



# UN WOMEN PALESTINE 6-MONTH RESPONSE FRAMEWORK



Photo: UNDP PAPP/ Ahbed Zagout

## Summary

UN Women has been working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) since 1997, to achieve women's social, economic, and political rights. Following the escalation of hostilities with the 7 October 2023 attack on Israel, UN Women is responding in line with its [humanitarian strategy](#), its long-standing work in Palestine on humanitarian assistance and women, peace, and security, and the UN and partner [Flash Appeal](#) launched on 6 November 2023. This document articulates UN Women's 6-month plan to respond to the needs across OPT, while reflecting the distinct and rapidly evolving realities on the ground in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Through this plan, UN Women aims to ensure that the most marginalized women and their families are reached by the

humanitarian assistance. UN Women will support the provision of immediate life-saving assistance, in collaboration with WFP, to 14,716 women-headed households (equal to 73,582 people) in the Gaza Strip, while also supporting gender responsive humanitarian assistance through flexible funding to women's rights organizations across the OPT, that urgently need assistance to survive and sustain their operations. Through leadership of the national-level Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group (GiHA), UN Women will advance data and analysis on the gendered impacts of the hostilities, and promote gender-responsive humanitarian operations across the UN system. This will be complemented by direct support to the advocacy efforts of Palestinian women.

## Situation Overview

After the escalation of hostilities following the 7 October 2023 Hamas attack that resulted in the deaths of more than 1,200 Israeli and foreign nationals, and the taking of over 200 hostages, many of whom are women, the situation in OPT has changed dramatically. The [Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#) is targeting 2.7 million people in critical need of assistance across the OPT, where humanitarian needs have been driven by the protracted Israeli occupation of more than 56 years, 16 years of the Gaza blockade, and recurrent hostilities between Israeli security forces and Palestinian armed groups.

Today, the people of Gaza are seeking to survive under an ongoing siege, heavy Israeli aerial bombardment, and ongoing ground military operations that have surrounded Gaza City. Since Israeli forces began sustained attacks on residential neighbourhoods, refugee camps, hospitals, schools, places of worship, bakeries and supermarkets, Gaza authorities have recorded the deaths of an estimated 11,078 Palestinian people, about two-thirds of whom are women and children, and an estimated 27,490 injured in Gaza alone.<sup>1</sup> Nearly 1.5 million people - over two-thirds of the total population of Gaza - have been displaced, 788,800 of whom are women and girls,<sup>2</sup> and civilian

housing and public infrastructure across Gaza has been destroyed. An estimated 1.1 million women and girls in the Gaza Strip remain in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including the 2,056<sup>3</sup> new female-headed households created in the past month.

Lifesaving provisions, such as water, food, fuel, medicine, health care, sanitation and hygiene items, including for menstrual hygiene, and winter clothing, are critical for the survival of the people in Gaza. UNRWA-designated emergency shelters are severely overcrowded, posing specific gendered needs, and service providers are overwhelmed. Since 21 October 2023, when the first convoy was allowed to enter, only 915 trucks carrying humanitarian supplies have entered the area, which is woefully inadequate to meet the needs of people in Gaza<sup>4</sup>.

Violence continues to spread beyond Gaza, with 169 Palestinians killed, including 46 children, in the West Bank between 7 October 2023 until 12 November 2023.<sup>5</sup> Demolitions of public infrastructure and housing continue, and the revocation of Israeli work permits, and other movement restrictions have also significantly impacted the livelihoods of Palestinians in the West Bank. Beyond the severity of everyday needs, the immense psychological toll of the crisis on the

population in the OPT is devastating. Even prior to this crisis, 54 per cent of Gaza's men showed signs of anxiety and depression, the highest numbers across the Middle East.<sup>6</sup> This number is certain to have increased as a result of the current escalation.

Despite the horrific situation on the ground, women's rights organisations are continuing to operate in the OPT yet with limited capacity. The physical offices and facilities of many of UN Women's partners are now damaged. For example, Gaza's only two women's shelters - both in Gaza City - are now closed. The women's rights organisations that are still operational in Gaza continue to respond directly to women's needs, while many of their staff are experiencing forced displacement themselves. In the West Bank, the three operational women's shelters remain functional. However, increased tensions and restrictions on movements are both affecting the ability to provide key services. UN Women's partners in the OPT are focusing on sourcing and distributing emergency items, using their networks of volunteers to support the distribution, continuing service provision where possible, and documenting and responding to protection concerns. They are also seeking to survive as organisations and are in desperate need of core funding support to keep their institutional capacities functional.

Photo: WHO



<sup>1</sup> Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #37

<sup>2</sup> Facts and figures: Women and girls during the war in Gaza

<sup>3</sup> Facts and figures: Women and girls during the war in Gaza

<sup>4</sup> UNRWA Situation Report #28 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

<sup>5</sup> Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #37

<sup>6</sup> Understanding Masculinities: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) - Palestine

## UN Women Palestine: A History of Responding to Crisis

UN Women has been working in the OPT since 1997, beginning its engagement in humanitarian action after the first major escalation in Gaza in 2009. To strengthen the gender-responsiveness of the humanitarian system, UN Women and OCHA produce an annual gender analysis; provide training to humanitarian actors on issues of gender and protection; backstop the integration of the [Gender with Age Marker \(GAM\)](#); and work closely with actors to strengthen the institutional capacities of women’s organizations to respond to humanitarian needs. Under the leadership of UN Women, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) has developed its first [Gender in Humanitarian Action Accountability Framework \(2023-2025\)](#).

The results of these efforts are evident. Systematically, the OPT scores as having one of the most gender-responsive humanitarian operations in the world, with internationally recognized best practices on gender-responsive localization.<sup>7</sup> Operationally, UN Women in

the OPT directly reaches an average of 19,000 women per year with gender responsive multi-sectoral services that include gender-based violence (GBV) case management and referral, psychosocial assistance, legal assistance, shelter and reintegration support, working alongside actors such as UNRWA, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, and UNFPA.

UN Women has supported implementation of the women, peace and security agenda in the OPT and beyond in the region since the passage of Security Council resolution 1325, including inter alia, supporting the development of National Action Plans (NAP) on 1325, rule of law, and promoting women’s role in peace-making and peacebuilding across the region. In the past few years, UN Women has been supporting national authorities in the implementation of the [NAP 1325](#), promoting women’s access to justice, and documenting the gendered impact of conflict on Palestinian women’s lives and supporting local women peace activists.

<sup>7</sup> [IASC Gender Accountability Framework Report 2021](#)

## Response Plan: November 2023 – April 2024

UN Women’s response to the crisis in Palestine will address women’s needs across both Gaza and West Bank and be structured around the following Humanitarian Response (Pillar 1 and 2) and Women, Peace, and Security support (Pillar 3):

### Pillar 1

Provide life-saving assistance to women and girls, including through supporting women’s organizations.

### Pillar 2

Strengthen accountability towards gender commitments in the coordination and implementation of the humanitarian response.

### Pillar 3

Support Palestinian women to meaningfully influence political decision-making at all levels.

## Humanitarian Response

### Pillar 1: Provide life-saving assistance to women and girls, including through supporting women's organizations

UN Women's support will focus on life-saving support and emergency assistance to women-headed households, as well as support to women's rights organizations to survive and continue to deliver. This will include:

- **Providing lifesaving assistance** to 14,716 women-headed households, representing 30 per cent of all women-headed households in Gaza. This will be done in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) and will initially focus on Gaza.
- **Providing flexible financial support** to women's organizations in both Gaza and the West Bank, including through the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, to enable them to sustain their operations to address the emergency needs of the affected population.
- **Providing unconditional cash** through women's organizations to women whose livelihoods are affected by the revocation of Israeli work permits and other movement restrictions.
- **Scaling-up provision of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)** throughout the OPT.

### Pillar 2: Strengthen accountability towards gender commitments in the coordination and implementation of the humanitarian response

UN Women will strengthen the gender-responsiveness of the humanitarian response throughout the OPT. This will include:

- **Leading the national-level gender coordination**, including through co-chairing the GiHA Working Group and the PSEA Network, as well as providing technical expertise to ensure the gender responsiveness of the humanitarian architecture, including the Humanitarian Country Team, Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, and relevant cluster and working groups.
- **Producing regular alerts on the gendered impact of hostilities in OPT** to influence UN system partners, member states, and other relevant actors.
- **Providing technical support** to guide the design, implementation and monitoring of gender-responsive humanitarian assistance, including through mainstreaming gender in cluster-wide assessments, Flash Appeals, Humanitarian Response Plan, and leading a standalone Gender Assessment with others such as UNRWA.
- **Supporting the establishment of women-led "Protection and Early Response Committees"** to strengthen the leadership and meaningful participation of women in the provision, distribution, and monitoring of humanitarian aid.

## Women, Peace, and Security

### Pillar 3: Support Palestinian women to meaningfully influence political decision-making at all levels

UN Women will continue to support and amplify the advocacy of Palestinian women to address the larger protection crisis of the current escalation, and the root causes of the conflict. This will include:

- **Supporting Palestinian women leaders to conduct advocacy** with senior political officials in Palestine, member states, and the United Nations.
- **Partnering with OHCHR and other human rights actors to advance women's rights**, including through providing small grants to women's rights organizations.
- **Bringing together Palestinian women across the Arab States region and in the diaspora, as well as with regional women peacebuilders and mediators**, to exchange views and develop joint messaging on the gendered impact of the escalation and the root causes of the conflict.
- **Conducting advocacy with member states, intergovernmental organizations, and the relevant UN bodies**, on the gendered impact of the escalation.