Concept of Operations, 6 November 2023
Palestine Logistics Cluster, Gaza Response

Background

The escalation of the conflict which began on 7 October in Gaza have resulted in the cessation of electricity, food, water, and fuel supplies, as well as restricted access to and movement within Gaza. This has caused a significant worsening of the humanitarian crisis and a large-scale displacement of the 2.2 million population within Gaza.

Due to the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis, the significant impact on the supply chain and the access challenges to and inside Gaza, humanitarian organisations face significant logistics challenges for the delivery of relief supplies and life-saving cargo.

In response to the request made by the Palestine Humanitarian Country Team, the Palestine Logistics Cluster led by WFP was officially activated on 16 October of 2023. To ensure all possible entry points and ramifications of the situation are considered, the Logistics Cluster Team continues to monitor the overall situation and provide support to and from surrounding countries which may either be able to support the response or be impacted by the crisis.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The following areas have been identified as gaps and bottlenecks in the response to the crisis in Palestine:

- Limitations of entry points and uncertain ability to conduct ongoing cross-border movement of relief supplies.
- Direct coordination of multiple humanitarian partners with the Egyptian authorities, Egyptian and Palestinian Red Crescent Societies, and UNRWA; in addition to the normal humanitarian architecture.
- No tracking system to ensure visibility of cargo through the Egypt corridor and inside Gaza.
- Limited coordination among sectors, OCHA, Egyptian and Palestinian Red Crescent as well as UNWRA for the prioritization of items entering Gaza.
- Fuel availability inside Gaza to sustain life saving humanitarian interventions and enable the logistics response.
- Limited storage capacity inside Gaza.
- Transport capacity inside Gaza to receive, consolidate and dispatch relief items to partners.
- Dedicated transport capacity in El Arish & Rafah crossing point in Egypt to enable a consistent & coherent flow of aid to Gaza.
- Access to Sinai airport/consolidation facilities for humanitarian actors.
- Logistics coordination and information-sharing resources to enable operational efficiency.
- Cargo consolidation and storage (including for medicines) at designated points of reception and transit in Egypt for incoming international cargo.
- Lack of clarity on consignee entity, importation, and customs procedures for humanitarian response partners in the current context.
- Uncertainty over the possible utilisation of alternative international supply chain corridors and other entry point into Gaza.

Objectives

Based on the current and foreseen logistics gaps and bottlenecks as well as access constraint, the Logistics Cluster aims to facilitate access to necessary and reliable logistics services, information related to logistics capacities, and to augment the logistics capacity of relief actors to enable a timely and uninterrupted supply of life-saving relief items to affected populations in Gaza.

Planned Activities

As lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, WFP will support UNRWA and the Egyptian and Palestinian Red Crescent societies to deliver assistance on behalf of the humanitarian community, through the Logistics Cluster in Palestine and a coordination cell.

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established in Egypt. This will include the provision of equipment, services, and expertise to augment the logistics capabilities of the service providing organisations. Complementary logistics services may also be provided to humanitarian partners for the consolidation of relief items.

Given the volatility of the situation and the uncertainty about future developments, Jordan and other alternative routes will continue to be monitored and be readied to scale up should they become viable options to facilitate and increase the uninterrupted flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza.

The following activities are planned to be available to the humanitarian community for the next three months:

1. Coordination
   - Hold regular Logistics coordination meetings, to strengthen coordination efforts amongst partners, address common logistics challenges in Gaza, Israel, Egypt, and Jordan and facilitate regional coordination cargo border crossing facilitation.
   - Consolidate partner pipeline information.
   - In Egypt, liaise with the ERC and authorities on behalf of the humanitarian community to facilitate the reception and onward movement of humanitarian cargo to the Rafah border. This includes also liaising with OCHA, Palestine Humanitarian Country Team, partners, and stakeholders to ensure the movement of cargo is in line with humanitarian priorities and appropriate and ready for convoy consolidation for inspection and deconfliction.
   - Work with other clusters, UNRWA, UNOCHA, Access Coordination groups, UNSCO to facilitate cross-border operations.
   - Gather and share logistics capacity information/assessments amongst Cluster participants.
   - Identify and address gaps, bottlenecks or duplication in operations as well as provide advice and troubleshooting assistance to partners.

2. Information Management
   To inform operational decision-making and improve the effectiveness of the logistics response, the Logistics Cluster will:
   - Collect, manage, and disseminate logistical information - including logistics constraints, capabilities, and market information - to support operational decision-making and improve the efficiency of the logistics response in Gaza, and from Egypt, Israel and Jordan.
   - Consolidate and share updated operational information, including operational overviews, meeting minutes, forms, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on how to access services.
   - Develop and share static and interactive Logistics planning mappings.
   - Collect and share information on requirements, documentation, customs, and tax exemption, and (where applicable) fast-track processes for incoming cargo.

3. Logistics Augmentation and Services
   The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual agencies or organisations. Instead, they are intended to augment national and partner capacity to increase efficiency, mitigate bottlenecks, avoid duplication of efforts, and supplement the response. The services are designed to fill identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain that limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected population.

Access permitting, the following activities and services may be provided at no cost to the user, or on a partial/full cost-recovery basis, depending on the availability of funds.

Upstream:
   - Facilitate access to donor funded strategic airlifts to Al-Arish international airport from international origin points, and if required, consolidated ocean transport to Egyptian ports.

In Egypt:
   - Consolidation and temporary storage for upstream cargo awaiting onward distribution to Gaza, located in Port Said.
   - Augmentation of the capacity of the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) through the provision of:

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- Logistics equipment - including temporary warehousing, handling equipment, and temperature-controlled storage, to enhance storage capacity and consolidate cargo at ERC-managed logistics hubs in Al-Arish and Ismailia.
- Support equipment - including temporary office and accommodation facilities for ERC responders in Al-Arish.
- Staff - with humanitarian logistics coordination expertise embedded within the ERC coordination centre.
- Road transport capacity - from Ismailia to Al-Arish, and onwards via Nitzana to Rafah entry point.
- Dedicated systems - for ERC to track the humanitarian assistance being transported (Relief Items Tracking Application/RITA).

In Gaza
- Augment the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) transport capacity from Rafah entry point to delivery points inside Gaza.
- Augment the temporary storage capacity of the PRCS inside Gaza to accommodate incoming humanitarian assistance.
- Roll out of dedicated systems to track humanitarian assistance from entry into Gaza to first point of offload (Relief Items Tracking Application/RITA). Note: This will facilitate partners’ ability to report on their own delivery and distribution activities, but not replace their responsibility for doing so.

Annex I ConOps Map