UNRWA has introduced a targeted approach to its cash assistance programme in 2019 to make best use of the available resources and prioritize most vulnerable Palestinian refugees. Throughout 2019, UNRWA reached approximately 411,000 Palestine refugees with cash assistance for food and non-food items, including about 127,000 belonging to the most vulnerable categories.

In-kind food assistance: The Agency’s food assistance programme continues to be highly valued by the most vulnerable Palestine refugees as it provides them with a range of staple food items. 136,000 individuals, including the most vulnerable Palestine refugees, those in areas where access remains constrained, and those newly displaced have been provided with in-kind food assistance.

In-kind NFI assistance: UNRWA assisted 31,000 Palestine refugees with in-kind non-food items. Due to the limited funding available, UNRWA had to restrict the distribution of NFI to Palestine refugees who continued to face mobility restrictions in Yalda, Babila and Beit Sahem (YBB), and to the most urgent cases only.

Socioeconomic Challenges

Displacement, loss of livelihoods and assets, destruction or damage of homes and basic infrastructure, and movement restrictions in certain areas are some many factors that have largely depleted the coping mechanisms of the 438,000 Palestine refugees estimated to be in Syria in 2019.

Fluctuations in the prices of basic commodities, rising inflation, shortage in fuel and gasoline, and rapid depreciation in the value of the Syrian pound compounded the effects of the conflict on Syrians and Palestine refugees alike.

Context Update:

1. Dera’a camp: About 800 families have returned to this conflict-affected camp. Basic infrastructure services are partially restored. UNRWA rehabilitated ten classrooms in Tiberius school and part of the sewer network. In 2020, the Agency plans to rehabilitate more installations including another school and a clinic.

2. Yarmouk camp/Yalda: The future of the camp remains unclear as of end of 2019. About 160 families have returned despite the destruction and lack of services. In neighboring Yalda, many members of the 2,000 displaced families still face movement restrictions.

3. Ein El-Tal camp: The camp remains largely in ruins, lacking basic infrastructure services. About 90 families are estimated to have returned to the camp despite the difficult living conditions.

4. Idlib/Northwest: Hostilities in Syria’s Idlib province intensified towards end of 2019. Fierce fighting resulted in the death of many civilians and forced tens of thousands to leave their homes. Several hundred Palestine refugee families are estimated to reside in the area.

5. Northeast: The launch of military operations in the northeast in October 2019 led to escalation of violence. UNRWA continues to provide cash assistance to 645 Palestine refugees in areas affected by hostilities.