



PALESTINE HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY FUNDING APPEAL

October 2023



**Women's Peace &
Humanitarian Fund**

A United Nations & Civil Society Partnership

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Background

On 7 October 2023, Palestinian armed groups in Gaza launched an attack on Israel, and Israeli forces retaliated with airstrikes on Gaza. Since then, heavy Israeli forces' bombardments of the Gaza Strip, from the air, sea and land, killing, as of 1 November, over 8,805 Palestinians with over 22,240 injured – over two-thirds of whom are women, children and elderly.¹ At least 1.4 million people in Gaza are already forcibly internally displaced, and as of 1 November, the Palestinian Ministry of Health reported 128 people killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and more than 2,274 injured, since 7 October. This number is the highest recorded number of Palestinians killed in a single week since 2017. Around 1,400 civilian Israeli and foreign nationals have also been killed, according to the Israeli authorities.

Israeli authorities ordered on 9 October a total siege of Gaza, announcing that they have halted the provision of electricity and fuel supplies to Gaza, and cut access to drinking water to its 2.2 million residents, pushing vital services to the brink of collapse.² Access for humanitarian staff and supplies into Gaza, thus limiting the delivery of aid, have also been restricted.³ UN and partners have been working towards establishing a humanitarian corridor to reach people with critically needed supplies.

The current humanitarian crisis and the ongoing hostilities are accompanied by gender specific vulnerabilities and risks with disproportionate impact on women and girls. The current escalation of violence in Gaza is expected to result in an increase of gender-based violence, including sexual and psychological violence. Internally displaced women are being disproportionately affected by the loss of livelihoods, housing and land, placing them in a position of elevated risk of sexual and labour exploitation, trafficking in persons, and forced marriage. According to women-led organizations, women who are internally displaced identified access to food and clean water as top priorities as well as the need for food security and nutrition. Securing women's and girls' easy access to comprehensive health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, is of key importance. Over 15,000 women had either given or were about to give birth

at the time of the attacks, with poor hygiene conditions posing great risks for mothers and their newborns.

The 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan identified 2.1 million Palestinians as requiring urgent assistance, as a direct result of decades of Israeli military occupation, 15 years of blockade of Gaza, internal Palestinian political divisions and recurrent hostilities between Israeli occupation forces and Palestinian armed groups.⁴ Even prior to the recent events, nearly 60 percent of households in Gaza were considered food insecure, many of which are headed by women, older people, those with special needs and in poor health.⁵ The World Food Programme (WFP) and UNRWA have been distributing food to displaced people in Gazan shelters.

However, the elevated humanitarian needs compounded by the current situation in Gaza, and the May 2023 escalation as well as the deteriorating situation in the West Bank leave local humanitarian organizations without the resources required to sufficiently respond to the needs of the most vulnerable Palestinians, particularly women and girls.

Palestinian civil society remains persistent, in particular women's rights and women led organizations continue to advocate for peace between Palestine and Israel and intra-Palestinian and provide humanitarian assistance.

Given that the combined effects of the protracted Israeli occupation are disproportionately affecting Palestinian women's and girls' safety and security, access to emergency services and humanitarian assistance, and their participation in crisis response, it is critical that local women and their organizations form part of the humanitarian response to ensure gender-inclusive and sustainable responses to the current needs.

WPHF's Emergency Funding Appeal: USD 10 million

In this context, the United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) is launching an urgent funding

appeal for up to USD 10 million to support local women's organizations' leadership in response to the escalation of violence in Palestine. This is to ensure that women on the frontlines and their organizations are empowered to lead in humanitarian initiatives throughout the crisis response and strengthen gender responsive humanitarian planning, frameworks and programming, including the provision of appropriate life-saving basic needs and services to affected women, girls and communities, as well as ensuring safety and security for women and girls, and supporting local women's organizations through institutional funding as they continue to operate in this fragile context. The following areas have been identified as priority needs:

- ▶ **WPHF Outcome 3** (Humanitarian & Crisis Response): Enhanced participation and leadership of women in planning and responding to humanitarian crises.
- ▶ **WPHF Outcome 5** (Protection of Women & Girls): Enhancing the safety, security and mental health of women and girls and their human rights respected.
- ▶ **Institutional Funding** for women's rights/led CSOs to adapt and sustain their operations during the crisis.

WPHF's emergency response in Palestine consists in rapidly channeling funding to pre-identified local women CSOs on the ground (phase 1), followed by an open Call for Proposals (phase 2) to mobilize women's organizations that can respond to the crisis and the needs of women and girls:

Emergency Call for Proposals (Phase 1) – USD 3 Mio

WPHF will allocate funding through a targeted (closed) Call for Proposals focused on WPHF Outcome 3 and 5, as well as Institutional Funding, to pre-identified local women's organizations. The selection of organizations will be undertaken together with UN Women as UN Management Entity for the WPHF in Palestine. The UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator will be responsible for review and approval of projects, as per the WPHF Emergency Track.

Regular Call for Proposals (phase 2) – USD 7 Mio

With additional funding (of a minimum of 1,000,000 USD), an open Call for Proposals under the WPHF's Regular Funding Cycle standard rules and procedures will be launched. This will allow organizations that were not pre-identified to apply.

National and local women-led, women's rights, feminist, or civil society organizations with a proven track record working with women and girls, will be eligible for this emergency funding. Grassroots and local community-based organizations will particularly be encouraged to apply, including those in consortiums.

The Call for Proposals will make available financing for civil society organizations that build the resilience of Palestinian women and girls through programmatic funding from 30,000 to 200,000 USD, and institutional funding to help sustain and strengthen women's organizations throughout the crisis with grants from 2,500 USD to 30,000 USD.

Management Arrangements

As per WPHF procedures, the Call for Proposals will be prepared and launched by the WPHF Secretariat, detailing the nature and scope of the funding as well as types of interventions that are encouraged, in close coordination with the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. The WPHF Secretariat will conduct the technical review of all proposals received and the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (for phase 1) and the WPHF National Steering Committee (phase 2) will be responsible for the final selection of proposals.

The WPHF Secretariat, together with the UN Management Entity will ensure quality monitoring and reporting on projects as well as linkages with partners and programmes from the UN, civil society, networks of women, and member states. The organizations selected through the Call for Proposals will also be included in WPHF's Community of Practice to learn from and exchange best practices with other WPHF partners.



References

- ¹ OCHA, 2023, [Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #26](#)
- ² OCHA, 2023, [Hostilities in Gaza and Israel - Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Version 1 as of 12 October 2023](#)
- ³ UN, 2023, [Explainer: UN on the ground amid Israel-Palestine crisis](#)
- ⁴ See 2.

About WPHF

The United Nations Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) mobilizes critical support for local and grassroots civil society organizations working on women, peace and security and humanitarian action. WPHF is a flexible and rapid financing mechanism supporting quality interventions designed to enhance the capacity of women to prevent conflict, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities. Since its launch in 2016, WPHF has funded over 1,000 local women's organizations working to support women to be a force for crisis response and lasting peace in 43 countries. In addition, WPHF has supported the participation and the protection of over 300 women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders in 23 countries.