

Japan's Economic Assistance and Normalization of Humanitarian Crisis in Palestine

MITHILESH KUMAR SINGH

Doctoral Researcher

Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (India)

ABSTRACT

This paper explores Japan's economic assistance to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to mitigate Palestinian hardship which has been occurring due to prolonged conflict between Israel and Palestine. It explores Japan's extensive Official Development Assistance (ODA) implementation in Palestinian society to address human security challenges like the absence of health care and education facilities, poverty, unemployment, etc. at the grassroots level. The main question of this paper is how Japan's aid has been effective in addressing human security in Palestine. For this study data on aid flow and aid activities in Palestine provided by the Japanese government and international institutions such as the UN and its agencies, relevant non-governmental organizations as well as electronic media reports is considered. To collect the ODA data, the official document published by the concerned authority is used.

Key Words : Japan's Economic Assistance, Humanitarian Crisis, Official Development Assistance (ODA), Israel-Palestine Conflict.

INTRODUCTION

The perpetual, aggressive, and intense nature of the conflict between Israel and Palestine has severely affected the humanitarian front in Palestinian territory. These aggressions come in the form of illegal occupation of Palestinian territory, violent attacks, and severe restrictions imposed on Palestinians by Israel. It must be stated that despite persistent condemnation from the international community, including Japan, Israel has been illegally occupying Palestinian land in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip since its foundation. For the Palestinian people, Israeli blockades and outposts in the West Bank pose a significant barrier to their socio-economic development since these hurdles have made it difficult for them to access public and basic facilities such as hospitals, schools, and other fundamental infrastructural facilities.

Given these challenges, Japan has taken a position

to assist Palestine while urging the Israeli government to halt its illegal settlements in Palestinian territory. Japan has given the "Middle East peace process" top priority in its policy-making to promote a peaceful atmosphere in the Palestinian territory. Japan has been one of the most ardent supporters of the Palestinians' right to self-determination while supporting UNSC Resolutions 242 and 388. Since the first Arab-Israeli War in 1947–1948, Japan has been advocating for a "two-state solution" to the Israel–Palestine issue, assisting in the establishment of international peace.

Japan has responded to the Palestinian problem by expressing its sincere concern and attention to the Palestinian people's deteriorating humanitarian situation. This paper explains how Japan is endorsing Palestinian rights, which deal with societal fundamental humanitarian issues. The paper also shows how since the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and 1993 Oslo Peace Process Japan has extended its economic assistance to the Palestinian

people.

Japan strives for stability and quality of life for Palestinians through its ongoing grants and emergency grant assistance. Grants have been awarded in areas such as the improvement of socially vulnerable individuals, fostering agriculture sector development, and resolving environmental issues. In addition, support has been provided to help the society's most vulnerable members, such as women and children.

Japan has dedicated itself to the revitalization of the Palestine since the Oslo Accord of 1993. Since then, Tokyo has been actively involved in Palestine's capacity-building through its economic initiatives, thereby tackling Palestine's humanitarian challenges. One of the main problems in West Asia is the ongoing conflicts and difficulties surrounding the Palestinian area, which has resulted in instability in the form of direct violence, terrorism, refugees, etc. The paper also demonstrates Japan's efforts to promote peace in Palestine through minimizing issues, eliminating difficulties, and thereby fostering a stable environment.

Here, we'll examine the current state of affairs in Palestine before discussing Japan's role in economic aid and peacebuilding.

Situation in the Palestinian Territories :

The West Bank and Gaza Strip's conditions have been steadily becoming worse. The situation is precarious as a result of Israeli military assault in the West Bank and Gaza. The illegal Israeli settlement in the West Bank continues to grow, in violation of both international law and the agreement-based Green Line between both parties. The Israeli government now routinely relocates its civilian population, destroys homes and other property using discriminatory methods, and restricts Palestinians' access to their land. The Palestinian people have been forced to move and abandon their land and property as a result of these illegal settlements.

Israel and the Palestinian Authority are not currently in negotiations. Since the breakdown of peace negotiations in the spring of 2014, tension has risen. The Israeli Defense Forces have killed and injured more people in the Palestinian area since 2015 than before. Additionally, Israel has established a "no-go" zone around Gaza's northern and eastern borders. The Israeli government has also implemented many closure measures in the Gaza Strip. Due to Israel's punitive closure of the Gaza Strip, which prevents the flow of products, Gaza's

civilian population is suffering severely from a lack of necessities. Israeli checkpoints and separate barriers in the West Bank also impose restrictions on freedom of movement. It is important to note that the West Bank was split into three "Areas A, B, and C" in the 1995 Second Oslo Accord. The residents of "Area C" have very limited access to water, schools, electricity, and other utilities as a result of these checkpoints and walls.

In Palestine, this entire situation is causing a catastrophe. Due to Israeli settlements and checkpoints, issues like a lack of water and decreased accessibility to key infrastructures like roads, hospitals, and schools have led to a severe humanitarian catastrophe in the area.

Japan's Humanitarian Assistance:

In light of the aforementioned humanitarian issues, Japan has put forth itself to the rehabilitation and development of Palestinians since the Oslo Accord of 1993. Japan is attempting to improve the condition of the Palestinian people in cooperation with international organizations including the United Nations Relief and Work Agency, UN-Women, United Nations Children Fund, and the United Nations Population Fund, among others.

The people of Palestine are currently dealing with a serious humanitarian crisis, including a lack of food and water, access to hospitals, basic infrastructure including schools for children, poorly maintained roads, and basic healthcare facilities, as well as a lack of energy and other means of income. The result of the prolonged war between Israel and Palestine is these serious issues. The status of Palestine is becoming increasingly precarious since the Arab-Israeli conflict that followed, and Israeli incursions into Gaza and the West Bank. In this section, we'll look into the grassroots Palestinian reconstruction efforts made by Japan. Japan is working to create a prosperous, happy, and peaceful environment in Palestine, utilizing its grant aid and humanitarian support.

Boosting Infrastructure, enhancing Livelihood and Social Development :

Japan has consistently offered its assistance in the area of infrastructure development, such as the building of roads, schools, hospitals, and other assistance relating to the refugee crisis, from the commencement of the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) in 1993. The Japanese government has contributed 800,900,000 Yen through the

“Project for Improvement of Internal Roads in Jericho” to upgrade internal roads and raise transportation safety in Jericho¹. Additionally, the GGP provided US\$ 87,990 for the restoration of a water pipeline in Al-Obediyeh city, Bethlehem. For more than 1,500 individuals who had been without water, this activity has restored 3240 meters of the water delivery network. In the Hebron community of Al-Karmel, a new primary school building has been handed another GGP. The help came to a total of USD 88,222. Four additional classrooms for about 150 students have been built as a result of these projects.

The construction of the Khawlah Girls Elementary School in Ad-Dahrieh village, Hebron, was made possible by US\$85,595 from the Japanese government as part of efforts to improve girls' education in Palestine². Additional elementary school classrooms were built as part of the school construction series using GGP funds totalling US\$ 81,336³. Through GGP, Japan has also supported four other projects for a total of US\$350,038. These four projects made contributions in the fields of the extension of the water network in Ad-Dahrieh city in Hebron governorate (US\$ 96600), the extension of the electric network in Immatain village in Qalqiliya governorate (US\$ 77,275), the extension of the electric network in Al-Zababdeh Municipality in Jenin governorate (US\$ 81,975), and the project for the extension of a girl's school in Um Altout⁴. Another GGP, totalling US\$ 94,457, was launched by the Japanese government to build more classrooms at the Doha Girls' Elementary School in Bethlehem⁵. New Grassroots Support for the Projects: The Japanese government has provided funding for the renovation of the Red Crescent Maternity Clinic in Jerusalem for US\$ 96995 and the strengthening of the SOS Mobile Clinic in the Bethlehem governorate for US\$ 52,680⁶.

Support of US\$12 million has been provided to encourage public activities in Area C of Jordan Valley, a settlement in the West Bank. Out of the 24 projects that have been approved, five have been created to establish and expand schools, four have been created to upgrade public health clinics, seven have been created to build community centres, one has been provided with a school bus and water tankers, four have been created to build and renovate community roads, three have been created to renovate the electricity network, and one has been created to improve veterinary services⁷. The Japanese government provided US\$84,553 through GGP for the construction of a cistern in a school in Al Khader village

to strengthen the school infrastructure in Halhul City⁸ and two Grassroots Projects in the West Bank with a total amount of US\$ 77,275 for the rehabilitation of the electric network also given by Japan⁹. The Japanese government has donated a total of US\$ 94,457 to two grassroots projects in the West Bank for the construction of an additional level with five new classrooms in Al-Doha Girls Elementary School¹⁰.

Extension of the electric network in the Ramallah governorate's Kafr-Ein hamlet for a total of US\$104,017¹¹; improvement of 33.8 kilometre of Internal City Roads of Jericho for a total amount of US\$ 7.2 million¹²; assistance to Saint Joseph's Hospital in East Jerusalem of a total amount of US\$ 78,626 through GGP¹³, assistance to Shepherd's Field Hospital by providing adequate care including X-ray services for the total amount of US\$ 88,300¹⁴ has been provided by the Government of Japan.

The Government of Japan is collaborating with UN organizations: the Food and Agriculture Organization, UNWOMEN, UNRWA, and UNESCO to address the threats to human security in the Jordan Valley to eradicate poverty and strengthen the protection of livelihoods. A community centre has been established at the Aqabat Jaber Camp in Jericho, supported by the Japanese government through the United Nations Human Security Trust Fund, to safeguard the livelihoods of disadvantaged Palestinian households¹⁵.

For the reconstruction of a two-story school building with six classrooms in Khallet Al-Mayyah Boys School in Hebron governorate total amount of US\$ 106,322¹⁶; GGP assistance of a total amount of US\$ 112,085 for a safe and appropriate education environment for a new Girls' School building at Sarta Village¹⁷; completion of an electrical project in Kufr-Ein village through GGP for the total amount of 104,017 US\$¹⁸; construction of additional classrooms in Al-Ubeidiya city and a water network of 5.6 kilometres in Aqqaba city through GGP of a total amount of US\$ 100,571¹⁹; improvement of 46.5 kilometres of Internal City Roads of Jericho including installation of pavement, sidewalk, and street lights through GGP of a total amount of US\$ 7.2 million²⁰; improving Lavatory Facilities at a secondary school in Hebron through GGP of a total amount of US\$ 110,973²¹; rehabilitation of the electric network in Al-Jadeida village through GGP of the total amount of US\$ 103,250²²; construction of Lavatory facilities at three schools: Dura Basic Girls School, Bani Naim Basic Girls School, and Assura

Secondary Boys School, all in Hebron governorate funded through GGP of a total amount of US\$ 110,973²³ has been funded by the Government of Japan.

To conserve rainwater and tap water, seventeen cisterns were built, enabling steady water access. These 17 cisterns have provided benefits to 500 individuals thanks to the GGP, which the Japanese government supported with a total of US\$ 111,560²⁴. More assistance has been provided to Salfeet Municipality to repair the electric network in Salfeet city through GGP. The Government of Japan has provided funding of US\$95,540 to extend 2,400 meters of new electric wires and repair 1,600 meters of old electric wires²⁵.

GGP assistance of US\$ 91810 for Red Crescent Society Hospital; support for Birzeit Municipality to rehabilitate and extend the water network in Birzeit city to replace around 1,570 meters of corroded and holed pipes funded through GGP of the total amount of US\$ 114,958²⁶ and support for the construction of a new school building at Al-Mustaqbal in the Addaraj area in Gaza through GGP of a total amount of US\$ 114,221 has been funded by the Japanese Government²⁷. To support the public activities of the communities in the Jordan Valley in the West Bank, including “Area C,” the Japanese government has supported three projects with a total contribution of US\$ 12 million²⁸.

The Government of Japan has donated a total of US\$ 197,379 toward the replacement of 650 meters of exposed middle-voltage wires in the Al Shyoukh municipality in the Hebron governorate and the construction of Al Khars School²⁹. Fund for the elevation of the refugee crisis through UNRWA (US\$ 10 million)³⁰ and support for children with disabilities in Bethlehem and Hebron governorates (total US\$ 224,544) has been funded by Japan³¹. Another assistance for the new electricity network in Al-Jadeida village for the safe and sufficient supply of electricity to all citizens in Al Jadeida (US\$ 103250)³²; extension of the electric network in Salem village (US\$ 121,870) has been provided by the Government of Japan³³.

Japan has generously contributed USD 6.4 million for Palestinian refugees through UNRWA³⁴, support for disabled children in Deheisha Refugee Camp extended by contributing US\$ 112,324³⁵. Japan has also provided \$3183,950 to support Palestinian children. Japan has been making an effort to meet the children of Palestine’s critical needs in this way. Through this assistance, Japan has increased its support for almost 130,000 children in the

West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem in the areas of health, education, water and sanitation, protection, and nutrition³⁶.

To ensure the children’s right to learn and play in an appropriate learning environment, Japan has provided US\$ 118,418 to construct six classrooms in Aqqaba Girls School in Aqqaba Municipality³⁷, grant of a total of US\$ 121,605 has been extended for Shawawrah village council to construct six additional classrooms in the Al-Halabi mixed school, another US\$ 120,741 grant has been extended for Beit Ulla municipality to construct nine additional classrooms³⁸.

Assistance to Socially Vulnerable People in the Field of Health, Education, and Protection :

In the West Bank villages, assistance is given for the training of a psychosocial support program. Together with the Early Childhood Resource Centre (ECRC), a Japanese NGO called “Campaign for Children of Palestine” has put US\$ 171,648 to use. Through this project, mother and kindergarten instructors in a Ramallah hamlet have received training on children’s psychological development, stress management, and mental health³⁹. In the areas of health, water, and sanitation in the Gaza Strip, the Rafah Desalination unit has been given an additional three million US dollars. This initiative has helped 4,000 infants, 7,500 high-risk expectant mothers, 50,000 children under the age of five, and 1,200 extremely malnourished kids⁴⁰. For the launch of Bab Al-Sahira Clinic at Red Crescent Hospital in Jerusalem, US\$ 96,995 has been granted through GGP. In terms of sanitation, technology, and efficiency, the clinic offers better healthcare services, and it has a greater capacity for women who need medical attention⁴¹. A total of US\$ 181,359 has been allocated for grassroots aid in the West Bank’s rural communities in the areas of health and education. The Khallit Al Mayyah Boys School in Hebron boasts a brand-new structure, as well as a centre for physical and hearing therapy⁴².

Azzoun Hospital development has been granted US\$ 49,518 by GGP to give the residents of Azzoun access to comprehensive medical care⁴³. The GPP has provided the Union of Health Care Committees in Gaza with US\$105,954. Al-Raa’ya Emergency Medical Centre has received surgical equipment and resuscitators⁴⁴.

Japan has given US\$ 78,626 through GGP to St. Joseph Hospital in East Jerusalem to enhance medical services. Through this help, the hospital has received

medical equipment⁴⁵. To support intellectually disabled persons, Japan has funded US\$ 123,065 for the Star Mountains Vocational Training Centre⁴⁶. The Gaza Strip's Society of the Care of the Handicapped now has an additional audio and speech therapy centre that is supported by the Japanese government. GGP has provided a total of US\$112,295 to update equipment and instruments for auditory and speech therapy⁴⁷.

New health, education, and emergency medical training projects have been launched in the Jerusalem Governorate with the assistance of Japanese NGOs. Total funding of US\$ 260,282 has been provided by the Japanese government to improve community service capacity building⁴⁸. Support has been given by Japan through GGP of a total amount of US\$ 111,758 to construct a new public clinic in Kober town Ramallah⁴⁹, US\$ 221,728 has provided for the development of an educational network in civil society for improving psychosocial care of youth in Hebron⁵⁰. The Ortho-Prosthesis Unit and the Rehabilitation Unit, respectively, have received additional US\$ 121,326 and US\$ 101,137 funding under GGP. The Japanese government has fostered the creation of equal chances for people with disabilities in the Jenin refugee camp through this support⁵¹. The Government of Japan has extended GGP of US\$64,464 intending to purchase endoscopy equipment for the Haidar Abdul-Shafi Medical Centre⁵². The Government of Japan continues to support the people of Palestine by giving grants to Japanese NGOs there. In this regard, the Japanese NGO received a grant for the construction of school- and community-based healthcare facilities. Total funding of US\$298,134 from GGP has been increased for emergency medical training for East Jerusalem school communities⁵³. Another GGP of a total amount of 120,620 has been extended for St. John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem to buy surgical equipment⁵⁴.

A new Japanese NGO called "Frontline" has aided in the field of psychological care for Gazan children. Total US\$ 254,756 through Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects has been funded by the Government of Japan. An X-ray unit has been opened in Hebron Emergency Centre in "H2 Area" in the old city of Hebron⁵⁵. With funding from the Japanese government totalling US\$ 98,700, Shepherd's Field Hospital has established a new laparoscopy system. The Beit Sahour Cooperative Society for Health Welfare has made use of the fund to give patients who need it access to proper laparoscopic

surgery without undue financial strain⁵⁶.

Japan continues to fund the creation of an educational network aimed at enhancing the psychological care provided to children in Hebron. In this regard, the Japanese government carried out its operations by partnering with the Japanese NGO "Peace Builders" and contributing US\$279,402 in financial support⁵⁷. Additionally, Japanese NGOs like Kokoooyo Naki Kodomotachi (KnK) are working to develop young people in the West Bank's Jerusalem governorate. Through Grant Assistance, the Government of Japan has provided funding for Japanese NGO projects totalling US\$ 289,802. The NGO's programs for youth and children in Jerusalem include programs for community involvement, informal education, and vocational training. The youth have received financial and physical support from the activities to enhance their abilities⁵⁸. With a total investment of US\$123,065 through GGP, the Government of Japan has supported a second vocational training program to provide an appropriate learning environment for those with intellectual disabilities⁵⁹.

Another project including community assistance for people with disabilities in the northern West Bank has received funding through GGP totalling US\$ 93,613 to improve health centres and educational directorates in the governorates of Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarem, and Nablus⁶⁰. The Government of Japan has launched an informal education program and a community engagement initiative to encourage extracurricular activities in public schools in the governorate of Jerusalem with the assistance of an NGO (Kokkyo Naki Kodomotachi). To this end, the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects program has received funding from Japan with a total amount of US\$ 312,280⁶¹.

The Japanese government has been conducting humanitarian operations in the occupied Palestinian territory in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Promote reproductive health care for women, involving primary healthcare as well as community-based health and first aid programs. In this regard, the Japanese government has provided US\$ 100 million⁶².

Conclusion:

Japan, by its economic assistance policies, has been addressing the humanitarian crisis in Palestine. In response to the humanitarian crisis and peace in the region Tokyo has explicitly manifested its supportive stance

through GPP. Providing economic assistance to the vulnerable section of the society, Japan is strengthening Palestinian society from the grassroots level. Issues related to human security are also addressed by Japan through its support in the field of social and physical infrastructure development. In this regard providing economic assistance through ODA and helping out through JIAC is an appropriate effort by Japan.

Limitation of the Study:

This study looks at the Israel-Palestine conflict and Japanese assistance to Palestine till 2018 and it has not dealt with the recent escalation of conflict between Israel and Palestine which took place on 7 October 2023 onwards.

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