



**ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE HUMANITARIAN/RESIDENT COORDINATOR
ON THE USE OF CERF GRANTS**

Country	Palestinian territory, occupied
Humanitarian / Resident Coordinator	Maxwell Gaylard
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I. Executive Summary

In 2008, soaring food prices, falling incomes and growing unemployment were jeopardizing the livelihoods of Palestinians, continuing a trend that was already visible in 2007¹. Previously self-reliant families were progressively falling into the poverty trap and were unable to escape from their situation in the absence of job opportunities. Furthermore those with work were facing increasing difficulties to manage due to unadjusted salaries, a degrading economic environment and high dependency ratios. Since 70 percent of Palestinian households – about 2.9 million people – live below the poverty line (as of July 2007), they are particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in the cost of living².

There was, and is, little scope for action other than that of a humanitarian-emergency nature to solve food insecurity, until the political dimension is resolved. In this framework and in concert with the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan (PRDP), social safety nets activities were in need of immediate support along with the relevant public institutions and implementing agencies.

Particular challenges were met in providing assistance in 2008, for a variety of reasons. At the time of planning for the 2008 CAP (Consolidated Appeal Programme), the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) had planned a reduced programme of assistance in the West Bank (to 30,000 families) in anticipation of economic improvements, including the resumption of salary payments to Palestinian Authority (PA) staff, following the Paris and Annapolis conferences at the end of 2007. However, rises in the cost of living (there was a 66 percent rise in the price of a basket of seven basic foods; a 33 percent rise in utility bills)³ affected many refugees who found themselves in extremely difficult circumstances and appealed for help from UNRWA. UNRWA also faced difficulties as rising of food prices worldwide meant that by the time the appeal was launched, the price of procuring basic commodities stood at 35 percent above budgeted costs.

As a result of these difficulties, a further 46,000 refugee families were identified as being in urgent need of food assistance, i.e. the Agency’s emergency food aid caseload rose from 30,000 to 76,000 families. However, funding shortfalls meant that the Agency would only have been able to assist 43,900 families, and with a reduced supply of food. With the CERF

¹ A comprehensive food security assessment completed by WFP and FAO in January 2007 concluded that more than 34 percent of the Palestinian population of the oPt was food insecure, with levels rising to almost 40 percent amongst refugees. A further 12 percent of refugees were found to be vulnerable to food insecurity and 19 percent only marginally food secure.

² PCBS, Survey on the Impact of Israeli Unilateral Measures on the social, economic and environmental conditions of Palestinian Households, 2006

³ IUED, Palestinian Public Perceptions, Report XI, forthcoming

contribution, however, the Agency assisted a further 32,600 families, mitigating the negative consequences of the increase in food prices.

Similarly, WFP requested support from CERF at the beginning of 2008, when an extremely difficult funding situation had forced the downsize of its activities and personnel. The main concern for WFP was the interruption of the assistance to the most destitute Palestinian families, which, however, could be prevented thanks to the CERF funding. Through this grant, about 200,000 Palestinians in the West Bank were assisted and received a three-month food ration which covered 66 percent of their daily food needs.

Two CERF requests for funding of food distribution projects in the West Bank in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) were approved in 2008, one for WFP, and one for UNRWA. The need for emergency funding for these projects arose from the rising food and fuel prices globally and locally, as humanitarian organizations were unable to meet the increasing demand for and cost of food assistance.

Agencies were able to provide substantive food supplements to an additional 335,135 people from the most vulnerable groups, refugees and destitute families. The number of beneficiaries was in excess of those proposed due to a decrease in international prices, UNRWA reached an additional 5,506 families (16.9 percent of the target population). Both agencies were able to respond in a timely and efficient manner using pre established programme mechanisms.

Increasing poverty throughout 2008 and into 2009 has continued the trend of increasing food insecurity, with growing numbers of people requiring humanitarian support to meet basic food needs. CERF funding effectively filled a funding gap over a three month period for the two major responding agencies in the oPt.

Total amount of humanitarian funding required and received during the reporting year	REQUIRED: RECEIVED:	\$ 4,988,364		
Total amount requested from CERF	FUNDS (IN TOTAL REQUESTED):	\$ 4,988,364		
Total amount of CERF funding received by funding window	RAPID RESPONSE: UNDERFUNDED: GRAND TOTAL:	\$4,988,364 \$ 4,988,364		
Total amount of CERF funding for direct UN agency / IOM implementation and total amount forwarded to implementing partners	UN AGENCIES/IOM: UNRWA : WFP:	: \$ 2,499,998 \$ 2,488,366		
	TOTAL:	\$4,988,364		
Approximate total number of beneficiaries reached with CERF funding (disaggregated by sex/age if possible)	TOTAL	under 5 years of age	Female (If available)	Male (If available)
	UNRWA 236,254 persons (38,106 families)	Below 15 yrs 44 percent	49 percent	51 percent
	WFP 198,880	WFP 32,938	97,939	100,941
Geographic areas of implementation targeted with CERF funding	West Bank UNRWA (Hebron, Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilya and Bethlehem areas WFP: Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarem, Nablus, Qalqiliya, Salfit, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Hebron			

II. Background

Severe economic hardship has been prevalent in the West Bank since the beginning of the second *intifada* in 2000. This is a result of the network of closures and restrictions which have greatly hindered access to land, markets, services and employment, leading to worsening poverty and declining living conditions amongst Palestinians in the oPt. Many Palestinians live below the poverty line and are therefore vulnerable to food insecurity. This situation is relatively constant and planned for through the CAP, however the unexpected sharp rise in local, as well as global, food and fuel prices left the humanitarian community in a situation where urgent needs could not be met with the resources and funding available.

A comprehensive food security assessment completed by WFP and FAO in January 2007 concluded that more than 34 percent of the Palestinian population of the oPt was food insecure, with levels rising to almost 40 percent amongst refugees. A further 12 percent of refugees were found to be vulnerable to food insecurity and 19 percent only marginally food secure. Since then, the rapidly rising food and fuel prices made the situation worse and the humanitarian community less able to respond as the cost of interventions increased. In the first three months of 2008, average monthly income in the West Bank decreased by 9 percent (24 percent among the poorest 20 percent of the population) while food prices rose 9 percent in the first half of the year. In addition, drought in the southern West Bank continued to stunt the growth of crops for domestic consumption and animal fodder, forcing many families deep into debt – 49 percent of families had purchased food on credit to cope with their difficulties in one month this year. Other coping mechanisms, such as non-payment of utility bills, sale of assets and reduction in food consumption, were being exhausted. There was a risk of widespread food insecurity and possible malnutrition as a result of decreased dietary diversity. Impoverished families were diverting resources away from other important needs, such as education and health costs. There was a dire need for food assistance among many refugee families.

As this situation was primarily affecting the food security sector, leaving the major providers of food distributions in the oPt – WFP and UNRWA – unable to meet the needs of an increasingly food insecure population, this was the sector that was prioritized for CERF funding. The impact of the rise in food prices, and the consequent increase in need and reduction in the ability of agencies to respond, was jointly assessed by WFP, FAO, UNRWA and subsequently discussed within the UN country team meeting, where an integrated UNRWA-WFP response was designed. Priority was given to West Bank populations, where the problems with the food aid pipeline were more acute. In line with their respective mandates, UNRWA focused on food insecure refugees and WFP on food insecure non-refugees.

III. Implementation and results

1. Coordination and implementation arrangements

WFP and UNRWA coordinated their respective food aid programmes to avoid any overlap of provision, enabling each Agency to focus on their target group - and, when required, share resources. This enabled a prompt, well-informed and efficient response (ie: sharing of information, distribution of caseload/roles, concerted fund-raising efforts, etc.).

2. Project activities & results

UNRWA

Owing to the high food prices and budget shortages, UNRWA, though well-placed and prepared to give emergency assistance, alone could meet only a limited number of these needs. CERF assistance allowed both the procurement of food and the logistical support necessary to extend Round 1 response to the newly vulnerable families. The Round lasted for three months (1 April to 1 July 2008). The funds available through the CERF contribution covered the costs of distributing a total of 38,106 food parcels to 38,106 families of six members or more residing outside camps, reaching a total of 236,254 beneficiaries. This is 5,506 families (16.9 percent) more than planned, as the price of commodities decreased during the procurement process, allowing the Agency to assist more of those in need. Overall, UNRWA was able to procure a total of 1,174mt of flour, 275mt of rice, 226mt of sugar, 78mt of powdered milk, 268mt of lentils, and 216,750 litres of sunflower oil, through CERF's contribution. However, 194mt of flour was not distributed to beneficiaries as its quality was not inline with the Agency's standards. This contribution greatly helped to alleviate the suffering of the refugees and prevent widespread malnutrition and ill-health. In addition, CERF's support for related costs such as transport and staffing allowed for the prompt distribution of food assistance, as well as ensuring that the assistance was going to those who needed it most. UNRWA realized a savings of a total of US\$ 878 under this grant.

The contribution covered the expenses of transport and operating cost for a total of \$ 242,114 (10 percent of whole contribution), in addition it covered a total of \$ 150,646 as salary for a duration of three months (April to July 2008). 96 Emergency Programme support staff and labourers were employed through the CERF contribution in April 2008, 99 in May, 107 in June and 60 in July 2008.

The group targeted with the CERF grant (families residing outside of camps and comprising of six or more members) received one parcel per family. The parcels contained 30kg of fortified wheat flour, 6kg of rice, 6kg of sugar, 2kg of powdered whole milk, 4 litres of sunflower oil, and 4kg of red lentils. They provided 19 percent of each person's calorific needs for 90 days. This promoted the health and well-being of the refugees, as well as freeing up cash from family finances for other important purposes, such as education costs or fresh supplements to their diets.

WFP

In 2008, the CERF contribution funded the "Assistance to the Destitute" component of the WFP Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), which started in September 2007. The PRRO aimed to meet the food needs of the most vulnerable food-insecure non-refugees and to support the PA in poverty reduction through productive activities and skills development. Through this CERF grant, WFP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), was able to reach 200,000 destitute Palestinians through a combination of targeted general distributions to households registered under the MoSA special hardship cases programme (i.e. households without breadwinners, including women or elderly-headed households) and of institutional feeding for individuals residing in social institutions, such as elderly homes, orphanages and hospitals. 2,646mt of food were purchased and distributed: 1,998mt of wheat flour, 18mt of salt, 252mt of sugar, 144mt of vegetable oil and 234mt of pulses. The food assistance, thanks to the CERF grant, helped the most destitute Palestinian families residing in ten Governorates of the West Bank to improve their food security level. The CERF had been extremely helpful and allowed WFP to continue assisting its neediest beneficiaries.

3. Partnerships

The coordination with members of the humanitarian country team took place at several levels:

Needs Assessment:

The need to increase the caseload of UNRWA emergency food distribution was realized through communication with the local community, on the one hand, and through the findings of a rapid food security assessment conducted by WFP, FAO and UNRWA that was prompted by the rapid increase in prices of basic food commodities. Strong collaborations with agencies from UNCT took place particularly with FAO (joint assessment and food security monitoring) UNICEF (nutrition surveillance) and WHO (support to social institutions).

Coordination and prioritization

The impact of the rise in food prices, and the consequent increase in need and reduction in the ability of agencies to respond, was discussed within the UNCT meeting, where an integrated UNRWA-WFP response was designed. Priority was given to West Bank populations, where the problems with the food aid pipeline were more acute. In line with their respective mandates, UNRWA focused on food insecure refugees and WFP on food insecure non-refugees.

Implementation

WFP and UNRWA coordinated their respective food aid programmes to avoid any overlap of provision, enabling each Agency to focus on their target group and, when required, share resources.

4. Gender-mainstreaming

Gender considerations are mainstreamed throughout WFP's operations. WFP works closely with the Ministry of Women Affairs and cooperating partners to increase the role of women in the design, decision-making and implementation of projects and ensure that at least 50 percent of the village committee members involved in the selection of activities are women. Polygamous households are regarded as separate families and receive food rations accordingly. 49.2 percent of the beneficiaries assisted through the CERF grant were female. UNRWA targeted families, both male and female headed.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

The WFP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is based on the updated Result-Based Management (RBM) toolkit which underlies all implemented programmes in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This updated system is supported by a newly designed M&E database, which is based on monitoring the indicators that are set on the output level for all programmes. Accordingly, the monitoring activities are carried out by the Field Monitors Assistants (FMAs) in four geographical areas covering the North, Central and Southern Governorates in the West Bank, in addition to Gaza Strip. The FMAs carry out these monitoring activities using monitoring forms that are developed in relation to each of the programmes. These forms are the primary tool for WFP to monitor the implementation of the programme and allow the FMAs through individual site visits to systematically assess the implementation process. Henceforth, the data is collected and entered into the M&E database for processing of qualitative information. On the other hand, the consolidated beneficiary/distribution report is used to monitor whether correct food rations were distributed, what is the closing balance situation and possible food losses. This report is prepared on a bi-monthly basis by each of the Cooperating Partners (CPs) and uploaded into the M&E database for analysis and monitoring purpose. Results of the analysis will be shared and discussed between WFP and its CPs; they both verify, for instance, if incorrect food rations were distributed, food rations were not distributed as planned, excessive closing balance, extreme change in beneficiary numbers, etc.

For monitoring purposes UNRWA utilized a system of clerks and operations support officers who ensured that all food parcels were distributed to the beneficiaries and visits were carried out by social workers to every family that receives assistance. The operational support officers verified the identities of the recipients in addition to the documentation produced by distribution clerks given on a monthly basis to the Emergency Appeal Coordination unit. Regular monitoring visits to operational sites were conducted and beneficiary qualitative perception monitored. In addition inter-UN/other sources of statistical information (including Palestinian public perceptions reports), as well as standard planned internal research office investigations were analyzed.

IV. Results

Sector/ Cluster	CERF projects per sector	Amount disbursed (US\$)	Number of Beneficiaries (by sex/age)	Implementing Partners and funds disbursed	Baseline indicators	Expected Results/Outcomes	Actual results and improvements for the target beneficiaries
Food Aid and Food Security	UNRWA 08-RWA-001 Emergency Food Assistance, West Bank	2,488,366 (total project budget: 12,813,836) The Agency realized a savings of \$ 878 under the CERF grant	38,106 refugee families benefited from food purchased with the CERF grant	N/A		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38,106 parcels for a total of 1174mt of flour, 275mt of rice, 226mt of sugar, 216,750 litres of sunflower oil, 268mt of pulses, 78mt of powdered whole milk distributed to 38,106 families of at least six family-members residing outside of camps; meeting 19 percent of their minimum calorific need for 90 days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of beneficiaries was in excess of those proposed due to a decrease in international prices, UNRWA reached an additional 5,506 families (16.9 percent of the target population) 236,254 persons An estimated 32,600 parcels for a total of 978mt of Flour, 195.6mt of Rice, 195.6mt of Sugar, 130,400 Litres of sunflower oil, 130.4MT of Lentils, 65.2 MT of powdered whole milk) distributed to 32,600 families of at least six family-members residing outside of camps; meeting 19 percent of their minimum calorific need for 90 days.
Food Security	WFP 08-WFP-035 “Targeted assistance for relief, support to productive activities and skills development of vulnerable non-refugee Palestinians” Assistance to the destitute within the PRRO 10387.1 Operation	2,499,998	198,880 non-refugee Palestinians	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual beneficiaries receiving WFP food assistance as a percentage of planned beneficiaries Actual mt of food distributed through each activity as a percentage of planned distributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive change in household food security and livelihoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 percent of the planned beneficiaries received WFP food assistance 2,646 mt of food commodities were purchased and distributed to about 200,000 beneficiaries (100 percent of the planned distributions were completed).

V. CERF IN ACTION

UNRWA

Siham Dawud Mohammad Judeh is a registered refugee residing in a village near Hebron. He is the head of a seven-person family living in particularly severe conditions. The refugee family is living in a single room with problems of ventilation and humidity. The household's income has been stretched to a minimum after the father and bread-winner was arrested and imprisoned in Israel. The psychological effects of this imprisonment, in addition to the general lack of employment, prevent him from working. This handicap directly affects the family's livelihood and mental health as they are no more able to purchase the basic food necessities or cover the basic health and education expenditures of its members.

UNRWA assisted the family through its emergency programme. One of the 275 emergency social workers visited the Judeh family, evaluating their socioeconomic background and need for assistance. The Emergency Relief Programme identified this particularly vulnerable family and made sure they would receive food aid as part of the 2008 first round of food distribution. The family hence received a parcel containing 30kg wheat flour, 6kg of both rice and sugar, 4 litres of sunflower oil, 4kg of pulses and 2kg of powdered whole milk. When visited by the social worker after the food distribution, the wife of Siham was happy to be able to use her meager income to purchase school stationery for her children and cover the expenses of the husband's treatment, instead of buying the usual basic food commodities to feed her family.

Along with the Judeh family, the CERF contribution has enabled UNRWA to help another 38,106 vulnerable refugee families in the West Bank.

WFP

Um Hamza is a woman living in Safa, a small village in the North-West of Ramallah. After her husband married another woman and stopped taking care of his previous family, Um Hamza became the head of her family which consists of five children: Hamza and Anas (who are twins), Mohamed, Rafeda and Fatima Alzahra'.

Um Hamza's family lives in severe poverty and their living conditions are critical; Um Hamza does not have any support except for her brother who lives abroad and tries to help her when possible. "My family didn't leave me or my children alone, they built this house for us, it is the best they could give us. My brothers always helped me but when they got married they gradually stopped. I don't blame them, they have their own family. My brother abroad started to help us seven years ago and he promised to do so until my sons graduate", said Um Hamza.

Um Hamza is very grateful to WFP for the food ration she receives under the Assistance to the Destitute Programme. She continued: "In this hard time and for the past few years, WFP food has been the basic food in our house; if we did not receive any WFP wheat flour, we would have to buy the same quantity which costs a lot. Fortunately, the wheat flour WFP gave us does cover all our needs, along with the other food items of the food ration, such as vegetable oil, pulses, salt and sugar. The WFP food ration allows me to buy other food items that we need, otherwise I would spend most of our money in buying only bread and basic foods. I am also cultivating some vegetables in my humble garden and I wish I could plant more. With WFP's help, I am hopeful that we will be able to survive the bad days".

These photos show the distribution of food parcels throughout



Annex: Acronyms and Abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FMA s	Field Monitors Assistants
GoI	Government of Israel
GS	Gaza Strip
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
JCF SVA	Joint WFP/FAO Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIS	New Israeli Shekel
NUC	National unity Government
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PRDP	Palestinian Reform & Development Plan
PRRO	Protracted Relief & Recovery Operation
SC-S	Save the Children-Sweden
SC-UK	Save the Children-United Kingdom
U5	Children under five
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
WB	West Bank
WBGS	West Bank and Gaza Strip
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization