

Food and nutrition

Fact sheet | November 2022

Regional and territorial disparities and disparities among population groups are characteristic traits of food insecurity and malnutrition in Palestine. The number of Palestinians suffering from food insecurity is divided between the refugee (70%) and non-refugee (30%) communities. The situation is of particular concern in the Gaza Strip, with 64.3% of the population classified as moderately or severely food insecure.

The Palestinian food system is key in enabling economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability. By leveraging the private sector, the food system plays a critical role in generating employment and building sustainable livelihoods. It creates employment opportunities and improves livelihoods, especially for the most vulnerable segments of the population. Farming represents a crucial coping strategy for Palestinian households at times of crisis, playing a key role in promoting food and nutrition security. The development of the agri-food system in Palestine is also essential to create job opportunities and enhanced livelihoods for many Palestinians.

Data sources:
United Nations Common Country Assessment for Palestine, 2022;
Atlas of Sustainable Development, 2020,
Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022.



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1.78

million people
experienced some
form of food
insecurity

9.6%

of GDP
is accounted for
by the Palestinian
food system



UNITED NATIONS
Palestine



Nutrition

Lack of variety in diets and empty calories are mainstays of Palestinian families' diets, contributing to high rates of overweight and obesity and several chronic non-communicable diseases.

Although the prevalence of undernutrition (stunting and wasting) is low nationally, a closer look reveals a higher prevalence among vulnerable communities, with the prevalence of stunting among children under five reaching 23% in some Bedouin communities. In contrast, overweight is a widespread problem, with a prevalence of 8.2% among children under five. Micronutrient deficiency is a major concern in Palestine, especially among the most vulnerable groups, largely due to Palestinian household consumption patterns of energy-dense, rather than nutrition-dense, food, and insufficient consumption of fruits and vegetables. The prevalence rates of all micronutrient deficiencies tended to be higher in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank across all vulnerable groups, pregnant women, lactating women, and children between the ages of 6 and 59 months.

“ Only with solidarity and cooperation in promoting sustainable agri-food system development will we see better production, nutrition, environment and lives for every Palestinian household and community.

Lynn Hastings

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territories



United Nations in action for food security and nutrition

- UNRWA provided over one million Palestinians in Gaza with emergency food assistance.
- To improve their immediate food and nutritional needs, the World Food Programme (WFP) supported 6,000 vulnerable people with a range of climate-resilient agricultural assets, such as hydro and aquaponics, greenhouses, livestock, poultry, beehives, and solar panels units.
- The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) supported over 15000 farmers, fishers and herders providing farm and dairy equipment, fodder, and investment in the agri-food system.
- WFP targets 435, 170 Palestinians every month with food assistance. Over 300,000 receive electronic vouchers that allow them to purchase food items from over 300 locally contracted shops. The most vulnerable families receive an in-kind food basket that consists of wheat flour, oil, lentils, chickpeas, and salt.

