



Coronavirus Emergency Appeal:

Support our work in affected vulnerable communities in Palestine

ACT NOW

The Coronavirus pandemic is threatening the lives of all humans across the globe, particularly in overcrowded areas. It is in these times of crisis where the most vulnerable, the elderly, the poorest and the marginalized are most at risk and Juzoor is addressing these issues and are assisting the Palestinian communities to support their health and social needs.

Juzoor for Health and Social Development is a Palestinian non-governmental organization working at the national level, dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Palestinian families and promoting health as a basic human right.

Situation Overview

On 5 March 2020, the Palestinian Prime Minister declared a State of Emergency across Palestine to contain the spread of COVID-19, after the first cases were confirmed in Bethlehem city. COVID-19 is an international public health crisis that needs to be addressed on all levels. While cases are still, the expected increase in COVID-19 cases will amplify critical challenges, making matters more difficult for the Palestinian health system in caring specifically for vulnerable groups including the elderly, especially those suffering from pre-existing conditions such as hypertension, cancer, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes; pregnant women; lactating women; and young children. Additionally, within that crisis is a large vulnerable group including Gaza, refugees, other displaced people, and people living in marginalized areas who are unfortunately at greater risk as the pandemic evolves.

At the same time, the situation is exacerbated due to the complex political situation, the full control that Israel has over the borders and resources, withholding the Palestinian tax revenues by Israel, the complete siege over the Gaza Strip, and already being one of the least-developed and worst performing economies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region; these factors all place a bigger strain on the Government of Palestine (GoP), the Ministry of Health, and other ministries in its effort to combat COVID-19. Additionally, within the next two weeks, a lot of Palestinian workers in Israel, who may be carrying the virus, are said to be returning home and these workers unfortunately represent the loophole that threatens to foil all of the Palestinian government's measures to prevent the spread of the virus as we seen in the recent outbreak in one of Ramallah's surrounding villages.

In Gaza, the situation is even more dire placing a more complex and critical concern as it is one of the most densely populated places in the world; where more than 2 million people live on only 360 square kilometers of land. Completely cut off from the rest of the world, it suffers from high unemployment and poverty rates, it severely lacks access to an already unstable healthcare system with limited, to no, medical supplies, with natural sources of water largely contaminated, and with malnutrition on the rise.

If the appropriate prevention measures are not taken and the virus spreads in camps both in the West Bank and Gaza, where people are already struggling with inadequate healthcare, poor hygiene and overcrowding, it will spread rapidly which may spark an extreme humanitarian crisis with potentially catastrophic consequences.

Juzoor's Response

Working for the health, safety and well-being of the Palestinian people and being an essential partner in the health cluster, Juzoor has already taken action during the outbreak of COVID-19 and is currently coordinating with various organizations in taking necessary steps. Additionally, working in line with the national needs and priorities, Juzoor has been working closely with the MoH, and other line ministries including the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Affairs and has printed COVID-19 related awareness materials for the ministries.

Additionally, over the past several years, Juzoor has been involved in the issue of infection prevention, a crucial component during this time. Staff within our organization have been responsible for setting standards for infection prevention in several settings and have served on the national committee for infection prevention. Juzoor has also conducted accredited trainings using these protocols and the curriculum developed for this purpose. It has cooperated with the MoH, UNFPA, UNICEF and other NGOs, and has systematically involved local capacities that were developed prior under IPC TOT activities in order to support the network in the aspect of infection prevention and build capacities nationally both in the West Bank and Gaza.

As the GoP and ministries are currently busy mitigating the situation at the national level, Juzoor, with its expertise, has identified key areas that need intervention and is prepared to take quick action to fill in the gaps by targeting the most vulnerable groups. Juzoor has prepared an emergency response plan with eight key interventions mentioned below, including creating job aids within the health system and support of the public at multiple fronts, which is tailored to respond to these needs and demands of the Palestinian population, specifically targeting at-risk vulnerable groups.

- **Intervention One: Outreach Community Support - Provision of Health and social support and care to communities and vulnerable populations affected by self-distancing measures**
- **Intervention Two: Infection Prevention & Control**
- **Intervention Three: Nutrition & Food Safety**
- **Intervention Four: Emergency Health Kits**
- **Intervention Five: Health Information Helpline**
- **Intervention Six: Public Health Communication - Increase access to reliable health information and addressing unmet needs**
- **Intervention Seven: Positive Parenting & Psychosocial Support**
- **Intervention Eight: Policy Research & Public Polls**

Finally, as the impact of the COVID-19 on health systems increases, our goals are to alleviate the current COVID-19 load on our MoH system at the practitioner level and help replace fear with confidence in the Palestinian approach to managing this crisis.

We urgently need your help to mitigate the spread of this deadly virus and strengthen the Palestinian national system for public health and preparedness.

If you would like to help, please contact Majd Hardan at mhardan@juzoor.org or +972 59 794 4020