



PROJECT PROPOSAL

EMERGENCY CASH ASSISTANCE TO CONFLICT- AFFECTED PALESTINE REFUGEES IN SYRIA

LOCATION: Syria

DURATION: Six months (1 July - 31 December 2019)

DONOR: Government of Belgium

April 2019

EMERGENCY CASH ASSISTANCE TO CONFLICT-AFFECTED PALESTINE REFUGEES IN SYRIA

UNRWA project code:	TO BE ASSIGNED UPON APPROVAL
Proposal submitted to:	GOVERNMENT OF BELGIUM
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Target area:	SYRIA
Funds requested:	EUR 1,000,000
Goal/strategic objective:	To respond to the emergency needs of Palestine refugees in Syria through the provision of cash assistance
Duration and expected start date:	Six months (1 July - 31 December 2019)
Number of direct/indirect beneficiaries or users:	APPROXIMATELY 9,063 CONFLICT-AFFECTED PALESTINE REFUGEES (2,666 FAMILIES)

1. SUMMARY

UNRWA is seeking a total of EUR 1,000,000 for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2019 to provide critical cash to vulnerable Palestine refugees who have been severely affected by the conflict in Syria to support them in meeting their basic NFI and food needs. The contribution from the Government of Belgium is expected to benefit up to 9,063 conflict-affected Palestine refugees (about 2,666 families) with cash assistance for NFI and food, offering USD28 per person per month for a duration of four months. The project will also cover additional minor costs related to bank fees.

Cash assistance has proven to be the most versatile and impactful form of humanitarian assistance over the past few years. It is also the preferred means of assistance for refugees due to the flexibility it offers them in meeting their individual and family needs. Family members can buy food and non-food items when they need it, based on their own choices and priorities. Under this grant, UNRWA plans to deliver cash assistance at the rate of USD 28 per refugee per month, providing four months of assistance, for a total of USD 112 per refugee over the entire duration of the project.

This project will be implemented within the overall framework of the 2019 UNRWA Syria Emergency Appeal, which aims to cover the emergency needs of an estimated 445,000 Palestine refugees in Syria in 2019. The total amount of the appeal for 2019 is USD 220,796,638.

2. BACKGROUND

Eight years of conflict in Syria continue to have dramatic consequences for the people living in the country, and Palestine refugees in particular. Violence, economic disruption and a contracting job market as well as a decrease in provision of public services and social security programmes have created and compounded vulnerabilities within the population. In the absence of a durable political settlement, intense and widespread hostilities have resulted in deaths and injuries, continued internal displacement, large-scale migration to other countries, lost livelihoods, mounting humanitarian needs and access restrictions hindering the emergency response, including in UNRWA areas of operations.

In 2019, UNRWA estimates that 445,000 Palestine refugees remain in the country out of 560,000 individuals registered with the Agency in Syria. Displacement, loss of assets and livelihood and high levels of inflation have contributed to the increased vulnerability of the Palestine refugee population. Many families have lost their main breadwinner to involvement in, or repercussions of the conflict, whether through death, incapacitation, detention or departure to another country in order to seek protection and asylum. Almost 60 per cent of Palestine refugees have been displaced at least once since the beginning of the conflict and, according to UNRWA estimations, more than 180,000 have seen their homes destroyed or severely damaged due to hostilities. Yarmouk, Dera'a, and Ein El-Tal (Aleppo) camps, previously home to more than 30 per cent of the Palestine refugee population in Syria, are almost completely destroyed. A vulnerability assessment conducted by UNRWA in 2018 estimated that 90 per cent of Palestine refugee households in Syria live in absolute poverty (less than USD 2 person/day) prior to receiving UNRWA cash assistance. As a result, it is expected that a large majority of the Palestine refugee population will continue to rely on UNRWA humanitarian assistance to meet their most basic needs in the years to come.

In 2019, cash assistance will remain a priority for UNRWA in Syria. Although vulnerability remains high across Palestine refugees in Syria, funding challenges are limiting the Agency's ability to continue to provide the same levels of humanitarian assistance as in past years. In order to ensure that the most vulnerable Palestine refugees continue to meet their basic needs, and to ensure an efficient use of scarce resources, a targeted approach will be introduced in 2019. Groups

characterized as most vulnerable, including female headed households (FHH), persons with disabilities, households headed by older persons and unaccompanied minors (orphans) will receive a higher social transfer value, while lower levels of emergency assistance will continue for all those refugee families that do not fall in the most vulnerable categories. Food assistance will also be limited to the most vulnerable Palestine refugees. Ready-to-Eat food baskets and Non-Food-Items (NFIs) will only be distributed in case of sudden-onset emergencies, new displacements, or spontaneous returns.

3. PROPOSED PROJECT

3.1 Overview of the cash assistance programme

In 2019, UNRWA will continue to provide cash assistance to respond to the basic food and NFIs needs of Palestine refugees. To ensure a more efficient use of scarce resource, the Agency will introduce a targeted approach to the provision of cash assistance, with a focus on the most vulnerable Palestine refugees. Based on a vulnerability assessment conducted by UNRWA in 2018 female-headed households, households headed by a person with disability and older persons, and unaccompanied minors (orphans) have an increased likelihood of being vulnerable. In order to ensure that most vulnerable Palestine refugees meet their basic needs, under the 2019 Emergency Appeal UNRWA will provide USD 28 per person per month to 126,000 Palestine refugees belonging to the four vulnerable categories stated above (female-headed households, households headed by a person with disability and older persons, and unaccompanied minors (orphans)). The remaining caseload of Palestine refugees will continue to receive basic emergency assistance in the amount of USD 14 per person per month, to ensure that they do not slip into further poverty; enhance their resilience; and prevent them from resorting to negative coping mechanisms. The amount of cash transfer planned for these interventions may vary due to the availability of funds under the 2019 EA.

The funds obtained under this proposal will enable UNRWA to cover four-month worth of cash assistance for food, providing USD 28 per person per month to up to 9,063 individuals (2,666 families) in 2019.

3.2 Implementation procedures

Cash assistance beneficiaries are recorded in UNRWA's emergency programme module, which is built off the Refugee Registration Information System (RRIS). The RRIS contains data for every registered Palestine refugees, including number of family members, age and gender of each family member, and pre-conflict address. The emergency programme module records the type of assistance received by each Palestine refugee individual (food, cash, NFI). The data is collected by UNRWA staff, and personal information is only used for UNRWA's programming and not shared with outside parties for confidentiality reasons. UNRWA has had to adapt its verification process to a situation where access for verification home visits is extremely limited. Palestine refugees are requested to apply for assistance at one of UNRWA's offices in Syria and to provide evidence of their status, non-employment with UNRWA/UN, physical presence in Syria for each family member and contact details for each household member, including their original and current address.

At the beginning of each distribution round, UNRWA establishes lists of beneficiaries for each cash distribution outlet, which covers the existing caseload and new applicants. Beneficiaries are informed of the date and place of distribution rounds by SMS as well as through popular social networks such as Facebook, and posting on lists and information at the different offices of UNRWA in the areas. Due to mobile connectivity issues, UNRWA had to diversify its modes of communication with beneficiaries to ensure better outreach. UNRWA establishes lists of recipients of cash assistance per outlet, which is shared with its implementing partners (banks, money vendors). Recipients are checked against the list and have to present proof of identification to receive the assistance. Recipients are crossed off the list once they have collected

their cash and a list of non-recipients is established for further follow-up. UNRWA's cash distribution points are located in Dera'a, Homs, Hama, Latakia, Aleppo, Damascus and Rural Damascus governorates. UNRWA partners up with two banks and one money transfer company to facilitate access to assistance for its beneficiaries across areas of operation. UNRWA has also established a point of distribution at its Field Office in Damascus to serve particularly vulnerable cases including female-headed households and persons with disabilities.

UNRWA has set up a database of beneficiaries to ensure better tracking, in particular in cases of non-reception of aid, through the appeal mechanism. The appeal mechanism enables Palestine refugees to bring up their issues with the emergency assistance programme, be it that they did not receive their notification, or were unable to receive the cash for some other reason.

4. EXPECTED RESULTS

The project seeks to respond to the emergency needs of Palestine refugees in Syria through the provision of cash assistance for food and NFIs to conflict-affected households. The expected outcome of the project is for Palestine refugees to be better able to meet their food need expenses with the dignity of choice during the emergency.

The contribution under this grant will benefit 9,063 Palestine refugees with cash assistance for food for four months with each beneficiary receiving USD 28 per month for a total of USD 112 over the duration of the project.

5. ASSUMPTIONS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The implementation of the project requires conditions that allow Palestine refugees and UNRWA staff to work in reasonable safety. This is assessed by UNRWA's professional safety officers in consultation with the UN Department of Safety and Security.

The risks associated with the distribution of cash are mitigated by using three modalities: bank distribution, money vendor and limited direct distribution at UNRWA facilities. The assistance database is reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure that all information pertaining to the status of the needs of beneficiaries remains accurate and up to date.

Beneficiaries are identified in the database through their unique registration card number. Once a family has received their cash, regardless of the outlet, this is recorded in the emergency module of the database. This is to avoid duplication of payments.

UNRWA is the sole organization with the mandate to serve Palestine refugees. As a result, Palestine refugees are not eligible to receive any form of cash assistance from other organizations. Sustained coordination with other humanitarian actors in Syria also helps reinforcing the lead of UNRWA in the service of Palestine refugees.

In terms of internal control mechanisms, UNRWA has established a separate unit that deals with cash assistance. The registration of cash assistance beneficiaries is now separate from the establishment of the list for payment. This has added a layer of control to ensure that disbursements reach the intended recipients only once per round.

6. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

UNRWA's cash assistance programme is part of a comprehensive package of assistance available to Palestine refugees in Syria, including protection interventions with a focus on SGBV, programmes targeting adolescent boys and girls, and a dedicated Woman Programme implemented through ten community-based organisations. Synergies are built between each intervention to ensure that refugees receive integrated assistance.

Any member of a family eligible for cash assistance over 18, regardless of his/her gender, can collect the cash on behalf of the family. In 2019, the emergency cash assistance will prioritize female-headed households, which are considered among the most vulnerable categories identified during the 2018 assessment. UNRWA will continue to respond to the needs of men, women, boys and girls throughout the project, monitoring distributions by gender and age. UNRWA will also continue to review its programme features to ensure cash is distributed to those most in need, including: the outreach and disbursement procedures, to ensure that they are not creating access barriers; the data collection procedures to ensure the reliability of data; demographics trends, for example, to verify to what extent a gender imbalance would reflect displacement patterns. UNRWA collects disaggregated data to monitor equity of access as part of the UNRWA overall gender action plan.

7. MONITORING AND REPORTING

The project will be supervised by the Senior Humanitarian Response Officer with the support of UNRWA social workers, the Finance Officer, the Humanitarian Response Officer for cash assistance, Project Associates and other project staff.

UNRWA will closely monitor the project and its impact on the lives of beneficiaries. Monitoring focuses primarily on ensuring that the eligible beneficiaries receive their cash in a timely fashion. UNRWA also keeps track of the beneficiaries who do not come to collect their money to be able to serve them during the appeal round once the initial distribution is completed. The costs related to monitoring this project are already covered by other funding sources.

UNRWA positions monitoring staff at all banks, money transfer outlets and the Field Office distribution point. Staff is available to respond to beneficiary queries, manage any overcrowding issues and ensure refugees receive the correct amount of assistance. In addition, UNRWA reports shares information on cash assistance and NFIs with the UN clusters to enable informed planning and consolidated programming. UNRWA has a results based monitoring system, which is a platform for review of progress against as well as sharing of lessons learned. The Agency will submit a final report and financial statement to the Government of Belgium within three months of the project's completion. The report will include a reflection of the utilization of the funds, together with a breakdown in the expenditures.

8. UNRWA'S CAPACITY

Despite the complex operating context, UNRWA has been able to maintain its operations throughout Syria. UNRWA continues to deliver regular and emergency programmes in Syria through a network of 3,700 local staff members. The Agency has maintained an operational presence in most places of residence of Palestine refugees in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Hama, Homs, Latakia, Aleppo and Dera'a. UNRWA has established a network of 15 food and NFI distribution centres in all areas of operations, including nine in Damascus. The Agency has also established a dedicated emergency team to support its response to the needs of Palestine refugees, who continue to be affected by the conflict and socioeconomic crisis in Syria. UNRWA is also rolling out additional capacity to all areas to strengthen direct monitoring of its operations.

UNRWA currently runs 103 schools throughout the country. The Agency continues to run 22 health centres and points providing primary health services to Palestine refugees in different locations across Syria, in addition to two mobile health clinics. .

UNRWA is working to prevent the further deterioration in basic living conditions of the most vulnerable Palestine refugees inside Syria, and to preserve the resilience of the Palestine refugee community by ensuring regular services are continued and adapted to conflict conditions and emergency needs, as well as by advocating for the neutrality, protection and the

preservation of the rights of Palestine refugees, whether they are residing inside or outside the camps or displaced within Syria or to neighbouring countries.

UNRWA coordinates its response with the UN Country Team (UNCT), including at the inter-agency coordination level and through sector/cluster working groups (active presence in the following sectors: Food, NFIs, Shelter, Protection, Education, Health, WASH, and Early Recovery). UNRWA is the only UN agency specifically mandated to provide support to Palestine refugees in Syria in most sectorial aspects, and implements a unique cash distribution programme through close cooperation with the General Authority for Palestine Arab Refugees (GAPAR) - the Agency's government interlocutor.

ANNEX I: LOG FRAME

INTERVENTION LOGIC	INDICATORS	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
1. Goal: To respond to the emergency needs of Palestine refugees in Syria through the provision of cash to conflict-affected households.			
2. Outcome(s): Palestine refugees are better able to meet their food and NFI needs during the emergency.			Security, social and political environment conducive to project implementation The fluctuations of the USD/SYP exchange rate remain within manageable margins.
3. Project Output(s): Cash provided at the equivalent rate of USD 28 per beneficiary, per month to identified conflict-affected, vulnerable Palestine refugees. Each beneficiary will receive four-month worth of cash assistance for a total of USD 112 per beneficiary.	100% of Palestine refugees assessed in need of emergency support who receive cash assistance. Up to 9,063 refugees provided with cash assistance in 2019. 50% of beneficiaries of cash assistance are women	Bank records of cash distribution. UNRWA records of cash distribution. Comparison: bank statements vs. monthly distribution lists. Relief and Social Services household records. Cash assistance distribution lists, including disaggregated data on sex and age types	Banks are capable of delivering services and financial data in a timely and efficient manner. Continued access of both UNRWA staff and Palestine refugees to pay points in conflict-affected areas.
4. Project Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish lists of cash assistance beneficiaries per outlets Distribute cash through banks, money transfer company outlets and UNRWA facilities. Conduct regular follow-up with beneficiary households. Review cash distribution lists, ensuring all payments meet project criteria. 	Beneficiary lists established. Funds provided regularly, on time and reflective of assessed needs of household. Where security situation permits, one visit per beneficiary household.	UNRWA Relief and Social Services (RSS) records. Bank records and statements vs UNRWA distribution lists. Monitoring reports, completion report and financial report.	Movement is possible, with few restrictions. Banking network remains functional and accessible. UNRWA facilities accessible.

ANNEX II: WORK PLAN

Tentative Work Plan - 2019

REF	ACTIVITY	INPUTS	DELIVERABLE(S)	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME (2019) Months					
					Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	Conduct administrative preparation.	Human Resources	Logistics are in place for conducting cash distribution	UNRWA Staff in Syria Field Office	X					
2	Generate list of eligible beneficiaries	Human Resources, Technical	List of registered potential beneficiaries.	UNRWA Staff in Syria Field Office	X					
3	Verify identity of beneficiaries	Human Resources, Technical	Validated list of beneficiaries	UNRWA Staff in Syria Field Office	X					
4	Distribute cash through bank system, money transfer companies and UNRWA Field Office.	Human Resources, Material	Cash distributed to beneficiaries.	UNRWA Staff in Syria Field Office UNRWA Area Offices and partner financial organizations		X	X	X	X	
5	Review cash distribution lists, ensuring all payments meet project criteria, and generate reports		Monitoring reports. Financial report.	UNRWA Staff in Syria Field Office	X	X	X	X	X	X

ANNEX III: PROJECT BUDGET BREAKDOWN IN EURO

Under the 2019 Emergency Appeal UNRWA will provide USD 28 per person per month to 126,000 Palestine refugees belonging to the four vulnerable categories stated above (female-headed households, households headed by a person with disability and older persons, and unaccompanied minors (orphans)). The remaining caseload of Palestine refugees will continue to receive basic emergency assistance in the amount of USD 14 per person per month, to ensure that they do not slip into further poverty; enhance their resilience; and prevent them from resorting to negative coping mechanisms. The amount of cash transfer planned for these interventions may vary due to the availability of funds under the 2019 EA. The funds obtained under this proposal will enable UNRWA to cover four-month worth of cash assistance for food, providing USD 28 per person per month to up to 9,063 individuals (2,666 families) in 2019.

Fluctuations in the exchange rate between Euros and US Dollars may lead to a slight increase or decrease to the final number of beneficiaries reached. The equivalent USD value of the EUR contribution will be determined at the time of receipt of funds.

Budget for the Contribution (EUR 1,000,000)

Item	Unit (USD)	Duration (month)	Total	beneficiaries	Total USD	*Total EUR
Cash Assistant	28	4	112	9,063	1,015,056	900,354
Bank fees	lump sum				616	546
Sub Total					1,015,672	900,901
PSC (11%)					111,724	99,099
Grand Total					1,127,396	1,000,000
The amount per person might be less than USD 28 per person depending on availability of funds. Accordingly, the number of beneficiaries might be higher than the reported.						

* UNRWA rate of exchange as of April 2019 used temporary for conversation into EUR and budgeting purposes at this stage. US\$1=0.887 EUR. Upon receiving the fund, UNRWA rate of exchange prevailing at that date of receipt will apply.

TREATMENT OF UNUTILIZED FUND BALANCE, EXCHANGE RATE FLUCTUATIONS

Any unutilized balances or savings may realize from the activities outlined under the project and/or exchange rate gains amounts that may emerge due to exchange rate fluctuations upon receiving the funds will be utilized within the overall project objectives and activities and may lead to slight increase in the final number of beneficiaries reached. Similarly, any unexpected shortfall due to exchange rate losses may lead to a slight decrease. Accordingly, actual expenditure and figures will be reported to the Government of Belgium through narrative and financial reports in due course.