

## COVID-19 and ActionAid response in Palestine

Since thirteen years ActionAid works in Palestine, helping to build the resilience of people living in a lock down state. To face the additional impact of the COVID-19 emergency and the forced quarantine, ActionAid urgently needs emergency funding to buy hygiene and food kits for families and provide support to women that are at higher risk of suffering domestic violence.

This is what ActionAid needs right now:

1. hygiene kits for 1,000 families (53 CHF per family)
2. 1500 food parcels for 1,500 families (85 CHF per family)
3. 300 sessions of psychosocial support for women (24 CHF for 1-hour session)

for a total of 187,700 CHF. Any contribution to the above is welcome.

### Context

The country has been in lockdown since 5 March in the West Bank and 15 March for Gaza Strip and presently<sup>1</sup> it counts 522 confirmed coronavirus cases, of which 336 in the West Bank, 169 in East Jerusalem and 17 in Gaza Strip. Although the official numbers of reported cases is not high, the impact of the pandemic and the lockdown is expected to exacerbate the ongoing humanitarian and economic crises, where at least half of the population (1.01 million people) is living under the poverty line, in overcrowded conditions and with poor access to water and sanitation. While washing hands several times a day is key to limiting the spread of the virus, people in Gaza even lack drinking water. Moreover, according to the WHO, the country is at high risk due to the insufficient medical resources to face this pandemic. Gaza in particular is especially ill-equipped to deal with the pandemic, due to the pre-existing blockade, the very poor health system and its high population density.

The present health services and supplies are inadequate to fight the virus spread. Gaza does not have adequate social protection systems, the basic infrastructure, essential equipment, medicines, supplies and human resources needed to treat a widespread outbreak of coronavirus. Further to the core health needs, there is shortage of essential goods including limited access to food, water and sanitation, protection, shelter and education. The increased tension and stress, and overcrowded conditions also result in an increase of domestic violence.

### What does ActionAid do in Palestine?

ActionAid is present in Palestine since 2007, and it works with women and youth groups, building reliance and encouraging active participation in civil and political life. In response to COVID 19 outbreak and the subsequent lockdown, ActionAid set up an Emergency Response Task Force, consisting of staff, partners and youth volunteers. The Task force planned and carried out an immediate response in Gaza, particularly in the Middle and Southern area (Rafah governorate, and the eastern villages of Khan Younis Governorate), in coordination with the Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Health and the Humanitarian cluster system. After identifying the most needy families, and organizing the

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<sup>1</sup> As of 5 May, 2020 according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health

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necessary training for young volunteers and staff member, hygiene kits and food parcels were procured, packaged and distributed by mid-April (link to short video [here](#))  
  
**What is needed now?**  
  
 People were very happy with the help received but as the situation continues, more needs to be done. For this action, ActionAid will target the most impoverished households, and particularly women GBV survivors who will also receive psychosocial and legal counselling services. Together with our partner in Gaza (the Palestinian Women Development and Studies Association) we identified the following needs:

1. hygiene kits for 1,000 families
2. food parcels for 1,500 families
3. 1-hour sessions of psychosocial support for 300 women.

To do that, we need approximately 53 CHF per family to support them with hygiene kits, 85 CHF for food parcels and 24 CHF per session of psychosocial support, for a total of 187,700 CHF.

How you could help? A donation of **5,000 CHF** could provide 94 families with hygiene kits. A gift of **7,200 CHF** could provide 300 hours of psychosocial support and legal counseling to women and girls that suffer from Sexual and Gender based violence (SGBV). 13,000 CHF will allow ActionAid to purchase 153 food parcels for a month for a family of 6 members.

Each hygiene kit contained the following items: Liquid hand soap, 500ml, hygiene hand gel pack of 500 ml (70% alcohol), bottles of Disinfecting bleach for house use, 5% concentration, packs of Women sanitary pads (18 pads in each pack), Wet wipes one pack, Garbage bags (60 bags in each pack), disposable hand gloves (100 gloves in each box) A supply worth of 53 CHF support family of 6+ members for a month.

Each food parcel contained the following items: Sunflower oil, Feta cheese, Olive oil, Italian Pasta, Tuna Coarse, Beans, Molasses cane, Crushed lentils, Extra Meat cane, White tahini, kg rice, Sauce, Tahini sweet, Sugar, Salt, Jam. A supply worth of 85 CHF supports the needs for a month for a family of 6+ members

On the short run, responding to the needs of women GBV survivors will alleviate social and economic impacts caused by the lockdown, and food insecurity resulting from the outbreak of the pandemic. On the long run, ActionAid will continue with its resilience programme, building the technical expertise of youth and women in leading the emergency response themselves, thereby contributing on strengthening the resilience of Palestinian society at large. ActionAid is committed to adhere to the Global standards of Humanitarian action (SPHERE, CHS), as well as to the women-led protection approach. The latter means that interventions during emergencies are carried out under the leadership of women, thereby strengthening their resilience and leadership in humanitarian crises.



### ActionAid Switzerland

Action Aid Switzerland is part of the ActionAid federation, which is present in more than 40 countries. ActionAid Switzerland is a tax-exempted charity, registered in the Canton of Ticino, number: CH-501.6.014.943-5.

We support the work of ActionAid in different countries, mostly focused on women. For this appeal, any contribution is welcome.

Our bank details are:

Associazione ActionAid Switzerland  
Banca Stato del Canton Ticino  
CH88007646277427Y0001  
Swift/BIC: BSCTCH22.

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