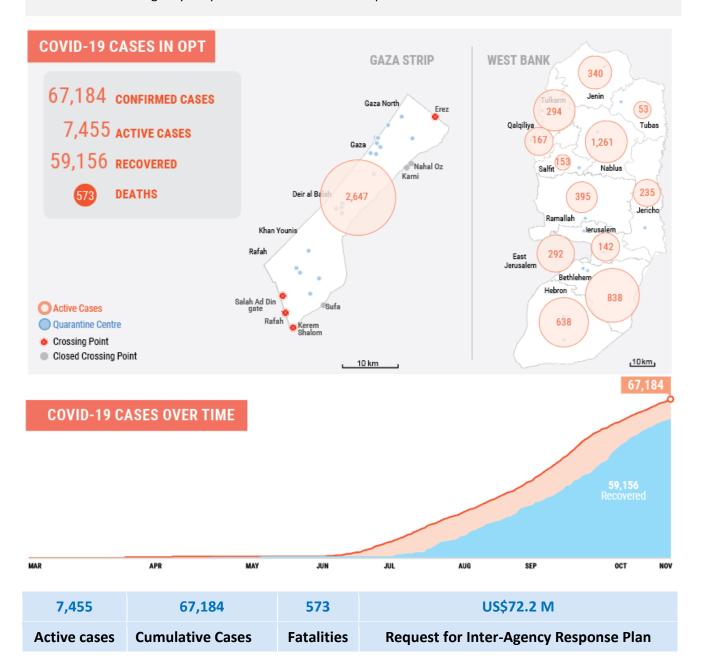


Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt): COVID-19 Emergency Situation Report No.21

(20 October – 2 November 2020)

HIGHLIGHTS

- After weeks of declining, active COVID-19 cases rise slightly; 81 more people die.
- Over 2,400 more cases of community transmission, and another nine fatalities reported in Gaza.
- The Inter-Agency Response Plan for the oPt is 49 per cent funded.



SITUATION OVERVIEW

During the reporting period, some 7,500 additional Palestinians in the oPt tested positive for COVID-19, and approximately 6,750 recovered. For the first time since mid-September, there has been a rise in active cases, from 6,703 at the end of the previous reporting period, to 7,455, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH).

These figures are believed to significantly underestimate the actual number of people who contracted the virus, due to the policy implemented in West Bank by the MoH, whereby only those showing possible symptoms, as well as travellers, are being tested, Over 500,000 laboratory samples have been tested for COVID-19 since the start of the crisis, and the positivity rate for those tested stands at around 11.1 per cent.

During this period, 81 more people died, bringing to 573 the cumulative number of fatalities due to the virus, 536 in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and 37 in the Gaza Strip. The case fatality rate in the oPt remains low by global standards at 0.9 per cent. Thirty-five patients are in intensive care units (ICU), seven of whom require mechanical ventilation, according to the MoH.

The Hebron governorate and East Jerusalem account for nearly 50 per cent of cumulative cases since the start of the pandemic, although at present, the Gaza Strip has the largest share of active cases (34 per cent).

In Gaza, the authorities have further eased the lockdown measures imposed in August, including a further reopening of schools, although a night curfew remains in place. In the West Bank, movement and activities have been largely restored, except for specific localities that recorded a surge in COVID-19 transmission. In Israel, the state of emergency, applicable also to annexed East Jerusalem, has been extended until 3 January 2021, although the government continues with a phased easing of restrictions.

Since the start of the school year, in early August in Gaza, and early September in the West Bank, more than 170 schools throughout the oPt have temporarily closed, either fully or partially, ranging from one day to 14 days of closure, following the health protocols for confirmed COVID 19 cases among pupils or school staff. This is imposing additional challenges to ensuring continuity of face-to-face education.

West Bank

The northern West Bank witnessed the largest increase in the reporting period, particularly the Nablus governorate, which recorded more than 1,300 new cases, and now has the largest share of active cases (1,261) after Gaza. Following the detection of a surge in the rate of contagion, temporary closures were imposed on Qaffin (Tulkarm), Beit Furik (Nablus), and Az Zawiya and Deir Istiya (Salfit) villages in the north, in addition to Husan village in the Bethlehem governorate. The latter governorate now accounts for the second highest number of active cases in the West Bank, after Nablus.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has opened a new emergency and isolation section in Jenin Government Hospital and preparations are ongoing for the establishment of a PRCS treatment centre in Nablus, in anticipation of an increase in COVID-19 morbidity in the winter.

During the reporting period, schools in the Nablus, Tulkarm, Salfit and Bethlehem governorates closed due to COVID-19 cases among pupils or staff. Since the beginning of the current school year, 570 schools in the West Bank have had students or staff who contracted the virus. The continuous disruptions in schooling due to the pandemic were compounded on 27 and 28 October due to a strike by teachers and staff in some West Bank schools, to protest the PA's partial payment of salaries. However, on 31 October, the Teachers' Union and the Ministry of Education announced that they had reached to an agreement and the affected schools were open again on 1 November.

All active cases who do not require medical treatment are being referred to home quarantine. In preparation for a continuing surge in infection, 13 facilities across the West Bank remain on stand-by to receive people who test

positive but do not have suitable conditions for home isolation; ten of these isolation centres are supported by UNRWA to serve residents of refugee camps, primarily.

In East Jerusalem, which until recently was accounting for the most active cases after Hebron, the number has declined significantly to less than 300 cases. However, this may be a reflection of a sharp drop in the number of tests currently conducted in the city by the Israeli authorities.

Between 18 and 31 October, 2,024 Palestinians entered the West Bank through the Allenby Crossing with Jordan, and 2,071 departed. All such movements require coordination with the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and testing for COVID-19 before crossing in either direction. The Jordanian authorities have launched an online system for coordination for Palestinians to exit via Allenby, although travellers must provide evidence of testing and a commitment to quarantine requirements.

Citing the lack of building permits, during the reporting period, the Israeli authorities demolished or seized 40 Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank, displacing 30 people. Of particular concern is an incident on 28 October, in which the Israeli authorities cut a donor-funded water pipe suppling 14 herding communities in the Massafer Yatta area of Hebron, home to around 1,400 people, including over 600 children. Among other consequences, this is expected to undermine the hygiene practices of these people, and consequently their ability to cope with the pandemic. No demolitions of inhabited homes have been recorded in East Jerusalem since the Israeli authorities' announcement, on 1 October, about a halt in the targeting of such structures due to the pandemic. Since the start of the pandemic, the Israeli authorities have demolished or seized, or forced people to demolish, at least 506 structures, displacing 620 people, including over 300 children.

Gaza Strip

In Gaza, 2,410 new COVID-19 cases were recorded in the reporting period. The number of active cases increased by 40 per cent, from 1,893 to 2,647, out of a total of 7,231 cases overall, since the start of the pandemic. Nine people died, bringing the death toll to 37. Testing efforts have been intensified in recent days, with at least 2,000 samples taken per day.

Although the occupancy rate of beds in hospitals has been steadily increasing and the number of people in intensive care units (ICU) has doubled in a week, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that the health system can cope with the current caseload.

The lockdown measures implemented in August continue to be relaxed, although the night-time curfew, from 20:00 to 07:00, remains in place. Four areas, including Beit Hanoun, Al Bureij refugee camp, two neighbourhoods in Gaza City, and localities in Jabalia, Khan Younis and Rafah, with high infection rates have been designated as 'red', and have been isolated from other neighbourhoods. The local authorities have indicated that the recent rise is due to the poor adherence to safety precautions by parts of the population, and suggested that some measures may be reinforced if the infection rates and pressure on the health system continue to increase; a full lockdown is a measure to be imposed only as last resort.

On 26 October, grades 7-11 resumed classes in government schools, following grade 12 who returned on 10 October. UNRWA schools re-opened on 2 November for students in grades 7-9, with three days of face-to-face learning and three days of distance learning, as part of the gradual return to school plan on a rolling basis. However, 48 schools, 25 government and 23 UNRWA, across Gaza are located in 'red' areas, and are currently closed.

The local authorities have also announced amendments to the quarantine regulations. People entering Gaza through the Rafah and Erez crossings, including international staff/foreign delegations, are no longer required to undergo home quarantine, if they can present a negative PCR test result, taken within 48 hours prior to entry. Those unable to present the test result on arrival can be tested at the border, but they are required to undergo home quarantine until the results are issued.

The Rafah Crossing with Egypt exceptionally opened for four days in both directions from 2 to 5 November. The crossing was last opened between 15 and 17 September, during which 1,700 people entered Gaza and 2,659 exited. Travellers are not subject to quarantine, but are required to have a negative COVID-19 test result conducted 72 hours before exiting Gaza, and 48 hours before entering.

The entry of goods continued from Israel through the Kerem Shalom Crossing, as did imports from Egypt via the Rafah Crossing. The Erez passenger crossing with Israel was also open for the exit of a small number of exceptional cases, mostly medical patients. The number of Palestinians entering Gaza through Erez has been relatively consistent, at approximately 80-110 people per week.

COORDINATION

The Inter-Agency COVID-19 Task Force, led by the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC), as well as the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), continues to convene on a weekly basis, to set policies and coordinate the implementation of various responses to the crisis.

In the Gaza Strip, OCHA and the clusters launched a multi-sectorial assessment aimed at better identifying, and respond to the needs of households with people in home isolation/quarantine. The data collection is based on phone interviews targeting a representative sample of households in such situation across all governorates. The exercise is expected to be completed in the coming weeks.

Due to the easing of the Gaza lockdown, the RC/HC's Access and Coordination Unit (ACU) no longer neds to coordinate the movement of humanitarian staff within Gaza with the local authorities, for critical missions., but is prepared to resume the arrangement, should the need arise.

During the reporting period, the ACU also facilitated 93 UN and 10 INGO staff, in addition to eight trucks with medical, education and other vital equipment, which required special coordination with the Israeli authorities, to be allowed to move between East Jerusalem and the remainder of the West Bank. During the same period, the ACU also facilitated the entry into Israel of 17 key International NGO staff.

Since 6 September, the World Health Organization (WHO) has been operating a temporary coordination mechanism to support Palestinian patients and companions from Gaza to apply for Israeli exit permits to access essential health services in hospitals in the West Bank and Israel. Referrals are made according to medical need, as decided by the Palestinian MoH. This temporary measure has been taken to mitigate the impact of the PA halt of coordination with the Israeli authorities, adopted since May, in response to Israel's threat to annex part of the West Bank.

In the same context, the UN Country Team has continued to operate a Logistics Cluster, led by the World Food Programme (WFP), to support the procurement of supplies and the receipt of donations needed for the COVID-19 response. Its main task is to mediate between the Customs Directorate in the PA Ministry of Finance and the Israeli authorities (COGAT and the Israeli Customs Office) to ensure the approval of the documentation required to allow the shipment of imported supplies into the oPt, through the various Israeli ports of entry. The cluster is currently processing 107 requests from UN agencies and international NGOs, of which 87 have been approved by both sides, 15 are pending approval by the Israeli authorities, and 5 were cancelled.

The Health Cluster is tracking the procurement and delivery of critical medical supplies by cluster partners against the immediate needs identified in the COVID-19 Inter-Agency Response Plan, in line with the State of Palestine's National Response Plan. The following table highlights the availability and gaps regarding the top ten medical items needed.¹

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¹ For a more comprehensive list, please contact the Health Cluster Coordination Team: asaparbekov@who.int and maroufm@who.int.

All partners are encouraged to subscribe and submit their requests for procurement of medical supplies for laboratory testing, case management and infection prevention and control through WHO's global COVID-19 response coordination portal.

As part of the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) plan, nearly 40 partners are distributing communication materials aimed at ensuring that the public has access to a broad range of information on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and to deal with misinformation. In October, the campaign has focused on protection measures for individuals and workplaces following the easing of restrictions; back to school messages, mental health response and support to victims of gender-based violence (GBV); stigma; breast cancer awareness, Mental Health Day, and praying safely. Some 2,000 community engagement kits (fabric masks, bags, shirts, hats and hand-sanitizers) were distributed to partners across the West Bank to support the mobilization of volunteers in sharing information about COVID-19. RCCE materials are available online.

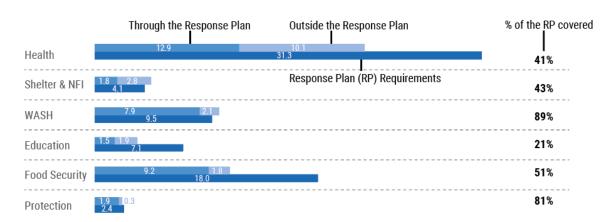
Supply Category		Item / Unit	Estimated Response Plan needs (by unit)	Delivered	Pipeline	Current Gap
Case Management		Ventilator, medical, invasive, adult/child	250	54	166	30
	1=	Patient Monitor (vital signs)	250	70	169	11
		Oxygen Concentrator	250	20	154	76
	*	ICU Hospital Beds	250	37	129	84
	!	Patient Beds	400	86	264	50
Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)	600	Surgical Mask	4,000,000	1,517,750	206,550	2,275,700
Control (IPC)	-	N-95 Respirator	300,000	130,148	168,380	1,472
		Surgical gloves	8,000,000	4,325,400	1,563,800	2,110,800
Laboratory Testing	Ī	COVID-19 PCR Tests	500,000	95,232	9,600	395,168
	8	Swabs / Medium, sample collection	500,000	141,500		358,500

FUNDING

The initial COVID-19 Inter-Agency Response Plan for the oPt, which requested \$42.4 million to support an immediate response to the crisis and the efforts led by the Government of Palestine, covered interventions through the end of June. In August, the Plan was extended until the end of 2020 and the financial requirement updated to \$72.2 million.

During the reporting period, additional contributions were received by WASH cluster partners, including \$81,390 from the Oxfam Appeal Fund, \$10,083 from Germany-GIZ, and \$6,000 from Islamic Relief Canada. This brings to \$35.7 million the funding raised since the start of the crisis, or 49 per cent of the amount requested in the Response Plan. Including resources contributed outside the Response Plan, a total of \$54.7 million have been mobilized in support of COVID-19 related response activities in the oPt.

TOTAL FUNDING FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE BY CLUSTER (IN MILLION US\$)



DEVELOPMENTS, CONCERNS AND FUNDING STATUS BY CLUSTER

* Health					
US\$ 31,304,992 Funding requirements	US\$ 12,905,035 Through the Response Plan	41% of the Response Plan covered	US\$ 10,125,602 Outside Response Plan	US\$ 23,030,637 Total Funding Received	
		Plan Covered	Plan	Received	

- 1. The Ministry of Health (MoH) opened a new COVID-19 emergency and isolation section in Jenin Government Hospital. The Dura Hospital in Hebron and the National Rehabilitation Centre in Ramallah have increased their capacity to received new COVID-19 patients, while preparations for the establishment of a Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) treatment centre in Nablus are ongoing.
- 2. Health Cluster partners delivered critical COVID-19 medical equipment and supplies to multiple facilities across the oPt. These included an automated RNA (ribonucleic acid) extraction machine delivered to Gaza Public Health Laboratory, which reduces the time required for the COVID-19 testing; ten RNA extraction kits; 50,000 swabs; 1,000 rapid test kits; 50 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing kits; 30 vital signs monitors; and 50 ventilators. Three hospital beds were also delivered to the Gaza Strip, alongside a spectrophotometer that is essential for testing the quality of medications and other medical formulas, before these can be administered in healthcare facilities.

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Health

US\$ 2,365,740	US\$ 1,917,434	81%	US\$ 305,434	US\$ 2,222,868
Funding requirements	Through the Response Plan	of the Response Plan covered	Outside Response Plan	Total Funding Received

1. Cluster partners provided remote and in-person Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) to over 1,700 people across the oPt. Three attempted suicides were recorded in Gaza (2) and Ramallah (1) during the reporting period. In the Gaza Strip, nearly 150 children were reached by specialized case management support.

- 2. The number of emergency helpline calls concerning domestic violence doubled during the first two weeks of October in Ramallah city, compared with September figures. Across the oPt, Cluster partners continue to disseminate awareness-raising messages and materials on COVID-19, child protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
- 3. The access of GBV victims to protection and justice remains of concern. One of the reasons is the inability of Palestinian Security Forces to reach suspected perpetrators in Area C and the H2 area of Hebron City, due to the ongoing lack of coordination with the Israeli authorities.

Education

US\$ 7,120,698	US\$ 1,517,000	21%	US\$ 1,918,746	US\$ 3,435,746
Funding requirements	Through the	of the Response	Outside Response	Total Funding
	Response Plan	Plan covered	Plan	Received

- 1. Since the start of the academic year, more than 170 schools across the oPt were either temporarily or fully closed from one to 14 days, following confirmed COVID-19 cases among pupils or school staff. With the support of Education Cluster partners, all schools across the oPt have received cleaning and hygiene kits, copies of the safe schools and health protocols, and training for children and staff.
- 2. On 27 and 28 October, a teachers' strike across the West Bank caused major disruption to schooling. The strike was to protest the payment of partial salaries over the past five months. An agreement between the Teachers' Union and the Ministry of Education (MoE), reached on 31 October, allowed the re-opening of schools the following day.
- **3. 48 schools in 'red areas' across the Gaza Strip are closed, as of 2 November.** On 10 October, schools reopened for grade 12 students. P A-run schools opened on 26 October for students in grades seven to eleven, while UNRWA-run schools opened on 2 November for students in grades seven to nine, with three days of face-to-face learning and three days of distance learning.
- 4. The Education Cluster is working with the MoE and UNRWA to support the delivery of distance learning, MHPSS services, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures and provision of hygiene kits and rehabilitation of WASH facilities.

Shelter & NFI

US\$ 4,092,551	US\$ 1,755,251	43%	US\$ 2,767,382	US\$ 4,522,633
Funding requirements	Through the Response Plan	% of the Response Plan covered	Outside Response Plan	Total Funding Received

- 1. In the Gaza Strip, Shelter Cluster partners provided non-food items (NFIs) to all active quarantine/isolation facilities. These included bedding sets, individual hygiene kits and dignity kits. Partners are procuring additional NFI's to replenish part of the distributed items and maintain original stock levels.
- 2. Shelter Cluster partners delivered COVID-19 hygiene kits to 411 vulnerable households (around 2,100 people), with family members in home quarantine in the Gaza Strip. The targeted households were identified as lacking proper sanitation and hygiene facilities.

3. In the West Bank, Cluster partners completed the distribution of nearly 9,000 NFIs to 14 quarantine centres on stand-by, targeting around 1,500 people. The NFIs included mattresses, blankets, pillows and hygiene kits for children and women.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

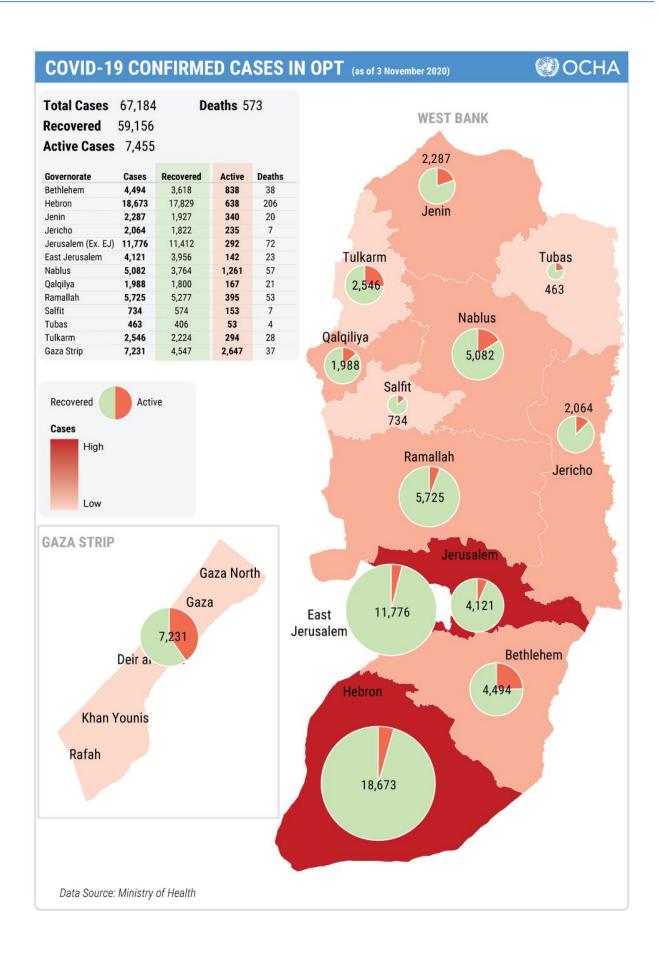
US\$ 9,504,052	US\$ 8,442,453	89%	US\$ 2,081,548	US\$ 10,524,001
Funding requirements	Through the	of the Response	Outside Response	Total Funding
	Response Plan	Plan covered	Plan	Received

- 1. WASH Cluster partners reached around 62,000 people during the reporting period. In the Gaza Strip, Cluster partners delivered over 13,000 bottles of water to people in 13 quarantine centres. In the West Bank, over 62,000 bottles of water and 1,000 hygiene kits were delivered to 13 quarantine centres on standby. In addition, Cluster partners supported 622 families, 38 healthcare facilities, eight care shelters and five local councils with hygiene and disinfection materials.
- 2. The Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) has replaced the chlorination system in its water reservoirs and wells in the south of West Bank to improve quality control of water supply on a national level. The upgraded system will ensure the quality of the water supplied to water service providers and secure maximum protection for those responsible for operating water infrastructure.

Food Security

US\$ 18,017,577	US\$ 9,177,426	51%	US\$ 1,777,441	US\$ 10,954,867
Funding requirements	Through the	of the Response	Outside Response	Total Funding
	Response Plan	Plan covered	Plan	Received

- 1. Many households continue to adopt negative coping strategies to cope with food insecurity. In its monthly survey among beneficiaries, the World Food Programme (WFP) found that 26 per cent of surveyed families in Gaza and 36 per cent in the West Bank consumed food of lower quality, compared to the previous month. In addition, in the Gaza Strip, 50 per cent borrowed food or relied on help from relatives or friends, whereas in the West Bank 23 per cent resorted to this strategy.
- 2. Oxfam will provide food assistance to some 1,500 people in all quarantine facilities in Gaza for a period of 90 days, until the end of January 2021. Following the receipt of additional funding, WFP indicated that it will be able to maintain the food assistance program to its 426,000 current beneficiaries across the oPt until January 2021.
- 3. The Consumer Price Index for the oPt increased during September 2020 by 1.26 per cent (1.57 per cent in Gaza, 1.32 per cent in West Bank) compared with August.



Cluster	Response Plan (RP) Requirements	Through the Response Plan	% of the RP covered	Outside the Response Plan	Total
Education	7,120,698	1,517,000	21%	1,918,746	3,435,746
Food_Security	18,017,577	9,177,426	51%	1,777,441	10,954,867
Health	31,304,992	12,905,035	41%	10,125,602	23,030,637
Protection	2,365,740	1,917,434	81%	305,434	2,222,868
Shelter_NFI	4,092,551	1,755,251	43%	2,767,382	4,522,633
WASH	9,504,052	8,442,453	89%	2,081,548	10,524,001
Grand Total	72,405,610	35,714,598	49%	18,976,153	54,690,751

Total funding for COVID-19 response by donors

Donors	Through the Response Plan	Outside the Response Plan	Total in US\$
Austria	_	229,564	229,564
Canada	2,215,757		2,215,757
CERF	527,000		527,000
DFID	1,423,772		1,423,772
ЕСНО	3,720,950	6,491,000 ¹	10,211,950
Education Cannot Wait	555,000	1,550,000	2,105,000
Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)	225,000		225,000
France	1,005,415		1,005,415
Germany	4,052,937	43,000	4,095,937
Ireland (Irish Aid)	235,200		235,200
Islamic Relief Worldwide	307,800		307,800
Italian Agency for Development Cooperation [AICS]	152,008	10,970	162,978
Japan	878,506		878,506
Kuwait	747,500	8,252,500	9,000,000
Norway	70,000	91,083	161,083
OPT Humanitarian Fund²	8,478,945	347,768	8,826,713
Other sources ³	1,578,588	330,155	1,908,743
Private Sector Fundraising	386,786		386,786
Qatar Fund for Development		562,455	562,455
Qatar Red Crescent		410,000	410,000
Save the Children ⁴	326,435		326,435
Start fund	251,000		251,000
Sweden (SIDA)	500,000		500,000
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation "SDC"	1,450,000	268,000	1,718,000

UNFPA Humanitarian Thematic Fund	332,000		332,000
UNICEF	792,000		792,000
USAID	250,000		250,000
War Child Holland ⁵	252,000	85,000	337,000
WFP (loan)	5,000,000		5,000,000
World Vision International		304,658	304,658
Grand Total	\$35,714,598	\$18,976,153	\$54,690,751

For more information including a detailed list of activities by cluster in both Gaza and the West Bank and for detailed maps of the Quarantine Centres please visit the COVID 19 Webpage found on the OCHA Website. Please go to the OCHA Website:

OCHA COVID-19 DEDICATED WEBPAGE

DETAILED LIST OF ACTIVITIES BY CLUSTER

¹ Attribution to the Inter-Agency COVID-19 Response Plane under verification.
² As of today, oPt Humanitarian Fund has received generous contributions from Germany (\$13.8m), Belgium (\$4.3m), Sweden (\$3.2m), Switzerland (\$3.1m), Norway (\$0.9m), Italy (\$0.6m), Iceland (\$0.4m), Ireland (\$0.3m), Korea (\$0.3m), Cyprus (\$12,500), United Nations Foundation (\$3,461).
³ Funding contributions below \$150,000 including funding towards and outside Covid-19 Response Plan, received from: Action Aid, AECID, African Women Development Fund, AICS, Ana-GEGHT, Cantabria 19, Care International Emergency Fund, Christian Aid&ACPP, Denmark, DRO, ElHDR, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Fridresh Nauman Foundation, Gazze Destek (GDD), Global fund for women, Grass Roots, HEKS, Holland, ICO-UAE, International Charity Organisation, IR – Canada, IR – UK, Italy (IADC), Jerrahi Order of America, Kvinna Till Kvinna, Luxemburg government - ARDI Program, McNulty Foundation, Medico International, Mennonite Central Committee, Mixed funds (German, Italian, Spanish and Dutch), NCA, DCA, NMFA, Norwegian Representative Office to the Palestinian Authority, Nous Cims, NRC, Open Society Foundation, Oxam, PHG, Private Donors, Rawa Funds, Representative Office of Switzerland in Ramallah, Secours Islamique France, SIDA+DFAT, StartNetwork, Suisse Cooperation, Trocare, UN Trust Fund, UNDP, United Palestinian Appeal, UNWOMEN HQ, Urgent Action Fund, WELFARE (Taawon), WHO, World Vision USA.

⁴ This includes contributions of Save the Children individual and pooled funds.

⁵ This includes contributions of War Child Holland and War Child Holland Head Office.