

## Joint Press Release

### Government of Japan and IFRC partnering to support humanitarian operations in the Occupied Palestine Territory

**Geneva/Ramallah – 1 April 2015:** The Government of Japan has pledged support to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in its operations with Palestine Red Crescent Society covering primary health care and community-based health and first aid programmes. The aim of the support is twofold: to improve reproductive health care for women and girls in the Occupied Palestine Territory (oPt), namely the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and to prevent interpersonal violence among the most vulnerable groups in the Gaza Strip with a focus on women and children.

An estimated 38,880 people, mainly in Gaza, will be reached by the project's two components either through the Red Crescent's Primary Health Centres and awareness sessions with communities, or through training and outreach activities. The Government of Japan is supporting the project with \$500,000 US dollars.

"The Government of Japan has recently granted \$100 million US dollars mainly to international organizations including IFRC. Addressing the issue of reproductive health care for women at all ages, and of the prevention of violence among the most vulnerable people are subjects of growing concern," said Junya Matsuura, Ambassador for Palestinian Affairs and Representative of Japan to the Palestinian Authority. "I'm pleased that Japan can contribute to tackling those issues in partnership with the IFRC."

The project's focus on reproductive health care is relevant in the complex environment of the Occupied Palestine Territory, where access to basic services such as health and water and sanitation is severely constrained. This has a negative impact on health in general, and on reproductive health in particular.

Five Primary Health Centres in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip will receive priority funding to provide standard equipment such as ultrasound, sonic aid, gynaecological instruments, stethoscope and diagnostic sets for services such as antenatal care and family planning.

Awareness sessions on topics such as breast feeding, maternal hygiene, nutrition, contraception and breast cancer prevention will be conducted in the health centres and in communities.

The interpersonal violence prevention component is targeting women and children in the devastated social fabric of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which has witnessed three violent conflicts since 2008, and where hundreds of thousands of people are living as refugees or have been displaced by the latest violence in 2014.

Due to the far-reaching impact of violence in Palestinian communities, the Red Crescent has developed a specific community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) programme on interpersonal violence prevention, which is being successfully implemented in the West Bank.

The support from the Government of Japan will ensure that interpersonal violence prevention is expanded to Gaza. With the destruction of entire industrial zones during the recent conflict, unemployment has risen to almost 60 percent here, adding to the stress among the population, making violence prevention a vital part of the Red Crescent's operations in the area. Volunteers from the society will be trained to understand that violence is preventable, to recognize people who may be at a higher risk of violence and take actions through outreach activities.

The violence prevention component will target five districts in Gaza: Gaza City, Jabalya, Deir Al Balah, Khan Yunis and Rafah.

**For further information, please contact:**

**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC):**

- Sorine Sorensen, IFRC Communication Delegate in oPT Mobile: +972 599 945 174 E-mail: [sorine.sorensen@ifrc.org](mailto:sorine.sorensen@ifrc.org)
- Benoit Matsha-Carpentier, Team leader, public communications Mobile : +41 79 213 24 13 E-mail: [benoit.carpentier@ifrc.org](mailto:benoit.carpentier@ifrc.org)

**Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS):**

- Erab Fuqaha, Head of Dissemination: Mobile: +970 599 251 116 Email: [erab@palestinercs.org](mailto:erab@palestinercs.org)

**Japanese Representative office:**

- Diala Zaineddin-Dodin , Development Aid Coordinator, Tel: 02-241-3120 - [diala@mofa.go.jp](mailto:diala@mofa.go.jp)