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ANNEX

Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe

Exceptional Assistance Measure regarding Palestine*

1. IDENTIFICATION

Action:	Support to immediate needs and protection of civilians following the May 2021 conflict in Gaza and West Bank
Action Reference:	NDICI CR 2021/29
Cost:	EUR 6 300 000 (European Union (EU) contribution).
Budget Line:	14 02 03 10
Duration:	Maximum 18 months. The authorising officer responsible may decide to extend this period twice by a further period of up to six months, up to a total maximum duration of 30 months, under the conditions laid down in Article 23(6) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947.
Lead service:	FPI

2. ACTION SUMMARY

The year 2021 saw the gravest escalation in hostilities between Palestinian armed factions and Israel since 2014. The armed conflict followed days of tension and clashes in Jerusalem, including at the holy sites, and increasing violence in towns in Israel and the West Bank.

The humanitarian and human security consequences of this latest escalation further aggravate the already tense and dire situation, in particular in the Gaza Strip where two million persons live on 360 square kilometres under a strict closure since 2007. The closure, lack of intra-Palestinian reconciliation and a dependence on international and humanitarian support, coupled with the ongoing pandemic, have severely affected all aspects of life in the Gaza Strip. Access and movement constraints, damage to infrastructure and roads, as well as contamination by explosive remnants of war are among the obstacles to proper needs assessment and assistance delivery. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) estimates that a significant number of the weapons fired from both sides during the violence failed to explode and remain hidden in the rubble or buried below ground in Gaza, presenting a danger to local communities.

In the West Bank, the presence of legacy minefields and of other explosive hazards pose a risk to the vulnerable communities that reside close to these locations. This contamination

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

continues to negatively impact the communities surrounding them, and undermines resilience in the region by impeding safe movement and precluding productive use of the land in areas where the pressure on land is high.

Bearing in mind the need to address the root causes of conflict as stated by the EU High Representative/Vice President Joseph Borrell on 22 May¹, this stabilisation package aims to respond to needs caused by the May 2021 escalation, ultimately contributing to the creation of a safer and more conducive environment for peacebuilding.

This 18-month measure will provide support in two areas. First, it will help identify, extract and dispose of unexploded ordnance in and around residential areas, markets, health clinics, schools and solar power plants in Gaza, coupled with a broad mine risk educational campaign. In West Bank the action will support provision of capacity enhancement support to the Palestinian Mine Action Centre (PMAC) and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit in the West Bank to allow them to carry out humanitarian mine action under their treaty obligations.

Considering that a weak private sector and youth unemployment are part of the root causes of vulnerability, the second component will support private sector efforts to provide economic opportunities in Gaza, in particular by supporting vulnerable groups including youth to start or resume work. In addition, the action will provide rapid response, financial support and tailored capacity building to the agricultural communities, including rehabilitation of main agricultural water wells, upgrading of water irrigation carrier lines, water ponds and greenhouses. In addition, the action will foster new relations and bridge channels between the West Bank and the Gaza stakeholders, in particular entrepreneurs and students. Finally, the action will integrate psychosocial support addressing symptoms of accumulated stress and trauma as well as efforts to build channels of communication between entrepreneurs in Gaza and West Bank.

3. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

3.1 BACKGROUND

The ongoing security situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank remains volatile and unpredictable. Throughout the area, in particular in the Gaza Strip, years of military escalations and conflicts have led to widespread destruction and high levels of explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination. Damage to basic infrastructure and utilities is severely affecting the provision of electricity, water and essential services. According to UNICEF estimates, some 57 education facilities and 29 health facilities in the Gaza Strip suffered damage as a result of the May hostilities. It is highly likely that these critical sites including schools and hospitals are now contaminated by ERW.

These repeated hostilities leave a dangerous legacy, including a sizable proportion of the unexploded ordnances, which remain in the ground, in some cases deeply, buried, posing an immediate threat to life as well as hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid and complicating recovery and development initiatives.

Besides assessing the situation and addressing the demining needs, this action will support the extraction of the deep buried bombs (DBBs) and provide necessary capacity enhancement to the Palestinian Authority on mine action.

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/98873/israelpalestine-after-ceasefire-what-should-europe-do_en

Military escalations, intra-Palestinian political division, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated containment measures, all add to the deterioration of the economic situation that the Palestinians face. According to the Gaza Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA)², Gaza's GDP is expected to decrease by 0.3 percent in 2021, and unemployment is estimated to increase to 50 percent in 2021 mainly due to the damage to businesses, physical injuries and the overall decline in economic activity due to the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the escalations exacerbated serious food insecurity in Gaza adding to the already dire situation. This action will thus support activities which provide businesses with the financial and technical support to improve their access to market as highlighted by the RNDAs as well.

Finally, mental health is a particularly significant problem in the Gaza Strip for both adults and children due to prolonged exposure to violence. The recent escalation only increased those needs. A part of this action will be focused on providing specialized mental health services which include consultation, structures individual counselling and therapy.

3.2 RATIONALE FOR CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIONS UNDER THE RAPID RESPONSE PILLAR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT

The current situation of imminent risk from unexploded ordnances, coupled with a lack of prospects and a deteriorating economy, constitute an exceptional and unforeseen situation in the sense of Article 4(4) of the NDICI Regulation. An adequate response cannot be provided under any other European Union Instrument due to the urgency with which the funds are required and due to available resources already being firmly committed.

Annex IV, paragraph 1, points (g), (j) and (m) of Regulation (EU) 2021/947 specifically provides for the use of the NDICI rapid response pillar to support (g) measures necessary to start the rehabilitation and reconstruction of key infrastructure, housing, public buildings and economic assets, and essential productive capacity, as well as other measures for the re-starting of economic activity, the generation of employment and the establishment of the minimum conditions necessary for sustainable social development; (j) measures to address, within the framework of Union cooperation policies and their objectives, the socio-economic impact on the civilian population of anti-personnel landmines, unexploded ordnance or explosive remnants of war. Activities financed under the Instrument may cover, inter alia, risk education, mine detection and clearance and, in conjunction therewith, stockpile destruction, and (m) support for the rehabilitation and reintegration of the victims of armed conflict, including measures to address the specific needs of women and children.

² <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/178021624889455367/pdf/Gaza-Rapid-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

3.3 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation measure
Deterioration of the security situation.	Medium	High	Monitoring of the situation will be ensured on a daily basis to adapt the implementation plans to the changing security situation. If the situation becomes to unsecure, activities would be suspended until the situation stabilizes and allows for implementation without putting at risk any staff members and beneficiaries.
COVID-19 Pandemic and associated containment measures create difficulties to implement the action.	Medium	Medium	The implementation partners will ensure close monitoring of the situation, following the WHO and national authorities' rules to limit risk of transmission during the implementation of the action. While the number of confirmed cases in Gaza has been decreasing in the past weeks, new peaks and restrictions could lead to change in the modality of implementation and/or the re-scheduling of certain activities.
The material and equipment needed for the implementation of the envisaged activities cannot be imported due to partial or full closure of the crossings, resulting in delays in implementation of activities.	High	High	Open communication with all parties will ensure that access issues are dealt with quickly and with minimal impact on operations.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the action is to support the Palestinian socioeconomic recovery, following the May 2021 escalation, as well as to facilitate an improved human security situation by reducing threats of the explosive remnants of war (ERW).

4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- 4.2.1 To contribute to stability and strengthened human security by assisting in ERW clearance in the Gaza Strip, conducting mine risk education campaigns and building mine clearance related capacities of the Palestinian Authority;
- 4.2.2 To support recovery and economic stability of the vulnerable populations in Gaza by contributing to livelihoods sustainability, empowerment of the economic actors as well as improved psychosocial condition of the communities.

5. ACTION COMPONENTS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The main expected results/outcomes include:

Expected Result (1): Mine contamination rapid response and assessment, as well as excavation of Deep Buried Bombs (DBB) at and around critical and vulnerable communities locations in Gaza executed.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.1.1 Conduct risk assessments at UN locations, including UNDP Rubble Removal Project sites and humanitarian and development partner locations;
- 5.1.2 Excavation of DBB discovered at UN other humanitarian actor locations and DBB affected communities;
- 5.1.3 Plan and carry out the safe destruction of white phosphorus.

Expected Result (2): Capacity of the conflict affected communities and the Palestinian Authority on how to mitigate the risk of explosive ordnance and deliver humanitarian mine action responses improved.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.2.1 Identification and delivery of mine action related trainings to conflict affected communities, construction workers and rubble removing personnel, UN and partner personnel;
- 5.2.2 Capacity enhancement support to the Palestinian Authority on provision of gender responsive explosive ordnance risk education to vulnerable communities in the West Bank;
- 5.2.3 Capacity enhancement support to the Palestinian Authority in updating explosive ordnance risk education materials and in developing a victim assistance strategy;
- 5.2.4 Provision of training to the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit in the West Bank.

Expected Result (3): Rapid response, financial support and tailored capacity building to the agricultural communities and individuals affected by conflict provided.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.3.1 Rehabilitation of main agricultural water wells and installation of supporting solar energy systems;
- 5.3.2 Rehabilitation and upgrading of water irrigation carrier lines, water ponds, greenhouses and open lands;
- 5.3.3 Capacity building and financial support to agrifood businesses;
- 5.3.4 Provision of capacity building trainings for the active community protection committees related to disaster risk reduction and response plans;
- 5.3.5 Design, development and support to community-led initiatives to strengthen the resilience of targeted communities.

Expected Result (4): Capacity building and access to market opportunity provision for young graduates and entrepreneurs provided.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.4.1 Gap analysis of the market;
- 5.4.2 Employability trainings and internship placement for unemployed young graduates;
- 5.4.3 Financial and technical support to start-ups and business ideas as well as businesses damaged during the May escalations.

Expected Result (5): Psychosocial assistance and gender transformative approaches provided.

Activities (indicative):

- 5.5.1 Consultations, mental health support, psychosocial assistance, trainings on self-care, gender based violence protection (GBV), referral pathways and existing GBV services;
- 5.5.2 Follow up and coaching for vulnerable individuals.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

The Commission will ensure that the appropriate EU rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures³.

6.1.1 Grant: direct award (direct management)

(a) Purpose of the grant

The grant will aim to pursue the objectives and expected results described in point 4 of this Annex, specific objective 2, and point 5, expected results 3, 4 and 5.

(b) Type of applicants targeted

The type of applicants targeted for this direct award are non-profit organisations.

(c) Justification of a direct grant

Under the responsibility of the Commission's authorising officer responsible, the recourse to an award of a grant without a call for proposals is justified because **the action entails crisis**

³ www.sanctionsmap.eu Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website, it is the OJ version that prevails.

management aid as referred to in Article 195(a) and as defined in Article 2(21) of the Financial Regulation at the date of the Financing Decision.

6.1.2 Indirect management with an international organisation

A part of this action may be implemented in indirect management with an entity which will be selected by the Commission’s services using the following criteria: due to the nature of the action, priority will be given to an implementing partner having a solid presence in the field, with a strong operational capacity in terms of human resources, technical competences and an established institutional network with local and national authorities, previous experience in providing demining assistance and cooperation with the responsible entities on the ground is required. The implementation by this entity entails the contribution to stability and strengthened human security by assisting in ERW clearance, conducting mine risk education campaigns and building mine clearance related capacities of the Palestinian Authority, as identified under point 4, specific objective 1, and point 5, expected results 1 and 2.

6.2 INDICATIVE BUDGET

The total European Union contribution under this Financing Decision **will not exceed EUR 6 300 000**. A breakdown among components is provided hereunder, and is indicative.

Indicative budget breakdown

Components	EU contribution (amount in EUR)	Indicative third party contribution, in currency identified
Component 1		
6.1.1 – Direct grant (direct management)	3 300 000	N.A.
Component 2		
6.1.2. – Indirect management with an international organisation	3 000 000	N.A.
Total	6 300 000	N.A.

6.3 ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The action shall be implemented under direct management for component 1 and indirect management for component 2. It will be devolved and sub-delegated to the **European Union Delegation in Jerusalem**, with the support of the Commission for the conclusion of the contracts implementing the action.

6.4 PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS MONITORING AND REPORTING

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process and part of the implementing partner’s responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final report. Each report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its

results (outputs and outcomes) as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the Logframe matrix. The report shall be laid out in such a way as to allow monitoring of the means envisaged and employed and of the budget details for the action. The final report, narrative and financial, will cover the entire period of the action implementation.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

6.5 EVALUATION

Having regard to the nature of the action, an evaluation will not be carried out for this action or its components.

The Commission may, during implementation, decide to undertake such an evaluation for duly justified reasons either on its own decision or on the initiative of the partner.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.6 AUDIT

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audits or expenditure verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

The financing of the audit shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing decision.

6.7 COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU.

This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, to be elaborated at the start of implementation.

In terms of legal obligations on communication and visibility, the measures shall be implemented by the Commission, the partner country, contractors, grant beneficiaries and/or entrusted entities. Appropriate contractual obligations shall be included in, respectively, the financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

The Communication and Visibility Requirements for European Union External Action (or any succeeding document) shall be used to establish the Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action and the appropriate contractual obligations.

7. COMPLEMENTARITY, COORDINATION AND FOLLOW-UP

This action will be implemented in coordination with relevant EU stakeholders and with other EU actions taking place in Palestine, whether in a humanitarian, stabilisation and/or development context. A careful coordination among these programmes will be ensured in order to benefit from a high level of complementarity and to facilitate an appropriate follow-up by other financing instruments.

In addition, close cooperation and coordination will be sought with other actions, in particular EU funded actions which are and will be implemented in support of the recovery and development responses conducted in Gaza. Those are in particular ongoing and planned activities funded by the European Commission Directorate General for the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), which are directed towards economic recovery in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The economic recovery aspect of the project will be in synergy with social protection initiatives which support vulnerable groups to cover basic needs but also to absorb shocks. It will complement other EU efforts, eg. humanitarian cash assistance, social protection schemes as well as DG NEAR's PEGASE fund. Regular reporting from implementing partners to the EU Delegation will be ensured so that complementarity with EU-funded actions can be ensured, and valuable insights shared with EU Member States.