

Humanitarian Emergency Response Fund for Occupied Palestinian Territories August 2007 to December 2008

History of HRF oPt.

The emergency pooled fund for oPt, the Humanitarian Emergency Response fund (HRF), was created in August 2007 in response to two sudden emergencies in the oPt, the Avian Flu outbreak which swept the oPt and Israel in 2006, and the flood from the Beit Lahia sewage plant in the Gaza Strip which killed five people and displaced thousands more.

At that time, there was no fund available to provide rapid allocation to support humanitarian activities in the immediate aftermath of such emergencies.

The HRF is already disbursing funds to emergency projects in response to the ongoing emergency in the Gaza Strip and new rapid response requests continue to be received and assessed, including for urgent humanitarian needs in the West Bank.

The HRF is a CAP project and is an entirely flexible funding mechanism which aims to provide immediate relief where gaps in emergency assistance are identified. The advantage of the HRF is that it takes only a few days to process and disburse funds. The Humanitarian Coordinator approves appropriate projects, and OCHA monitors and coordinates their implementation.

Current guidelines are in the process of being reviewed by the HC, OCHA and advisory board to ensure that it has the appropriate capacity to respond to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.

*Guidelines for the operation of the HRF (along with proposal, reporting and financial templates) are available at www.ochaopt.org.

Situation overview:

Political, economic and social conditions have continued to deteriorate in the oPt and ordinary Palestinians continue to bear the brunt of the ongoing crisis. In addition to continuing fatalities from direct Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there was a dramatic increase in deaths and injuries due to internal Palestinian violence in 2007. The poverty rate stands at 57%¹ and food insecurity affects 34%² of the population. Sharp increase in food prices since the beginning of 2008 constituted a key factor compounding the humanitarian situation especially for the poorest sectors of society primarily in Gaza but also amongst vulnerable groups in the West Bank.

Deterioration has been particularly severe in Gaza which has been effectively sealed off from the rest of the world since mid-June. Few residents can now exit Gaza, even in the case of

¹ PCBS, *Poverty in the oPt in 2006*, August 2007.

² WFP/FAO, *Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA)*, released in February 2007.

medical emergency, and only limited commercial and humanitarian supplies can enter Gaza. A complete halt to the import of raw materials and exports to Israel and the wider world resulted in 75,000 Gazan employees laid off by mid-September. Dependency on agencies such as UNRWA and WFP in Gaza now stands at 80%, which will further increase due to the continuing closure of Gaza's external borders.

In the West Bank, the closure regime continues to impede access to workplaces, markets and to health and education services. The Government of Israel (GoI) continues with construction of the Barrier, Upon completion of the Barrier, approximately 9.5% of the West Bank will be isolated between the Barrier and the Green Line. Administrative and physical restrictions on access to East Jerusalem for West Bank Palestinians continue. Eligibility requirements for Palestinians entering the closed area to the west of the Barrier in the northern West Bank have become tighter. The impact of the expanding presence of Israeli infrastructure in Area "C", 60% of the West Bank, including settlements, outposts, military infrastructure and roads, falls disproportionately on the Palestinian communities in "C", who are increasingly vulnerable. The eastern slopes including the Jordan Valley, east Bethlehem and east and south Hebron are almost exclusively Area "C". Continuing restrictions on Palestinian development in Area C by a variety of restrictive Israeli measures, including the demolitions of structures due to lack of building permits and lack of authority of the PA in 'C' has left most needs of these communities unaddressed in the PRDP. Their fragility has been compounded in 2008 by a series of weather shocks, drought and frost in particular. Through to the end of February 2008 the West Bank received only 25% of its average rainfall, severely affecting herding communities which were already struggling with poverty and debt caused by rapidly escalating costs of essential fodder and water. This situation was worsened by a week of frost in mid-January which killed many of the surviving grazing plants and crops and caused high death rates amongst sheep and goats.³

HRF Targeting and Impact.

HRF has targeted the most vulnerable groups as identified in the CAP documents for 2007 and 2008 to provide assistance during periods of sudden emergency.

In the West Bank, the coping strategies of small scattered communities, dependant on herding in marginalized locations of Area C⁴ have been eroded by recurrent drought, the collapse of local markets, the lack of access to affordable water, the rise in fodder costs and loss of traditional alternative livelihoods in Israel due to sustained closure.

Poverty combined with the prohibition of building by the Israeli Civil Administration has resulted in more than 3,200 families (more than 192,000 people) living in makeshift tents, tin shacks and caves, mainly on the eastern slopes of the West Bank. Poverty has reduced the ability of families to maintain their dwellings, ensure adequate nutrition, access to health care or provide fuel for cooking and heating. These weakened communities are acutely vulnerable

³ For further details see: OCHA and FAO, *Drought: The Latest Blow to Herding Livelihoods*, January 2008, available at: <http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/Hebron%20Drought.pdf>.

⁴ Copy paste from elsewhere.

to unseasonable weather, and other shocks as a result of occupation, and need timely and appropriate assistance to overcome them.

The HRF has provided assistance during an outbreak of water borne disease caused by drought of 2007, by delivering clean drinking water to 948 families. During an acute weather crisis in January 2008, the HRF was able, through six projects, to ensure minimal heating and bedding for more than 3,200 families to protect them during sub-zero temperatures. By providing immediate assistance the HRF supported communities in maintaining their livelihoods and withstand displacement.

In addition, the HRF focused to mitigate the consequences of drought in vulnerable areas by trying to assist communities affected by lack of access to adequate and safe water. Areas of intervention included the provision of an emergency water supply to Palestinian communities in rural areas in the West Bank. Four NGOs responded to providing water trucking to 3,275 vulnerable households facing the highest water cost.

In the Gaza Strip, pre-existing levels of poverty have increased dramatically since the Hamas take-over in June 2007, further reducing the capacity of the populations to respond to their own emergency needs. The blockade of crossing points into Gaza has hampered the delivery of planned aid and development programmes. Israeli military operations – most significantly since 27 December 2008 - significantly increased the need for assistance, especially for medical services.

The HRF has supported seven projects in Gaza, including one at a sewage treatment plant which threatened the health of local children, and to ensure emergency health services to a population under continue threat of military attack.

In addition, the HRF funded the collection of garbage which had accumulated in the Gaza city streets as a result of the closure of crossings and the lack of fuel and which was posing a health threat to locals. The HRF also enabled implementing partners to respond to the flooding in northern and southern Gaza, and in the Jabalia refugee camp, that damaged a number of homes and left many streets knee-deep in water, forcing the evacuation of many families.

Funding in 2007

Summary of Contributions

<i>Date</i>	<i>Donor</i>	<i>US \$</i>
2007	Spain	1,000,000
2007	Sweden	1,469,495.63
Total		2,469,495.63

During the last quarter of 2007, only one of the approximately 40 projects which were submitted to the HRF met the strict emergency criteria of the Fund’s guidelines. In 2008, 15 proposals were approved, and many more proposals were received but fell outside the HRF’s strict life-saving criteria.

Table 2 # Project funded-local & international

Year	Local NGO	Int' NGO's	Total # projects
2007	-	1	1
2008	3	9	16

Table 3 Projects by sector

Year	Health	Shelter	WATSAN	Total
2007	1			1
2008	4	6	5	15
	4	6	5	16

Table 4 Summary table of funding (US Dollars)

	US Dollars
Received	\$ 2,469,495.63
Spent 2007	\$ 200,000
Spent 2008 (Jan.- December)	\$1,022,113
TOTAL	\$ 2,046,861

Project funded in 2007

Need

An outbreak of diarrhea in marginalized areas of southern Hebron during the last quarter of 2007 was threatening to affect one in ten under-fives in the area, if it went unchecked. A joint assessment by **OCHA, MSF, UNRWA, RCSD and the Ministry of Health** confirmed the outbreak and identified causing factors, which included a drought-related water shortage, both for domestic use and livestock; the lack of water network; closure (restricted access to filling points); the high cost of water; and the storage of existing supplies in contaminated rainwater harvesting cisterns.

Response

The international NGO “**Action Against Hunger**” proposed the following intervention in rural South Hebron via:

- The cleaning of 450 cisterns by the communities
- Providing fresh and clean water to 6,000 people and 10,000 sheep
- The chlorination of water supplies and training.

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Impact

Direct:

- A reduction in the number of diarrhea cases in the targeted communities to **2%**.
- No deaths from dehydration were reported.

Indirect:

- Elimination of potential sources of more serious water-borne diseases;
- preventing an sudden increase in poverty and debt necessitating the sale of flocks.
- Alleviated threat of displacement.

NB: The lack of access to water and sale of flocks are the two key triggers for displacement of herding communities

Project funded in 2008/ West Bank Shelter

Need:

To prevent risk of hypothermia among vulnerable communities living in corrugated tin shacks, tents and caves in rural areas of the West Bank during a sudden bout of frost and snow, the most severe weather in the region for more than 40 years. The majority of families living in such conditions are herders who live in 'Area C' on grazing land but where they have no permission to build more solid homes. The number of vulnerable had increased before the onset of the cold weather crisis as the herders have suffered from years of drought, lack of access to grazing land and the sharp rise in the price of fodder resulting in extreme poverty. In Israel, where poverty levels are lower and more coping strategies are available, five people died from hypothermia.

Response

Following a joint needs assessment by **UNRWA, a local NGO RCSD** and OCHA in Southern Hebron it was concluded that the emergency provision of fire-wood, mattresses and blankets was necessary. Additional assessments were conducted in the rest of the West Bank by local and international NGOs, UNRWA and OCHA. Findings confirmed that the need was widespread.

Approximately 3,275 families (more than 23,000 individuals) across the West Bank were provided with the basic essentials, fuel for heating and bedding to prevent hypothermia. The HRF response triggered additional assistance from UNRWA who provided more than 200 blankets to poor families who were living in very basic breeze block dwellings.

Table 5. Agency Responses by Area.

Agency	Area	Beneficiaries
RCSD	South Hebron and Bethlehem	709 household
NEF	North West Bank	650 household
Premiere Urgence	Qalqilia	864 household
Shams	Central WB and Jordan Valley	740 households
ACH	Tubas Governorate	267 households
ACTED	Salfit governorate	45 households
	Total	3,275 households

Direct Impact

- No deaths or hospital admissions for hypo-thermia in the West Bank were reported.
- The projects provided households with minimum winter weather protection to limit and avoid cold-induced health problems, (including pneumonia) and provided heaters and fuel along with mattresses and blankets to ensure that households are better equipped to cope with any future crises.

WEST BANK: Response to drought crisis

Need.

The local authorities as well as the international community witnessed another poor winter for rainfall during 2007/2008. The reduction of water available in the West Bank due to the drought and the almost complete depletion of household water reserves pushed up the price of water once again. Prices were reaching NIS 40 per cubic meter and expected to continue to rise before the following rainy season.

It became clear that if a water distribution project was not undertaken urgently, people would be unable to afford sufficient supplies to protect themselves from water borne diseases (due to concentrated fecal contamination) and diseases linked to insufficient access to water (under 15 liters per person per day).

Response

The HRF funded four water tankering projects to South Hebron, the Northern West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

The overall goal of this intervention was to prevent any health deterioration by covering the basic needs of the targeted communities in the southern Hebron Governorate by supplying them with clean water for domestic and animal use.

Agency	Area	beneficiaries
ACH	South Hebron	1,064 household
Swedish Cooperative Centre	South Hebron	1,460 household
Premiere Urgence	North West Bank	844 household

CISP	Jordan Valley	1,038 households
	Total	4406

Direct Impact

- Eliminating potential sources of water-borne diseases (such as cholera)
- Saving the subsistence economy by preventing the shifting of financial resources to acquire water for herds.
- Assisting in saving what was left of the financial resources of the communities and preventing the displacement of the affected communities

GAZA STRIP: Emergency Response to Health services needs

Need

To ensure continued emergency health services in the Gaza Strip following the destruction of a mobile clinic, all the medicine supplies and most of the equipment of the Palestinian Medical Relief Services (PRMS) at its main clinic in an Israeli air-strike. PRMS offers its services to more than 250,000 beneficiary patients in Gaza which have been affected by frequent military attacks and incursions resulting in numerous serious casualties. Full functioning of the clinic is a critical life-saving necessity.

Response

The overall goal of the response was to ensure the continuation of emergency health service provision, via the procurement of the following: a generator, equipment for the disabled and more than 150 types of medicine to rebuild the stocks of the pharmacy

Direct Impact

- The resumption of health services to more than 250,000 people living in the area and in the rest of the Gaza Strip via the mobile clinic.
- Health services are now resumed via the mobile clinic, the loan center and the clinic of chronic diseases which provides medicine every month

GAZA STRIP: Emergency Response to Water and Sanitation needs

Need

To prevent further child deaths in open sewage lagoons near Um Al-Nasser village in the North Gaza Strip, after a number of local children were killed after falling into the waste water basins. There was also a serious threat of disease being spread as children played in close proximity to the facility. The PWA and WATSAN sectors confirmed the essential nature of the intervention.

The lagoon is one of those which burst its banks in 2006 causing the death of 5, injuring many others and causing displacement.

Response

A three-metres high, 3500 metre long galvanized fence was installed around the waster water basins in the Um al Nasser village to prevent access to by children. The project was implemented by COOPI-Cooperazione Internazionale.

Impact

- The area is now fenced and children in the area are safely prevented from accessing the lagoons.
- The public health standard of the village is enhanced as contaminated material can no longer be brought into the village by children playing in the waste water.
- The total beneficiaries of the fund is the whole population of Um Al Nassr inhabitants estimated around 5000.

GAZA STRIP: Emergency Response to health/Sanitation needs**Need**

To minimize the health hazard posed to swimming areas contaminated by the untreated sewage currently being pumped into the sea.

Response

The installation of warning signs on the beaches to inform users that the beaches and sea are is contaminated by sewage being pumped in the location

Direct Impact

- Minimize the effect on people's health by making them aware of the contaminated beaches along the Gaza sea

GAZA STRIP: Rapid Response to Health and Sanitation needs**Need**

Following the closure of Gaza's borders by Israel and the consequent lack of fuel and automobile spare parts, many Gazan municipalities are not able to normally carry out the collection and transportation of solid waste. This creates an increasing accumulation of slag heap in high population density areas and the unavoidable detrimental impact on health and sanitation conditions. A number of rubbish mounds were also located in close proximity to hospitals and schools, affecting a wide range of vulnerable population.

Response

The main goal is to avoid spreading of diseases in Gaza urban area by the enhancement of health and sanitation condition of the target population through the urban solid waste collection, transportation and disposal using animal traction carts.

Impact

The un-accumulation of non collected garbage that seriously threatens the health of the population and the degradation of the city sanitation seriously hypothec its ecological and economical environment on the mid term. The number of beneficiaries is the 90% of the whole population of Gaza City estimated around 513.000.

GAZA STRIP: Emergency Response to Floods

Need

Heavy rain that fell on Gaza at the end of October 2008 forced a number of Palestinian families to evacuate their homes. Streets in parts of northern and southern Gaza were left knee-deep in water and many properties were damaged. Jabalia Refugee Camp suffered considerably, especially at the centre of the camp. The infrastructure in the Gaza Strip has no capacity to respond to such heavy rainfall, especially where repairs and maintenance have been limited or completely held up by the Israeli blockade.

Response

To contribute towards mitigating the negative impact of the flooding in the most vulnerable communities in Jabalia, through the provision of hygiene kits, and to fund repairs to the electric panels at Abu Rashid and Al Alami sewage and storm water pumping stations in northern Jabalia.

Direct Impact

180 households, in addition to most of Jabalia Refugee Camp population (estimated 100,000 people) benefited from having restoration of a stable water supply.

HRF in Action

Under the guidance of the HC and through the collaborative decision-making process involving the Advisory Board and OCHA field staff, the HRF will continue to contribute to the improvement of a coordinated and coherent humanitarian response and to complement existing funding mechanisms.

The priorities of the HRF will be increasingly guided by the Humanitarian Country Team. Sector lead agencies, local authorities and OCHA field staff will continue to screen proposals from a technical aspect before referral to the Advisory Board.

Furthermore, OCHA will continue its efforts to monitor the implementation of HRF support through on-going internal and external evaluation and reporting by field staff, the HRF coordinator and other Agencies.

Since its establishment, the HRF has funded **sixteen projects** with a total funding of **\$2,046,861** . The demand for the flexible, fast response of the HRF is already increasing in

the wake of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Additional funding is required in order to meet this need, and in addition protect livelihoods and improve living conditions in the West Bank, where emergency needs are also anticipated.

HERF projects (September 07-December 31 2008)

	Partner	Project title	Governorate	Sector	Allocation
1	ACH-Action Against Hunger	Clean water supply in 30 communities in S. Hebron	South of Hebron	Water	199,805.00
2	ACH- Sapin	Emergency Heating, bedding and housing insulation to vulnerable communities -Tubas	Tubas	Shelter	89,986.45
3	Rural Centre for sustainable Development	Emergency Heating, bedding and housing insulation to vulnerable communities - South East Hebron	South East Hebron	Shelter	199,804
4	Premiere Urgence	Emergency Heating, bedding and housing insulation to vulnerable communities - Qalqilia	Qalqilia	Shelter	48,517
5	Near East Foundation	Emergency Heating, bedding and housing insulation to vulnerable communities - North OPT	North OPT	Shelter	180,188
6	Shams	Emergency Heating, bedding and housing insulation to vulnerable communities - Northern OPT	North OPT	Shelter	199,804
7	ACTED	Emergency Heating, bedding and housing insulation to vulnerable communities - Salfit & Jericho Bethlehem		Shelter	62,009
8	PMRS	Emergency health care provision	Gaza	health	- 85,000
9	COOPI	Fencing the sewage water lagoon in Gaza	Gaza	Health/protection	157,000
10	ACH	Warning signs on the beaches of Gaza in the areas of sewage discharge	Gaza	Health/protection	28,000
11	COOPI	Collecting the Garbage from Gaza city Streets with animal tractions carts due to	Gaza	Health	160,000

		lack of Fuel because of the closure on Gaza			
12	ACH	Emergency water tankering project for the vulnerable communities facing the highest water costs.	South West Bank	Water	199,000
13	SCC	Emergency water tankering project for the vulnerable communities facing the highest water costs.	South West Bank	Water	139,905
14	PU	Emergency water tankering project for the vulnerable communities facing the highest water costs.	North West Bank	Water	62,743
14	CISP	Emergency water tankering project for the vulnerable communities facing the highest water costs.	Jordan Valley	Water	200,000
16	CARE	Emergency response to mitigate the negative impact of the flooding on the most vulnerable communities in the Jabalia Refugee Camp.	Gaza	Water/Health	35,100
	TOTAL				2,046,861