperation and prioritization not only within clusters/ sectors, but between them.</p>	<p>Maintain possibilities for future coordinated inter-cluster application to the CERF if deemed necessary in response to the deteriorated humanitarian situation in Gaza</p>	<p>OCHA HCT Clusters</p>
<p>CERF funding was employed as a last resort. Funding for UNRWA's food distribution should in the first instance come from predictable and timely donor funding</p>	<p>Continue advocating towards donors for predictable and timely funding for top priority interventions such as food assistance in Gaza</p>	<p>Agencies Donors OCHA</p>
<p>The application and approval process for the CERF application was quick and clear. Initial review and feedback by the country team was prompt and relevant to the project, and the approval of the requested funds occurred within the period that would allow UNRWA to implement the activities effectively</p>	<p>Maintain the close contact and fluid communication between the agencies and OCHA.</p>	<p>Agencies OCHA</p>

VI. PROJECT RESULTS

TABLE 8: PROJECT RESULTS			
CERF project information			
1. Agency:	UNRWA	5. CERF grant period:	09 Sept 2013 – 08 March 2014
2. CERF project code:	13-RR-RWA-005	6. Status of CERF grant:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
3. Cluster/Sector:	Food Security Cluster		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concluded
4. Project title:	Emergency Food Assistance in Gaza		
7. Funding	a. Total project budget:	US\$ 13,584,066 ⁵	d. CERF funds forwarded to implementing partners:
	b. Total funding received for the project:	US\$ 13,584,066 ⁶	▪ NGO partners and Red Cross/Crescent: US\$ 0
	c. Amount received from CERF:	US\$ 3,000,000	▪ Government Partners: US\$ 0
Results			
8. Total number of <u>direct beneficiaries</u> planned and reached through CERF funding (provide a breakdown by sex and age).			
<i>Direct Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Planned</i>	<i>Reached</i>	<i>In case of significant discrepancy between planned and reached beneficiaries, please describe reasons:</i>
a. Female	51,496	57,111	The difference between planned and reached beneficiaries is attributed to the decrease in commodities prices. At the budget development stage, the Agency made provision for fluctuation in prices which did not take place. Accordingly the total number of beneficiaries was slightly increased.
b. Male	53,804	59,442	
c. Total individuals (female + male):	105,300	116,553	
d. Of total, children <u>under</u> age 5	33,000	36,131	
9. Original project objective from approved CERF proposal			
The objective of the Project's CERF component is to ensure that the 105,300 most destitute refugees classified under UNRWA's abject poor category are able to secure their basic food requirements in January 2014, in light of the rapid deterioration of socio-economic conditions in the Gaza Strip. The objective is to protect those food insecure refugees from under nutrition and assist in diversifying their caloric intake.			
10. Original expected outcomes from approved CERF proposal			
Outcome	Indicator	Target	Source of verification
The poorest refugees in the Gaza Strip secured sufficient food energy and do not suffer from under nutrition during the first quarter of 2014.	# of abject poor refugees receiving CERF-funded food assistance	105,300	Relief and Social Services Beneficiary database
	# of abject poor refugees receiving CERF-funded food assistance (female)	51,496	Relief and Social Services Beneficiary database
	# of abject poor families receiving CERF-funded	18,890	Relief and Social Services

⁵ This amount reflects the final actual cost of food commodities distributed during January – March 2014. As mentioned above, final unit cost were lower than initially budgeted for.

⁶ This amount reflects the total amount of funds received, including the CERF portion. In addition to the CERF contributions, UNRWA was able to fund the complete budget for Emergency Food Distribution only due to lower spending on other activities that allowed the Agency to re-direct un-earmarked funds towards the Emergency Food Assistance programme.

	food assistance		Beneficiary database
	# of abject poor female-headed households receiving CERF-funded food assistance	3,706	Relief and Social Services Beneficiary database
	% of daily calorie requirements covered for the abject poor families receiving CERF-funded food assistance	76%	Relief and Social Services
	# of tons of CERF-funded food commodities procured	3,712	Logistics Department
	# of tons of CERF-funded food commodities procured locally	2,715	Logistics Department

11. Actual outcomes achieved with CERF funds

Through the implementation of the Emergency Food Distribution in the first quarter of 2014, the poorest refugees in the Gaza Strip secured sufficient food energy and avoided the risk of under nutrition. Level of achievement on the indicators and targets set at the proposal stage are provided below:

Indicator	Target	Achievement	%
# of abject poor refugees receiving CERF-funded food assistance	105,300	116,553.00	111%
# of abject poor refugees receiving CERF-funded food assistance (female)	51,496	57,111	103%
# of abject poor families receiving CERF-funded food assistance	18,890	19,733	104%
# of abject poor female-headed households receiving CERF-funded food assistance	3,706	n/a	
% of daily calorie requirements covered for the abject poor families receiving CERF-funded food assistance	76%	76%	100%
# of tons of CERF-funded food commodities procured	3,712	4,063	109%
# of tons of CERF-funded food commodities procured locally	2,715	2961	109%

12. In case of significant discrepancy between planned and actual outcomes, please describe reasons:

The project was implemented according to the plan and outcomes were reached.

The additional beneficiaries reached and CERF-funded food commodities procured is due to a decrease in food prices which allowed UNRWA to reach more families than originally projected with CERF funds.

13. Are the CERF funded activities part of a CAP project that applied an IASC Gender Marker code?

YES NO

If 'YES', what is the code (0, 1, 2a or 2b): 2a
If 'NO' (or if GM score is 1 or 0):

14. M&E: Has this project been evaluated?

YES NO

If 'YES', please describe relevant key findings here and attach evaluation reports or provide URL

If 'NO', please explain why the project has not been evaluated

UNRWA's Emergency Food Assistance programme in Gaza is regularly monitored by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (MEU), and independent unit within the field office that supports the programme's evidence-based management and planning through the collection, collation and analysis of data. Based on the feedback received through the monitoring process, no major issue was raised during the activities implementation. The Unit further ensured the emergency intervention adhered to a results-based monitoring framework, which are tracked and reported on a quarterly basis.

ANNEX 1: CERF FUNDS DISBURSED TO IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

N/A

ANNEX 2: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS (Alphabetical)

AAR	After Action Review
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HEA	Household Economic Approach
RSSP	Relief and Social Services Programme
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator and/or Humanitarian Coordinator
SEFsec	Social, Economic and Food Security Survey
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East