



Arab food security monitoring framework

Country reviews

The State of Palestine

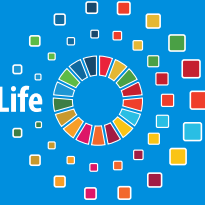


Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**





Shared Prosperity **Dignified Life**



VISION

ESCWA, an innovative catalyst for a stable, just and flourishing Arab region

MISSION

Committed to the 2030 Agenda, ESCWA's passionate team produces innovative knowledge, fosters regional consensus and delivers transformational policy advice. Together, we work for a sustainable future for all.



Arab food security monitoring framework

Country reviews

The State of Palestine



© 2021 United Nations
All rights reserved worldwide

Photocopies and reproductions of excerpts are allowed with proper credits.

All queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), e-mail: publications-escwa@un.org.

The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Links contained in this publication are provided for the convenience of the reader and are correct at the time of issue. The United Nations takes no responsibility for the continued accuracy of that information or for the content of any external website.

References have, wherever possible, been verified.

Mention of commercial names and products does not imply the endorsement of the United Nations.

References to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

United Nations publication issued by ESCWA, United Nations House, Riad El Solh Square, P.O. Box: 11-8575, Beirut, Lebanon.

Website: www.unescwa.org

Photo Credit:
Cover: ©iStock



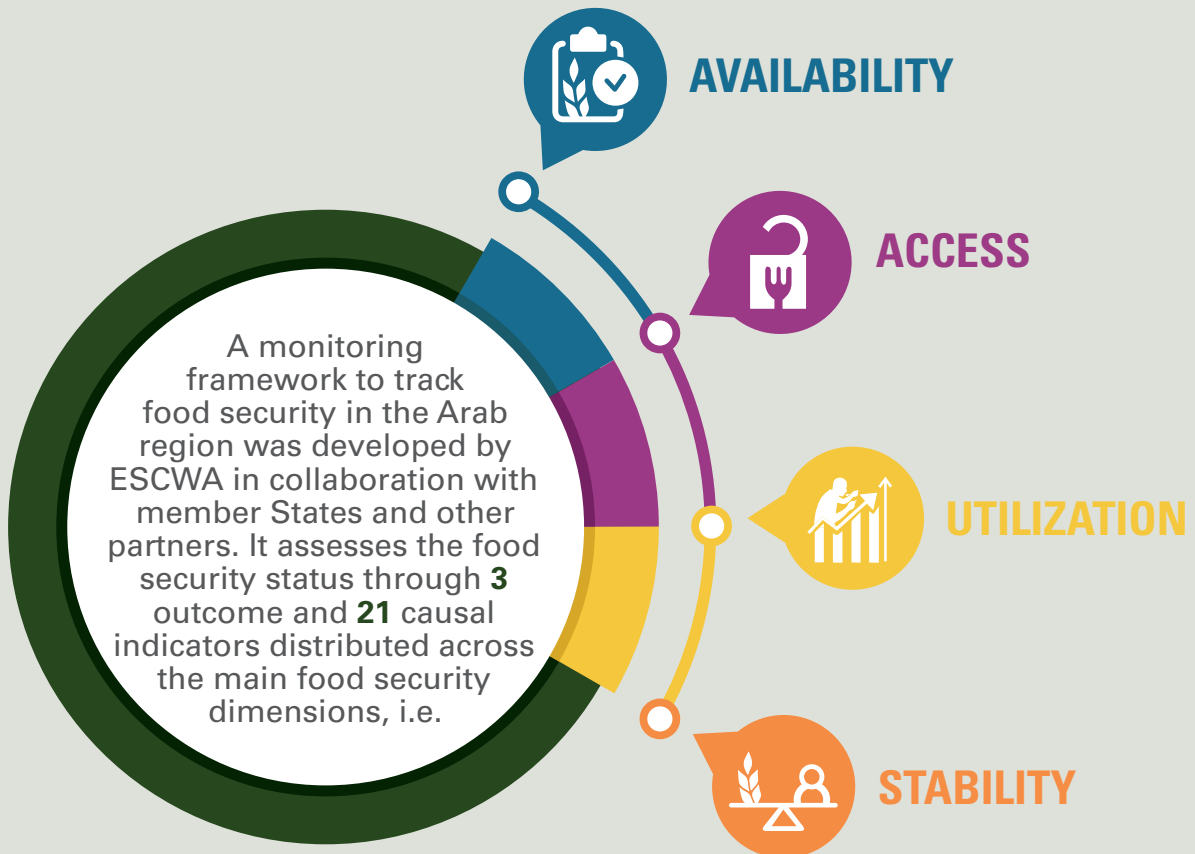


Contents

 Introduction	5
 Food security dashboard - Arab region	10
 Food security indicators, world vs. Arab region	11
 Country background	12
A. Natural resources	12
B. Socioeconomy	12
C. Agriculture and food security	13
 Data and trends	14
A. Core indicators	14
B. Availability	14
C. Access	14
D. Utilization	15
E. Stability	15
 Food security dashboard	16
 Food security indicators, The State of Palestine	17
 Food security snapshot	18
A. Drivers and determinants	18
B. Action areas	18
 Impact of COVID-19	20
 References	23



Key Messages



The monitoring framework highlights the lack of sufficient data for monitoring food security in the State of Palestine. However, given the high poverty rate and the widespread restrictions imposed because of the occupation, food security remains a cause of concern. The country profile reviews the impact of COVID-19, early measures against it and their effect on the food situation.



Introduction

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and its partners developed the Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework that helps countries assess their food security situation despite its complex and multidimensional nature.¹ The Monitoring Framework is an outcome of the project entitled “Promoting Food and Water Security through Cooperation and Capacity Development in the Arab Region”, implemented in collaboration and partnership with Arab countries, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), academia and other experts, and with the support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The framework builds on the globally agreed upon definition of food security as existing “when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”² which, as defined, comprises four dimensions, namely availability, access, utilization, and stability, can be evaluated at individual, household, national, regional, or global levels and can be seasonal, transitory or chronic. The framework was developed over a period of three years and involved consultations with more than 200 Arab and international experts. It involved a wide-ranging literature review to account for the latest thinking and experiences in assessing and monitoring food security at national, regional and global levels as well as a mapping of past and present policies, strategies and action plans.

The encompassing review led to the development of a comprehensive monitoring framework that tracks food security at different spatial levels, considers its four dimensions and accounts for both individual and household food security while facilitating a follow-up of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The end result was the Monitoring Framework that expresses food security and nutrition as a function of a multitude of indicators spread in its four dimensions, though approximately five to six indicators under each dimension account for most of the variations and thus are more consequential than the rest. Most of the selected indicators are already widely used globally to monitor aspects of the food system, and the SDGs and other plans of actions are used by major global institutions as development, economic, social, health, or environmental indicators. It was also ensured that the indicators are measurable, relevant to the Arab context and available for at least 50 per cent of Arab countries or the regional population, or both.

1 Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 2019. Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2019/4). Beirut. Available at <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/tracking-food-security-arab-region>.

2 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), 2009. Report of the Committee on World Food Security: Final version. Agenda item III, Thirty-fifth Session of the Committee on World Food Security, 14, 15 and 17 October 2009, CFS:2009/2 Rev.2. Rome.



The 24 indicators that were selected are split into a core pillar with three ex post or outcome indicators — prevalence of undernourishment, moderate or severe food insecurity and obesity, while the remaining 21 ex ante or causal indicators were further split into the four food security dimensions as shown below. All the indicators are global in nature while catering to regional specificities and are grouped as follows:

- **The Core Pillar** comprises three outcome indicators that provide a picture of the prevailing food security and nutrition situation resulting from policies and programmes being implemented as reflected in the form of malnutrition – undernutrition (low caloric intake), overnutrition (excess caloric intake) or nutrient deficiency (low nutrient intake);

1 Core Indicators (CO)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
C01	Prevalence of undernourishment ^R %	Undernourishment	2.1.1
C02	Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity measured using FIES ^R %	Food insecurity	2.1.2
C03	Prevalence of obesity in the adult population (18 years and older) ^R %	Obesity	

^R : Reversed During Normalization

- **The Availability** dimension comprises six indicators reflecting the supply side of food, namely, physical food inflow and outflow at macro and micro levels through production, trade, distribution, and others;

2 Food Availability Indicators (AV)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
AV1	Primary wheat yield as a percentage of potential achievable yield - %	Yields	2.3.1
AV2	Agriculture Orientation index for government expenditures - Index	Agriculture expenditure	2.a.1
AV3	Food losses (% total food available) ^R %	Food loss	12.3
AV4	Average dietary energy supply adequacy - %	Dietary energy supply	
AV5	Wheat import dependency ratio ^R %	Import dependency	
AV6	Share of water resources used in agriculture out of total renewable water resources ^R %	Agriculture water	6.4.2



- **The Access** dimension comprises five indicators reflecting the ability of the population to acquire needed food through financial means and/or socioeconomic strengths with determinants including income/revenues, prices and supply-chain infrastructure;

3 Food Access Indicators (AC)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
AC1	Poverty headcount ratio ^R %	Poverty	1.1.1/1.2.1/1.2.2
AC2	Share of food consumption expenditure in total household consumption expenditure ^R %	Food consumption	
AC3	Unemployment rate ^R %	Unemployment	8.5.2
AC4	Logistics performance - index	Logistics	
AC5	Inflation, consumer prices ^R %	Inflation	

- **The Utilization** dimension comprises five indicators touching on nutrition impact or factors affecting it such as availability of basic water and sanitation infrastructure and critical health parameters showing the impact of food unavailability or nutrient deficiency, namely, stunting, wasting and anaemia;

4 Food Utilization Indicators (UT)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
UT1	The population using at least basic drinking water services - %	Drinking water access	1.4.1/6.1.1
UT2	The population using at least basic sanitation services - %	Sanitation access	1.4.1/6.2.1
UT3	Children under 5 years of age affected by stunting ^R %	Child stunting	2.2.1
UT4	Children under 5 years of age affected by wasting ^R %	Child wasting	2.2.2
UT5	Anaemia among women of reproductive age (15-49 years) ^R %	Women anaemia	

- **The Stability** dimension comprises five indicators highlighting the variability in food production or supply factors that might affect these such as climate change, weather events, price shocks and sociopolitical conditions, all of which might impact the other food security dimensions and the core pillar as well;

5 Stability Indicators (ST)			
Code	Indicator description	Short name	SDG linkage
ST1	Climate change vulnerability index ^R	Climate change	
ST2	Food price anomalies standard deviation ^R	Price anomalies	2.c.1
ST3	Political stability and absence of violence - ranking	Political stability	
ST4	Per capita food production variability - \$1,000/capita ^R	Production variability	
ST5	Per capita food supply variability - kcal/capita/day ^R	Supply variability	



Data are collected and computed using a dedicated Excel template. The results are presented in the form of a dashboard with two overlapping doughnut charts whose ten rings represent the data normalized to score between 0 (worst performance) and 10 (best performance), as depicted in the graph below. The inner doughnut displays the results of the core indicators while the outer doughnut shows those of the four food security dimension indicators. During the normalization process, indicators with a low value indicating good performance were reversed and are represented with an (R). The doughnut chart is always accompanied by a table presenting the raw indicator data together with the year of data collection and the overall trend between two time periods.

By design, the framework is mechanistic for two reasons: (i) indicators are set and distributed across the food security core pillar and four dimensions; and (ii) the interpretation of results follows a determined path consisting, first, in evaluating results of the three core indicators to identify food security and/or nutritional outcome, and second, in examining the 21 dimension indicators to identify hotspot areas that need immediate action. Stakeholders only need to enter data into the provided Excel template to generate the doughnut graph and related table containing raw data and trends. The data can be sourced at the regional, national and, if available, sub-national levels and disaggregated along gender lines or others noting, however, that a great majority of indicators cannot be disaggregated below the national level.

A complete description of the framework, which was endorsed by the Executive Council of AOAD in March 2019, was published and is available at ESCWA official publication website³ under the title “Tracking Food Security in the Arab Region”⁴. In addition to providing a full background on the framework, the publication presents the key results of tracking food security at the Arab regional level and the trend over the considered years and reviews selected policies and actions that might be considered under each of the indicators to remedy arising concerns. The publication is accompanied by a technical document entitled “Manual for Monitoring Food Security in the Arab Region”, which provides a more detailed description for each of the 24 indicators comprising the monitoring framework including, when applicable, computation methodology, justification for selection, linkage to SDGs, potential data sources, and normalization process. It also overviews the use of the accompanying Excel template. Since the completion of the Food Security Monitoring Framework, numerous national agricultural and statistics experts from Arab countries have received in-depth training that took place in Tunis⁵ and Beirut⁶ and which focused on how to utilize the framework and interpret results for maximum impact for policy and programme design and development.

This report provides a series of food security overviews for the 22 Arab countries, which build on the above-described Arab Food Security Monitoring Framework. Its aim is to further highlight how to use the framework as well as to build capacity on its use with a focus on the national level. As such, it supports Arab countries in their endeavours to utilize the framework in the implementation of food security programmes, to assess the prevailing situation and

3 See https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/tracking-food-security-arab-region-english_1.pdf.

4 See https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/manual-monitoring-food-security-arab-region-english_1.pdf.

5 See <https://www.unescwa.org/events/training1-food-security-monitoring-framework-arab>.

6 See <https://www.unescwa.org/events/training2-food-security-monitoring-framework-arab>.



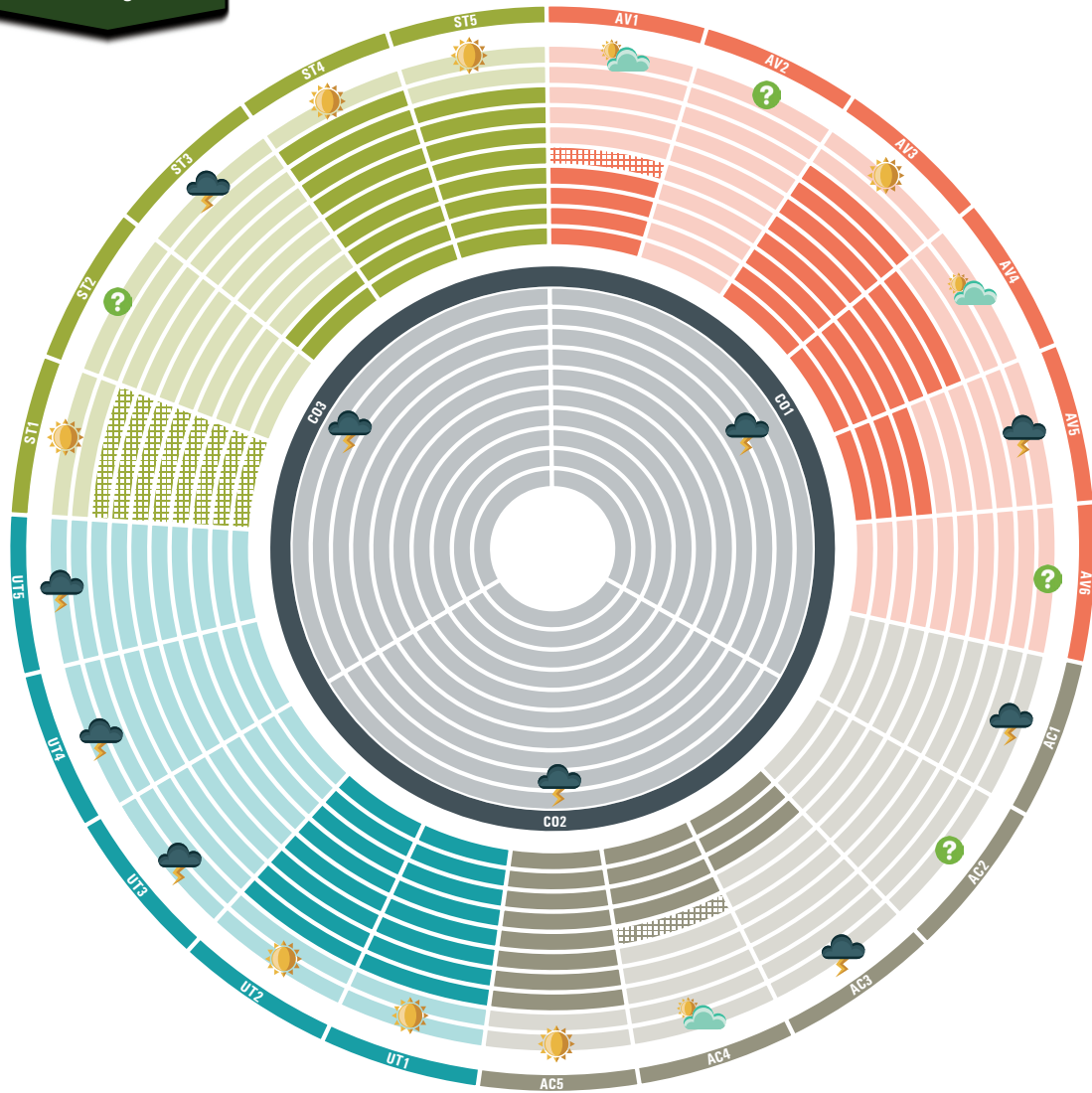
to follow up on progress achieved towards the implementation of selected SDGs. It should further enhance capacity at country level and support efforts of national experts to collect focused data, analyse them using a dedicated framework and interpret meaningfully the results to provide policymakers with an overall view of their respective country's food security situation while also outlining alternative paths to address the situation.

The country overviews were produced by ESCWA with data delivered by national experts who provided or reviewed the underlying data (see attached list) and from global databases, as appropriate. For some countries, critical data are still missing, which should serve as a call to action to collect and provide the necessary data as the basis of more accurate and focused advice. The data were collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; thus, some results might not reflect the current situation. It is hoped that the report will raise the necessary awareness so that countries can make additional efforts to remediate the lack of data.



Food security dashboard

Arab region



2010 Data: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Latest Data: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Performance: ☀ High: Proceed Action | ☁ Average: More Action | ⚡ Low: Urgent Action | ? No Data



Food security indicators, world vs. Arab region

Indicators		World		Arab region			Trend
		Latest		2010	Latest		
Code	Description	Value	Year	Value	Value	Year	
CORE INDICATORS							
CO1	Undernourishment ^R %	10.8	2016	11.5	12.1	2016	●
CO2	Food insecurity ^R %	9.2	2018	n.a.	12.2	2016	
CO3	Obesity ^R %	13.0	2016	24.6	28.4	2016	●
AVAILABILITY INDICATORS							
AV1	Wheat yields - %	n.a.		76.5	82.2	2017	●
AV2	Agriculture expenditure - index	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
AV3	Food loss ^R %	n.a.		7.3	6.8	2013	●
AV4	Dietary energy supply - %	n.a.		131	131	2017	●
AV5	Wheat Import dependency ^R %	n.a.		62.5	65.0	2012	●
AV6	Agriculture water ^R %	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ACCESS INDICATORS							
AC1	Poverty ^R %	26.2	2015	n.a.	16.6	mult.	
AC2	Food consumption ^R %	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
AC3	Unemployment ^R %	5.0	2018	9.6	10.4	mult.	●
AC4	Logistics - index	2.8	2016	2.6	2.7	2016	●
AC5	Inflation ^R %	2.5	2018	5.7	12.8	mult.	●
UTILIZATION INDICATORS							
UT1	Drinking water access - %	88.5	2015	84.3	86.9	2015	●
UT2	Sanitation access - %	68.0	2015	78.9	80.8	2015	●
UT3	Child stunting ^R %	22.2	2017	n.a.	22.9	mult.	
UT4	Child wasting ^R %	7.5	2017	n.a.	8.7	mult.	
UT5	Women anaemia ^R %	32.8	2016	34.2	35.5	2016	●
STABILITY INDICATORS							
ST1	Climate change ^R - index	n.a.		n.a.	0.1	2019	
ST2	Price Anomalies ^R - index	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ST3	Political stability - ranking	n.a.		20	14	2017	●
ST4	Production variability ^R - \$/1,000/capita	n.a.		10.3	10.1	2016	●
ST5	Supply variability ^R - kcal/cap/day	n.a.		32.8	29.8	2013	●

^R : Reversed During Normalization n.a.= Not Available mult.= Multiple years
 ● Red: Negative Trend ● Yellow: Neutral Trend ● Green: Positive Trend

Source: Computed by ESCWA.





Country background

A. Natural resources

The State of Palestine is under occupation with its land and water being heavily restricted by Israel. The West Bank is landlocked and sits on the west bank of the Jordan River while the Gaza Strip is

a narrow coastal strip of land along the Mediterranean Sea. Farming is determined by the agro-ecology of the concerned areas based on altitude, proximity to water sources and soils.

Box 1. The marginalized in Palestine: Bedouin communities

Throughout the Arab world, mobile pastoralists and herders, also known as “Badou” or Bedouins in English, are among the poorest and most marginalized. This is also the case in Palestine, where their plight is multiplied by the constant fear of forced transfer and resettlement that looms over their heads. An estimated 30,000 Bedouins live in Area C under complete Israeli control. Access to rangeland and mobility is the key to their livelihood strategy. Yet, their movement is constantly curtailed by the Israelis. In Gaza, some 75,000 Bedouins live in areas suffering from various restrictions to movement. Bedouins are the most vulnerable and marginalized segment of Palestinian society and are considered to be at the bottom of the social ladder. All Bedouins are registered as refugees, even those who are under the Palestinian authority. This comes in spite of the economic contribution, estimated at 40 per cent of the Palestinian agriculture gross domestic product. Their level of food insecurity is very high, and they rely on aid for survival.

Source: OXFAM, 2017.

B. Socioeconomy

Restriction of movement and travel, within and between Palestinian areas, and the constant pressure exerted by Israel prevent the development of an efficient Palestinian economic, social and political system. Food is quasi exclusively obtained from Israeli sources, which controls all entry

and exit points to the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS). Similarly, any farm produce from the WBGS must be marketed through Israeli channels.

The protracted occupation is affecting each of the 4.7 million Palestinians living in the



WBGS. In 2018, the gross domestic product (GDP) in WBGS was evaluated at \$14.6 billion, which translates into about \$3,200 per capita.

Agriculture represented about 3.2 per cent of total GDP and employed 6 per cent of males and 7 per cent of females.¹

C. Agriculture and food security

Recent estimates by WFP are that one third of the population of the West Bank is food insecure and that two thirds of the inhabitants of Gaza experience food insecurity. Thus, 1.7 million are affected by food insecurity, which is driven by poverty and unemployment.²

Food insecurity is highest among women, especially in Gaza. Malnutrition is frequent, and poverty is pervasive and affects half the population of Gaza, which has been under a sea, air and land blockade for 11 years.

1 World Bank, n. d.

2 World Food Programme (WFP), 2020.





Data and trends

A. Core indicators

- **Prevalence of undernourishment (CO1)** data are not available;
- **Prevalence of severe food insecurity (CO2)** was reported at 9.5 per cent in 2016 lower than the average of the Arab region at 12.2 per cent, but this might be due to the occupation that gives Palestine a context that is different from all other countries of the region;
- **Obesity (CO3)** data are not available.

B. Availability

- **Wheat yield to potential (AV1)** data are not available;
- **Wheat import dependency (AV5)** data are not available;
- **Agriculture orientation index (AV2)** doubled from 0.14 in 2010 to 0.28 in 2017; though it is still a small value, it nevertheless indicates the Government's willingness to invest in the agricultural sector;
- **Water resources used in agriculture (AV6)** remained at around 21 per cent between 2010 and 2017 as per official sources. The low rate of abstraction would be sustainable; in reality, however, most of the water is used by Israel, which is causing its degradation in spite of the low Palestinian extraction rates.
- **Food losses to food available (AV3)** data are not available;
- **Average dietary energy supply adequacy (AV4)** data are not available;

C. Access

- **Poverty ratio at \$3.2/day (AC1)** was reported at 29.2 per cent in 2017, an increase compared to 25.7 per cent in 2010 and way above the regional average of 16.6 per cent;
- **Food consumption share of expenditures (AC2)** was reported at 30.5 per cent in 2017 compared to 36.4 per cent in 2010, meaning that households spend about a third of their income on food. However, many receive humanitarian assistance;



- **Unemployment rate (AC3)** was reported at 30.8 per cent in 2018, an increase compared to the 23.8 per cent of 2010. The high rates are due to the lack of opportunity due the occupation and restricted economic activities;
- **Logistics performance (AC4)** data are not available;
- **Inflation, consumer prices (AC5)** was -0.2 per cent in 2017 pointing towards the possibility of a deflation. It was 3.74 per cent in 2010.

D. Utilization

- **Population using basic drinking water services (UT1)** stood at 61.9 per cent in 2010 and dropped slightly to 59.1 per cent in 2017, pointing to serious challenges to achieve the corresponding 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target;
- **Population using basic sanitation services (UT2)** increased from 90.8 per cent to 99.7 per cent, respectively, between 2010 and 2017 and covers almost the entire population;
- **Stunting in children under five years (UT3)** exhibited a favourable trend between 2010 and 2014 as it declined from 10.3 per cent to 7.4 per cent, respectively. Both these values are under the low prevalence of malnutrition threshold, set by the World Health Organization (WHO) classification, and the target set by the World Health Assembly (WHA) for 2030;
- **Wasting in children under five years (UT4)** affected only 1.2 per cent, a significant drop from the 2010 value of 3.2 per cent. This value also goes under WHO classification of low prevalence of malnutrition and below the WHA target for 2030;
- **Prevalence of anaemia among women (UT5)** was reported officially in 2010 at 27.1 per cent, while no later data was provided.

E. Stability

- **Climate change vulnerability (ST1)** data are not available;
- **Food price anomalies (ST2)** data are not available;
- **Political stability (ST3)** data are not available;
- **Food production variability (ST4)** was relatively low in both 2010 and 2016, at \$8,100 and \$7,300,³ respectively. It shows stability in the food production system; the low values might be due to the limited production as a result of the various restrictions put in place by the Israeli occupation;
- **Food supply variability (ST5)** data are not available.

³ Constant 2004-2006 International USD.



Food security dashboard

State of Palestine



2010 Data: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Latest Data: ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Performance: ☀ High: Proceed Action | ☁ Average: More Action | ☁⚡ Low: Urgent Action | ? No Data



Food security indicators, State of Palestine

Indicators		Arab		State of Palestine			Trend
		Latest		2010	Latest		
Code	Description	Value	Year	Value	Value	Year	
CORE INDICATORS							
CO1	Undernourishment ^R %	12.1	2016	n.a.	n.a.		
CO2	Food insecurity ^R %	12.2	2016	n.a.	9.5	2016	
CO3	Obesity ^R %	28.4	2016	n.a.	n.a.		
AVAILABILITY INDICATORS							
AV1	Wheat yields - %	82.2	2017	n.a.	n.a.		
AV2	Agriculture expenditure - index	n.a.		0.14	0.28	2017	●
AV3	Food loss ^R %	6.8	2013	n.a.	n.a.		
AV4	Dietary energy supply - %	131	2017	n.a.	n.a.		
AV5	Wheat Import dependency ^R %	65.0	2012	n.a.	n.a.		
AV6	Agriculture water ^R %	n.a.		20.8	21.0	2017	●
ACCESS INDICATORS							
AC1	Poverty ^R %	16.6	mult.	25.7	29.2	2017	●
AC2	Food consumption ^R %	n.a.		36.4	30.5	2017	●
AC3	Unemployment ^R %	10.4	mult.	23.8	30.8	2018	●
AC4	Logistics - index	2.7	2016	n.a.	n.a.		
AC5	Inflation ^R %	12.8	mult.	3.8	-0.2	2017	●
UTILIZATION INDICATORS							
UT1	Drinking water access - %	86.9	2015	61.9	59.1	2017	●
UT2	Sanitation access - %	80.8	2015	90.8	99.7	2017	●
UT3	Child stunting ^R %	22.9	mult.	10.3	7.4	2014	●
UT4	Child wasting ^R %	8.7	mult.	3.2	1.2	2014	●
UT5	Women anaemia ^R %	35.5	2016	27.1	n.a.		
STABILITY INDICATORS							
ST1	Climate change ^R - index	0.1	2019	n.a.	n.a.		
ST2	Price Anomalies ^R - index	n.a.		n.a.	n.a.		
ST3	Political stability - ranking	14	2017	n.a.	n.a.		
ST4	Production variability ^R - \$/1,000/capita	10.1	2016	8.1	7.3	2016	●
ST5	Supply variability ^R - kcal/cap/day	29.8	2013	n.a.	n.a.		

^R : Reversed During Normalization n.a.= Not Available mult.= Multiple years
 ● Red: Negative Trend ● Yellow: Neutral Trend ● Green: Positive Trend

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all data figuring in this table and framework were received from national sources.





Food security snapshot

A. Drivers and determinants

Data are seriously lacking to have a good grip on the food security of the State of Palestine based on this framework. Undernourishment (CO1) and obesity (CO3) lack data while food insecurity experience (CO2) is concerning.

Hotspot areas include the following:

- **Availability:** agriculture orientation (AV2);
- **Access:** poverty (AC1) and logistics (AC4);
- **Utilization:** anaemia among women (UT5).

B. Action areas

A country under occupation cannot be judged with the same policy criteria as any other. However, a close reading of the framework and of associated literature unveils a set of policies that can guide the resilience of food systems and the improvement of food security in the State of Palestine, which include the following:

1. Improve data collection and share data with the international organizations in order to harmonize all data. WBGS is home to a large number of international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which have established procedures for data collection. These data need to be confirmed, triangulated and made accessible through international databases. This will allow better planning and policymaking.
2. Food security is high on the agenda of the Palestinian National Authority. This is the time to address concurrently the two interdependent issues of poverty and food insecurity. The humanitarian response plan of FAO of 2019 is on target, and should be

adopted and supported by the Palestinian National Authority. Its main features are the following:

- a. Restore agricultural production, especially using sustainable production techniques: This will enhance the resilience of the farming community and contribute to delinking from the Israeli food dumping system;
- b. Support vulnerable women and youth in herding communities: This will target the marginalized (women and youth) within the marginalized (Bedouins and pastoralists) (box 1);
- c. Emergency livelihood support in cash or kind: Under occupation, it is impossible for many to survive without direct assistance, as people are not operating in a regular economy;
- d. Strengthen food security coordination: This will avoid redundancies and allow a set of targeted and focused actions.



It should be noted that recommendations a, b and c address concurrently the availability and access dimensions of food security which are the two most critical dimensions in

the case of the State of Palestine. It must also be noted that, as Palestinians routinely put it, they face one problem: occupation.



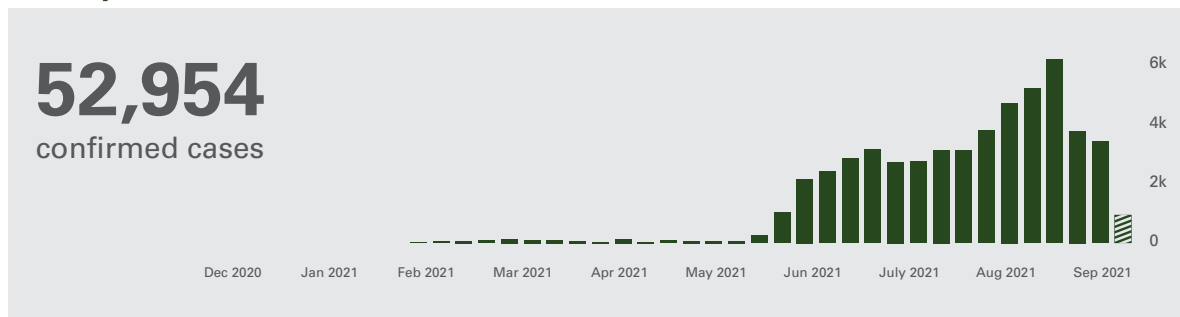


Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic reached the State of Palestine in early March 2020 and, by October, had affected close to 53,000 people with about 400 deaths recorded. The first peak was reached in late June/early July

with daily rates of about 400 daily cases. Currently, the State of Palestine is going through a second peak with daily cases hovering at 400 and more.

Weekly cases



Source: World Health Organization, n. d.

The restrictive measures implemented to control the pandemic exacerbated the existing economic challenges, and the number of food-insecure people is expected to increase to possibly 50 per cent, worsening their already existing poor living conditions and limited dietary diversity.⁴

Lockdown measures⁵ negatively impacted livelihoods and led to the loss of income, pushing 100,000 people into poverty.

Furthermore, the purchasing power of Palestinians has been impacted by the closure of schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the refusal of the Palestinian National Authority to accept the tax money collected by the occupation leading to the termination of the cash-for-work opportunities and payment of governmental salaries for the month of May. Restricted social safety nets and

⁴ World Health Organization (WHO), 2020; Middle East Centre, 2020; and FAO, 2020.

⁵ Closure of non-essential businesses and institutions; curfew from 20:00 to 06:00 on weekdays and from 20:00 to 06:00 on weekends; suspended public transportation between governorates (not within); prohibiting public and private events; restrictions on businesses and commercial movements; and suspension of coordination with the occupation's authorities.

frozen salaries pushed more people into food and nutrition insecurity. The decrease in purchasing power led to a decrease in the demand for retail food. For example, in Gaza, red meat consumption decreased by 15 per cent. All of the above combined pushed 29 per cent of registered workers into need of humanitarian assistance.⁶ Lockdown measures also disrupted the local and global supply chains, primarily impacting the agricultural livelihoods of Bedouins and farmers as they struggled to export their fruits and vegetables, sell their sheep due to a decrease in demand and prices, and import/acquire inputs, fertilizers and feeds.⁷

The high prices of the available low-quality agricultural inputs, together with the cuts of water supplies that pushed the farmers to buy water from private sellers, increased local production costs. Increased food

prices were reported in Gaza. Moreover, due to import disruptions, meat prices increased, especially those of broilers and turkey and that of chicken doubled due to increased demand during Ramadan. In the meantime, the availability of food products from external sources competed with locally produced food items.⁸

Some improvements were witnessed in the agricultural sector, such as the export of avocado, lemon and guava, except for red meat and dairy. However, improvements did not last long due to the heat wave that further disrupted the agricultural sector in late May and early June and the spike in the daily confirmed COVID-19 cases in July that brought back lockdown measures leading to the same negative impact on farmers, supply chains, and others, as reported earlier.⁹

6 OCHA, 2020.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.



Box 2. Examples of initiatives

Government-led

Several municipalities and Government entities distributed food and water to the population. In addition, farmers and cooperatives donated fruits and vegetables and flour bags to benefit affected people in Bethlehem Governorate and Toubas.^a In early May, 1,000 beneficiaries in Gaza received a total of 700 tons of broiler feed.^b

The Government in the West Bank, in collaboration with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and charities, distributed one million seedlings, fertilizers and animal feed worth \$1 million for home gardens; 90 per cent was completed by end of April.^c In addition, the number of vulnerable families was assessed, the availability of food monitored through an online survey, and \$100 distributed to 100,000 families each.^d

Other initiatives

The private sector distributed food items to needy families in Bethlehem.^e

Local NGOs distributed more than 160 tons of vegetables and 5 tons of dates to poor families and farmers by the end of April.^f

An interagency response plan was formulated between WFP, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and Union of Agricultural Workers Committee to help the food-insecure households impacted by COVID-19, to provide them with in-kind and cash assistance, including e-vouchers, and to put in place a new door-to-door delivery method in Gaza. Requirements for the food security sector were \$11,781,726.^g

To protect agricultural livelihoods, FAO provided Bedouins and shepherds with animal feed, and NGOs purchased the locally produced food. Total funds received were \$10,954,867; 78 per cent of the Response Plan was completed by July 28.^h

In March, UNRWA added 12 facilities for food distribution to ensure social distancing at distribution centres. Jointly with WFP, it distributed 4,000 food boxes to 1,113 households.ⁱ

WFP and FAO monitored market availability and prices, and access to food, markets and inputs across the State of Palestine. The Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee sent wheat to 200 households in the Bedouin community and to more than 120 households in Bethlehem.^j

a Fundación Promoción Social, 2020.

b OCHA, 2020.

c Ibid.; and Al-Monitor 2020.

d OCHA, 2020.

e Fundación Promoción Social, 2020.

f OCHA, 2020.

g Ibid.

h Ibid.

i Ibid.

j Ibid.





References

- Al-Monitor (2020). Palestinians launch initiatives to fight COVID-19 outbreak. Available at <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/03/palestine-west-bank-corona-virus-initiatives-solidarity.html> (accessed September 8, 2020).
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2008). Country profile - Occupied Palestinian Territory. FAO AQUASTAT reports. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/CA0348EN/ca0348en.pdf>.
- _____ (2019). Near East and North Africa Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2018: Rural Transformation - Key for sustainable development in the Near East and North Africa. Cairo. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ca3817en.pdf>.
- _____ (2020). Palestine: Revised humanitarian response Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), May-December 2020. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cb0203en.pdf> (accessed September 7, 2020).
- FAO and others (2019). The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019: Safeguarding against Economic Slowdowns and Downturns. Rome. Available at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf>.
- Fundación Promoción Social (2020). Solidarity wins in uncertain times in Palestine. Available at <https://promocionsocial.org/en/la-solidaridad-vence-en-palestina-en-tiempos-dificiles/> (accessed September 8, 2020).
- Middle East Centre (2020). Food Insecurity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Reflections in Light of the COVID-19 Lockdown. London School of Economics and Political Science. Available at <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2020/03/31/food-insecurity-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-reflections-in-light-of-the-covid-19-lockdown/> (accessed September 7, 2020).
- Mueller, N. D. and others (2012). Closing yield gaps through nutrient and water management. *Nature*, vol. 490, pp. 254-257. Available at <https://www.nature.com/articles/nature11420?platform=oscar&draft=journal>.
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (2020). Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): COVID-19 Emergency Situation Reports (several issues).
- Oxfam (2017). Towards Sustainable Food Security in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Strengthening Rangeland Governance. Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/towards-sustainable-food-security-occupied-palestinian>.
- World Bank (n. d.). Indicators. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator> (accessed April 2020).
- World Food Programme (WFP) (2020). Palestine Country Brief, February. Available at https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000113477/download/?_ga=2.68407185.1407243313.1586985242-559758826.1586821765.
- World Health Organization (WHO) (n. d.). COVID-19 dashboard. Available at <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/ps> (accessed October 6, 2020).
- _____ (2020). Occupied Palestinian Territory: COVID-19 Response Plan (April 24). Humanitarian Country Team. Available at <https://www.who.int/health-cluster/countries/occupied-palestinian-territory/occupied-palestinian-territory-covid-19-humanitarian-response-plan-april-2020.pdf?ua=1> (accessed August 11, 2020).





