

WEST BANK & GAZA



Multiple generations of humanitarian need and a cutoff of U.S. support and foreign assistance left millions in Gaza and the West Bank without essential services, food insecure, and on the brink of poverty.

Country Context

Civilians in the Palestinian territories face the daily reality of living in a protracted conflict. The untenable living situation, combined with harsh restrictions on movement, fuels large-scale unrest throughout Gaza. 195 people were killed and over 29,000 injured during the Great March of Return protest in March 2018. The enormous rise in casualties, exacerbated by ongoing protests and retaliation, has overwhelmed a failing health infrastructure.

How is the U.S. Involved?

In 2018, the U.S. government halted funding to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency—the lead U.N. agency providing essential services, health care, and education to Palestinian refugees—as well as bilateral assistance through NGO partners. In FY 2020 appropriations, Congress acted to restore \$75 million in development and humanitarian assistance.

Key Figures



2.4 million

in need of humanitarian assistance



Over 50%

of the labor force is unemployed



53%

of Gazans are below the poverty line



Over 1.7 million

are food insecure



\$348 million

requested for humanitarian response

On-the-Ground Perspective

- Power cuts of 18-20 hours per day in Gaza have impeded the delivery of essential services and crippled activity. These cuts leave hospitals, water and sewage treatment, and other vital civilian facilities reliant on outside, vulnerable fuel sources to maintain essential functions.
- Programs that provide food, medical care, and livelihood assistance have shuttered, and local staff have been laid off due to the Administrative Review of Assistance and the impact of the Anti-Terrorism Clarification Act on U.S. funding.
- Real income in Gaza has declined 30% in 20 years. As the economy continues to decline, more people will soon need humanitarian assistance.

Responses and Actions

- The Norwegian Refugee Council has reached nearly 38,000 children through education programming that works directly with traumatized youth to offer psycho-educational support.

InterAction has a West Bank/Gaza working group; to request a briefing, contact policy@interaction.org. References available at [interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport](https://www.interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport).

