



The West Bank

*UNRWA's ability to deliver
services in the West Bank and
East Jerusalem*



Centre for Documentation
and Counter Extremism

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The West Bank - UNRWA's ability to deliver services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

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Executive summary

UNRWA continues to operate in the West Bank at a reduced scale and with declining quality. Following Israeli legislation that entered into force in January 2025, limiting the agency's legal status, activities and cooperation with Israeli authorities, UNRWA's continuous provision of services takes place in an operating environment in the West Bank which has become substantially more restrictive.

Additional measures have affected UNRWA's presence in East Jerusalem and its ability to deploy international staff. At the same time, austerity measures have been introduced due to financial pressures, while demand for services has increased as Palestinian Authority service provision has deteriorated. Movement restrictions and security incidents continue to hamper access for both staff and beneficiaries.

UNRWA's health programme remains operational across the West Bank, where UNRWA continues to provide primary healthcare services to registered Palestine refugees. However, the programme faces growing challenges stemming from military operations, movement restrictions, damage to facilities, funding constraints and logistical disruptions. Although healthcare services continue to function, there are concerns regarding their long-term sustainability and quality.

The education programme continues to operate on a large scale, serving approximately 48,000 students through 96 schools. Most schools in the West Bank remain open; however, six schools in East Jerusalem have been closed and schools in parts of the northern West Bank have been forced to adopt emergency arrangements, including remote learning and temporary learning spaces. Learning outcomes have deteriorated due to prolonged disruptions, including the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, security incidents, movement restrictions and interruptions to in-person education. Financial constraints, procurement difficulties and challenges associated with digital learning further affect the programme.

UNRWA's Relief and Social Services programme continues to provide socioeconomic assistance, including cash assistance, food support, counselling and services for vulnerable groups. However, increasing humanitarian needs, funding shortages, access restrictions and security incidents have placed significant pressure on the programme and have led to some service disruptions. Service delivery has become particularly challenging in northern refugee camps and in East Jerusalem.

The Infrastructure and Camp Improvement programme has been affected by camp closures, displacement, access restrictions and security incidents which have hindered maintenance and development projects in refugee camps. Infrastructure interventions have increasingly focused on emergency repairs and essential maintenance rather than longer-term development projects. Operational challenges are particularly pronounced in northern refugee camps and in East Jerusalem.

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Introduction and methodology

The thematic COI report at hand is a joint product published by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The report examines the latest developments regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA's) situation in The West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in light of Israel's Cessation of UNRWA Activities Law, which was passed on 28 October 2024 and implemented in January 2025.

The report examines the general situation of UNRWA services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem in light of the political, legal, financial and security situation, focusing on the current service delivery, specifically in the Health, Education, Relief and Social Services as well as Infrastructure and Camp Improvement programmes.

The purpose of this report is to provide up-to-date information relevant to the processing of asylum cases. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the report were developed by DIS and DRC in consultation with the Secretariat of the Danish Refugee Appeals Board. The ToR are included in [Annex 2](#).

The report is written in accordance with the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) Country of Origin (COI) Report Methodology.¹

In 2025, the DRC and the DIS published a joint report on the security and human rights situation in the West Bank.² The report provided a detailed account of the security environment, the human rights situation, restrictions on freedom of movement, and settler violence.

The report at hand is published as a continuation of that earlier work. As a result, this report does not describe the security and human rights situation in the West Bank with the same level of detail. Readers seeking a comprehensive understanding of these issues may refer to the 2025 joint report, as well as of the subsequent reporting on the human rights and security situation in the West Bank.

The information presented in this report relies primarily on data collected through online and in-person meetings with interlocutors in Europe, Amman (Jordan) and the West Bank. The report at hand does not claim to exhaust the full range of publicly available material. Selected open sources are used to supplement and corroborate the mission findings. The information presented in this report should be read in conjunction with other publicly available and relevant COI on the West Bank.

Meetings with sources in Amman were conducted during a visit to Jordan from 3 to 10 February 2026. The delegation consulted a total of 14 sources prior to, during and after the

¹ EUAA, *Country of Origin (COI) Report Methodology*, 22 February 2023, [url](#)

² DIS & DRC, *The West Bank - Security and human rights situation*, January 2025, [url](#)

mission. The interlocutors were selected for their relevance to the ToR for the mission. Meetings were held with a number of different types of sources, including a research professor, the Palestine Red Crescent Society, UNRWA West Bank Field Office Director, Roland Friedrich, UNRWA departments and international organisations.

The purpose of the meeting was explained to all interlocutors, and they were informed that their statements would be included in a publicly available report.

Draft meeting minutes were forwarded to the sources for approval, giving them the opportunity to amend, comment on or correct their statements to ensure that the minutes accurately reflected the information they had provided. All sources approved their statements. The meeting minutes can be found in [Annex 1](#).

Several meetings were held with different UNRWA departments from the Amman Headquarters and from the West Bank Field Office (primarily online). Due to sensitivity concerns, most interviewed organisations requested anonymity. For the same reason, UNRWA requested that interview transcripts not be attached as an annex to the report, although the information provided may be used in the report. Accordingly, only the interview transcript from the West Bank Field Office Director is included in the annex.

Regional escalation following the outbreak of the war on Iran on 28 February 2026 has led to increased settler attacks and tighter movement restrictions in the West Bank.³ All interviews with sources were conducted prior to this date, and these developments are therefore not reflected in their statements.

The report is a synthesis of information obtained from primarily oral sources, supported by written sources, and does not include all details and nuances provided by the sources. In the report, care has been taken to present the views of the sources as accurately and transparently as possible. The individual sources should not be held accountable for the content of the report.

For transparency and accuracy, paragraphs in the meeting minutes have been numbered consecutively and referenced in the report's footnotes. Information provided by UNRWA is referenced as UNRWA HQ or UNRWA WBFO without further specification. In instances where sources have provided information beyond the scope of the ToR, yet relevant to asylum cases, this information has been incorporated in the minutes, but not addressed in the report.

Research and editing were finalised on 4 June 2026. The report is publicly available on the website of the DIS, <https://us.dk/>, and DRC, asyl.drc.ngo, and may be consulted by all stakeholders involved in refugee status determination, as well as by the general public.

³ Aljazeera, *What's happened in Gaza and the West Bank since the start of the Iran war?*, 13 March 2026, [url](#); ACLED, *While all eyes are on the Iran conflict, settler violence is surging in the West Bank*, 27 March 2026, [url](#)

Clarification of Terminology

The situation in the West Bank is highly complex due to a layered framework of governance, where laws and regulations vary significantly across geographic lines.⁴ Throughout this report, the terminology used has been chosen to reflect legal standards of International Humanitarian Law (IHL):

- Occupied West Bank: Since 1967, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip have been occupied territories, referred to as the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt), under international law.⁵ In line with other COI reports and for the sake of readability, this report will henceforth refer to the occupied territories by 'the West Bank', 'East Jerusalem' and 'Gaza'.
- Israeli Security Forces (ISF) and Israeli Defense Forces (IDF): The government of Israel is present in the West Bank through the Israeli Security Forces (ISF), which encompass Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Israeli Security Agency (Shin Bet), Israel National Police, and Border Police.⁶ The government has assigned the Israeli military (through the Israeli Defense Forces) the role of maintaining security in the West Bank, including traditional policing tasks through military orders.⁷ In this report, the use of the terms 'ISF' or 'IDF' highlights that in the West Bank, the ISF and IDF operates as both military and police.⁸ The terms ISF and IDF are used interchangeably, following the usage in the original sources.
- Militarised vs. military operations: The UN and other international bodies and organisations describe that military tactics and weapons are used by Israel in the West Bank in context of law enforcement contrary to International Humanitarian Law.⁹ Against this background, the UN classify operations carried out in the West Bank by the ISF, including the IDF, as 'militarised operations'.¹⁰ However, to enhance readability, the term 'military operations' is used throughout this report to describe the military nature of these operations.

⁴ UN, *THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA*, 1982, [url](#); ICG, *Stemming Israeli Settler Violence at Its Root*, 6 September 2024, [url](#), p. 5

⁵ HRW, *Use of Force in the Occupied West Bank*, 8 May 2024, [url](#)

⁶ USDoS, *2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Israel, West Bank and Gaza*, 20 March 2023, [url](#)

⁷ HRW, *Use of Force in the Occupied West Bank*, 8 May 2024, [url](#)

⁸ HRW, *Use of Force in the Occupied West Bank*, 8 May 2024, [url](#)

⁹ HRW, *Use of Force in the Occupied West Bank*, 8 May 2024, [url](#); ICRC, *What does the law say about the responsibilities of the Occupying Power in the occupied Palestinian territory?*, 26 June 2024, [url](#); Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Centre, *The Legal Framework Regulating the Use of Force in the West Bank*, including East Jerusalem, 12 February 2024, [url](#)

¹⁰ UN, *UN Human Rights Office condemns the Israeli military's targeting of shelters with internally displaced Palestinians in Gaza and the militarized operations in the occupied West Bank*, 12 September 2024, [url](#)

Abbreviations

COI	Country of Origin Information
COGAT	Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories
DIS	Danish Immigration Service
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
HQ	Headquarters
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
IDP	Internally displaced person
INGO	International Non-governmental Organisation
ISF	Israeli Security Forces
MSF	Medicines Sans Frontiers
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
PRCS	Palestine Red Crecent Society
RSS	Relief and Social Services
UN	United Nations
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WHO	World Health Organisation
WBFO	West Bank Field Office

1. Background

1.1 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)

In accordance with United Nations resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established and began operating on 1 May 1950. When UNRWA began its operations, it was responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees. Today, UNRWA's mandate is to provide assistance to some 5.9 million registered Palestine refugees who are eligible to UNRWA services,¹¹ including 934,000 refugees in the West Bank.¹² In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee issue, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently extending it until December 2028.¹³

UNRWA services include education, healthcare, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and camp improvement, microfinance as well as emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict.¹⁴

1.2 The division of areas in the West Bank

The 1995 Oslo Accords divided the West Bank into three areas of control (Areas A, B and C) as part of a temporary agreement, and the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established as an interim self-governing body. The division placed Area A (18% of the West Bank) under full PA control, Area B (22% of the West Bank) under joint Israeli-PA control, and Area C (60% of the West Bank) under Israeli control, enforcing its policies through the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). Although this division of power was intended as transitional steps toward a final agreement, the division of the West Bank remains in place.¹⁵

Currently, more than 3 million people live in the West Bank, divided across 11 governorates in Areas A, B and C respectively, with Hebron being the most populated governorate with more than 800,000 residents. Other major governorates include Jerusalem, Nablus, Ramallah, and Jenin.¹⁶

¹¹ UNRWA, *What we do*, n.d., [url](#)

¹² UNRWA, *Where we work*, n.d., [url](#)

¹³ UNRWA, *Letter from UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini to the President of the United Nations General Assembly Ms Annalena Baerbock*, 17 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁴ UNRWA, *about unrwa*, n.d., [url](#), p. 5; UNRWA, *Where We Work*, n.d., [url](#)

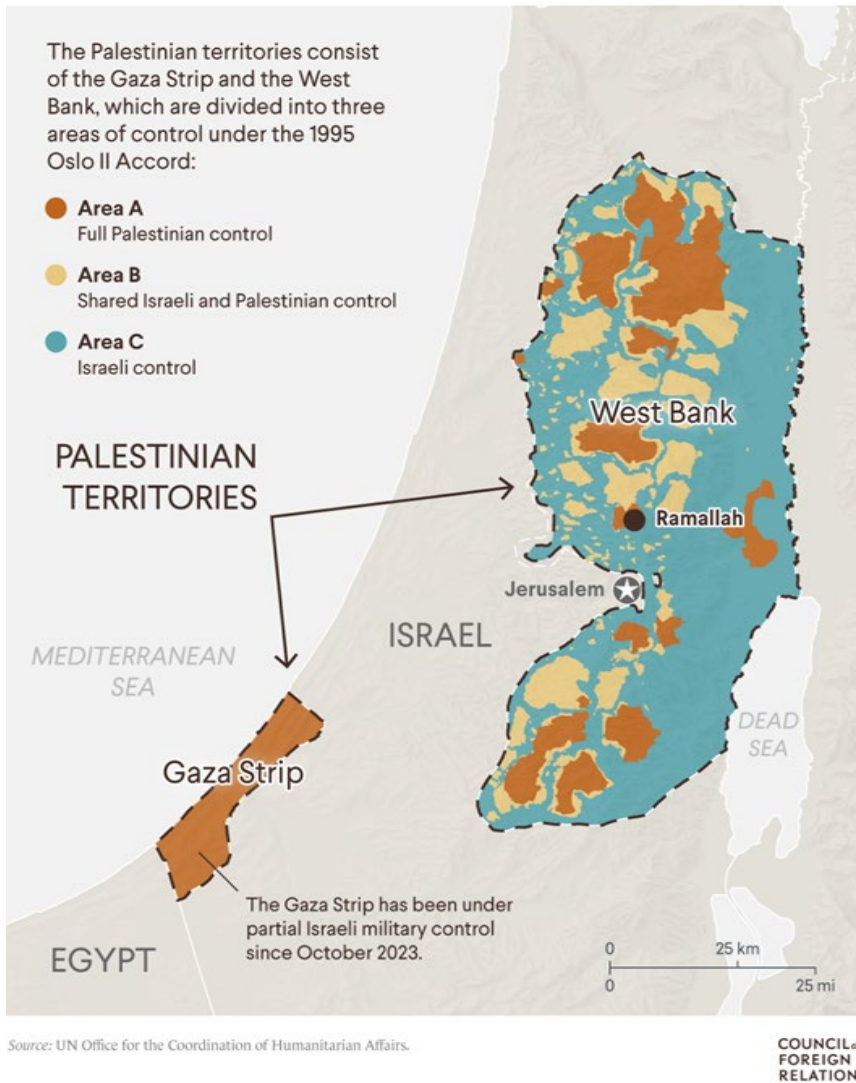
¹⁵ Anera, *What are Area A, Area B, and Area C in the West Bank*, n.d., [url](#); NRC, *Area C is everything*, 8 September 2023, [url](#), pp. 2-3; CFR, *Who Governs the Palestinians?*, 28 May 2024, [url](#); The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, *One Rule, Two Legal Systems: Israel's Regime of Laws in the West Bank*, October 2014, [url](#), pp. 10-11

¹⁶ Al Jazeera, *Ten maps to understand the occupied West Bank*, 16 September 2024, [url](#)

1.2.1 East Jerusalem

East Jerusalem has been occupied by Israel since the 1967 war, and is not part of Areas A, B or C. The separation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank consists of military checkpoints, an 8-metre-high wall and a permit system controlled by Israel.¹⁷

How the Palestinian Territories Are Divided



Source: Council on Foreign Relations, *Who Governs the Palestinians?*, 28 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁷ UN Habitat, *Spatial Planning in Area C of the Israeli occupied West Bank of the Palestinian territory*, May 2015, [url](#)

1.2.2 Recent changes in demographics and control in the West Bank

On 8 February 2026, the Israeli cabinet decided on a series of measures that will allow Israelis to purchase land in the West Bank with little limitation and without government oversight. In addition, the cabinet decided to strip some powers from the PA in Areas A and B, and in Hebron.¹⁸

Additionally, the Israeli government approved a plan to designate large areas of the West Bank as state property if Palestinians cannot prove ownership, which triggered regional backlash and accusations of de facto annexation.¹⁹ According to sources, the move constitutes a breach of international law and effectively advances annexation through administrative measures.²⁰

According to media reports, on 1 April 2026, the Israeli Security Cabinet approved the establishment of 34 additional settlements. Of the 34 settlements, 10 are reportedly existing outposts to be legalised, while 24 are new settlements, all located in Area C of the West Bank. Until the establishment of the current Israeli government, there were 127 official settlements in the West Bank. The current government has approved another 102 settlements. The majority of the settlements approved are in Jenin, Hebron, Ramallah, Bethlehem and the Jordan Valley.²¹

1.2.2.1 Settlement plans, including E1 project

According to the UNRWA West Bank Field Office Director, the increasing number of settlements and outposts is affecting movement and access for Palestinians.²²

On 20 August 2025, the Higher Planning Council of the Israeli Civil Administration formally approved plans to construct 3,401 housing units in the E1 settlement block. The development of the settlement block, which is situated in a strategic location between Jerusalem and Ma'ale Adummim, would connect settlements east of Jerusalem with Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem as part of a planned extension of the separation barrier.²³ The E1 settlement block and the gradual

¹⁸ Peace Now, *The Cabinet Approves a Series of Decisions to Take Control of Land and Strip Powers from the Palestinian Authority*, 8 February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁹ Aljazeera, *Israel approves proposal to register West Bank lands as 'state property'*, 15 February 2026, [url](#); UN Secretary General, *UN Secretary-General condemns the Israeli Government's decision to resume land registration procedures in Area C of the occupied West Bank – Statement*, 16 February 2026, [url](#)

²⁰ Aljazeera, *Israel approves proposal to register West Bank lands as 'state property'*, 15 February 2026, [url](#); UN Secretary General, *UN Secretary-General condemns the Israeli Government's decision to resume land registration procedures in Area C of the occupied West Bank – Statement*, 16 February 2026, [url](#); Amnesty International, *Israel/OPT: Global impunity fueling Israel's unlawful annexation measures in the West Bank*, 26 February 2026, [url](#)

²¹ Peace Now, *Cabinet Decision on the Establishment of 34 New Settlements*, 9 April 2026, [url](#)

²² UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 25

²³ OHCHR, *A/HRC/61/70: Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights - Advance edited version*, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

extension of Israeli administrative control are described by sources as a path towards annexation of the West Bank.²⁴

The current road link between Ramallah and Bethlehem, which runs through the E1 area, will be limited to Israeli use. A separate road will be built for Palestinian use and will be physically segregated from E1, with the result that Palestinians will be denied access to the area designated as E1 as well as to a large surrounding area. According to OHCHR, the development of E1 will physically separate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and contribute to further fragmentation of the Palestinian Territory. Furthermore, thousands of Palestinians from 18 Bedouin communities located within the E1 area are reported to be at risk of displacement, with some communities having received demolition orders.²⁵

In September 2025, Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich put forward a proposal to extend Israeli sovereignty over 82% of the West Bank territory. Smotrich argued that Israel should seek to control as much land as possible while encompassing as few Palestinians as possible. He also noted that the Ministry of Defence's settlement administration had been working on mapping sovereignty over the majority of the West Bank.²⁶

1.3 Political and Legal Environment

In early 2024, the government of Benjamin Netanyahu alleged that 12 out of approximately 13,000 UNRWA employees in Gaza were involved in the 7 October 2023 Hamas-led attacks and claimed that a broader number of UNRWA staff had affiliations with Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad.²⁷

UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini dismissed nine of the 12 accused employees.²⁸ Despite these measures, the allegations prompted 17 donor states to suspend funding to the agency, exacerbating its existing financial constraints. In April 2024, an independent investigation, detailed in the Colonna report, found no evidence substantiating the allegations. While most donor governments later resumed funding, the United States continued to withhold financial support.²⁹

²⁴ Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 20-21; OHCHR, *UN Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: E1 settlement plan, another unlawful step to consolidate the annexation of the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem*, 21 August 2025, [url](#)

²⁵ OHCHR, *A/HRC/61/70: Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan - Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights - Advance edited version*, 4 February 2026, [url](#)

²⁶ Lapresse, *Smotrich presents plan to annex 82% of the West Bank*, 3 September 2025, [url](#)

²⁷ German Network for Forced Migration Studies, *Understanding UNRWA: the complex history and politics of the UN agency for Palestine refugees*, 26 November 2025, [url](#)

²⁸ UNRWA, *Investigation completed: allegations on UNRWA staff participation in the 7 October attacks – UNRWA Commissioner-General statement*, 5 August 2024, [url](#)

²⁹ German Network for Forced Migration Studies, *Understanding UNRWA: the complex history and politics of the UN agency for Palestine refugees*, 26 November 2025, [url](#)

1.3.1 Laws affecting UNRWA's activities

On 28 October 2024, the Israeli Knesset passed two laws, both subject to a 90-day implementation period and entering into force in January 2025.³⁰ The first law, Law to Cease UNRWA Operations, led to the termination of the Comay-Micheltmore Agreement, which had regulated UNRWA's operations as well as its privileges and immunities in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since 1967. The law further states that Israeli authorities are not permitted to maintain contact with UNRWA or individuals acting on its behalf.³¹ The second law, Law to Cease UNRWA Operations in the Territory of the State of Israel, introduces a prohibition on UNRWA activities within the sovereign territory of the State of Israel. This provision affects UNRWA's operations in East Jerusalem, which Israel considers part of its sovereign territory.³² To enhance readability, the laws will be described as 'the UNRWA ban' throughout this report.

In October 2025, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion in response to Israeli legislation, stating that Israel, as the occupying power, has legal obligations to cooperate with UNRWA to facilitate the unhindered provision of essential supplies required for the survival of the Palestinian civilian population.³³ In December 2025, the Israeli Knesset enacted legal amendments to the above-mentioned laws mandating the termination of electricity and water services to UNRWA offices and installations in East Jerusalem.³⁴ The amendments also included the provision of telecommunications, banking, and other financial services to the agency."³⁵

1.3.2 Consequences of the UNRWA ban

According to UNRWA West Bank Field Office Director, the no-contact provision carries the most substantial operational consequences for UNRWA, influencing the volume and continuity of service delivery. Over 90 % of the beneficiaries affected are located in the West Bank, where most of disruptions are occurring. In East Jerusalem, the operational ban has resulted in the

³⁰ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 10

³¹ The Cairo Review of Global Affairs, *The Consequences and Prospects of Israel's Ban of UNRWA*, winter 2025, [url](#); UN General Assembly Security Council, *Identical letters dated 9 December 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council*, 10 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-2

³² The Cairo Review of Global Affairs, *The Consequences and Prospects of Israel's Ban of UNRWA*, winter 2025, [url](#); UN General Assembly Security Council, *Identical letters dated 9 December 2024 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council*, 10 December 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-2

³³ International Court of Justice, *Obligations of Israel in relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, Other International Organizations and Third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 22 October 2025, [url](#)

³⁴ Times of Israel, *Knesset passes law blocking provision of electricity and water to UNRWA facilities*, 29 December 2025, [url](#); UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 12

³⁵ Times of Israel, *Knesset passes law blocking provision of electricity and water to UNRWA facilities*, 29 December 2025, [url](#)

closure of schools and health centres, as well as the demolition of UNRWA's compound in Sheikh Jarrah.³⁶

While the legal amendments mandating the termination of electricity and water services is formally directed at areas Israel regards as part of its sovereign territory, its impact has reached beyond East Jerusalem. An UNRWA school in the Jordan Valley, situated in Area C and previously supplied by the Israeli electricity company, also had its electricity cut after the law came into force.³⁷

According to the UNRWA WBFO Director, further substantial impact of the legislation is the removal of UNRWA's immunities and privileges. This legal shift enables Israeli authorities to pursue terrorism-related charges against UNRWA, revoke the protected status of UNRWA compounds - including those that have already been demolished - and freeze UNRWA assets held in Israeli financial institutions.³⁸ Sources have described these measures as a clear violation of international law³⁹ and UNRWA has added that collectively, these measures expose the agency to substantial legal and operational risks.⁴⁰

Israel seized and demolished UNRWA's compound in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem, on 20 January 2026, when officials from the Israel Land Authority, accompanied by Israeli police, entered the site with bulldozers and heavy machinery.⁴¹ Sources state that the area is intended for a settlement project comprising approximately 1,400–1,440 housing units.⁴²

The no-contact policy has affected UNRWA's ability to import medicine, resulting in stockouts.⁴³ For more information, see [3.1.5.2](#). UNRWA's central pharmacy located at its headquarters in East Jerusalem was destroyed by Israeli authorities in January 2026 and the remains of the building looted, with the premises stripped of all equipment and supplies. Identifying and securing alternative storage sites is both challenging and financially burdensome for UNRWA.⁴⁴

³⁶ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 11

³⁷ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 6, 12

³⁸ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 13

³⁹ The New Arab, *UNRWA chief denounces Israeli police's seizure of agency's Jerusalem assets*, 9 December 2025, [url](#); Government of Iceland, *Joint statement on support to UNRWA and NGOs*, 5 January 2026, [url](#); The Diplomatic Service of the European Union, *Israel/Palestine: Statement by the High Representative on voting in the Israeli parliament regarding UNRWA operations*, 28 October 2024, [url](#); UNRWA, *UNRWA Commissioner-General: Unprecedented Violation of UN Premises and International Law in East Jerusalem*, 20 January 2026, [url](#); PLO: 2, 24; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 11, 13

⁴⁰ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 13

⁴¹ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 14; The Guardian, *Israel bulldozes Unrwa headquarters in East Jerusalem*, 20 January 2026, [url](#); PLO: 24; International human rights organisation: 4; UNRWA WBFO; International organisation: 10

⁴² PLO: 24; Haaretz, *Israel Razed UNRWA's East Jerusalem HQ, Now It's Planning to Build 1,400 Housing Units on the Site*, 20 January 2026, [url](#)

⁴³ PLO: 8; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 15

⁴⁴ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 16

The Israeli authorities have not granted UNRWA's international staff visas or permits to enter the West Bank and Gaza since the end of January 2025.⁴⁵ The absence of international UNRWA staff in the West Bank has substantially affected protection activities^{46 47} and the ability to coordinate movement, access and delivery for refugees and preventing Israeli forces' use of UNRWA installations.⁴⁸ Before the no-contact policy, staff could liaise with the Israeli military, regularly following up on incidents, addressing issues and responding immediately to protection and operational concerns. The current situation limits UNRWA's ability to raise incidents with duty bearers. As a result, protection coverage is less extensive, and case management is less effective than before the policy was introduced.⁴⁹

Sources assessed that UNRWA's capacity has been substantially weakened by the withdrawal of international staff, restrictions on movement, and the closure of key facilities.⁵⁰ One source highlighted that UNRWA faces particular difficulties in Area C, where rising needs and limited resources have overwhelmed its ability to provide protection and assistance.⁵¹ Sources assessed that UNRWA is unlikely to regain its previous operational capacity and cannot expand services to meet increasing demand.⁵² Nevertheless, UNRWA remains operational and continues to deliver services, although at a reduced scale⁵³ and with declining quality.⁵⁴

1.3.3 *Shu'fat and Kalandia camps in East Jerusalem*

According to researcher Jørgen Jensehaugen, Israel distinguishes between annexed East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank in its domestic legal framework, a distinction that is not recognised under international law.⁵⁵

The ban on UNRWA has been enforced more strictly in areas Israel considers part of its territory, including East Jerusalem, where authorities have reportedly cut water and electricity supplies to UNRWA facilities.⁵⁶ Although Kalandia Camp is located in the West Bank west of the

⁴⁵ UNRWA, *UNRWA Situation Report #216 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem*, 8 April 2026, [url](#); International organisation: 14

⁴⁶ UNRWA's protection work aims to ensure Palestine refugees can access their rights under international law — including rights to health, education, family life, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. UNRWA field offices document alleged rights violations and use this evidence to engage authorities — both through private dialogue and public advocacy — with the aim of improving conditions for refugees and preventing recurrence. UNRWA, *What We Do, Protection*, May 2024, [url](#)

⁴⁷ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 17; Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 13

⁴⁸ Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 13

⁴⁹ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 17

⁵⁰ Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 1, 9; International human rights organisation: 3-4

⁵¹ Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 1

⁵² International human rights organisation: 3; INGO: 3, 5; Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 17

⁵³ International human rights organisation: 3-4; Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 1; INGO: 3, 5

⁵⁴ INGO: 8; UNRWA HQ; UNRWA WBFO

⁵⁵ Jørgen Jensehaugen Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo: 1

⁵⁶ Jørgen Jensehaugen Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo: 2

separation barrier, it is considered part of Israeli territory under Israeli law. Sources stated that the UNRWA Kalandia Vocational Training Centre may therefore be subject to closure, seizure, or other enforcement measures.⁵⁷

Kalandia Camp and Shu'fat refugee camp illustrate the impact. Residents rely heavily on UNRWA services, as they have limited access to services from either the PA or Israeli authorities.⁵⁸ In Shu'fat, municipal services and policing are largely absent due to the camp's location beyond the separation barrier.⁵⁹

UNRWA schools in Shu'fat were closed following implementation of the Israeli ban,⁶⁰ reportedly worsening existing socio-economic hardship and creating major gaps in essential services.⁶¹

1.3.4 International non-governmental organisations (INGO's) deregistration

UNRWA's activities in the West Bank are mainly focused on refugee camps. The humanitarian situation in parts of the West Bank, particularly in the northern camps, has been critical, and in emergency situations UNRWA serves as a central service provider in the camps, while NGOs, including INGOs, constitute a broader humanitarian support network delivering essential humanitarian and development assistance in coordination with the UN and Palestinian civil society organisations.⁶²

On 30 December 2025, 37 INGOs operating in Gaza and the West Bank were notified that their registrations would expire the following day, after which they would have 60 days to cease operations.⁶³ The registration deadline was set for 1 March 2026. While some organisations might be able to continue operating temporarily—potentially through national partners—the scale, duration, and modalities of such arrangements remain uncertain.⁶⁴

On 23 March 2026, the Israeli Supreme Court held a hearing in which the Court's President confirmed that collected data on staff would be shared with Israeli security services. The Court also affirmed Israel's authority to order NGOs to cease operations in Gaza and the West Bank. All 16 petitioning organisations opted for a ruling rather than submitting full employee lists, viewing data transfer to a conflict party as incompatible with humanitarian principles and data protection laws.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ Jørgen Jensehaugen Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo: 3

⁵⁸ Jørgen Jensehaugen Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo: 7

⁵⁹ UNRWA, *unrwa west bank – camp profile: shu'fat camp*, 2023, [url](#)

⁶⁰ Jørgen Jensehaugen Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo: 4

⁶¹ Jørgen Jensehaugen Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo: 6

⁶² Jørgen Jensehaugen Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo: 13; Oxfam, *Oxfam and 52 international NGOs warn Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action*, 2 January 2026, [url](#)

⁶³ Oxfam, *Oxfam and 52 international NGOs warn Israel's recent registration measures will impede critical humanitarian action*, 2 January 2026, [url](#)

⁶⁴ INGO: 9

⁶⁵ INGO: 10

Jørgen Jensehaugen stated that recent developments, including the destruction and depopulation of refugee camps in Jenin, have considerably affected humanitarian infrastructure. In this context, restrictions or bans on NGOs represent a reduction of the humanitarian and development structures upon which Palestinians depend. If NGO activities are restricted while UNRWA and the PA face financial collapse, the combined effect could generate a severe social and economic crisis. According to Jørgen Jensehaugen, UNRWA's role cannot be assessed in isolation; it must be understood within a broader landscape of political restrictions, financial instability, and the erosion of humanitarian infrastructure in the West Bank.⁶⁶

1.4 Security Environment

Since 7 October 2023, practices associated with the war in Gaza have been carried out in the West Bank, including siege measures, movement restrictions, airstrikes and targeting of civilian infrastructure. These have also included the use of armed drones, air power in heavily populated areas, and large-scale raids on towns and refugee camps.⁶⁷

Conditions are reportedly deteriorating. Regular use of military operations, increased settler violence and restrictive movement measures⁶⁸ have significantly reduced access to healthcare, education and essential protection services.⁶⁹ OHCHR has additionally reported a pattern of repeated killings with impunity.⁷⁰

An INGO noted that the situation in the West Bank is characterised by increasing violence, land confiscation and displacement, with curfews resulting in frequent delays in emergency assistance, infrastructure repair, legal aid and in-kind support.⁷¹ Movement and access restrictions have increased with a rise in manned checkpoints and yellow gates appearing across the West Bank, often closing off entire villages and refugee camps, effectively isolating them.⁷² The PLO stated that the overall situation in the West Bank is extremely challenging, citing discrimination, numerous checkpoints and restrictions on freedom of movement.⁷³

⁶⁶ Jørgen Jensehaugen Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo: 14

⁶⁷ Chemlali, A., & Andersen, L. E. (2025). *The anatomy of displacement: Gaza, West Bank and South Lebanon*. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). DIIS Report Vol. 2015 No. 14, [url](#), p. 33; B'Tselem, *Gaza Doctrine: The West Bank is under Fire*, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

⁶⁸ UNFPA, *Situation Report - Crisis in Palestine*, January 2026, [url](#), p. 1; INGO: 16-17; Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 9; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 23

⁶⁹ UNFPA, *Situation Report - Crisis in Palestine*, January 2026, [url](#), p. 1; PRCS: 23; Head of an international humanitarian organization in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 7, 9

⁷⁰ UN OHCHR OPT, *Alarm over pattern of unlawful killings with two Palestinian families killed and settlers terrorising communities*, 15 March 2026, [url](#)

⁷¹ INGO: 15, 18

⁷² UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 27, INGO: 17, UNRWA WBFO; PRCS: 16, 23

⁷³ PLO: 19

Several sources⁷⁴ have highlighted that there is a deep-rooted discrimination in the West Bank, including in the form of segregated road networks,⁷⁵ movement restrictions and permit requirements,⁷⁶ the separation barrier/wall,⁷⁷ and the dual legal system whereby Palestinians face military law while Israeli settlers enjoy civil law protections.⁷⁸

Based on data collected and verified by UN OCHA, 1,081 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, between 7 October 2023 and 11 April 2026. Between 7 October 2023 and 30 March 2026, 11,885 Palestinians have been injured.⁷⁹

1.4.1 Military operations affecting UNRWA services

Intensified Israeli security incursions, stricter movement restrictions, settler violence, and periodic crossing closures have led to increased displacement and disrupted services, including UNRWA schools.⁸⁰ The deteriorating security situation has substantially affected operations in both the northern West Bank and East Jerusalem, and has furthermore resulted in extensive delays in or total hindrance of travel due to checkpoints and road closures.⁸¹

There are reports of daily or near-daily incursions in the West Bank,⁸² and refugee camps have reportedly been targeted since 7 October 2023.⁸³ According to UNRWA, there has been a pattern of forcible entry into UNRWA facilities in the West Bank since October 2023.⁸⁴ Israeli

⁷⁴ International human rights organisation: 7; UN, *Thematic Report: Israel's discriminatory administration of the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem*, 7 January 2026, [url](#); HRW, *Abusive Israeli Policies Constitute Crimes of Apartheid, Persecution*, 27 April 2021, [url](#); Amnesty International, *ISRAEL'S APARTHEID AGAINST PALESTINIANS*, 2022, [url](#); ICI, *LEGAL CONSEQUENCES ARISING FROM THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF ISRAEL IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM, ADVISORY OPINION*, 19 July 2024, [url](#), pp. 64-65; B'Tselem, *Apartheid*, 12 January 2021, [url](#)

⁷⁵ NRC, *In the West Bank, segregated roads displace Palestinians*, 31 March 2022, [url](#); B'Tselem, *West Bank roads on which Israel forbids Palestinian vehicles*, 31 January 2017, [url](#); France24, *The 'apartheid road': West Bank highway sparks controversy*, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁶ Amnesty International, *ISRAEL'S APARTHEID AGAINST PALESTINIANS*, 2022, [url](#), p. 16-17; OCHA, *Fact Sheet: Movement and Access in the West Bank*, April 2026, 23 April 2026, [url](#); B'Tselem, *Restrictions on Movement*, n.d., [url](#); B'Tselem, *West Bank roads on which Israel forbids Palestinian vehicles*, 31 January 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁷ B'Tselem, *The Separation Barrier*, n.d., [url](#); IMEU, *Explainer: Israel's West Bank Wall*, 26 September 2024, [url](#); OCHA, *BACK TO THE WALL - The humanitarian impact of the Israeli Barrier in the West Bank twenty years on*, n.d., [url](#); OCHA, *The humanitarian impact of 20 years of the Barrier - December 2022*, 30 December 2022, [url](#)

⁷⁸ OHCHR, *Israel's death penalty law constitutes discriminatory regime of capital punishment: UN experts*, 2 April 2026, [url](#); ACRI, *One Rule, Two Legal Systems: Israel's Regime of Laws in the West Bank*, 16 June 2022, [url](#); OHCHR, *Israel: UN experts condemn decades of unfair trials for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank*, 3 July 2024, [url](#); HRW, *Born Without Civil Rights*, 17 December 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁹ OCHA, *Data on casualties*, accessed 17 April 2026, [url](#)

⁸⁰ UNRWA, *UNRWA STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-29*, 2026, [url](#), p. 5

⁸¹ UNRWA WBFO, UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 27, INGO: 17; PRCS: 16, 23

⁸² UNRWA WBFO; MEMO, *Israeli raids surge across West Bank amid regional war with Iran*, 6 March 2026, [url](#); Al Jazeera, *Settler Violence in the West Bank, and the Risk of Atrocity during Wartime Cover*, 15 March 2026, [url](#)

⁸³ UNRWA WBFO; OHCHR, *'No end in sight': Israeli forces attack occupied West Bank as Gaza ceasefire takes hold, say experts*, 27 January 2025, [url](#); Cairo Review, *The Consequences and Prospects of Israel's Ban of UNRWA*, 2025, [url](#); PLO: 19

⁸⁴ UNRWA, *The West Bank: Israeli Security Forces use UNRWA Health Centre as temporary detention site in southern West Bank in violation of international law*, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

soldiers reportedly enter UNRWA facilities and refugee camps⁸⁵ without restrictions, including schools and health centres,⁸⁶ deploying sound bombs and tear gas in main areas of refugee camps,⁸⁷ deploying jeeps and armed personnel inside boys' schools⁸⁸ and installing metal fences inside refugee camps along the barrier bordering an Israeli settlement.⁸⁹

There have been reports of Israeli soldiers detaining, interrogating and arresting individuals in health centres⁹⁰ and refugee camps,⁹¹ and reports of search operations inside refugee camps resulting in Palestinians being shot and killed by Israeli forces.⁹²

Military operations in the northern camps of Jenin, Nur Shams and Tulkarem have led to approximately 33,000-35,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs),⁹³ which is described as the largest displacement since 1967.⁹⁴ UNRWA staff have been prevented from entering the camps.⁹⁵ According to UNRWA, these large-scale demolitions represent a new pattern and have had an unprecedented impact on Palestine Refugees, while also resulting in substantial changes to the physical layout of the camps in the northern West Bank.⁹⁶

1.4.2 Settler violence

Sources described settler violence as systematic and widespread,⁹⁷ with settlements expanding.⁹⁸ Recurring settler violence has increased displacement and disrupted UNRWA services, including education at UNRWA schools.⁹⁹ According to UNRWA's WBFO Director, settler violence has escalated to unprecedented levels. October 2025 recorded the highest number of settler violence and harassment incidents in UNRWA's records.¹⁰⁰ From January

⁸⁵ UNRWA WBFO

⁸⁶ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA, *UNRWA Situation Report #193 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem*, 20 October 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁷ OCHA, *Humanitarian Situation Update #266 | West Bank [EN/HE]*, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁸ UNRWA, *UNRWA Situation Report #187 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem*, 5 September 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁹ OCHA, *Humanitarian Situation Update #324 | West Bank*, 18 September 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁰ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA, *The West Bank: Israeli Security Forces use UNRWA Health Centre as temporary detention site in southern West Bank in violation of international law*, 13 February 2025, [url](#)

⁹¹ OCHA, *Humanitarian Situation Update #358 | West Bank*, 19 February 2026, [url](#)

⁹² UNRWA, *UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem*, 31 March 2026, [url](#); UNRWA, *UNRWA Situation Report #215 on the Humanitarian Crisis in the Gaza Strip and the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem*, 31 March 2026, [url](#)

⁹³ Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 24

⁹⁴ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 4; PLO: 13; HRW, *"All My Dreams Have Been Erased" Israel's Forced Displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank*, 20 November 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁵ UNRWA WBFO

⁹⁶ UNRWA, *The West Bank: large scale house demolitions by ongoing Israeli Forces operation are having unprecedented impact on Palestine Refugees*, 6 March 2025, [url](#); UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 26; HRW, *"All My Dreams Have Been Erased" Israel's Forced Displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank*, 20 November 2025, [url](#)

⁹⁷ PRCS: 24; International human rights organisation: 9

⁹⁸ PRCS: 25

⁹⁹ UNRWA, *UNRWA STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-29*, 2026, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁰⁰ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 24

2025 to January 2026, a total of 1,981 settler attacks were recorded by OCHA.¹⁰¹ During the war in Iran in 2026, a substantial increase of 378 settler attacks were reported over a 40-day period.¹⁰²

Since 7 October 2023, attacks are reportedly coordinated, large-scale and carried out with the backing of the IDF and senior ministers who encourage settlement expansion and have allegedly armed settlers.¹⁰³ The distinction between civilians, military and police has allegedly become blurred with growing impunity.¹⁰⁴ Schools in the West Bank have increasingly become targets of settler violence, with cases of children being killed.¹⁰⁵

The type of violence has become more severe and brutal,¹⁰⁶ including more frequent cases of physical assaults and arson. Settlers increasingly enter Palestinian communities and homes, exposing women and children to violence. In some cases, Palestinians attempting to defend themselves have been arrested or killed.¹⁰⁷ There is no actor able to provide protection,¹⁰⁸ and attacks on Palestinian communities, whether in villages, camps, or towns, are carried out by the IDF, settlers, or a combination of both.¹⁰⁹ As a result, many Palestinians have no other option but to flee to other areas, often leading to repeated displacement.¹¹⁰

Settlers have erected roadblocks restricting movement and cutting off entire communities.¹¹¹ One source noted that humanitarian actors, including UNRWA service providers, face increasing security risks when operating in rural parts of Area C where Israeli settlements and outposts are located. Armed settlers attempt to discourage access to these communities, making movement more dangerous for humanitarian operators, who are at times targeted by settlers.¹¹²

¹⁰¹ OCHA, *West Bank Monthly Snapshot - Casualties, Property Damage and Displacement | January 2026*, 19 March 2026, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁰² MEMO, *378 crimes in 40 days: Surge in West Bank settler attacks occurring under government cover*, 16 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰³ International human rights organisation: 9; The Guardian, *Settler-only IDF units functioning as 'vigilante militias' in West Bank*, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ International human rights organisation: 9; The Guardian, *Settler-only IDF units functioning as 'vigilante militias' in West Bank*, 30 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁵ The Guardian, *Palestinian boy, 14, among two killed in settler attack near West Bank school*, 22 April 2026, [url](#); Le Monde, *Jewish settlers in West Bank escalate harassment and terror campaign to annex Palestinian land*, 23 April 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 2-3; Doctors without Borders, *"They shoot to kill": Settler violence in the West Bank*, 26 March 2026, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 2-3

¹⁰⁸ International human rights organisation: 10; Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 3

¹⁰⁹ International human rights organisation: 10; HRW, *West Bank: Israel Responsible for Rising Settler Violence*, 17 April 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 2-3

¹¹¹ INGO: 17

¹¹² Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 4

1.4.3 Situation of UNRWA staff

Security developments, particularly in conflict-affected fields, have affected staff members who remain on the frontline of service delivery.¹¹³ Visibility as UNRWA staff can pose a security risk,¹¹⁴ a pattern also highlighted in a *Guardian* investigation reporting harassment, intimidation, and obstruction of UNRWA personnel by Israeli authorities.¹¹⁵ Two sources stated that the growing volume of anti-UNRWA statements can lead to an increased safety risk for UNRWA staff.¹¹⁶

UNRWA reported that staff have been subjected to violence, including by soldiers,¹¹⁷ and daily humiliation, e.g. at checkpoints.¹¹⁸ Such treatment varies depending on individual soldiers and the situation on the ground.¹¹⁹ For instance, the Qalqilya Hospital director was stopped at a checkpoint near Ramallah and asked if he worked for UNRWA, which the soldiers considered a terrorist organisation, after which they threatened to hit him.¹²⁰

UNRWA stated that Israeli soldiers do not respect UN identity cards or vehicles.¹²¹ Drivers transporting solid waste have sometimes been turned back or detained for hours, while sanitation workers have been insulted and exposed to violence. In one case, a worker wearing a UNRWA vest was attacked and harmed by a soldier's dog. Sanitation labourers consistently wear UNRWA vests, clearly identifying their affiliation. Due to the no-contact policy, UNRWA lacks direct communication with Israeli authorities, preventing coordination in cases involving staff detention or related incidents.¹²²

UNRWA partners inside the West Bank face difficulties in visiting HQ in Amman. For instance, they are required to leave behind UNRWA-related items, including laptops, bags, etc., before reaching the border crossing, as they can face harassment.¹²³

1.5. Socioeconomic Environment

According to the World Bank, the financial environment in the West Bank is characterised by a combination of macroeconomic decline, institutional fiscal crisis, and operational constraints.¹²⁴

¹¹³ UNRWA, *UNRWA STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-29*, 2026, [url](#), p. 26

¹¹⁴ UNRWA WBFO

¹¹⁵ The Guardian, *Documents reveal alleged pattern of Israeli harassment of Unrwa workers on West Bank*, 19 May 2024, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 10; International organisation: 7

¹¹⁷ UNRWA WBFO

¹¹⁸ UNRWA WBFO

¹¹⁹ UNRWA WBFO

¹²⁰ UNRWA WBFO

¹²¹ UNRWA WBFO

¹²² UNRWA WBFO

¹²³ UNRWA HQ

¹²⁴ World Bank Group, *IMPACTS OF THE CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST ON THE PALESTINIAN ECONOMY*, April 2025, [url](#), p. 1

Since October 2023, many Palestinians have been denied access to the Israeli labour market contributing to rising unemployment and declining household incomes.¹²⁵ At the same time, there has been a sharp decline in the gross domestic product, which recorded a cumulative contraction of about 13 % in the West Bank during 2025 compared to pre-war levels in 2023. As a result, purchasing power has eroded significantly, and economic growth has stalled across most productive sectors.¹²⁶ The PA currently faces the risk of insolvency¹²⁷ with Israel's withholding of clearance revenues, constituting the majority of PA income, identified as the principal driver, alongside shrinking donor support and the economic shock of the Gaza war.¹²⁸

Living conditions in the 24 refugee camps in the West Bank, 19 of which are administered by UNRWA, have deteriorated. In 2025, unemployment in refugee camps reached approximately 38.5 %, while poverty levels escalated to unprecedented levels due to repeated incursions, the destruction of infrastructure and restrictions imposed on movement. The camps face challenges such as population overcrowding, shortages in essential services and declining international support.¹²⁹

1.5.1 Funding situation

According to several sources, UNRWA faces significant and - in the view of the PLO - existential financial difficulties following reductions in funding by several donors, the repercussion of which began with the decision of the United States in 2018 to completely cut funding to UNRWA.¹³⁰ The US was UNRWA's largest donor, contributing 343 million USD in 2022 and 422 million USD in 2023,¹³¹ almost accounting for 30 % of UNRWA's total donor contributions.¹³²

Sources reported ongoing financial pressures affecting both UNRWA and the PA, including insufficient and uncertain funding and constrained operating conditions, with implications for the operational capacity of both institutions over time.¹³³ According to researcher Jørgen

¹²⁵ World Bank Group, *IMPACTS OF THE CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST ON THE PALESTINIAN ECONOMY*, April 2025, [url](#), p. 1; Times of Israel, *Barred from working in Israel, West Bank Palestinians pay a price for Gaza's war*, 19 July 2025, [url](#); PLO: 10

¹²⁶ PLO: 10; PRCS: 15

¹²⁷ Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 8; Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 14; Arab Center Washington DC, *Running on Empty: The Deepening Financial Crisis of the Palestinian Authority*, 12 February 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁸ Arab Center Washington DC, *Running on Empty: The Deepening Financial Crisis of the Palestinian Authority*, 12 February 2026, [url](#)

¹²⁹ PLO: 11

¹³⁰ PLO: 6; UNRWA WBFO; Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 25; INGO: 7; International organisation: 9; BBC, *US ends aid to Palestinian refugee agency Unrwa*, 1 September 2018, [url](#)

¹³¹ AP, *Donations to UNRWA USA have spiked since the start of the war in Gaza*, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

¹³² Congress, *UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): Background and U.S. Funding Trends*, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

¹³³ Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 8, 19; PRIO, *UNRWA: In Anticipation of a Double Collapse*, 19 October 2023, [url](#); EUAA, *UNRWA's ability to fulfil its mandate across its areas of operation*, 15 April 2026, [url](#), p. 5; Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 18

Jensehaugen, there is a risk that both major employers and primary service providers could collapse concurrently.¹³⁴

Sweden has ceased funding,¹³⁵ while contributions from Gulf state funding (including Saudi Arabia) is volatile year-to-year and often earmarked. The pool of stable donors able or willing to fill gaps is narrowing due to competing global priorities.¹³⁶ Despite some new donor pledges, UNRWA funding remains insufficient. UNRWA and the PLO link reduced donor confidence, funding cuts, and stricter conditions to sustained political pressure and allegations of neutrality breaches by the Israeli government, even where such claims were later addressed or disproven.¹³⁷

UNRWA reported persistent cash flow shortages due to delays between donor pledges and actual disbursements, affecting liquidity and salary payments.¹³⁸ UNRWA has highlighted that the agency has been forced to operate under month-to-month financial conditions, with uncertainty regarding its long-term financial stability.¹³⁹

According to sources, the funding shortfall has had direct operational consequences, including reduced service delivery,¹⁴⁰ and limited implementation of infrastructure and development projects in refugee camps.¹⁴¹ The funding shortfall has affected the quality of services, particularly in areas such as education,¹⁴² health,¹⁴³ and social protection,¹⁴⁴ where there are staffing reductions,¹⁴⁵ salary cuts,¹⁴⁶ issues with procurement of medicine,¹⁴⁷ and non-replacement of retired personnel.¹⁴⁸ In addition, the quality of services has been affected through increased overcrowding in schools,¹⁴⁹ and reliance on temporary or daily-paid staff.¹⁵⁰

In January 2026, UNRWA announced austerity measures consisting of a 20 % reduction in salaries and working hours for locally recruited staff across all fields of operation due to

¹³⁴ Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 8, 19; PRIO, *UNRWA: In Anticipation of a Double Collapse*, 19 October 2023, [url](#)

¹³⁵ UNRWA, *On the decision by the Government of Sweden to stop funding UNRWA in 2025*, 20 December 2024, [url](#)

¹³⁶ Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 25-26; INGO: 7

¹³⁷ PLO: 6; Amman Net, *UNRWA to Cut Working Hours and Reduce Salaries by 20 Percent Amid Unprecedented Financial Crisis*, 19 January 2026, [url](#)

¹³⁸ Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 25-26

¹³⁹ Haaretz, *UNRWA Still Operates in Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Despite Israeli Law Banning Agency*, 9 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ INGO: 8; Amman Net, *UNRWA to Cut Working Hours and Reduce Salaries by 20 Percent Amid Unprecedented Financial Crisis*, 19 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁴¹ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁴² UNRWA WBFO, INGO: 8

¹⁴³ PLO: 8; UNRWA HQ

¹⁴⁴ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁴⁵ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 19, INGO: 8

¹⁴⁶ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁴⁷ PLO: 8

¹⁴⁸ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁴⁹ PLO: 7

¹⁵⁰ UNRWA WBFO

financial constraints, effective from 1 February 2026.¹⁵¹ Austerity measures included staff cuts, recruitment freezes, reduced contract security, and operational reductions, including shorter clinic hours, closure of some health services and reduced teacher preparation hours,¹⁵² as well as shortages of essential medicines.¹⁵³

The PLO noted that this measure was implemented to address a severe financial deficit estimated at around 220 million USD¹⁵⁴ and added that reductions in salaries and working hours are negatively affecting the quality and continuity of services provided, particularly essential programmes and services, such as the education and health sectors.¹⁵⁵ According to UNRWA, it is too soon to fully assess the operational impact of the austerity measures.¹⁵⁶ However, both the quality and the extent of services are likely to be affected,¹⁵⁷ as the current situation is not sustainable.¹⁵⁸

In February 2024, Israel's Bank Leumi suspended UNRWA's account and froze around 3 million USD, citing concerns about unusual transactions and alleged diversion of funds to terrorist groups in Gaza.¹⁵⁹

2. Service delivery overview by programme in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

2.1 Health programme

Health services in the West Bank are delivered by UNRWA, the Palestinian Authority (PA), national and international NGOs as well as the private sector.¹⁶⁰ However, closures, enforced shutdowns, military searches and damage to health facilities have severely disrupted

¹⁵¹ PLO: 7; MEE, *Jordan: Unrwa salary cuts raise fear of agency's 'dismantling'*, 26 February 2026, [url](#); TRT World, *UNRWA forced to cut services by 20% due to severe lack of funding*, 5 February 2026, [url](#); UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 10; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 18

¹⁵² UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 19

¹⁵³ Amman Net, *UNRWA to Cut Working Hours and Reduce Salaries by 20 Percent Amid Unprecedented Financial Crisis*, 19 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ Reuters, *UNRWA chief says cash flow crisis may force him into 'unprecedented decision'*, 24 June 2025, [url](#); Amman Net, *UNRWA to Cut Working Hours and Reduce Salaries by 20 Percent Amid Unprecedented Financial Crisis*, 19 January 2026, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ PLO: 7; INGO: 8

¹⁵⁶ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 19

¹⁵⁷ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 18

¹⁵⁸ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁵⁹ MEMO, *Israel's Bank Leumi suspends UNRWA's bank account*, 5 February 2024, [url](#); Haaretz, *Israel's Ban on UNRWA Is Set to Take Effect. So What Will Happen in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank?*, 17 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ UNRWA WBFO; Al Eker et. al, *Unveiling health disparities in Palestine: a qualitative study of stakeholders' perspectives*, 2025, [url](#), p. 2

healthcare services.¹⁶¹ At least 928 attacks on health facilities, personnel and transport were registered by WHO in the West Bank in 2025. Additionally, the healthcare sector is impacted by the weak economy.¹⁶² At the same time, the PA faces a severe financial crisis, negatively affecting PA health services.¹⁶³

2.1.1 UNRWA health services

UNRWA provides outpatient primary healthcare in 43 health centres in the West Bank, including about 19 smaller medical points operating on a limited schedule. All UNRWA services in health centres are free of charge. Of the 43 health centres, two are located in East Jerusalem (see [East Jerusalem](#)) and three in the northern West Bank in Jenin, Tulkarem and Nur Shams camps (see [Northern camps](#)).¹⁶⁴ The health centres in East Jerusalem have been closed by the Israeli authorities, while health centres in Tulkarem, Nur Shams and Jenin are inaccessible due to their location inside the camps.¹⁶⁵

UNRWA clinics in the West Bank largely provide basic primary healthcare, with limited secondary care capacity. Those relying on UNRWA healthcare often have few alternatives. Individuals who can afford alternative providers often seek services outside the UNRWA system.¹⁶⁶ However, due to the severe deterioration of the PA health sector and rising unemployment, far fewer patients are able to rely on private providers, increasing pressure on UNRWA facilities.¹⁶⁷

The range of services in health centres includes maternal and child health, treatment for patients suffering from non-communicable and chronic diseases as well as treatment for the elderly.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, UNRWA provides dental care and a small number of physiotherapists.¹⁶⁹ There is no specialised programme for individuals with disabilities.¹⁷⁰

In the West Bank, more than 45,000 patients suffering from non-communicable diseases visit health centres regularly to obtain medicine, including patients suffering from diabetes, hypertension and chronic obstructive lung disease.¹⁷¹ In 2025, UNRWA completed 1,130,000 consultations with 1,050,000 consultations in 2024. The average number of patients per doctor

¹⁶¹ Handicap International, *Access to Healthcare: The Hidden crisis in the West Bank*, January 2025, [url](#), p. 1, PLO; 8; UNRWA WBFO; INGO: 8; Annals of Family Medicine VOL. 22, NO. 6 ♦ NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024, “We Haven’t Even Started Crying Yet”: Caring for the Family Under Occupation and War in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶² World Bank Group, *Palestinian Healthcare Critically Impacted by Weak Economy and Barriers*, 18 September 2023, [url](#); PLO: 7-9

¹⁶³ UNRWA WBFO; PRCS: 20

¹⁶⁴ UNRWA HQ

¹⁶⁵ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 7

¹⁶⁶ Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 21-22

¹⁶⁷ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁶⁸ UNRWA HQ; PLO: 8; PRCS: 7

¹⁶⁹ UNRWA HQ

¹⁷⁰ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁷¹ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ 5

per day is 73, but the number is expected to rise to more than 100, which will lead to decreased consultation times. To mitigate this, UNRWA tries to rely more on telemedicine consultations.¹⁷²

UNRWA operates a hospital in Qalqilya with 60 beds, which provides maternal delivery, internal medicine and paediatrics.¹⁷³ The city of Qalqilya is surrounded by a separation wall with a gate.¹⁷⁴ Previously, UNRWA referred so-called cold cases, such as hernia, haemorrhoids or cholecystitis, to Qalqilya Hospital. This is no longer the case due to movement restrictions affecting travel to reach treatment.¹⁷⁵ Also, some departments of Qalqilya Hospital have stopped operating and are no longer able to provide the necessary medical services.¹⁷⁶

2.1.1.1 Access to healthcare services in East Jerusalem

UNRWA used to operate two health centres in East Jerusalem, one in the Old City and one in Shu'fat camp. Both centres were closed in January 2026 following the implementation of the UNRWA ban. The health centre in the Old City was closed by Israeli forces, while electricity and water in Shu'fat health centre were cut by Israel, leaving the centre unable to operate.¹⁷⁷

West Bank ID holders married to Jerusalem ID holders living in Jerusalem are not able to access Israeli healthcare and previously relied on UNRWA's health centres in East Jerusalem.¹⁷⁸ As of February 2026, following the closure of UNRWA's health centres in East Jerusalem, the agency was in the process of opening a new health centre in 'Anata, near Jerusalem but on the West Bank side.¹⁷⁹ The health centre, reportedly opening in March or April 2026, will be accessible for patients from both closed health centres, including patients with Jerusalem IDs. They can, however, experience some level of harassment at checkpoints.¹⁸⁰ As of 4 June 2026, there were no news about the opening of 'Anata health centre.

As a temporary measure, patients in East Jerusalem can seek assistance through telemedicine. If medicines are needed, patients or their relatives are directed to collect them from other health centres, as IDPs may collect medicines at any health centre in the West Bank. Once the location of an IDP is confirmed, they are referred to emergency health points until the health centre in 'Anata opens. If a physical examination is required, patients can seek care at health centres in Jericho or Ramallah.¹⁸¹

Persons holding a Jerusalem ID in East Jerusalem can access Israeli healthcare if they can pay the mandatory insurance. With an Israeli insurance, hospital services are free of charge;

¹⁷² UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 7

¹⁷³ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; PRCS: 12

¹⁷⁴ PRCS: 12

¹⁷⁵ UNRWA WBFO; PLO: 8

¹⁷⁶ PLO: 8

¹⁷⁷ UNRWA HQ; UNRWA WBFO; PLO: 22-23

¹⁷⁸ UNRWA HQ

¹⁷⁹ UNRWA HQ; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 7

¹⁸⁰ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁸¹ UNRWA WBFO

however, medicines require co-payments, which can be high and may lead poorer patients to seek assistance from UNRWA.¹⁸² UNRWA HQ stated that if a person does not pay the mandatory insurance, they will have issues with their Jerusalem ID.¹⁸³ UNRWA WBFO had not heard about cases of revocation of Jerusalem IDs because an ID holder did not pay the mandatory health insurance, but added that it is well-known that they should pay for the Israeli insurance, otherwise the debt will accumulate and go to court, after which the Jerusalem ID can be withdrawn.¹⁸⁴

If a West Bank resident marries a person from Jerusalem or Israel, they can move to Jerusalem, but cannot access Israeli healthcare. More than 30 % of UNRWA's patients belong to this category.¹⁸⁵

2.1.1.2 Access to healthcare services in Northern camps

Due to Israeli incursions in the North and the substantial number of IDPs, UNRWA health centres in Jenin, Tulkarem and Nur Shams were closed in January 2025.¹⁸⁶ Médecins Sans Frontières reported that healthcare access was significantly disrupted by the discontinuation of UNRWA services and displacement combined with continuing movement restrictions across the West Bank. Nearly one in three respondents described being unable to access a doctor when needed due to cost, lack of nearby facilities or transport issues.¹⁸⁷

To maintain service provision, UNRWA has established a fully developed alternative health system in the North comprising 11 facilities, two functioning as full health centres and the remainder as smaller health points, supplemented by emergency health teams to ensure medical coverage for internally displaced persons.¹⁸⁸ According to UNRWA, the number of patients registered at health points corresponds to those who attended health centres in the three camps, indicating that health services for displaced individuals have been maintained.¹⁸⁹

2.1.1.3 Diabetes

Patients in need of continuous monitoring of diabetes are provided with a glucometer and sticks for the glucometer. UNRWA trains patients or relatives in how to use it to allow them to monitor blood sugar levels at home themselves.¹⁹⁰

There are two types of insulin: vial (injected) and pen (pre-prepared). While insulin is not produced on the local market, UNRWA is still able to provide three different types of insulin

¹⁸² UNRWA HQ; UNRWA WBFO

¹⁸³ UNRWA HQ

¹⁸⁴ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁸⁵ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁸⁶ UNRWA, *Health Conditions of, and Assistance to, Palestine Refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, n.d., [url](#), p. 6; UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; PRCS: 9

¹⁸⁷ MSF, *Five Months under Iron Wall: The Human Toll of Prolonged Displacement & Territorial Fragmentation in the West Bank*, July 2025, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁸⁸ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 7; UN, *UNRWA: A Lifeline for the Displaced Families in the Northern West Bank*, 7 April 2025, [url](#); UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; PLO: 17

¹⁸⁹ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

¹⁹⁰ UNRWA WBFO

vials. The pen is more expensive and not provided by the agency. However, some insulins are available on the local market at the patient's own expense. UNRWA does not provide other specialised types of insulin.¹⁹¹ However, current shortages risk affecting supplies of insulin and other high-cost or high-demand medicines.¹⁹²

2.1.1.4 Chronic obstructive lung disease

UNRWA cannot treat all cases of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and not all medicines are available. UNRWA noted that COPD treatment depends on the specific case, as the agency only provides some symptomatic treatments. The first is to stop smoking. The agency does not offer anti-smoking programmes in health centres. However, if a patient suffers from wheezing, dyspnoea or asthma, they are able to medically treat it.¹⁹³

UNRWA provides asthmatic medicines such as Ventoline; steroids; Beclomethasone inhaler; Salbutamol inhaler; Prednisolone; Salbutamol respirator solution; Dexamethasone injection and Hydrocortisone vial free of charge. All of these are included in the essential drugs list, while other COPD medicines are not included, e.g. Atrovent or Symbicort. Not all cases of COPD are managed with these medicines. According to UNRWA WBFO, they can be used, but are not the first-line medication of choice.¹⁹⁴

2.1.1.5 Cancer

Cancer treatment is not included in UNRWA's service provision. UNRWA provides cancer patients with Palestinian governmental insurance to receive treatment in PA facilities or in facilities referred to by the PA.¹⁹⁵ However, many patients referred by the PA are rejected by private hospitals.¹⁹⁶ Patients must pay the bills themselves and submit them to UNRWA, which will then reimburse the costs to the patient. The insurance costs (approximately 200-250 USD) are fully covered by UNRWA. This only applies to patients suffering from cancer.¹⁹⁷

2.1.1.6 Mental health

UNRWA operates a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support programme with a psychologist in the health centres.¹⁹⁸ There are no psychiatrists available through UNRWA.¹⁹⁹

UNRWA trains doctors, nurses and counsellors to be able to assist with mental health cases. There is a standardised screening questionnaire (GHQ-12) for the primary diagnosis containing a series of questions. If more than half of the score is positive, UNRWA staff provides counselling. UNRWA conducts diagnosis screenings for mental health, e.g. depression, and can

¹⁹¹ UNRWA HQ

¹⁹² UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 15

¹⁹³ UNRWA HQ

¹⁹⁴ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁹⁵ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁹⁶ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; PRCS: 18

¹⁹⁷ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁹⁸ UNRWA WBFO

¹⁹⁹ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

treat depression with fluoxetine. For other mental health issues, e.g. PTSD, UNRWA refers severe cases to mental health institutions.²⁰⁰

2.1.1.7 Care for the elderly

UNRWA does not usually have the resources or capacity to make home visits to elderly people, e.g. for administration of their medicines. It is quite common for family members to help and support their elders, e.g. by collecting their medicines in health centres.²⁰¹

2.1.2 Hospitalisation coverage

2.1.2.1 UNRWA

UNRWA provides free primary healthcare but requires up to a 30 % co-payment for referred secondary and tertiary care.²⁰² The agency has contracts with nine hospitals in the West Bank and only St. John Eye Hospital in East Jerusalem. UNRWA only refers patients to these nine hospitals.²⁰³ The agency only refers urgent cases to hospitals, e.g. appendicitis and cases posing a serious risk of death or disability.²⁰⁴

Some surgeries, diagnostic procedures, medicines and uncommon or highly specialised procedures, particularly expensive ones, are not covered. If a patient suffers a cerebrovascular stroke and requires hospitalisation in the intensive care unit, the agency covers 70 % of the admission costs, but the patient would have to pay for all medications and services such as MRI and CT scans. In addition, surgical operations for cold cases, e.g. hernia, haemorrhoids or cholecystitis, are not covered by UNRWA.²⁰⁵

According to UNRWA WBFO, in cases referred to hospitals, UNRWA covers 70 % of the admission costs for a maximum of 7-10 days, while the patient pays 30 %. For vaginal birth delivery, UNRWA covers 50 %, whereas 70 % is covered for caesarean sections.²⁰⁶ Previously, UNRWA covered 70-90 % of the costs. Because of the financial crisis of UNRWA, the coverage was reduced to 70 %. There are limitations to referrals to private hospitals, as UNRWA cannot cover all patients due to increasing prices at private hospitals.²⁰⁷

2.1.2.2 Palestinian Authority (PA)

Although refugees with insurance can access health services through the PA, many rely on UNRWA services and medicines due to the PA's financial conditions. At the same time, access to

²⁰⁰ UNRWA HQ

²⁰¹ UNRWA HQ

²⁰² Al Eker et. al, *Unveiling health disparities in Palestine: a qualitative study of stakeholders' perspectives*, 2025, [url](#), p. 10

²⁰³ UNRWA WBFO; PLO: 8

²⁰⁴ UNRWA WBFO

²⁰⁵ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁰⁶ UNRWA WBFO

²⁰⁷ UNRWA HQ

higher-level hospital care is very limited because of the PA's crisis.²⁰⁸ The PA operates a hospital and clinics; however, clinical doctors are only present once a week due to a lack of salary payments. In the hospital, doctors work twice a week, except for emergency cases.²⁰⁹ The PA is experiencing substantial medicine shortages due to revenues withheld by Israel.²¹⁰ According to the Ministry of Health, 120 of the 592 medicines it provides were out of stock as of early February 2025.²¹¹

In the past, patients sought medical assistance from the PA in cases involving severe and long-term illnesses to have medical costs nearly fully covered. Under the current conditions, however, private hospitals reject new referrals from the PA due to their unpaid bills.²¹² In February 2026, a major hospital in the West Bank, Bethlehem Arab Society Rehabilitation, ended relations with the PA and stopped receiving patients. UNRWA WBFO expects other hospitals will do the same. Moreover, many suppliers have stopped supporting the PA with medicine and medical supplies. In UNRWA WBFO's assessment, there will be a collapse in the Palestinian secondary healthcare system if the situation continues.²¹³

Elective surgeries, e.g. knee or hip operations, no longer take place under the PA due to staff reductions. Thus, patients would have to wait or seek assistance at private hospitals. Two sources noted that under the current conditions, specialised treatment with the PA is very limited.²¹⁴

UNRWA WBFO stated that the PA refers patients for psychiatrist consultations free of charge for all Palestinians, and that health insurance is not required. In practice, however, this is also affected by the PA's debt to the private sector leading to rejections of referrals.²¹⁵

2.1.2.3 Israel

UNRWA does not have contracts with hospitals in Israel. Nevertheless, patients can seek assistance from the PA, as government insurance covers about 90 % of the total costs in Israeli hospitals, including medicines and examinations. In a few cases, the insurance covers 95-100 % of the total costs. Yet, the PA is trying to decrease dependence on Israeli hospitals because of expensive costs. Thus, only cancer and rare, complicated cases are referred to Israeli hospitals.²¹⁶

²⁰⁸ UNRWA HQ; Handicap International, *Access to Healthcare: The Hidden crisis in the West Bank*, January 2025, [url](#), p. 11; UNRWA WBFO; Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 20

²⁰⁹ UNRWA HQ; Handicap International, *Access to Healthcare: The Hidden crisis in the West Bank*, January 2025, [url](#), p. 11

²¹⁰ UNRWA HQ

²¹¹ Handicap International, *Access to Healthcare: The Hidden crisis in the West Bank*, January 2025, [url](#), p. 11

²¹² UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; PRCS: 18

²¹³ UNRWA WBFO

²¹⁴ UNRWA HQ; PRCS: 20-21

²¹⁵ UNRWA WBFO 3

²¹⁶ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

Since 7 October 2023, the possibility to refer patients to Israeli hospitals has become more difficult.²¹⁷ According to one source, it is still possible,²¹⁸ while another source did not know whether Israel would allow Palestinians to enter for treatment and added that it is very complicated as patients must obtain different permits.²¹⁹ According to the Palestine Red Crecent Society (PRCS), it is almost impossible to obtain such a permit.²²⁰ Furthermore, permits for treatment in East Jerusalem are very difficult to obtain.²²¹

The PLO noted that some applications are approved, while others are not. Decisions depend on the discretion of the Israeli officer responsible for issuing permits. No explanations are provided for rejected applications and there is no possibility of seeking clarification or appeal.²²²

Israeli hospitals are not owed outstanding payments by the PA, as Israel deducts the relevant amounts directly from the tax revenues it collects on behalf of the PA. Before transferring these revenues, Israel subtracts outstanding payments, including those owed to Israeli hospitals, and transfers the remaining balance to the PA. As a result, the PA does not make separate payments to the hospitals.²²³

Palestinians seeking treatment abroad must obtain medical permits from Israeli authorities, but approval rates fell from nearly 80 % before October 2023 to 56 % between October 2023 and December 2024, contributing to a decline in requests - from over 72,000 in the first nine months of 2023 to just over 67,000 in the following 15 months.²²⁴

2.1.2 Challenges faced by UNRWA in the health programme

PRCS stated that since 2022, many restrictions have been placed upon UNRWA, affecting the health of the whole population.²²⁵

2.1.2.1 Movement restrictions

The increasing number of checkpoints affects movement and access to essential services, disrupting UNRWA's health service delivery and causing delays in the opening of health centres, reduced staffing, and, in some cases, temporary closures.²²⁶ WHO reported that physical barriers and movement restrictions delay access to specialised care in East Jerusalem.²²⁷

²¹⁷ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; PRCS: 13

²¹⁸ UNRWA WBFO

²¹⁹ UNRWA HQ

²²⁰ PRCS: 13

²²¹ PRCS: 19; PLO: 21

²²² PLO: 20

²²³ UNRWA WBFO

²²⁴ Handicap International, *Access to Healthcare: The Hidden crisis in the West Bank*, January 2025, [url](#), p. 11

²²⁵ PRCS: 7

²²⁶ UNRWA, *Health Conditions of, and Assistance to, Palestine Refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, n.d., [url](#), p. 5; UNRWA HQ; UNRWA WBFO

²²⁷ WHO, *Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem*, 20 January 2026, [url](#), p. 2

Across the West Bank, more than 1,000 checkpoints and closed gates constitute a hindrance in the access to healthcare for patients and staff.²²⁸ For instance, al-Arroub and al-Fawwar camps are completely closed and inaccessible by car for patients and staff.²²⁹ UNRWA tries to mitigate this by having health staff work in camps close to their homes.²³⁰ According to UNRWA WBFO, UNRWA patients face humiliation at checkpoints.²³¹

Access for ambulances has been severely restricted, preventing PRCS teams from meeting the standard response time of 7-12 minutes. A village near Ramallah that was previously reachable within 10 minutes now requires over 45 minutes when checkpoints are open. When checkpoints are closed, PRCS staff are treated as regular citizens despite the emblem of the Red Crescent being visible. This exposes them to delays, searches, harassment, and in some cases violence, including fatal incidents, contributing to the loss of 58 staff members. In addition, there have been reported cases where delays led to patient deaths. Incidents are reported to the ICRC, although Israeli authorities reportedly deny the claims and investigations may take months.²³²

2.1.2.2 Procurement of medicines

As previously mentioned, the no-contact policy has affected UNRWA's ability to import medicine, resulting in stockouts. UNRWA's essential drugs list includes 90 types of medicine, and although availability has never previously fallen below 70 or 80 items, the current shortages risk affecting supplies of insulin and other high-cost or high-demand medicines.²³³

According to UNRWA, the agency has managed to secure money for the procurement of medicines, but faces challenges in delivering them to the West Bank due to Israeli legislation banning coordination with UNRWA. As a result, UNRWA cannot obtain permission to import medicines and has instead relied on donations and procurement from local markets in the West Bank. However, locally procured medicines are significantly more expensive, forcing UNRWA to purchase smaller quantities.²³⁴

Stockouts of various medicines have occurred due to import restrictions,²³⁵ which have worsened since the implementation of the Israeli laws in January 2025.²³⁶ According to the PLO,

²²⁸ UNRWA WBFO; PRCS: 16, 23

²²⁹ UNRWA WBFO

²³⁰ UNRWA HQ

²³¹ UNRWA WBFO

²³² PRCS: 16-17

²³³ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 15

²³⁴ UNRWA HQ; UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA, *Health Conditions of, and Assistance to, Palestine Refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, n.d., [url](#), p. 5-6; PLO: 8; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 15; International organisation: 11, 13

²³⁵ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²³⁶ UNRWA HQ

there is a clear shortage of essential medicines, such as medicine for cancer patients, liver and kidney diseases.²³⁷

To mitigate shortages, patients, especially those with non-communicable diseases, were sometimes provided with additional quantities in advance. Once a stockout occurs, however, UNRWA is unable to dispense the required medicines, leaving patients to seek their own solutions. Referral pathways to find medicine elsewhere are also constrained, as PA hospitals, private facilities, NGOs and UNRWA all draw from the same small local market. In effect, during a stockout, patients either rely on previously issued supplies or are unable to obtain the medicine at all.²³⁸

2.1.2.3 Financial challenges

The financial crisis prevents UNRWA from hiring staff and replacing retired staff, resulting in a severe staff shortage with more than 80 vacant posts for nurses, doctors, midwives, psychosocial counsellors, etc.²³⁹

Due to austerity measures,²⁴⁰ UNRWA health centres, which previously operated five days per week, are now open four days per week (Monday–Thursday).²⁴¹ Sources opined this will impact health operations, e.g. the quality of healthcare; overcrowding of patients, pressure on staff and missed appointments.²⁴² One source highlighted the challenge of health centres being closed on Saturdays, which is the weekend in the West Bank. Thus, parents will have to bring their children during their own working hours.²⁴³

There has been an increase in consultations owed to the increase of the population; the financial crisis inside the West Bank forcing many patients who previously sought medical assistance in the private sector to seek free of charge UNRWA services; and finally, many former PA patients shifting to UNRWA as several services and medicines are no longer available at the PA.²⁴⁴

2.1.2.4 Storage facilities

UNRWA's central pharmacy located inside the headquarters compound in East Jerusalem was destroyed by Israel,²⁴⁵ and UNRWA now depends on a private storage in Ramallah.²⁴⁶ The

²³⁷ PLO: 8

²³⁸ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 15

²³⁹ UNRWA WBFO

²⁴⁰ PLO: 7; MEE, *Jordan: Unrwa salary cuts raise fear of agency's 'dismantling'*, 26 February 2026, [url](#); TRT World, *UNRWA forced to cut services by 20% due to severe lack of funding*, 5 February 2026, [url](#); UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁴¹ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 19, PLO: 7

²⁴² UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; PLO: 7; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 19

²⁴³ UNRWA HQ

²⁴⁴ UNRWA WBFO; Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 14-15

²⁴⁵ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 16

²⁴⁶ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

agency is exploring how to establish a pharmacy in the West Bank due to several issues with the rental storage. The rent is too high; UNRWA has to pay rent per pallet (approximately 70 USD per pallet per month); staff are not able to work there, and there have been problems with distribution. In December 2025, the storage mistakenly shipped UNRWA's insulin to Gaza. The insulin was returned to the West Bank, but patients experienced a shortage of insulin for two weeks.²⁴⁷

2.2 Education programme

UNRWA operates 96 schools across the West Bank and East Jerusalem attended by approximately 48,000 students. 90 schools are located in the West Bank and six in East Jerusalem.²⁴⁸ Students attend UNRWA schools until the end of 9th grade.²⁴⁹ Out of the 96 schools, 80 schools in the West Bank are reportedly operating with no interruptions. Six schools have been forcefully closed in East Jerusalem, and 10 schools in the northern parts of the West Bank are in emergency mode, meaning that education continues either remotely or in temporary learning spaces.²⁵⁰

Both UNRWA and PA schools are, however, deteriorating in terms of learning outcomes.²⁵¹ According to a study conducted by Cambridge University, students in the West Bank have lost two scholastic years due to Covid-19 and other factors negatively affecting education.²⁵² UNRWA HQ stated that from a learning perspective, the situation is very difficult, and there is very little the agency can do to improve access and quality. The use of digital learning presents substantial challenges, particularly for younger students.²⁵³ Not all children have access to computers and tablets, and some struggle with internet access.²⁵⁴

UNRWA WBFO stated that as of February 2026, no viable alternatives to the current situation have been identified, given ongoing constraints such as learning loss, salary cuts, movement restrictions and the security environment. The priority is to complete the 2025/2026 school year, while prospects for future years remain uncertain. The only potential option would be to revise education plans by reducing learning time and curricula. As a result, students may receive only 50-60 % of intended learning, which would further weaken learning outcomes and lead to additional reductions in teacher salaries.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁷ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁴⁸ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁴⁹ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁵⁰ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 2; UNRWA HQ

²⁵¹ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁵² UNRWA WBFO; University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies in partnership with UNRWA, *Palestinian Education Still Under Attack: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education*, January 2026, [url](#), p. 55

²⁵³ UNRWA HQ

²⁵⁴ UNRWA HQ; UNRWA WBFO; University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies in partnership with UNRWA, *Palestinian Education Still Under Attack: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education*, January 2026, [url](#), p. 48

²⁵⁵ UNRWA WBFO

2.2.1 Financial challenges

In January 2024, UNRWA hired temporary appointed teachers to supplement the schools. Yet, additional resources were required for the training and guidance of newly appointed teachers, which also proved challenging in light of the security situation.²⁵⁶

UNRWA's core services are funded through the programme budget, which faces a 220 million USD deficit out of 880 million USD in Q1 2026. While external funding supports emergency responses and projects, it cannot cover teacher salaries, which rely solely on this budget. Approximately 95 % of the education budget is allocated to salaries and 5 % to operations, leaving no funding for development, training, reforms or quality improvement.²⁵⁷

UNRWA implemented austerity measures in February 2026. The agency seeks to maintain five school days per week without reducing the curriculum to preserve quality,²⁵⁸ meaning teacher prep time will be hindered.²⁵⁹ For instance, teachers no longer arrive an hour before the school day to open the facilities, resulting in children waiting outside unsupervised. This situation heightens protection risks for students and has generated significant concern among parents.²⁶⁰ As of 8 February 2026, UNRWA schools continued to operate five days per week.²⁶¹

2.2.2 Increased enrolment and procurement challenges

The number of students enrolled in UNRWA schools in the West Bank has increased, attributed to the deteriorating situation of PA schools,²⁶² PA schools closed by Israel²⁶³ and rising poverty prompting families who previously used private schools to shift to UNRWA schools.²⁶⁴ The PA currently conducts three days of in-person teaching per week.²⁶⁵ This development increases pressure on UNRWA's already overstretched education system, which is already operating with reduced salaries, fewer resources, a shortened school week²⁶⁶ and shift-based schooling.²⁶⁷ Overcrowding has increased across all grade levels.²⁶⁸

In the West Bank, textbooks are provided to UNRWA by the PA.²⁶⁹ Due to the PA's ongoing crisis, textbook printing has been disrupted, leading to a lack of supply. To mitigate this,

²⁵⁶ UNRWA WBFO

²⁵⁷ UNRWA WBFO

²⁵⁸ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁵⁹ UNRWA HQ; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 19

²⁶⁰ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 20

²⁶¹ UNRWA WBFO

²⁶² UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 9; Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee: 14-15

²⁶³ UNRWA WBFO

²⁶⁴ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 5

²⁶⁵ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 5

²⁶⁶ Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 11

²⁶⁷ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁶⁸ UNRWA HQ; PLO: 7

²⁶⁹ UNRWA HQ

UNRWA used internal resources and additional costs to copy selected materials.²⁷⁰ Because of the no-contact policy, many local suppliers are unwilling to work with UNRWA. As a result, the agency had to rely on a limited number of local suppliers instead of its usual global procurement channels, making operations significantly more expensive and time-consuming. When attempting to procure several hundred laptops the previous year, UNRWA was unable to find a single supplier able to provide the required quantity.²⁷¹

2.2.3 Movement restrictions and security situation

In the 2024/2025 school year, the Education Cluster recorded 2,040 incidents affecting education, including settler incursions, weapon use, detentions and harassment, impacting 541 schools; 84,749 students and 4,711 teachers.²⁷²

Approximately 160-170 teachers have struggled to reach their schools regularly, leading to a loss of 7-10 % of UNRWA's teaching capacity. While students often live near their schools, it may not be the case for teachers. UNRWA reassigned teachers to locations closer to their homes,²⁷³ reducing education quality with subject-specific staff gaps due to limited teacher specialisation.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, some children have to travel far through checkpoints to attend school,²⁷⁵ and in some places, gates have been installed to prevent people from entering or exiting villages, resulting in delays in access to services such as education.²⁷⁶

UNRWA schools have faced regular security threats, violence and disruptions from Israeli forces and settlers, including electricity cuts and military operations, with no alternative schooling options for families in certain areas, such as Hebron.²⁷⁷

Emergency protocols are in place to respond to security incidents. One option is to perform internal evacuations for safer locations inside the school. The other option is external evacuations to outside the school. As a consequence of the UNRWA ban, UNRWA can no longer coordinate with Israel in case of an external evacuation,²⁷⁸ also impacting UNRWA's ability to deconflict operations.²⁷⁹ In February 2025, UNRWA's WBFO Director stated that the IDF had

²⁷⁰ UNRWA WBFO

²⁷¹ UNRWA HQ

²⁷² University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies in partnership with UNRWA, *Palestinian Education Still Under Attack: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education*, January 2026, [url](#), p. 46

²⁷³ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ; University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies in partnership with UNRWA, *Palestinian Education Still Under Attack: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education*, January 2026, [url](#), p. 58

²⁷⁴ UNRWA WBFO

²⁷⁵ UNRWA HQ

²⁷⁶ PRCS: 23

²⁷⁷ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA, *UNRWA STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-29*, 2026, [url](#), p. 5; UNRWA, *Meet My School*, n.d., [url](#)

²⁷⁸ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁷⁹ UNRWA HQ

stopped informing UNRWA about operations conducted near schools, a practice it had previously maintained, thereby endangering pupils' lives.²⁸⁰

2.2.4 Schools in Northern camps

In January 2025, ten UNRWA schools in Jenin, Tulkarem and Nur Shams were closed when the camps were forcibly emptied out.²⁸¹ According to UNRWA, military operations in the camps caused major learning losses: by the end of 2023–2024, West Bank students lost about 10 % of the school year, while students in the northern camps lost 45-50 % due to school closures. As of February 2026, 35,000 refugees, including around 4,400 students, remain displaced.²⁸²

In December 2025, UNRWA reopened four schools near Tulkarem camp located just outside an Israeli-declared closed military zone. The schools are currently providing emergency education with compressed classes for 2,800 displaced children from the Tulkarm and Nur Shams camps.²⁸³ Students from the northern camps are only able to attend in-person education three days per week. In addition, UNRWA provides two remote learning days to IDP students in the three camps.²⁸⁴

In February 2025, UNRWA introduced a distance learning approach combining self-learning materials, partial online education and the establishment of alternative schools in cooperation with the PA. Under this arrangement, the PA shared school facilities with UNRWA, enabling a shift-based system in which UNRWA students attend classes in second shifts and on Saturdays.²⁸⁵ UNRWA stated that although not ideal, this arrangement provides education to approximately 4,400 students.²⁸⁶

UNRWA's digital education strategy uses a combination of online and in-person learning. UNRWA WBFO stated that not all children have the means and devices to connect, and internet connectivity is not always reliable. However, only 25-30 % of the children have been able to connect to online lessons.²⁸⁷ UNRWA HQ noted that the agency has conducted extensive digital education. Since Covid-19 and with the support of KfW (German state-owned development bank), UNRWA has increased the number of tablets, charging stations at schools, solar panels

²⁸⁰ Haaretz, *UNRWA Still Operates in Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Despite Israeli Law Banning Agency*, 9 February 2025, [url](#)

²⁸¹ UNRWA WBFO; University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies in partnership with UNRWA, *Palestinian Education Still Under Attack: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education*, January 2026, [url](#), pp. 54-55

²⁸² UNRWA WBFO

²⁸³ UNRWA HQ; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 4

²⁸⁴ UNRWA WBFO; University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies in partnership with UNRWA, *Palestinian Education Still Under Attack: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education*, January 2026, [url](#), p. 55

²⁸⁵ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA HQ

²⁸⁶ UNRWA HQ

²⁸⁷ UNRWA WBFO

on roofs to charge with and laptops for teachers. There is a robust effort underway to obtain digital materials to supplement existing school materials.²⁸⁸

As part of the emergency response, UNRWA spends 90,000 USD monthly to transport approximately 3,000 displaced children to and from school, as the displaced families have lost all of their means and cannot provide for their children to reach school every day. The buses also function for safety concerns, as Israeli forces remain near schools, making it unsafe for children to walk.²⁸⁹

2.2.5 Schools in East Jerusalem

In May 2025, Israeli authorities closed the six schools in East Jerusalem, leaving approximately 800 students unable to complete the scholastic year.²⁹⁰ To mitigate this, UNRWA initiated distance and self-learning. The agency has not been able to resume teaching in the six schools²⁹¹ located in Shu'fat camp, Silwan, Wadi al-Joz and Sur Baher.²⁹² The forced closure of schools in East Jerusalem has had a significant psychological impact on children and their families. Students initially continued their education online until the end of the semester in June 2025, with examinations conducted in-person at alternative venues.²⁹³

UNRWA has been unable to systematically monitor subsequent student enrolment, but available information indicates that many children from Shu'fat camp have enrolled in private schools, where facilities are substandard and teaching quality is lower than in the UNRWA schools that were closed. Other students are crossing checkpoints into the West Bank to attend al-Awqaf schools²⁹⁴ in the area, a small number have enrolled in municipality schools in Beit Hanina, and a very small number are attending PA schools in 'Anata (Area C/B).²⁹⁵ UNRWA had no information about 15 % of the students who previously attended the closed schools in East Jerusalem. However, the agency assumed that many either joined Israeli systems and did not want to share the information with UNRWA, or others dropped out of school. UNRWA received information that several students have dropped out, as many could not send their children to Israel, especially people from Shu'fat camp.²⁹⁶

In East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities operate two systems: some schools use modified Palestinian textbooks, removing the logos of the PA and other contents, while others teach the

²⁸⁸ UNRWA HQ

²⁸⁹ UNRWA WBFO

²⁹⁰ University of Cambridge, Centre for Lebanese Studies in partnership with UNRWA, *Palestinian Education Still Under Attack: Restoration, Recovery, Rights and Responsibilities in and through Education*, January 2026, [url](#), p. 47; UN, *UNRWA statement on return to schools in the occupied West Bank*, 1 September 2025, [url](#); UNRWA WBFO; PLO: 22

²⁹¹ UNRWA WBFO; Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 4

²⁹² PLO: 22

²⁹³ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 3

²⁹⁴ A waqf is a charitable endowment held in trust under Islamic law. Britannica, *Waqf*, n.d. [url](#)

²⁹⁵ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 3

²⁹⁶ UNRWA WBFO

Israeli curriculum. Students attending these schools can enter high schools, but without a Palestinian education, they cannot enter Arabic or Palestinian universities.²⁹⁷

2.2.5.1 Kalandia Training Centre

In January 2026, Israel disconnected electricity in Kalandia Training Centre attended by 325 trainees.²⁹⁸ There are indications that water supply could also be cut.²⁹⁹ Sources noted a great risk that Israel will seize it altogether.³⁰⁰ UNRWA uses backup generators to continue vocational service; however, the centre provides vocational and technical services in shops for which electricity is a requirement. As of February 2026, the centre was still operating, but not to a full extent.³⁰¹

UNRWA is seeking alternatives for trainees, such as on-job or work-based training, but this requires agreements with the local labour market, which has limited capacity to offer such opportunities. Even if available, UNRWA lacks the resources to provide additional teachers across multiple locations outside Kalandia Training Centre.³⁰²

Kalandia and other training centres serve youths from poor families across the West Bank who cannot afford or safely manage daily transportation. UNRWA therefore provides accommodation where trainees stay during the week and return home on a weekly basis. This costly service ensures training continuity and provides protection, food and support, but also creates a safety risk, as large groups of 16-18-year-olds, especially in Kalandia, could be exposed if Israeli authorities take over the site, potentially overnight.³⁰³

2.3 Relief and Social Services (RSS)

RSS consists of three main components: Relief, Registration, and Social Services. RSS operates with approximately 150 regular staff in the West Bank. With emergency recruitment, staffing may increase to just under 200 personnel.³⁰⁴

2.3.1 UNRWA RSS Services in the West Bank

2.3.1.1 Impact of the UNRWA ban

The introduction of the UNRWA ban has not resulted in a formal suspension of all core RSS services; however, it has negatively affected the timeliness, coverage, and sustainability of programme delivery, i.e. delayed interventions and incomplete coverage.³⁰⁵ Staff frustration has

²⁹⁷ UNRWA WBFO

²⁹⁸ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 6; UNRWA WBFO; PLO: 25; UNRWA HQ; MEMO, *Power cut at UNRWA's Kalandia Training Centre north of Jerusalem raises fears of seizure*, 29 January 2026, [url](#)

²⁹⁹ UNRWA WBFO

³⁰⁰ UNRWA WBFO; PLO: 25; Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at PRIO: 3; International human rights organisation: 4; UNRWA HQ; MEMO, *Power cut at UNRWA's Kalandia Training Centre north of Jerusalem raises fears of seizure*, 29 January 2026, [url](#)

³⁰¹ UNRWA WBFO; UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 6

³⁰² UNRWA WBFO

³⁰³ UNRWA WBFO

³⁰⁴ UNRWA WBFO

³⁰⁵ UNRWA WBFO

also increased, accompanied by some absenteeism and resignations. Recruitment of qualified staff for vacant posts was also reported to be increasingly difficult.³⁰⁶

2.3.1.2 Social Safety Net Programme

Eligibility for the Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP)³⁰⁷ is determined through a poverty-based assessment tool, which relies on socio-economic data collected by social workers in a centralised system.³⁰⁸ With the SSNP programme, each family member receives 12 USD per quarter.³⁰⁹ The poor financial situation in the West Bank has substantially increased the number of people in need, while programme coverage has remained limited.³¹⁰

The SSNP currently has an estimated waiting list of approximately 3,000–4,000 families. Prior to recent adjustments, the programme covered around 36,000 individuals—equivalent to fewer than 7,000 families—out of a total refugee population of approximately one million. Following the introduction of digital identity verification in 2025–2026, the caseload was reduced by about 2,000 individuals, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to roughly 34,000. Despite growing socioeconomic pressures, the waiting list has remained relatively limited. This is primarily because eligibility for the SSNP is determined by a severe poverty threshold of approximately 1.79 USD per person per day (i.e. below 2 USD). This threshold is considerably lower than that of the PA, where the poverty line is estimated at around USD 2.70–3 per person per day or higher. As a result, fewer families qualify under SSNP criteria.³¹¹

In addition, no new household poverty assessments have been conducted over the past two years due to limited operational capacity and the suspension of registration and reassessment processes. Consequently, the waiting list has remained largely static and does not reflect the likely increase in needs driven by rising unemployment and poverty rates. According to UNRWA WBFO, if new assessments were carried out, thousands of additional families who have sought assistance in the past two years would likely fall below the SSNP poverty threshold and qualify for support.³¹²

2.3.1.3 Cash-for-Rent assistance

UNRWA WBFO reported that cash-for-rent assistance for IDPs is provided under its crisis intervention programming and financed through multiple donors. RSS currently covers approximately 60–80% of the assistance, while the remaining share is funded by other

³⁰⁶ UNRWA WBFO

³⁰⁷ UNRWA provides eligible Palestine refugees with in-kind food assistance and cash-based support through the Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP). The programme aims to alleviate poverty among Palestine refugees across UNRWA's fields of operation, with particular focus on refugees classified as living in abject or extreme poverty. UNRWA, *What we do, Relief and Social Services*, n.d., [url](#)

³⁰⁸ UNRWA WBFO

³⁰⁹ UNRWA WBFO

³¹⁰ UNRWA WBFO

³¹¹ UNRWA WBFO

³¹² UNRWA WBFO

international organisations operating in the northern West Bank. However, UNRWA WBFO indicated uncertainty regarding the continuation of external support for this remaining portion.³¹³

In 2025, assistance was delivered through two disbursement rounds, each covering a three-month period. Beneficiary families received approximately 1,000 Israeli Shekel per month, amounting to 3,000 Shekel per round. The transfer amounts were based on joint assessments of average rental costs. As the subsidies are project-based, they are not stable and cannot be guaranteed on a year-round basis.³¹⁴

Looking ahead, UNRWA is assessing future funding prospects for RSS and advocating for additional resources. While assistance in 2025 was broadly distributed, future support is expected to be more targeted, with stricter vulnerability criteria applied due to limited funding.³¹⁵ Families excluded from rental assistance have limited alternatives. Some may seek partial support from the PA, stay in temporary accommodation such as the American University compound, move in with relatives, or sell personal belongings. Although some landlords may temporarily tolerate delayed payments, evictions have been reported, and IDPs are often turning to negative coping mechanisms³¹⁶ e.g. adolescent boys face pressure to contribute economically, resulting in child marriage, early entry into informal and often hazardous labour, and school dropout in order to cover the rent.³¹⁷

2.3.1.4 Emergency and project-based interventions

While SSNP eligibility criteria have not changed, UNRWA has expanded the range of emergency and project-based interventions, including:

- Food vouchers, including long-term programming in partnership with WFP, for refugees who lost income, and who are economically vulnerable or poor. Bedouin communities receive food parcels and food vouchers through UNRWA funded by WFP.
- Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MCPA) for IDPs.
- Cash for rent/shelter support for IDPs.
- MCPA for Gaza labourers living in the West Bank since 7 October 2023.
- In-kind assistance, including non-food items, hygiene kits, and dignity kits.
- Selective emergency cash assistance, including protection-related cash for women.

³¹³ UNRWA WBFO

³¹⁴ UNRWA WBFO

³¹⁵ UNRWA WBFO

³¹⁶ UNRWA WBFO

³¹⁷ Protection Cluster, *Occupied Palestinian Territory (Opt) Protection Analysis Update, Update on protection risks faced by men and boys*, 23 January 2026, [url](#)

- Seasonal/Ramadan (*zakat*) cash assistance, targeted at the most vulnerable.

For Ramadan/*zakat* cash, specific vulnerability criteria have been developed, prioritising households that lost income after 7 October 2023 (particularly former labourers in Israel); families affected by military operations or displacement; households that had not received MCPA or shelter cash within the previous six months; female-headed households; households with multiple members with disabilities; large households and other vulnerability profiles.³¹⁸

2.3.1.5 Support for IDPs

In addition to rental support in the form of the Cash-for-Rent programme, RSS provides a broad range of interventions to IDPs, subject to eligibility criteria and funding availability. However, coverage is partial and dependent on programme thresholds. Despite the broad range of interventions, the coverage is still not sufficient to meet the needs of the IDPs. Some IDPs are eligible under the SSNP based on poverty criteria but not specifically on displacement status. Those qualifying receive quarterly cash assistance.³¹⁹

- Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)
IDPs receive MPCA every three months, largely funded through external partners rather than core UNRWA funding.
- Cash-for-rent assistance
Provided in limited rounds (two in 2025), covering three months per round.
- Selective emergency cash (under social services)
Small-scale emergency cash grants for households facing acute circumstances (e.g. illness, mental health crisis, protection concerns). This is distinct from regular SSNP payments and is need-based.
- Zakat/Ramadan cash assistance
Seasonal support to highly vulnerable households, including some IDPs, based on specific vulnerability criteria.
- Food assistance
Through partnership with WFP, IDPs may receive food vouchers. Coverage was expanded in the northern part of the West Bank, but remains eligibility-based and not universal.
- Non-food items
Distribution of blankets, hygiene kits, dignity kits, and other in-kind assistance under emergency programming.
- Protection and psychosocial support
Through social services and crisis intervention units, IDPs may access: Cash-for-

³¹⁸ UNRWA WBFO

³¹⁹ UNRWA WBFO

protection support (including for women at risk); psychosocial support; mental health follow-up; and gender-based violence related interventions.

- Coordination with partners
RSS works with the PA and other humanitarian actors to provide a complementary package of services.³²⁰

2.3.2 Financial challenges

In 2025, UNRWA was, for the first time in its history, unable to deliver all four planned quarterly cash payments under the Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP) due to funding constraints. Only three of the four disbursement rounds were implemented.³²¹

In addition, exchange rate fluctuations led to recurrent shortfalls and delays in cash disbursements. For the fourth quarter of 2025, a reported deficit of approximately USD 153,000 affected the SSNP. Although UNRWA subsequently disbursed planned payments for the first quarter of 2026, no retroactive payment was made for the missed fourth-quarter cycle.³²²

More broadly, overall programme management funding for RSS in the West Bank has declined substantially over the past two years. This reduction has weakened operational capacity, including the administrative and managerial support required to sustain core programming.³²³

At the same time, emergency interventions have increased but are primarily financed through short-term or project-based funding. Within social services, activities such as psychosocial support—previously funded through core budget lines—are increasingly dependent on such temporary funding streams. This shift raises concerns about the sustainability of delivering core programme services in the future.³²⁴

2.3.3 Movement restrictions and security situation

Some locations, including three refugee camps in the northern West Bank, remain inaccessible for in-person operations. Where physical access is not possible, alternative modalities are used, including phone-based outreach and assessments; hotline communication with beneficiaries; remote socio-economic assessments conducted by social workers; online meetings and workshops in place of in-person activities.³²⁵

The security situation has to a large extent disrupted staff movement and operations. Travel between northern and southern areas can take several hours due to checkpoints and road closures, and in some cases, staff were required to stay overnight because return travel on the same day was not feasible, increasing operational costs. To meet operational demands, staff

³²⁰ UNRWA WBFO

³²¹ UNRWA WBFO

³²² UNRWA WBFO

³²³ UNRWA WBFO

³²⁴ UNRWA WBFO

³²⁵ UNRWA WBFO

have also worked extended hours, including at night. Overall, the situation has adversely affected staff safety, freedom of movement, access to refugee camps and other areas, and the ability to conduct in-person outreach and service delivery.³²⁶ In situations involving incursions, closures, demolitions, or heightened insecurity, planned field visits are postponed until conditions are assessed as sufficiently safe.³²⁷

2.3.4 East Jerusalem

Following the implementation of the UNRWA ban, RSS lost operational access to its field office in East Jerusalem in Sheikh Jarrah.³²⁸ As a result, staff previously based in a single compound in Jerusalem were redeployed to offices in other parts of the West Bank, primarily in Ramallah and Bethlehem, as well as surrounding central and southern areas. Only a limited number of staff were from northern areas.³²⁹ The reallocation of staff presented operational challenges. The team had to revert to remote working arrangements similar to those used during the COVID-19 period. This transition was complex, as staff were dispersed across multiple locations. Additionally, at the initial stage, office infrastructure, supplies, documentation, and other essential materials located in the Jerusalem compound could not be accessed.³³⁰

RSS used to rely on Jerusalem ID holders as they were the only staff who could continue the work in East Jerusalem after the Israeli UNRWA ban. However, as all UNRWA employees are facing increasing challenges when passing check points, RSS is no longer able to rely on Jerusalem ID holders to the same extent.³³¹

2.3.5 Northern Camps

The deteriorating security situation since 2023, particularly during 2024–2025, has substantially disrupted operations in both the northern West Bank and East Jerusalem. In the northern West Bank, repeated military incursions into refugee camps—especially in Jenin, Tulkarem, and Nur Shams—have prevented staff from accessing these areas since the onset of the incursions.³³² As a result, staff have been unable to access beneficiaries inside the camps and have instead followed internally displaced persons outside the camp areas. During the initial phase, outreach was conducted primarily through hotlines and phone contact with beneficiaries in order to assess needs and provide assistance remotely.³³³

2.3.6 NGO deregistration

UNRWA expressed concern regarding the potential impact of restrictions affecting NGOs and humanitarian actors in the West Bank. UNRWA indicated that any reduction in the operational

³²⁶ UNRWA WBFO

³²⁷ UNRWA WBFO

³²⁸ UNRWA WBFO

³²⁹ UNRWA WBFO

³³⁰ UNRWA WBFO

³³¹ UNRWA WBFO

³³² UNRWA WBFO

³³³ UNRWA WBFO

capacity of cooperating organisations could negatively affect assistance delivered through partnership arrangements, including cash-for-rent support, multi-purpose cash assistance, and in-kind distributions such as blankets, hygiene kits, and other relief items. According to UNRWA, such risks were of particular concern in the northern West Bank, where humanitarian needs remain high and access constraints already limit service delivery.³³⁴

2.4 Infrastructure and Camp Improvement programme

The Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme consists of several components. Unlike programmes such as Education or Health, the programme does not primarily depend on core funds. Instead, the majority of funding comes from external project-based contributions from various donors, including Germany, Bahrain, the Gulf states and other Arab countries.³³⁵

Infrastructure projects are implemented in the 19 camps in the West Bank. Approximately 55 engineers are employed across the West Bank, working on projects with a total budget envelope of around 19 million USD, funded by various donors.³³⁶ The programme covers both construction projects and maintenance of all UNRWA installations in the 19 camps. This includes schools, health centres, and administrative offices.³³⁷ UNRWA highlighted that the camp improvement programme faces challenges because reliance on project-based funding prevents larger-scale interventions from moving forward in the absence of adequate financial resources.³³⁸

UNRWA also stated that refugee camps are not included in PA's broader development planning processes, and that infrastructure projects may be implemented in areas surrounding camps but not within the camps themselves. Not all projects attract sufficient donor interest, which complicates efforts to address infrastructure gaps across the camps. Needs across the West Bank are substantial, and given UNRWA's current financial deficit, it is increasingly difficult to meet these needs.³³⁹

Solid waste management is another key component of the programme. Approximately 300 sanitation labourers and environmental health staff are employed to collect waste in all camps across the West Bank. The programme also operates equipment, including waste compactors and tractors, to transport waste to dumping sites.³⁴⁰ Solid waste management is the only component that largely relies on core funds, as the salaries of sanitation labourers on fixed-term contracts are paid through the programme budget. By contrast, engineering staff and

³³⁴ UNRWA WBFO

³³⁵ UNRWA WBFO

³³⁶ UNRWA WBFO

³³⁷ UNRWA WBFO

³³⁸ UNRWA WBFO

³³⁹ UNRWA WBFO

³⁴⁰ UNRWA WBFO

related overhead costs are covered through externally funded projects.³⁴¹ The programme also includes shelter rehabilitation, which involves maintenance and repair of houses inside the camps. Infrastructure works include rehabilitation and maintenance of sewer and water networks within the camps.³⁴² Funding limitations often prevent the implementation of larger development projects, and activities depend on donor contributions. Small-scale infrastructure projects are implemented in cooperation with camp committees and external partners, including WASH and shelter clusters. UNRWA is an active partner in these clusters, particularly with regard to addressing camp-related needs.³⁴³

Within West Bank camps, electricity and water for residents are not provided by UNRWA. UNRWA is responsible for paying electricity and water bills for its own installations, such as schools and health centres. For these installations, UNRWA covers costs and manages the necessary technical setup.³⁴⁴

2.4.2 East Jerusalem

UNRWA noted that Shu'fat camp is a particularly complex case. The camp includes residents holding both West Bank IDs and Jerusalem IDs. Israeli authorities have warned that West Bank ID holders should not work in Shu'fat, as the area is considered under Israeli authority. However, at the same time the Israeli municipal authorities have, according to UNRWA, not assumed responsibility for sanitation services in the camp, including waste collection. UNRWA is in a dilemma in which it can either continue operating and expose staff to potential risks, or cease operations and leave the camp without waste collection services.³⁴⁵

UNRWA has been responsible for several installations in East Jerusalem, including a former field office with security personnel, a health centre, and facilities in Shu'fat camp.³⁴⁶ Although UNRWA staff have been physically removed from East Jerusalem, the relevant department remains formally responsible for maintaining these installations, despite facing restrictions on access to the area, which includes oversight of essential services such as electricity, water, and other engineering functions.³⁴⁷

At the time of the interview, sanitation services in Shu'fat camp were still operational, including the presence of sanitation workers and waste compactors. However, the situation was described as precarious, with ongoing concerns that the Jerusalem municipality could intervene and remove UNRWA staff at short notice.³⁴⁸

³⁴¹ UNRWA WBFO

³⁴² UNRWA WBFO

³⁴³ UNRWA WBFO

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³⁴⁵ UNRWA WBFO

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³⁴⁷ UNRWA WBFO

³⁴⁸ UNRWA WBFO

2.4.3 Operational challenges

When fixed-term sanitation workers retire, their positions cannot always be refilled due to austerity measures. Instead, UNRWA relies on daily-paid labourers, which requires additional sources of funding.³⁴⁹ To address these gaps, a Cash for Work project funded by the German development bank KfW is being used to recruit daily-paid sanitation workers. However, this has led to salary discrepancies between fixed-term UNRWA staff and daily-paid workers employed through externally funded projects, resulting in internal disparities.³⁵⁰

In the West Bank, solid waste management faces budgetary challenges, as it relies on core funds. Funds are insufficient to cover all dumping site fees. As a result, UNRWA relies on emergency funds and flash appeals to fill funding gaps. UNRWA also considered maintenance costs for compactors as an ongoing challenge.³⁵¹

In addition, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit skilled labourers, particularly for projects located outside their immediate local areas. Labourers are reported to prefer working in nearby villages or camps and are often unwilling or unable to travel to other regions, such as Nablus, the central West Bank, or Hebron, due to access restrictions and movement constraints.³⁵²

Due to the no-contact policy, UNRWA is unable to obtain or renew UN vehicle licence plates, which prevents the registration of newly procured vehicles and creates operational challenges. For instance, an EU-funded waste compactor could not be put into operation as it could not be licensed. As a temporary measure, UNRWA explored an arrangement under which the municipality of Bethlehem would operate the vehicle and provide services in return.³⁵³

It is difficult for the Camp Infrastructure Programme to recruit staff holding Jerusalem IDs, as potential applicants are reluctant to apply to UNRWA due to its current reputation and restrictions affecting its operations in Jerusalem. At the same time, existing staff members within the department with Jerusalem IDs have left the agency, resulting in additional operational gaps.³⁵⁴

Another challenge is contracting local companies. Prior to UNRWA's removal from East Jerusalem, contractors based in East Jerusalem regularly participated in standard tendering procedures. Following the ban on UNRWA's activities, however, contractors have reportedly refused to apply for or engage in work with UNRWA in East Jerusalem. This reluctance is linked to concerns about security and safety, which have made it difficult to carry out maintenance work on UNRWA installations in the area.³⁵⁵

³⁴⁹ UNRWA WBFO

³⁵⁰ UNRWA WBFO

³⁵¹ UNRWA WBFO

³⁵² UNRWA WBFO

³⁵³ UNRWA WBFO

³⁵⁴ UNRWA WBFO

³⁵⁵ UNRWA WBFO

2.4.4 Camp closures and access restrictions

Following the events of 7 October 2023 and subsequent developments affecting UNRWA's operations in Jerusalem, additional gates and movement restrictions were introduced in certain areas. For example, in Fawwar camp in the Hebron area, a gate was installed at the camp entrance. Such measures affect UNRWA's ability to carry out operations, including sanitation services, as waste compactors and tractors require vehicular access to enter and exit the camps. While staff may still enter on foot, heavy equipment cannot operate without road access. Similar constraints have been reported in other areas, including in the northern West Bank.³⁵⁶

In the camps of Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams, widespread damage to housing stock and infrastructure has been reported, including the destruction of an estimated 800 houses and partial damage to approximately 650 additional housing units.³⁵⁷

UNRWA has not been permitted to rebuild the camps, and the areas have been closed off. The PLO assessed that Israel intends to create a new neighbourhood.³⁵⁸ As of 31 March 2026, it was announced that the affected areas would remain closed until the end of May 2026.³⁵⁹ The PLO noted that Israel has conditioned the return of refugees to the area on four requirements: (1) that UNRWA would not be allowed to operate within the premises; (2) that all residents would undergo security clearances; (3) that no political activity would take place in the camps; and (4) that houses would not be rebuilt.³⁶⁰

The scale of destruction has resulted in approximately 32,000 refugees being displaced from these camps.³⁶¹ Most refugees are residing in nearby areas, often with relatives, to access services still functioning,³⁶² and UNRWA is attempting to meet their basic needs.³⁶³ The situation, however, is not sustainable, as infrastructure is under pressure.³⁶⁴

UNRWA is seeking to provide assistance to displaced persons from Nur Shams, Tulkarem, and Jenin camps. However, it currently lacks access to these camps and is therefore unable to assess the extent of infrastructure damage.³⁶⁵

In Deheisheh camp, closures are reported to be rare. In contrast, in Fawwar camp, entrance gates are closed approximately three to four times per month, often following security

³⁵⁶ UNRWA WBFO

³⁵⁷ UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich: 26

³⁵⁸ PLO: 15-16

³⁵⁹ OCHA, *Humanitarian Situation Report (10 April 2026)*, 10 April 2026, [url](#)

³⁶⁰ PLO: 15-16; MEE, *Israel demands removal of UN agency for Palestinians before ending Jenin assault*, 19 August 2025, [url](#); MEMO, *Israel extends closure, siege of northern West Bank camps until end of March*, 2 February 2026, [url](#)

³⁶¹ HRW, *"All My Dreams Have Been Erased" Israel's Forced Displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank*, 20 November 2025, [url](#)

³⁶² International human rights organisation: 13-14

³⁶³ UNRWA WBFO

³⁶⁴ International human rights organisation: 13-14

³⁶⁵ UNRWA WBFO

incidents. Closures typically last two to three days and affect sanitation services, as vehicles are unable to enter or leave the camp.³⁶⁶ Similar access restrictions have been observed in Jalazon and Kalandia camps, particularly in connection with checkpoint closures or operations conducted by ISF. The situation is characterised by limited predictability, and access conditions may change rapidly.³⁶⁷

2.4.5 Security incidents

Several incidents have been reported involving drivers of UNRWA waste compactors on roads used jointly by Israelis and Palestinians. Drivers operating vehicles marked with the UN emblem were stopped by Israeli soldiers and asked to present identification documents. The drivers were at times treated poorly during such encounters.³⁶⁸ Additionally, there have been several incidents with drivers transporting solid waste, who have been turned back or detained for hours. In some cases, sanitation workers were insulted and exposed to violence.³⁶⁹

To mitigate risks, efforts have been made to assign staff to work in areas close to their place of residence, thereby reducing the need to cross checkpoints and limiting exposure to potential harassment. Travel between the southern and northern parts of the West Bank can take several hours due to checkpoints and delays.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ UNRWA WBFO

³⁶⁷ UNRWA WBFO

³⁶⁸ UNRWA WBFO

³⁶⁹ UNRWA WBFO

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Annex 1 – Meeting minutes

International organisation

Online meeting on 4 February 2026

About the source: The international organisation works in the field of humanitarian work.

Situation of UNRWA

1. In the occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), both the West Bank and Gaza, UNRWA remains one of the largest service providers, although it is operating under increasingly severe constraints.
2. Reductions in service delivery, combined with access challenges, have prompted UNRWA to shift from full-service provision toward an increasingly cash-based programming model. Assistance to UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in managing this transition has included the development of vulnerability criteria and the refinement of targeting methodologies, with particular attention to refugee households. This has been particularly relevant in the northern West Bank in recent months, while also seeking consistency with PA priorities.
3. Overall, reduced funding to UNRWA has forced the agency to shift towards more targeted assistance, which has generated discomfort among communities in the West Bank and has led to protests. UNRWA is the primary interface with the population, and dissatisfaction with humanitarian actors or the UN more broadly is often directed at UNRWA, which is widely perceived as synonymous with “the UN”.
4. There are perceived opportunities in the West Bank despite the overall deterioration in conditions. Certain components of the PA remain relatively functional, and, together with UNRWA, provide a basis for gradually shifting from a predominantly humanitarian posture toward a recovery- and development-oriented approach.
5. The source views long-term responsibility in the West Bank as resting with the PA. While some PA structures are not yet fully prepared to assume expanded roles, the source considers these as the necessary long-term solution, and there is already a gradual transition toward enabling the PA to take on more responsibilities.
6. From this perspective, and in the source’s opinion, the humanitarian community should progressively step back, with greater reliance placed on the PA. This view is not universally shared. The source describes the situation in the West Bank as a protracted political crisis that manifests in humanitarian needs. Many of the issues at hand are protection-related rather than traditional humanitarian concerns. Historically, humanitarian actors have assumed broad responsibility for protection in the West Bank, and the source questions whether this approach should continue.

7. A significant security-related challenge concerns the growing volume of anti-UNRWA messaging. The trend is considered highly concerning. While general anti-UN sentiment exists, the targeted nature of rhetoric directed specifically at UNRWA has become particularly prominent, with national UNRWA staff facing a more persistent sense of exposure and vulnerability.

Funding and financial situation

8. Contingency planning has been undertaken within the humanitarian system in anticipation of the possibility that a designation under terrorism-related legislation could be issued by the United States against UNRWA. Similar legal reviews were required in previous years following the designation of several Palestinian NGO's by Israeli authorities, which raised questions regarding the legal implications for humanitarian entities and potential personal liability for staff. Internal discussions are ongoing, and final guidance has not yet been issued. As part of preparedness measures, options are being examined to mitigate potential legal or operational repercussions for staff, both national and international, should such a designation occur.
9. In the funding context, the source stressed that it is important to continue bilateral support to UNRWA. While the United States and other donors have opted not to provide funding, this does not preclude other Member States from contributing, and several have increased their allocations to help offset the shortfall. UNRWA has demonstrated its capacity to sustain operations and remains one of the largest providers of assistance, including being second only to WFP in certain areas such as food distribution. The agency continues to show institutional resilience, and there is strong community reliance on, and support for, its services.

Consequences of the anti UNRWA bills

10. On 20 January 2026, Israeli forces entered the UNRWA headquarters compound in the Sheikh Jarrah area of occupied East Jerusalem and demolished the premises using bulldozers and heavy machinery. This event, combined with a broader set of restrictions, has had significant implications for UNRWA's operational capacity and ability to function.
11. Since the introduction of the no-contact policy, UNRWA has faced significant constraints in importing goods, such as medicine and in-kind items. This has contributed to UNRWA's increasing reliance on cash-based assistance, and in the northern West Bank the needs identified by communities have been broadly aligned with this shift toward greater use of cash modalities.
12. The type of assistance provided has varied by location. In areas where shelter needs were predominant, support was provided in the form of cash-for-rent. In locations

where households faced a wider range of needs, multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) was used.

13. UNRWA has continued to secure the medical supplies required for its operations, including through increased reliance on local procurement within the West Bank. This has enabled the agency to maintain a high volume of medical consultations. It is the source's assessment that a similar approach has been applied to school supplies, with a shift toward sourcing materials locally, reflecting existing efforts to use local procurement where it is economically viable.
14. International staff have not been granted visas since Israeli authorities halted the issuance of visas for UNRWA heads of office and other international personnel, resulting in a significantly reduced international presence. Remote management under these conditions is challenging, and national staff face heightened exposure in the absence of on-site international personnel, who ordinarily provide a basic level of protective presence.
15. Despite these constraints, operations have continued, and the source described it as remarkable that UNRWA has maintained service delivery in both Gaza and the West Bank.

Displacement

16. In the West Bank, the displaced population is residing in a range of accommodation types. Many individuals have secured rental housing, and maintaining stability in rental prices is a key concern; prices have remained relatively steady to date. Others are staying with relatives or friends, though such arrangements are not considered sustainable. Current indications suggest the situation may become increasingly protracted. Advocacy efforts therefore emphasize enabling returns where feasible, while interim support has included successive rounds of cash assistance to bridge the period until longer-term solutions can be identified.

Palestine Liberation Organization/ Department of Refugee Affairs -, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and head of the Department of Refugee Affairs Dr. Ahmed Abu Holi and International Relations and Fundraising Expert Mai Odeh

Meeting in Amman, 5 February 2026

Overall political situation for UNRWA

1. According to representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), UNRWA holds the primary and exclusive mandate and is the only UN agency legally responsible for providing relief services to Palestine refugees across all five of its operations (the West Bank including the occupied East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, Jordan and Lebanon).

This is based on UN Resolution No. 302, which clearly defined the framework of its mandate and in organic connection with Resolution 194, as the political and legal reference for the Right of Return. They emphasized that any attempt to undermine UNRWA's mandate or eliminate its role constitutes a direct undermining of the international humanitarian system and a blatant assault on the multilateral international order. This exclusive mandate cannot be replaced or circumvented, given that the Agency represents a safety valve for regional stability and serves as a political and legal witness to the established rights of Palestinian refugees.

2. The PLO views that Israel as the occupying power, is proceeding in blatant defiance of the UN-rules-based system by enacting domestic legislation aimed at undermining UN institutions and the mandates of its agencies. Among these are the decisions issued by the Israel Knesset on 28 October 2024, which entered into actual force in January 2025. The PLO stresses the absolute legal nullity of these laws due to their fundamental contradiction with the Charter of the United Nations and international resolutions, foremost among them Resolution (302) and Resolution (194). Established principles of international law affirm that domestic laws and regulations may in no way restrict or obstruct the work of a UN institution that enjoys diplomatic immunities and privileges. Accordingly, safeguarding UNRWA's mandate and ensuring the implementation of its mandate constitutes a legal and essential necessity that must be fulfilled in accordance with the provisions of international law, free from any unilateral sovereign dictates that lack international legitimacy.
3. The PLO indicated that UNRWA's mandate was renewed by the United Nations in December 2025, with 168 countries voting overwhelmingly in favor of continuing its mandate. The PLO affirms that this international consensus is not merely a political stance, but an explicit recognition of the Agency's legitimacy and its vital role.
4. The PLO clarified that the scope of UNRWA's mandates constitutes a legal entity that is entirely independent and separate from the competencies of the Palestinian National Authority. While the two entities work in close coordination, the PLO emphasizes that the UNRWA holds the sole and exclusive mandate over Palestine refugees, UNRWA is indispensable and irreplaceable. The PLO stressed its absolute rejection of assuming any of UNRWA's responsibilities or replacing it in any capacity. It also firmly rejects any suggestions and proposals from the international community calling on it to accept additional funding to take over parts or tasks of UNRWA's work as a substitute for the unjust Israeli Knesset's Anti-UNRWA legislation. According to the PLO, UNRWA contributes to regional stability and provides not only relief services but also plays a role in safeguarding the right of refugees to return.
5. The PLO stated that Israel has decided to ban 37 International humanitarian organisations from operating inside Palestine and preventing them from carrying out their relief mission. These decisions are intended, in their ultimate objective, to

systematically and deliberately push Palestinians to leave their land through the intentional destruction of the basic conditions necessary for life. This approach stands in clear contradiction to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice issued in July 2024, which affirmed the illegality of the occupation and the obligation of the occupying power to facilitate the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance, while warning against any measures aimed at altering the demographic composition. From a legal perspective, this is consistent with United Nations reports that regard the undermining of humanitarian work as a coercive tool to impose displacement. Such actions constitute a grave violation of Article (49) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the occupying power from transferring civilian populations or creating conditions that compel them to leave or be forcibly displaced.

Financial Constraints affecting UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank

6. According to the PLO, UNRWA faces significant and existential financial difficulties following reductions in funding by several donors, the systematic repercussion of which began with the decision of the United States in 2018 under President Trump to completely cut funding to UNRWA. The PLO added that Israel, as the occupying power, with the support of certain international actors, continues to exert maximum pressure through organised political smear campaigns aimed at promoting unfounded allegations accusing the Agency of “terrorism,” lack of neutrality, and incitement to antisemitism. These campaigns have triggered negative reactions from some donor parties, which rushed to impose strict restrictions and political conditions on their funding, while other parties reduced their financial contributions by up to 50% compared to previous years. The organisation affirms that this programmed decline in funding came as a direct result of continuous Israeli incitement and the distortion of facts, despite the falsity of these allegations having been established in the “Colonna” report (April 2024) and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (July 2024). This contraction in financial support not only threatens the operational sustainability of UNRWA but also represents a dangerous capitulation to plans aimed at eliminating the refugee issue by drying up the funding sources of the only international witness to their Nakba.
7. This financial deficit has affected UNRWA employees. UNRWA recently decided to reduce staff salaries by 20% in order to address a severe financial deficit estimated at around \$200 million. According to the PLO, many staff members—who are refugees themselves—have become increasingly frustrated. The PLO noted that reductions in salaries and working hours are negatively affecting the quality of services provided. This situation was further aggravated when, in early January 2026, the Agency terminated the contracts of 571 employees from the Gaza Strip. These employees had been forcibly displaced to Egypt and had previously been granted exceptional unpaid leave

beginning on 1 March 2025. As a result, the living conditions of their families deteriorated sharply. At the same time, the Agency adopted austerity measures and significant cutbacks affecting essential programs and services, particularly in the education and health sectors, threatening their quality and continuity at a time when refugees' need for these services is increasing. The PLO stated that overcrowding in UNRWA schools has increased, with up to 60 students in a single classroom.

8. Medical centers provide treatment for patients suffering from chronic diseases, pregnant women, and the elderly. There is a clear shortage of essential medicines in medical centers, such as medicine for cancer patients, liver and kidney diseases. The procurement of medicines has become increasingly difficult due to UNRWA's financial situation, combined with import challenges linked to Knesset legislation and the "no-contact" policy warning of serious humanitarian consequences for Palestinian refugees who depend on UNRWA services. In a related context, UNRWA adopted decisions to prevent second- and third-level medical referrals to hospitals that are not contracted with the Agency. This has worsened the health conditions of patients suffering from cancer, liver disease, and kidney disease in Lebanon, and the Gaza Strip. The negative impact has also extended to Qalqilya Hospital, where some departments have stopped operating and are no longer able to provide the necessary medical services.
9. The PLO faces its own financial deficit, that has undermined its ability to pay the full salaries of its employees, which it attributed primarily to the continued withholding and confiscation by Israel, the occupying power, of the clearance revenues owed to it. The proportion of withheld and deducted funds has risen to nearly 70% of the total revenues.
10. The financial situation in the West Bank has further deteriorated because many Palestinians are being denied access to the Israeli labour market after 7 October 2023. According to the PLO, the socio-economic situation is very difficult and is collapsing. This has been reflected in the unprecedented rise in unemployment rates, which surged to approximately 31% in the West Bank by 2025, compared to about 13% before the crisis. At the same time, there has been a sharp decline in the gross domestic product, which recorded a cumulative contraction of about 13% in the West Bank during 2025 compared to pre-war levels in 2023. As a result, purchasing power has eroded significantly, and economic growth has stalled across most productive sectors.

Overall situation in the West Bank

11. There are 24 refugee camps in the West Bank, of which 19 are administered by UNRWA. These camps are experiencing a severe deterioration in living conditions, with unemployment rates rising to approximately 38.5% in 2025. Levels of poverty have also escalated to unprecedented levels due to repeated incursions, the destruction of

infrastructure, and restrictions imposed on movement. The camps face serious challenges, including population overcrowding, shortages in essential services, and declining international support, all of which threaten humanitarian and social stability.

12. International staff are no longer granted visas and are not permitted to enter the West Bank. As a result, no international staff were working in the West Bank at the time of the meeting. This restriction also included preventing the UNRWA Commissioner-General, Philippe Lazzarini, from entering the Gaza Strip and the West Bank starting on 18 March 2024. Due to the escalating restrictions and the refusal by the Israeli occupation authorities to issue or renew visas, UNRWA's international staff were forced to leave the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and to carry out their duties remotely from outside the Palestinian territories in order to ensure the continuity of relief operations under these exceptional circumstances.

Security

13. Militarised operations in the northern camps of Jenin, Nur Shams, and Tulkarem have resulted in approximately 35,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), which the PLO described as the largest displacement since 1967.
14. The PLO reported that a high percentage of houses in these camps have been destroyed, while the IDPs have no alternative places to go.
15. UNRWA has not been permitted to rebuild the camps, and the areas have been closed off. According to the PLO, Israel intends to create a new neighbourhood instead of rebuilding Jenin, Nur Shams, and Tulkarem as refugee camps.
16. According to the PLO, Israeli authorities recently stated that the affected areas would remain closed until at least March 2026. The PLO further noted that Israel has conditioned the return of refugees to the area on four requirements: (1) that UNRWA will not be allowed to operate within the premises; (2) that all residents will undergo security clearances; (3) that no political activity will take place in the camps; and (4) that houses will not be rebuilt. The PLO rejected these conditions, which it viewed as part of what it described as Israel's broader objective of encouraging Palestinians to leave the West Bank.
17. Because UNRWA was prohibited from entering the Jenin, Nur Shams, and Tulkarem camps, the agency has been relying on mobile clinics and hybrid and e-learning to provide basic services.
18. Some children have recently returned to school, but approximately 5,000 students have been affected overall.
19. According to the PLO, other refugee camps in the West Bank also face frequent incursions, making daily life very difficult. The PLO described the overall situation in the West Bank as extremely challenging, citing discrimination, numerous checkpoints, and restrictions on freedom of movement.

Health

20. Permits for treatment in hospitals in Israel are currently granted only for very critical and urgent cases. According to the PLO, some applications are approved while others are not, and such decisions depend on the discretion of the Israeli officer responsible for issuing permits. The PLO stated that no explanations are provided for rejected applications and that there is no possibility of seeking clarification or appeal.
21. Two main Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem provide treatment for certain critical conditions (Makassed Hospital and Augusta Victoria Hospital), including some cancer, kidney, and liver diseases. However, these hospitals are not accessible to many patients due to the permit system.

Overall situation in East Jerusalem

22. The PLO reported that there are no functioning UNRWA schools or medical centres in East Jerusalem. UNRWA has rented a facility in A'nata, but all schools in the area have been closed by Israel. On 8 April 2025, six UNRWA schools in East Jerusalem were raided and shut down. The closures included schools located in the areas of Shuafat Refugee Camp, Silwan, Wadi al-Joz, and Sur Baher, depriving approximately 850 students of their right to education.
23. Regarding the health sector, the Palestine Liberation Organization reported that the occupying authorities issued a notice ordering the closure of the Jerusalem Health Center (Al-Zawiya Clinic), located inside Bab al-Sahira, on 13 January 2026. This clinic is the oldest UNRWA clinic and serves approximately 30,000 Palestinian refugees. These measures are being implemented in accordance with Knesset decisions adopted in October 2024, which entered into force in late January 2025. The legislation prohibits the Agency's activities and bans any form of contact with it, resulting in the suspension of all essential educational and health services in the city.
24. The UNRWA headquarters in East Jerusalem was subjected to extensive destruction, and Israeli occupying authorities have removed the flag of the United Nations Agency (UNRWA) and replaced it with the Israeli flag, in a step viewed as a direct targeting of international legitimacy. According to the PLO, Actual demolition operations within the compound began, including the destruction of mobile offices on 20 January 2026. These actions were accompanied by bulldozers entering the headquarters under the supervision of Israeli officials and the destruction of infrastructure. The PLO described these actions as violations of international law and considered them a significant change in the situation in the West Bank including East Jerusalem, particularly with the cutting of water and electricity supplies to children's schools and medical facilities affiliated with the agency. The PLO also referred to a settlement plan aimed at converting the headquarters' land into a residential complex consisting of 1,440

settlement units, warning of the catastrophic consequences of these decisions on the vital services provided to Palestinian refugees in Jerusalem. According to the PLO, these decisions have severely affected Palestinians in East Jerusalem.

25. The Qalandia Training Centre affiliated with UNRWA is located just on the other side of the separation wall and faces the imminent risk of closure. According to the PLO, Israeli authorities have cut water and electricity supplies in late January 2026 to the centre and are threatening to confiscate the land on which it stands. The Organization noted that this vocational institute, established in 1953, is built on land leased from the Jordanian government prior to the Israeli occupation in 1967, making any attempts to seize it a blatant violation of international agreements and international law. The institute currently enrolls 350 students (with some updated statistics indicating 325), who receive vocational and technical training in 16 different specialties. All of these students face the risk of losing their educational and professional future if the confiscation is carried out, as there is no equivalent educational alternative available in the area.

Return to the West Bank

26. According to the PLO, refugees who left before 1967 are not permitted to return to the West Bank.
27. Palestinians holding West Bank IDs are able to travel freely to Jordan.
28. The PLO stated that in some families, a father holding a valid ID can enter the West Bank, while children, siblings, or other family members without such documentation cannot.
29. The PLO noted that some individuals were prevented from returning because they reportedly had “secret files” with the Israeli authorities, of which they themselves were unaware.
30. According to the PLO, some individuals attempting to return were held for hours at the Allenby Bridge crossing and were pressured to cooperate with Israeli authorities. The PLO reported that some individuals were allowed to enter, while others were detained when attempting to do so.
31. There are no clear criteria to determine who would be permitted to enter the West Bank and who would face difficulties. According to the PLO, decisions depend on the Israeli general in charge at the time.

International human rights organisation

The source has worked with various international organisations engaged with Palestinian issues for several years over a span of the last two decades in different roles, and is currently still

working within the human rights, humanitarian and development landscape in the West Bank and Gaza.

Meeting in Amman, 4 February 2026

Anti-UNRWA Legislation and Policies

1. There are a number of recent legal developments targeting UNRWA. These laws are, in themselves, unlawful, yet they are still being implemented. Israeli officials have been explicit that their broader objective is to undermine any possibility of establishing a Palestinian state, and these statements reflect a long-term strategic direction that should not be underestimated.
2. The ultimate aim is to eliminate the right of return for Palestinian refugees. As long as UNRWA exists, it continues to uphold and articulate this right. The broader strategy is to ensure that Palestinians in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq remain where they are. UNRWA is the primary actor consistently speaking about the right of return, and its presence keeps the issue on the international agenda. The attacks on UNRWA form part of a wider effort to ensure that the Agency ultimately ceases to exist.
3. UNRWA continues to present itself as able to deliver services, but with international staff withdrawn and increasing difficulties in bringing essential goods into the West Bank, it is doubtful that service delivery can realistically continue at previous levels.
4. UNRWA's headquarters has already been shut down—an objective Israeli authorities signalled 15–18 years ago—and the Kalandia Training Centre is very likely to be next. Services are being gradually reduced, and the overall trajectory is one of steadily diminishing operational capacity.
5. Other UN agencies are not in a position to take over UNRWA's extensive operations in the West Bank. A number of UN entities and NGOs, including their Heads are outside Israel Occupied Palestinian Territory due to visa restrictions. According to the source, the assumption that other UN agencies could replace UNRWA is short-sighted, particularly given the current financial constraints across the UN system. There is also an increasing tendency to shift responsibilities to private companies, including in areas traditionally handled by public or humanitarian actors, and this trend is reflected in the growing reliance on private security.
6. In the source's assessment, UNRWA is attempting to project stability and continuity, but the Agency should be raising a stronger alarm. It is putting on a brave face and conveying that it can still deliver services. The current communications approach may not fully reflect the severity of the situation, and risks creating a misunderstanding of the scale of the challenges UNRWA is facing.

Security Situation, incl. Settler Attacks and Freedom of Movement

7. There is a deep-rooted discrimination in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In the assessment of the source, this discrimination is so entrenched in the West Bank that it could qualify as apartheid, as a recent UN report alludes. Since 7 October 2023, there have been massive raids across the West Bank. There is also forceful displacement, not only from the northern camps but also from other areas of the West Bank outside the camps.
8. In East Jerusalem, houses are being destroyed and residents are receiving eviction notices, with no mechanism capable of stopping it. As long as there is impunity, these practices will continue. Israeli ministers such as Smotrich and Ben Gvir have openly stated that these measures are intended to ensure that there will be no Palestinian state.
9. Settler violence has increased and is now occurring almost daily. It is widespread and systematic. Settlers coordinate attacks through WhatsApp and other social media platforms. In earlier years, incidents often involved isolated confrontations between individual settlers and Palestinian herders. Now, attacks are coordinated, large-scale, and carried out with the backing of the IDF and senior ministers who encourage settlement expansion and have armed settlers since 7 October 2023. The distinction between civilians, military, and police has become blurred. There is extensive impunity. Settlers have been told that the land belongs to them, that they have more rights than Palestinians, and that they should take over hilltops. With weapons and assurances that there will be no consequences, they act accordingly. The source described settler violence as “off the charts.”
10. The IDF has stated openly that it is not there to protect Palestinians, citing a lack of human resources, but it accompanies settlers and protects them. There is no actor able to provide protection. The earlier notion of protection—based on the physical presence of the UN or volunteers deterring attacks—no longer applies. There are now outright and blatant attacks on Palestinian communities, whether in villages, camps, or towns, carried out by the IDF, settlers, or a combination of both.
11. Volunteers coming to the West Bank are being labelled as terrorists and expelled, and some have also been attacked. It is not a safe environment, despite the area not being an active war zone.
12. Freedom of movement is severely affected. Numerous checkpoints, earth mounds, and flying checkpoints prevent students from reaching schools and restrict movement more broadly. This is contributing to the collapse of the social fabric, as people cannot move freely, affecting businesses, schools, workplaces, and hospitals. This deterioration is already underway.
13. Displacement from the northern parts of the West Bank has led people to move into surrounding communities, where they access whatever services remain available. Cooperation with other organisations indicates that the situation is not sustainable.

Infrastructure is under pressure. The PA considered providing prefabricated housing, but this did not materialise, leaving people reliant on family and relatives.

14. In the northern West Bank, displaced people are living with relatives in neighbourhoods where some schools and medical centres still function, but if conditions worsen, further displacement is expected.
15. According to current analyses, the West Bank is not considered a conflict situation. The applicable legal framework is therefore the human rights framework, meaning a law-enforcement paradigm. Under this framework, the use of fighter jets, shoulder-fired missiles, rockets, or similar weapons to “wipe out” areas are not permissible. However, in the Israeli perspective, the situation is treated as a conflict.

PA Situation

16. Many Palestinians have been killed and tortured, and PA security forces have infringed on rights and acted on behalf of the Israelis. There is clear security coordination between the PA and Israel. Torture occurs in PA detention centres, and in some cases, courts have ordered detainees released, but the PA does not release them because the Israelis do not want them released.
17. Before the Iron Wall operation in the West Bank, the PA was sent in first, and there is footage showing PA personnel beating and humiliating Palestinians.
18. The PA is collapsing, which is acknowledged by the PA itself. Under the current conditions, it is unable to stand on its own and cannot pay salaries. With UNRWA also under heavy pressure, the assessment is that the situation will deteriorate significantly. According to the source, the end goal is to substantially weaken both the PA and UNRWA, and this is expected to occur in a slower and more gradual manner. If this trajectory continues, it will result in a severe deterioration in the situation for Palestinians. No other actors, neither UNICEF nor WHO, can replace the roles of the PA and UNRWA, especially given the current financial constraints. The consequence would be major gaps and serious humanitarian and human rights impacts.

International Organisations

19. Reports suggest that Israel is pressuring Palestinian banks in ways that could disrupt the financial transfers UN agencies and INGOs rely on for their operations.
20. The source indicated that there is a multi-pronged effort to weaken the PA, UNRWA, INGOs, UN organisations, and Palestinian organisations. If UNRWA is pushed completely out of Jerusalem, indications are that other NGOs will be targeted next, with pressure to relocate their offices to Ramallah or Amman. OCHA and other UN organisations still based in East Jerusalem are also expected to come under increased pressure.

21. Palestinian organisations are being labelled as terrorist entities, checkpoints are set up to restrict their movement, and funds intended for the PA to pay salaries are being withheld. All of these measures affect the rights and security of Palestinians.

Future Risks

22. There are broader dynamics unfolding in the West Bank. The current situation in the West Bank is not as organised as Gaza was. Armed Palestinian groups are present, but loosely organised, and if a Palestinian should enter a settlement and casualties would occur from that, the response from Israeli forces is expected to be overwhelming. Under the current geopolitical conditions, it would be extremely difficult to prevent such an escalation of the security situation in the West Bank.
23. Palestinians consistently state, and have done so for the past twenty years, that this is their land and they will not leave. However, the situation in Gaza shows that conditions can be made so unliveable that people begin to express a desire to leave.

Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Executive Director Randa Bani Odeh

Online meeting, 8 February 2026

PRCS is a national red crescent society and a member of the International Federation for Red Cross Red Crescent Society. PRCS works as an independent entity in Palestine and as auxiliary to the Ministry of Health and public services. In case of rising needs, PRCS supports, but does not replace UNRWA. According to the source, it is not possible to replace UNRWA.

PRCS tasks

1. PRCS and UNRWA are both members of the shelter and the health clusters. While UNRWA is leading in the provision of services, coordination of complementary work takes place through the clusters, e.g. coordination of food security programmes in terms of distribution of food parcels, for instance in Jenin area. In regards to shelter, PRCS distributes blankets, mattresses, etc.
2. Coordination with UNRWA also takes place via PRCS health mobile teams to support people in Jenin camp. PRCS' four mobile clinics reach out to marginalised and vulnerable communities and assist pregnant women and persons suffering from non-communicable diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes. At least once a month, PRCS provides support in monitoring of non-communicable diseases, provision of medicine and assistance in antenatal care.
3. In coordination with UNRWA, other NGOs and providers, PRCS attempts to track and support displaced individuals. UNRWA operates a cash project to pay the rent for displaced individuals. If the family needs relief items, hygiene kits, etc., PRCS can support them in this.

4. In Gaza, PRCS is part of an agreement between Gavi (an international organisation responsible for immunisation and vaccination), UNICEF and IFRC. With the Ministry of Health and UNRWA in Gaza, vaccinations were conducted for all children. PRCS was responsible for 30 % of these; the Ministry of Health 30 %, and UNRWA 40 %. According to the source, the situation will be the same in the West Bank. UNRWA plays a significant role in the vaccination of refugees.
5. PRCS offers MHPSS to children, families and the society staff through different programs and activities.
6. PRCS operates two schools for deaf children, they also provide hearing aids, in addition to centres for intellectual and physical disabilities, the society offers physiotherapy, occupational therapy and assistive devices. Moreover, PRCS runs campaigns of early detection of disability, especially for loss of hearing.

Current challenges for UNRWA

7. UNRWA is a UN body established to support Palestinian refugees. UNRWA plays a significant role in the monitoring of health of pregnant women and children. Additionally, they monitor non-communicable and communicable diseases. Since 2022, many restrictions have been placed upon UNRWA. UNRWA continues to focus on education and health sectors, however, restrictions affect the health of the whole population.
8. In the source's assessment, UNRWA is the only body capable of providing services to Palestine refugees in the West Bank. It is not possible to distribute their services among other UN agencies.
9. Since the attacks on the refugee camps in Tulkarm and Jenin, there has been no health services in place on these sites. UNRWA reallocate health services to areas where displaced families are – in surrounding communities.
10. UNRWA tries to track displaced refugees, e.g. to monitor and assist individuals in need of vaccinations and persons suffering from chronic diseases. They established a centre in Qabatiya close to Jenin as many displaced refugees ended up in that area. However, this initiative was not enough, as the displaced people were scattered.

Economic situation and access restrictions

11. The PA is also facing shortages of funding and allot of restriction related to access.
12. UNRWA operates a hospital in Qalqilya. The city of Qalqilya is surrounded by a separation wall with a gate.
13. Refugees (patients) in West Bank are referred to Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem before. However, no one can reach the hospital due to the need of a permit, which is almost impossible to obtain.

14. There are a few NGOs with clinics, health centres and hospitals in the West Bank. Due to the cut of funding to Palestine, these facilities are facing difficulties and their work is impacted.
15. In addition to the economic constraints due to the current situation, and high unemployment rate, increase in the market prices and low capacity of purchase.

Obstacles to ambulance services

16. Access for ambulances to towns and cities has been severely challenged by the existence of more than 1,000 checkpoints and gates. Currently, it is impossible for PRCS teams to reach emergency patients within the standard response time between 7-12 minutes. The source used a village near Ramallah as an example. Previously, the response team could reach the village within 10 minutes. As of February 2026, it takes the response team more than 45 minutes to reach it if the gate or checkpoint is open. If the checkpoint or gate, on the other hand, is closed, guards treat PRCS staff as regular citizens although the emblem of Red Crescent is visible. Guards delay the ambulances, search and harass the staff. Sometimes, guards beat staff and shoot at ambulances. For instance, a PRCS staff on a job in Gaza was shot and killed in February 2026. In total, PRCS has lost 58 team members, most of them on duty. In one or two cases, the delays resulted in the patient's death.
17. In the West Bank, PRCS' mobile clinic in Jordan Valley was stopped and delayed at a checkpoint. Every delay or attack is reported to the ICRC. Israeli authorities, however, deny the reports and inform the ICRC that they will investigate the incidents, which can last for months.

Medical referrals

18. Asked about the situation of Palestinians in need of specialised medical treatment in Israeli hospitals, the source replied that referral permits for medical treatment is very limited. Referrals normally happen via the PA, which usually covers the costs. However, tax money collected from the PA by Israel has not been released to the PA. Consequently, the PA has not been able to pay their increasing debts at private hospitals. With the lack of new PA referrals, private hospitals with good specialised treatments and specialists find themselves in a financial crisis, and they are unable to pay staff salaries.
19. The situation is the same for hospitals in East Jerusalem, as it is very difficult to obtain permits there.
20. The PA's hospital offers some specialised treatments, but due to the economic deficit and strikes, these services have also been affected and are currently very limited.

21. The current situation leaves patients with the options seeking assistance from private hospitals by paying themselves, or wait for treatment at the governmental hospital if available. Sometimes, they are able to get surgical treatment and medications.

Security situation

22. PRCS has established more than 80 First Aid posts in communities around the West Bank. At the posts, first responders (youths and volunteers from the villages) are trained in first aid and become responsible for a post. Posts can mobilise and open in case of emergencies within short period. If a case needs to be transferred, the first aid team calls the ambulance, which coordinates with ICRC in case of access denial.
23. In some places, gates have been installed to prevent people from entering or exiting villages, meaning that residents cannot or consistently delay access health or education.
24. In the West Bank, military and settlers' attacks is continuous, systematic, and organised attacks.
25. Settlements are expanding. A lot of land has been confiscated for the purpose of improving the quality of life of settlers.

Jørgen Jensehaugen, Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

Online meeting in Copenhagen 28 January 2026

The UNRWA Ban and the Status of East Jerusalem

1. Analysis of the UNRWA ban begins with understanding the distinction Israel draws between annexed East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank within its legal structure. This distinction differs from how the area is treated under international law, and the UNRWA ban contributes to consolidating Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem.
2. The ban is being implemented particularly forcefully in areas Israel treats as Israel, including through measures affecting UNRWA facilities in East Jerusalem. The source referred to actions such as cutting electricity and water to UNRWA facilities in East Jerusalem.

Qalandia Vocational Training Centre and Shu'fat Camp

3. Qalandia stands as an example of this. To reach Qalandia, you must pass through the separation barrier and the checkpoint, after which you arrive at another refugee camp. Despite being in the West Bank and West of the separation barrier, under Israeli law the area is still considered to be within Israeli territory. Qalandia Vocational Training Centre is now under threat of closure, seizure, or other enforcement action. The risk to Qalandia was greater than expected previously. Qalandia is serving approximately 350 students predominantly from poorer and less well-connected families. Admission

involves vetting, and the programme is oriented toward enabling entry into the labour market. Undermining this facility disproportionately affects disadvantaged groups.

4. The Shu'fat camp is in a governance and rights limbo because it is technically located inside Israel. However, refugees in this camp are Palestinian and do not hold Israeli citizenship. Nor are they part of the Palestinian Authority (PA) area. The UNRWA schools in Shu'fat were closed when the Israeli ban entered into practice and, as the source understood it, remained closed.
5. The source said that he had previously seen no clear plan for alternative education pathways, and that he had been told residents might eventually be directed toward nearby Israeli schools. As the source understood the situation, many students have not received regular schooling during the current school year, with limited exceptions for families able to afford private schooling.
6. Shu'fat Camp faces high levels of crime. There are less police in East Jerusalem which makes the area more vulnerable to crime, and the source considered that school closure risks are aggravating already difficult social conditions. These areas are historically dependent on UNRWA provision, and restrictions on UNRWA therefore create acute gaps in essential services.
7. Residents of Qalandia and Shu'fat refugee camps do not have access to services from the PA or Israeli authorities and rely only on UNRWA services. The camps are located within areas annexed by Israel yet are considered part of the occupied West Bank, resulting in administrative and service provision gaps.

Financial crisis

8. The PA is in a financial crisis and faces the risk of insolvency. In the West Bank, the two largest employers are the PA and UNRWA, the latter employing significant numbers of local staff. Simultaneous threats to UNRWA's operations—due to Israeli legislative measures and declining donor funding—and the financial instability of the PA create a risk that both major employers and primary service providers could collapse concurrently.
9. Multiple external factors are significantly affecting UNRWA's capacity to provide services to Palestinians, who remain highly dependent on the agency. The financial crisis of the PA has reportedly led to a transfer of students from PA schools to UNRWA schools. This shift reflects the severity of the PA's financial instability and its impact on public service provision, particularly in education.
10. At the same time, UNRWA is implementing substantial austerity measures due to its own financial crisis. All locally recruited UNRWA staff across its fields of operation (West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon) have had their salaries reduced by 20%, with only minor exceptions. UNRWA dismissed Gaza-based staff members who had left the Gaza Strip (e.g., to Egypt), as they were no longer physically present in the area of operations. In the education sector, UNRWA reduced the school week from five to four days.

11. The reported movement of students from PA schools into UNRWA schools is occurring despite these cuts. This development increases pressure on UNRWA's already overstretched education system, which is operating with reduced salaries, fewer resources and a shortened school week.

Deregistration of NGOs

12. The deregistration or exclusion of NGOs in the West Bank must be understood within the broader humanitarian and political context. In Gaza, UNRWA functions as the foundational humanitarian infrastructure. Many other NGOs operate within or on top of UNRWA's baseline services, effectively supplementing its core provision. Even prior to the war, the humanitarian situation in Gaza was severe, and both refugees and non-refugees relied on UNRWA for food assistance and basic services.
13. In the West Bank, UNRWA's mandate is more geographically limited, primarily focused on refugee camps. However, the humanitarian situation in parts of the West Bank—particularly in the northern areas such as Jenin, Nablus, and Tulkarem—has been critical. In emergency situations, UNRWA has often served as a central service provider, while other NGOs have constituted a broader support network delivering essential humanitarian and development assistance.
14. Recent developments, including the destruction and depopulation of refugee camps in Jenin, have significantly affected humanitarian infrastructure. In this context, restrictions or bans on NGOs represent not only administrative measures but also a reduction of the humanitarian and development structures upon which Palestinians depend.

If NGO activities are restricted while UNRWA and the PA face financial collapse, the combined effect could generate a severe social and economic crisis. UNRWA's role cannot be assessed in isolation; it must be understood within a broader landscape of political restrictions, financial instability, and the erosion of humanitarian infrastructure in the West Bank.

Responsibility for schools in the West Bank

15. Israeli authorities have previously indicated that the PA should assume responsibility for UNRWA schools in the West Bank. While it is unclear whether this policy is currently being actively pursued, it aligns with Israel's long-standing political objective of dismantling UNRWA.
16. Israel has consistently opposed UNRWA on ideological grounds, viewing the agency as a symbol of the Palestinian refugee issue and the associated right of return. Integrating refugee students into the PA school system would reclassify them administratively within the Palestinian institutional framework of the West Bank, rather than under a distinct refugee agency.

17. This position, however, presents a structural paradox. One of Israel's principal accusations against UNRWA has been that it promotes anti-Israeli content through its educational curriculum. UNRWA's response has been that it is legally obligated to use the official textbooks of the host authority in each field of operation. In the West Bank and Gaza, this means using PA textbooks. At the same time, UNRWA supplements the curriculum with additional requirements, including human rights education, critical thinking components, UN-based teacher training, and stricter vetting procedures for staff.
18. If the concern is the content of PA textbooks, transferring students directly into PA schools would result in their exposure to the same curriculum without UNRWA's additional oversight mechanisms. This creates an internal inconsistency in the Israeli argument for transferring responsibility. There are also significant practical risks. The PA is facing severe financial constraints and lacks both the fiscal capacity and institutional resources to absorb the full number of students currently enrolled in UNRWA schools. A large-scale transfer of responsibilities could contribute to PA insolvency.
19. In a broader political context, Israel has stated opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state while simultaneously seeking to dismantle UNRWA. If UNRWA's responsibilities are shifted to the PA without a viable political framework or sustainable financial support, the likely outcome would be institutional overload, potential financial collapse of the PA, and heightened severe instability in the West Bank. This represents a realistic short- to medium-term risk scenario.

Access to Services for Refugees and Non-Refugees

20. Palestinians in the West Bank can access PA medical services if they hold insurance, with an annual fixed payment. PA health service quality is low.
21. Individuals who can afford alternative providers often seek services outside the UNRWA system.
22. UNRWA maintains a formal distinction between registered refugees and non-refugees in its registration system. However, in broader humanitarian practice, including within UNRWA operations, needs-based considerations may at times reduce the practical significance of this distinction. In humanitarian contexts, strict limitation of services to refugees alone can create social tensions between refugees and non-refugees. In severe crisis environments, such as Gaza, distinctions between refugee and non-refugee populations have in practice become less operationally relevant in certain forms of assistance.

Northern West Bank displacement

23. The situation in the northern West Bank is among the most severe current issues. There are reports of large-scale displacement from camps with around 33,000-40,000 displaced Palestinians.

Overall situation related to funding conditions

24. The source described the current funding situation for UNRWA as extremely severe. The United States is no longer contributing, and Sweden has either ceased funding or reduced it significantly.
The Gulf state funding (including Saudi Arabia) is volatile year-to-year and often earmarked (e.g., for specific facilities rather than salaries). The source reported hearing from UNRWA leadership that Gulf state funding between 2024 and 2025 had been reduced by approximately 90%. The source stated that the pool of stable donors able or willing to fill gaps is narrowing due to competing global priorities.
25. The source distinguished between the total volume of annual donor contributions and cash flow timing. Even if annual pledges are sufficient on paper, delayed disbursement can produce acute shortfalls at points during the year, including uncertainty about meeting salary payments month to month. The source indicated this cash flow problem has existed for many years.
26. UNRWA is comparatively cost-efficient relative to other UN agencies and NGOs, attributing this to heavy reliance on local staff, scale-based procurement and long-term logistics structures. Employing local staff also supports the local economy. If any other organisation should replace UNRWA it would cost much more to run the same operations. The source reported that when he had researched this topic, talking to multiple humanitarian actors, they were unable to provide accurate figures for how much more, but some suggested 3 to 4 times could be a realistic assumption.
27. The source assessed that Israeli policy appears focused on eliminating UNRWA without a clear plan for managing consequences, including education provision and welfare responsibilities. UNRWA historically reduced costs and risks for Israel by externalising welfare provision for the occupied population to international donors, and earlier Israeli security institutions valued UNRWA for contributing to stability. In the source's view, this benefit has been overridden by political-ideological opposition.

Settlement E1, severing East Jerusalem, and displacement risks

28. The planned construction of Settlement E1 (east of East Jerusalem) is strategically significant, and a wedge that could separate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and contribute to undermining a contiguous two-state outcome.
29. On whether Israel could seek to push residents from Jerusalem into the West Bank, the source stated that before the Gaza war he would not have expected such policies due to international pressure but assessed that recent developments in the northern West Bank suggest fewer constraints and that such outcomes cannot be ruled out. The source also said that policies targeting Jerusalem may remain somewhat more constrained due to higher international attention but considered that service deprivation could drive movement regardless of intent unless alternatives are provided.
30. Neighbouring countries would resist absorbing additional Palestinian refugees. The source assessed that Jordan would not accept responsibility for additional long-term refugee burdens, that Egypt would consider this a national security threat and reject it,

and that broader regional economic pressures reduce willingness to assume additional costs.

INGO

The source has been working in the humanitarian sector, policy and project management for over a decade, with most experience taking place in the Middle East, including the oPt, and a strong background on the evolution of the context over the years.

Online meeting 27 February 2026

UNRWA's operational capacity

1. The source's perspective was based on a global or regional role rather than being stationed in Palestine.
2. The source understood that there are currently no expatriate UNRWA staff left in the West Bank. Access to Israel and the West Bank was described as difficult or impossible for expatriate staff.
3. Despite these restrictions, the source stated that UNRWA is still able to deliver services but no longer at the scale it had previously maintained. The source expressed uncertainty about how long this could continue. The source referred to legal impediments imposed by the Israeli government as well as broader physical access challenges affecting humanitarian organisations in both the West Bank and Gaza.
4. UNRWA is the only actor with the knowledge, expertise and track record to operate at such scale and also has the UN mandate to do so. Other UN agencies and NGOs operate in the occupied Palestinian territory, but UNRWA has historically been the organisation capable of delivering services on the scale it has done for decades.
5. The source considered it unlikely that UNRWA would be able to return to its previous full-scale operational model, stating that the Israeli authorities would not allow this and the lack of unified diplomatic support for UNRWA is worsening this dynamic. The source also pointed to broader political debates about the future of UNRWA among UN member states and within domestic political debates in several countries.
6. According to the source, some expatriate UNRWA staff members were very pessimistic about the agency's ability to operate in the future, both in terms of service provision in the West Bank and regarding UNRWA's longer-term role in the region.

Impact of funding cuts on UNRWA's services

7. UNRWA's budget has been reduced for several years and the financial situation has become increasingly difficult. Several donors have temporarily suspended funding, while others have decided to stop funding UNRWA altogether, beginning with the United States and followed by several others.
8. The source did not have detailed figures but stated that UNRWA had had to reduce staff numbers and make cuts across different parts of its operations. According to the source, this included cuts in education services and reductions in staff positions across

the region, including frontline workers. The source stated that service delivery had been reduced and that the quality of services had declined. The source mentioned education services in particular but assumed that other services had also been affected. Health-care provision in refugee camps was also described as having been significantly impacted.

Deregistration of NGOs and consequences for humanitarian aid

9. The consequences of NGO deregistration for the humanitarian and protection landscape in the West Bank remains uncertain. The deadline for NGO registration was expected to be 1 March 2026, and the source stated that it was not yet clear how this would affect humanitarian organisations. Organisations might be able to continue operating for some time, possibly through national partners, but the scale and modalities of such operations were unclear.
10. Several organisations had filed a petition with the Israeli Supreme Court requesting an extension of the deadline, but the source noted that they were still waiting for an official response from the Israeli government. Following the temporary injunction granted on February 27, the hearing at the Israeli High Court took place on Monday 23rd March. Despite all the evidence provided by the petitioning organisations, the Israeli High Court did not engage with the core concerns related to GDPR regulation for EU-headquartered agencies during the hearing. The President stated that the purpose of the data collection was clear—namely, transfer to Israeli security services for cross-referencing and affirmed Israel's authority to order NGOs to withdraw from Gaza and the West Bank (while the Palestinian Authority is the legal inviting party). At the end, the Israeli High Court granted petitioners 72 hours to notify whether the organizations are prepared to submit the full lists of all employees. If so, a period of 30 days will be provided to complete this task. If not, the court will dismiss the petition and issue a judgment. Collectively, with the 16 petitioners decided to ask the Court to rule. INGOs cannot transfer sensitive personal data to a party to the conflict since this would breach humanitarian principles, duty of care and data protection obligations.
11. Access to the West Bank is highly restricted for humanitarian organisations. Entry for expatriate staff through Jordan was described as inconsistent, with some staff prevented from entering and others allowed to enter. Holding a valid registration in Israel does not systematically grant easier access to the oPt in this regard.
12. The source also raised the possibility that deregistered organisations could potentially be labelled as terrorist organisations by Israeli authorities, noting that this had previously occurred with Palestinian human rights organisations. If this were to happen, the source believed it would be extremely difficult for the affected organisations to continue operating.
13. Another key uncertainty concerned funding. Some donors have indicated willingness to continue funding deregistered organisations, but it remained unclear whether all donors would follow such an approach. If donors were unwilling to fund deregistered

organisations, the source noted that many NGOs would not be able to continue operating.

14. The source added that Israeli discussions about alternative humanitarian structures in Gaza were ongoing. According to the source, these proposals involved so-called “safe alternative communities” that would allegedly provide basic services in a highly militarised environment. The source expressed the view that UNRWA and many INGOs adhering to humanitarian principles would likely not participate in such arrangements, given the high risks of politicization of aid in such settings, as it has been experienced with the previous iteration (the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation – GHF).

Security situation, land confiscation and access restrictions in the West Bank

15. The situation in the West Bank is characterised by increasing violence, land confiscation and displacement. Referring to another NGO’s assessment, the source summarised current policies in the West Bank as “clear the land and grab the land”.
16. There is increasing impunity for Israeli settlers and for Israeli military forces providing protection to settlers. Land confiscation and displacement, which had previously mainly occurred in Area C, are increasingly occurring in Area B and, to a lesser extent, in Area A. Military incursions into Area A were described as becoming more frequent, and settlers were also reported to be attempting to enter these areas to pressure Palestinians to leave. A new illegal Israeli outpost was reported being set up in Area A at the end of March.
17. Access to humanitarian assistance has become extremely difficult. Movement restrictions were described as a major obstacle, with numerous checkpoints, gates and roadblocks established by Israeli forces and, at times, by settlers. These restrictions often cut off entire villages or communities.
18. Curfews lasting several hours or days were also reported. As a result, humanitarian assistance, including emergency assistance, infrastructure repair, legal aid and in-kind support, is frequently delayed. Access constraints affects both humanitarian organisations and Palestinian beneficiaries. Aid delivery can be delayed for days or indefinitely due to movement restrictions and security conditions.
19. Land confiscation and policies aimed at removing herding and farming communities are also undermining humanitarian programmes, including veterinary support, agricultural assistance and legal protection activities.
20. Humanitarian organisations are no longer able to operate at the same scale or efficiency as in the past and that current assistance cannot keep pace with the level of violence and displacement.
21. According to the source, the cumulative impact of these conditions, resulting in people not being able to seek aid and sustain themselves in a dignified manner, is de facto forcing Palestinians to leave the area where they live, if not the West Bank altogether. The source noted that even residents of cities such as Ramallah are increasingly expressing a desire to leave due to deteriorating living conditions and restrictions on movement. Expressing the willingness to leave does not imply they act on it. Although

these reports are anecdotal, they highlight how unbearable the conditions become for Palestinians across the West Bank.

Head of an International Humanitarian Organisation in the West Bank and former UNRWA employee

Online interview 27 February 2026

Humanitarian challenges and settler violence in Area C

1. According to the source, UNRWA has increasingly struggled to provide protection and financial assistance to refugees in Area C due to reduced international staff and funds. Recent events in refugee camps have overwhelmed UNRWA, and the number of displaced persons has increased significantly. The source estimated that more than 50,000 people in Area C are at risk of forcible transfer.
2. There is a significant increase in settler violence. The number of incidents has increased, and the type of violence has become more severe and brutal, including more frequent cases of physical assaults and arson. Settlers increasingly enter Palestinian communities and homes, exposing women and children to violence. The source indicated that such incidents have become more common since the Gaza war.
3. The source stated that Palestinians have no options for protection. Palestinians cannot effectively defend themselves against settlers without risking arrest or violence, and in some cases, Palestinians who attempted to defend themselves have been arrested or killed. As a result, the source stated that many Palestinians have no other option to flee to other areas, often leading to repeated displacement. Many affected communities consist of pastoral or farming populations who cannot flee to urban areas as they are not accustomed to living in urban areas.
4. Humanitarian actors, including UNRWA service providers, face increasing security risks when operating in rural parts of Area C where Israeli settlements and outposts are located. Settlers are armed and attempt to discourage access to these communities, making movement more dangerous for humanitarian operators, who are at times targeted by settlers.
5. The source was not aware of the details of UNRWA's continued services in rural communities in Area C. There is at least one camp and some schools and clinic in Area C. However, the source emphasised that the personal security situation of refugees and non-refugees living in these communities are in jeopardy.

The Palestinian Authority's limited capacity in Area C

6. The PA has limited capacity to provide services in Area C. Under the Oslo framework, the PA can provide some services such as education and health care, but in practice these services are often restricted.

7. Israeli authorities can prevent teachers or medical personnel from accessing communities. Moreover, several schools built with humanitarian support in Area C currently face demolition orders.
8. The source stated that if INGOs were forced to leave Area C, it would be difficult for other actors to replace their services. UNRWA lacks the financial capacity to expand services significantly, Palestinian NGOs face security and legal challenges, and the private sector is generally unwilling to invest in Area C. The source contrasted this with Area A, where multiple actors including the PA, NGOs and the private sector provide assistance.

Movement restrictions and the security environment

9. Movement restrictions across the West Bank have increased significantly since October 2023 and particularly following a ceasefire period during the Gaza war. Additional roadblocks and checkpoints have been established across the West Bank, restricting Palestinian movement and limiting access to services. The source stated that these restrictions have had a significant effect on the ability of all humanitarian actors, including UNRWA, to deliver services.
10. The source also stated that UNRWA has been “demonised” in Israeli public discourse, which the source believes increases the risks for UNRWA staff. According to the source, displaying UNRWA identification at checkpoints may create additional risks for staff.

Deregistration of organisations

11. The source stated that many organisations consider themselves legally registered because they are registered with the Palestinian Authority (PA), and therefore expect to continue operating from Palestinian-controlled areas.
12. The Israeli regulations affecting INGOs are broader than the legislation affecting UNRWA. According to the source, while the UNRWA legislation could be interpreted as applying primarily to Israel, the INGO regulations explicitly refer to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

Financial challenges

13. UNRWA has historically provided assistance to refugee households affected by demolitions and Israeli military raids. The source stated that it does not have the factual basis to determine whether UNRWA is currently able to provide assistance at the same level as previously, but on the protection side the reduced resources are already felt. The reason is the lack of international staff to ensure civil military liaison with Israeli military officials to coordinate movement and access and delivery, protection interventions for refugees and preventing Israeli forces’ illegal use of UNRWA installations.
14. The PA is facing severe financial difficulties and is close to bankruptcy. This has resulted in reduced public services, including schools operating only a few days per week.

15. The source suggested that this situation may explain why UNRWA has reported an increase in service use, including higher numbers of students and clinic visits. According to the source, refugees may increasingly rely on UNRWA services as services provided by the PA decline.
16. In Area C, however, displacement and insecurity also affect access to schools and services. Many communities that previously had schools have been displaced, leaving school buildings abandoned and requiring children to seek education elsewhere.
17. The source stated that although demand for UNRWA services may increase, it remains uncertain whether UNRWA has the resources to expand services significantly.
18. The source expressed concern about the combined financial pressures affecting both the PA and UNRWA. According to the source, reducing the capacity of both institutions simultaneously could have serious long-term consequences. Prolonged disruption of education and public services could lead to long-term social and economic challenges, particularly among young people who may experience years of interrupted schooling.
19. Reductions in UNRWA funding and staffing may affect service quality. Reduced teaching hours and increased reliance on remote learning could affect the quality of education compared to traditional classroom teaching.

Political developments and long-term outlook

20. The source described the current policies affecting Area C as creating a coercive environment intended to encourage Palestinians to leave. This includes settlement expansion, land registration policies and restrictions on Palestinian development. The source added that these policies are in line with what the Israeli authorities are proposing of new policies, for instance the E1 project.
21. The source stated that annexation is occurring on the ground through gradual extension of Israeli administrative control, including infrastructure investments and settlement expansion. The source added that settlers are increasingly attacking Area B with the goal of pushing the Palestinian populations from Areas C to B to A where they would be increasingly confined to densely populated areas surrounded by Israeli-controlled territory. This forced population movement is intended by Israeli officials to achieve what they call Palestinian “voluntary” emigration from the West Bank.

UNRWA West Bank Field Office, Director Roland Friedrich

Meeting in Amman, 5 February 2026

Overview of West Bank Field Office

1. In the West Bank, there are currently 940,000 registered refugees. UNRWA operates 96 schools, 43 health centres, and runs 19 refugee camps, delivering a wide range of services. Approximately half of all services are provided outside the camps, and about half of UNRWA’s installations are also located in non-camp areas. UNRWA serves refugees wherever they reside, based on their eligibility and socio-economic needs.

UNRWA services

2. Out of the 96 schools, 80 schools in the West Bank are operating with no interruptions. Six schools have been forcefully closed in East Jerusalem, and 10 schools in the northern parts of the West Bank are in emergency mode, meaning that education continues either remotely or in temporary learning spaces.
3. The forced closure of schools in East Jerusalem has had a significant psychological impact on children and their families. Students initially continued their education online until the end of the semester in June 2025, with examinations conducted in person at alternative venues. UNRWA has been unable to systematically monitor subsequent student enrollment, but available information indicates that many children from the Shu'fat camp have enrolled in private schools, where facilities are substandard and teaching quality is lower than in the UNRWA schools that were closed. Other students are crossing checkpoints into the West Bank to attend al-Awqaf schools in the area, a small number have enrolled in municipality schools in Beit Hanina, and a very small number are attending PA schools in 'Anata (Area C/B). While some children may currently be without any schooling due to gaps in available alternatives, UNRWA believes this represents a very limited number of cases.
4. In the northern West Bank, the region has experienced its most severe displacement crisis since 1967, with approximately 33,000 people still displaced from the three refugee camps of Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams. Ten UNRWA schools in the affected camps have been impacted: six remain closed, while four reopened in December 2025, primarily serving the Tulkarm area. These schools are located just outside an Israeli-declared closed military zone and are currently providing emergency education with compressed classes for 2,800 displaced children from the Tulkarm and Nur Shams camps.
5. Despite the closure of schools in East Jerusalem, the 2025/2026 scholastic year has seen a significant increase in student enrollment in the West Bank. There are currently 48,000 students enrolled, excluding the 800 students from East Jerusalem, compared with the usual 45,000. This increase is driven both by rising poverty—prompting families who previously used private schools to shift to UNRWA schools—and by parental preference for UNRWA's five-day school week, in contrast to PA schools, which are currently operating only three days per week.
6. Vocational training services remain operational, including the two centers in Ramallah and the Kalandia Training Center (KTC), which is currently facing substantial pressure due to Israeli legislation calling for its seizure. KTC has operated for many decades and is a critical learning institution for young male refugees from across the West Bank who rely on the training it provides. The facility's electricity was recently cut, and UNRWA is

now supplying power through a generator that meets only a portion of the center's requirements and is financially burdensome to maintain.

7. A comparable pattern is observed in the health sector, where UNRWA has registered an increase in health consultations in 2025 compared with 2024. Out of 43 health centres, two in East Jerusalem have been closed, while three centres in Tulkarm, Nur Shams, and Jenin are currently inaccessible due to their location inside the camps. To maintain service provision, UNRWA has established a fully developed alternative health system in the North, comprising 11 facilities, two functioning as full health centres and the remainder as smaller health points, supplemented by emergency health teams to ensure medical coverage for internally displaced persons. In 'Anata, preparations are underway to open a new Health Centre to support East Jerusalemite communities.
8. A total of 270,000 beneficiaries are currently receiving social protection and emergency assistance. This includes approximately 36,000 individuals supported through poverty-related social safety net interventions, and around 40,000 Bedouins receiving in-kind food assistance. A joint food-voucher programme with WFP reaches up to 100,000 beneficiaries. UNRWA also provides cash assistance to more than 33,000 displaced camps residents in the northern West Bank, such as rent payments and emergency multi-purpose cash. UNRWA also assists roughly 5,000 Gaza who were stranded in Israel after 7 October 2023 and subsequently deported to the West Bank. Additionally, an ECHO-funded crisis intervention programme provides cash assistance for minor damages and protection-related needs for Palestine refugees across the West Bank. Furthermore, UNRWA provides psycho-social support to more than 2,500 households monthly in average. Collectively, these interventions account for 270,000 beneficiaries currently assisted.
9. Solid waste collection continues, including in the Shuafat camp, and it is one of the only services still operating in East Jerusalem.

Consequences of the anti-UNRWA laws

10. On 28 October 2024, the Israeli Knesset passed two laws, both subject to a 90-day implementation period and entering into force in January 2025. The first law bans UNRWA from operating within Israeli territory, including East Jerusalem, which Israel has illegally annexed according to international law. The second law prohibits all contact between UNRWA and Israeli authorities.
11. The no-contact provision carries the most substantial operational consequences for UNRWA, directly influencing the volume and continuity of service delivery. Over 90 percent of the beneficiaries affected are located in the West Bank, where the majority of disruptions are therefore occurring. In East Jerusalem, the operational ban has already led to the closure of schools and health centres, as well as the demolition of

UNRWA's compound in Sheikh Jarrah in violation of international law, representing a significant and more radical change in policy.

12. In December 2025, the Israeli Knesset enacted legal amendments mandating the termination of electricity and water services to UNRWA offices and installations in East Jerusalem. While the law is formally directed at areas Israel regards as part of its sovereign territory, its impact has reached beyond East Jerusalem. An UNRWA school in the Jordan Valley, situated in Area C and previously supplied by the Israeli electricity company, also had its electricity cut after the law came into force.
13. A further significant impact of the anti-UNRWA legislation is the removal of UNRWA's immunities and privileges, in clear contradiction to international law. This legal shift enables Israeli authorities to pursue terrorism-related charges against the Agency, revoke the protected status of UNRWA compounds (including those that have already been demolished), and freeze UNRWA assets held in Israeli financial institutions. Collectively, these measures expose UNRWA to substantial legal and operational risks.
14. Israel has seized and demolished UNRWA's compound in Sheikh Jarrah. On 20 January 2026, officials from the Israel Land Authority, accompanied by Israeli police, forcibly entered the compound. They arrived with bulldozers and other heavy machinery and took physical control of the site and destroyed the bulk of UNRWA offices and other buildings.
15. The no-contact policy has affected UNRWA's ability to import medicine, resulting in stockouts. UNRWA's essential drugs list includes 90 types of medicine, and although availability has never previously fallen below 70 or 80 items, the current shortages risk affecting supplies of insulin and other high-cost or high-demand medicines. UNRWA previously procured medicines from India and other international suppliers, particularly for more expensive items. Following the implementation of the no-contact policy, UNRWA has had to rely on local procurement, where supply is limited and costs are substantially higher. To mitigate shortages, patients, especially those with non-communicable diseases, were sometimes provided with additional quantities in advance. Once a stockout occurs, however, UNRWA is unable to dispense the required medicines, leaving patients to seek their own solutions.-Referral pathways to find medicine elsewhere are also constrained, as PA hospitals, private facilities, NGOs, and UNRWA all draw from the same small local market. In effect, during a stockout, patients either rely on previously issued supplies or are unable to obtain the medicine at all.
16. UNRWA's central pharmacy located at its headquarters in East Jerusalem was destroyed by Israeli authorities in January 2026 and the remains of the building looted, with the premises stripped of all equipment and supplies. Identifying and securing alternative storage sites is both challenging and financially burdensome for the Agency.
17. From a protection perspective, the absence of international UNRWA staff in the West Bank has significantly affected protection activities. Before the no-contact policy, staff could liaise with the Israeli military, regularly following up on incidents, addressing

issues constructively and responding immediately to protection and operational concerns. The current situation increases staff vulnerabilities and limits the Agency's ability to raise incidents with duty bearers. As a result, protection coverage is less extensive, and case management is less effective than before the policy was introduced.

Financial situation

18. The agency-wide austerity measures recently introduced, such as the 30-hours service week, have reduced UNRWA's operational capacity. Area staff are currently only receiving 80% of their salary. This has increased staff vulnerabilities—particularly for those with outstanding loans—and has had a significant psychological impact. As a result, both the quality and the extent of services are likely to be affected.
19. UNRWA has started assessing how the austerity measures are affecting services, but as of 5 February 2026 it is still too early to fully understand the overall impact. Some changes, however, are already apparent. Health centres now open only four days a week, creating a backlog of patients on Monday mornings and placing additional pressure on staff. Education remains a five-day-a-week service, with efforts focused on maintaining classroom time. To achieve this, six to seven hours of weekly teacher preparation have been cut.
20. Teachers are no longer arriving an hour before the school day to open the facilities, resulting in children waiting outside unsupervised. This situation heightens protection risks for students and has generated significant concern among parents.
21. The austerity measures mean that social workers will have less time to spend on vulnerable cases, which will inevitably affect the level of support and follow-up they can provide.
22. Due to the current budget crisis, UNRWA was unable to finance social protection assistance for the last quarter of 2025, affecting 36,000 people. The Agency will need to conduct another round of beneficiary qualification and review eligibility criteria, reflecting the lack of sufficient funds to sustain assistance. This situation is expected to continue and may lead to further reductions in emergency support, as cash assistance and food vouchers depend entirely on available emergency funding. As of February 2026, this portfolio continues. At the same time, more people are struggling to repay loans under the Microfinance Programme, and many are requesting deferrals, evidence of the growing socio-economic strain on households and the worsening economic environment overall.

Security situation

23. Since 7 October 2023, the security situation across the West Bank has deteriorated significantly.

24. Settler violence has escalated to unprecedented levels. October 2025 recorded the highest number of settler violence and harassment incidents in UNRWA's records. The 2025 olive harvest, which commenced on 9 October, was characterised by assaults on Palestinians harvesting olives and attacks on their crops and agricultural assets. Over the course of 2025, 12 Palestinians were killed and more than 863 injured in incidents linked to settler violence.
25. Settlement expansion continues, enabled in part by recent legislative developments, including the E1 settlement plan and the May 2025 authorisation of new settlements. This is accompanied by the forcible transfer of Bedouin and herder communities from Area C. The increasing number of settlements and outposts is affecting movement and access. Four settlements evacuated in 2005 as part of the so-called disengagement plan are now in the process of being reestablished. The Homesh settlement has already been re-established, and the recently authorised Sa-Nur settlement will impact movement between the Jenin and Tulkarm areas.
26. Another aspect of displacement affects the refugee camps directly. Widespread demolitions and damage to infrastructure, including mass demolitions as part of the Israeli Operation "Iron Wall" in the northern West Bank, have led to an estimated 800 houses destroyed or heavily damaged and 650 moderately damaged in the refugee camps of Jenin, Tulkarm and Nur Shams. The expansion of settlements and the systematic policy of demolitions in refugees camps aim at changing the topography of these Palestinian areas.
27. Movement and access restrictions have increased, as shown in OCHA's regularly published maps. The situation is more severe now compared to the first year after 7 October 2023. There is a rise in manned checkpoints and in yellow gates that appear across the West Bank, often closing off entire villages. Restrictions are now being placed directly around individual villages, closing off their access roads and effectively isolating them. This represents a new method of restricting movement.

De-registration of NGOs

28. The full impact of the de-registration of international NGOs in the West Bank remains unclear. For INGOs operating in the area, concerns extend beyond the risk of losing registration to the broader funding environment. UNRWA works closely with INGOs, and any forced suspension of their activities would have an immediate effect on the emergency response in the West Bank. For example, UNRWA distributes non-food items supplied by INGOs, such as hygiene kits and other essential materials. However, compared with Gaza, the level of dependency on INGOs in the West Bank is lower.

Annex 2 – Terms of Reference (ToR)

UNRWA services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

1. Background

2. General situation regarding UNRWA services in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

2.1. Political and Legal Environment

- 2.1.1. Current legal situation following the Israeli ban on UNRWA
- 2.1.2. Additional legislation impacting operations
- 2.1.3. Implications for UNRWA staff

2.2. Security Environment

- 2.2.1. Current security and political dynamics
- 2.2.2. Impact on access to and continuity of services

2.3. Financial Environment

- 2.3.1. General funding status of UNRWA
- 2.3.2. Specific financial situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem

3. Service delivery overview by region and sector in the West Bank

3.1. Relief and Social Services (RSS)

- 3.1.1. Impact of external factors
- 3.1.2. Current availability and operational status

3.2. Education Services

- 3.2.1. Impact of external factors
- 3.2.2. Current availability and operational status

3.3. Health Services

- 3.3.1. Impact of external factors
- 3.3.2. Current availability and operational status

3.4. Infrastructure and Camp Improvement (ICI)

- 3.4.1. Impact of external factors
- 3.4.2. Current availability and operational status

4. Service delivery overview by region and sector in East Jerusalem

4.1. Relief and Social Services (RSS)

- 4.1.1. Impact of external factors
- 4.1.2. Current availability and operational status

4.2. Education Services

- 4.2.1. Impact of external factors
- 4.2.2. Current availability and operational status

4.3. Health Services

4.3.1. Impact of external factors

4.3.2. Current availability and operational status

4.4. Infrastructure and Camp Improvement (ICI)

4.4.1. Impact of external factors

4.4.2. Current availability and operational status