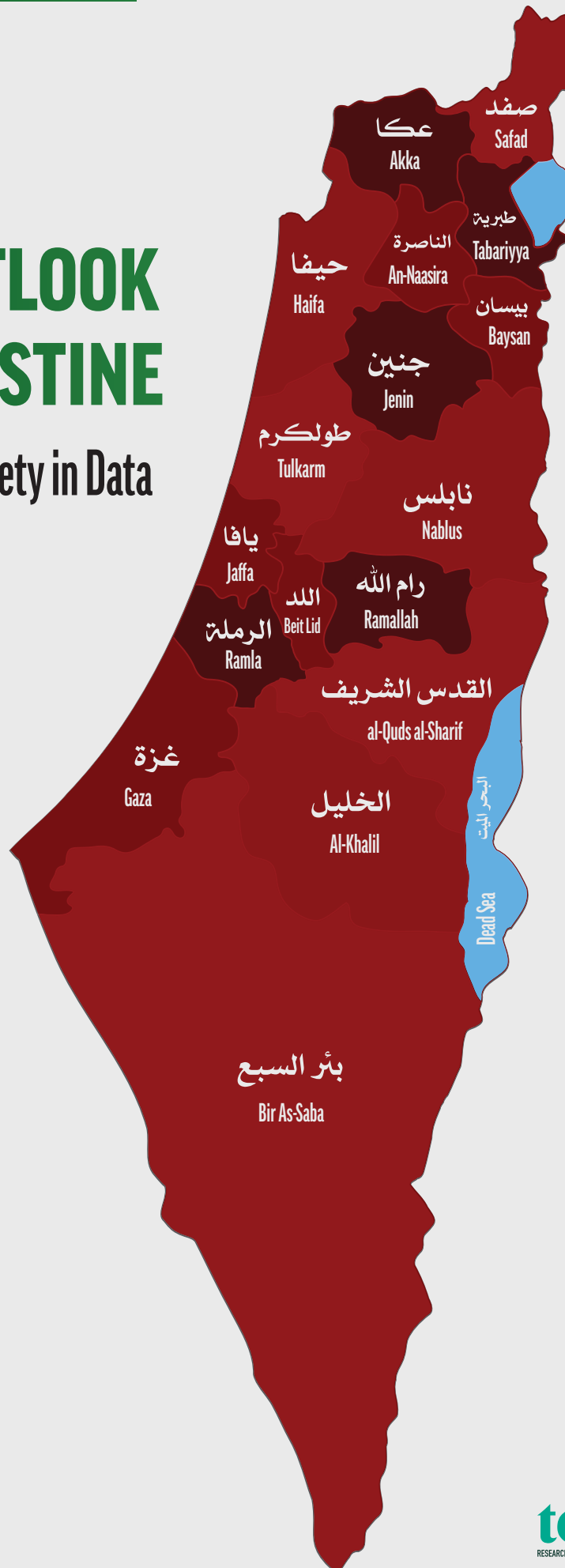


THE OUTLOOK OF PALESTINE

Palestinian Society in Data



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THE OUTLOOK OF PALESTINE: PALESTINIAN SOCIETY IN DATA

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The Outlook of Palestine report has been prepared by the Research Center for Social Thought and Policy (TODAM). TODAM produces ideas and strategies to realize the goal of a just, equitable and prosperous society.

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Abbreviations

| | |
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| Amnesty | Amnesty International |
| CWRC | Colonisation of Wall and Resistance Commission |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| PLO | Palestine Liberation Organization |
| ICBS | Israel Central Bureau of Statistics |
| MAS | Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute |
| OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| PCBS | Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goals |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| UAWC | Union of Agricultural Work Committees |
| World Bank | World Bank |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| ILS | New Israeli Shekel |

Foreword

Atty. Ahmet Sait Öner

Chairman of İLKE Foundation

On October 7, 2023, the Zionist regime of Israel launched yet another assault on Gaza, adding to the long history of assaults it has inflicted on Palestinians. This brutal terror is part of a series of deliberate attacks that have been ongoing since 1948, each one intensifying over time. Now, as we approach the first anniversary of this latest attack, the aggression has further escalated with an attempted incursion into Lebanese territory.

Conscientious citizens worldwide, especially those in the Muslim community, have raised their voices in protest of these massacres. However, the Western bloc, often treating international law as its own to interpret and wield, has largely turned a blind eye to these atrocities and has actively supported Israel's terrorism. In this period, the world has witnessed the darker side of the British-Jewish civilization, as both the United States and the United Kingdom have offered unwavering support for Israel's actions.

Undoubtedly, the atrocities in Gaza will be brought to justice, and this moment will stand as a significant chapter in the transformation of global politics. As a dedicated think tank, the İLKE Foundation bears witness to these events through this report. On the anniversary of October 7, our Research Center for Social Thought and Policy (TODAM) has prepared this report, which aims to analyze the impact of these assaults on Gaza through different indicators, including demographics, education, healthcare, and the economy.

With The Outlook of Palestine report, our goal has been to measure the impact of Zionist Israel's attacks on the people of Gaza. We have analyzed Palestine's socio-economic situation before October 7, focusing on demographics, employment, economic conditions, healthcare services, and access to education. Additionally, we have documented the daily effects of the blockade on besieged regions, including water shortages, household access to medical care, the number of destroyed homes, and uprooted trees, while creating a detailed record of the challenges faced by Palestinians through comprehensive data.

In line with its mission to produce data-driven research, the İLKE Foundation presents this report with the hope that it will serve as a valuable resource for decision-makers, policymakers, and researchers across various fields. We also aim for this report to deepen our understanding of the Palestinian cause, bearing witness to the resilience of a people who have endured unimaginable hardship and oppression while looking forward to a future of hope. We extend our sincere gratitude to the report's authors—Researcher Şüheda Nur Uzuntaş, Dr. Ola Awad, Dr. Ghassan Elkahlout, and Prof. Sari Hanafi—and the editorial board for their contributions. May this report shed light on the realities faced by Palestinians and support those working toward justice and peace.

Introduction

Şüheda Nur Uzuntaş

Researcher, İLKE Foundation

Israel has occupied Palestine since 1948, and the attacks by the Zionist regime have intensified over time. Since 7 October 2023, the settler colonialist Israeli regime has escalated its mass violence to the level of genocide. Since October 7, the death toll has surpassed that of the large-scale ethnic cleansing of Palestinians by Israel in 1948, known as the Nakba. We have witnessed ethnic cleansing and genocide that we would encounter in history books, and we continue to witness Israel committing crimes against humanity. Hence, as Sosyal Veri (Social Data), we prepared the Outlook of Palestine report as a testimony and a data-driven resource on Palestine.



Data on Palestine

In the initial stage of preparing the report, we periodically shared Palestine-related data on our website, Social Data, under the title of "Data on Palestine." We shared data on the socio-economic outlook of Palestinian society before October 7. The data on Palestine comprises 60 indicators with 7 sub-headings: Labor Force and Employment, Demography, Education, Economy, Israeli Violence, Health, Social Life and Welfare. We shared different indicators ranging from national income per capita to the number of students in schools, from the number of academic staff to the number of houses demolished by Israel.

It was quite difficult to access data on Palestine through Turkish resources. There were limited government sources available for Palestinian data before October 7. Thus, Sosyal Veri will try

to fill this gap with its data on Palestine today and in the future, and we will continue our efforts to improve the categories on our website and develop more indicators.

We analyzed multiple sources while compiling data on Palestine. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), which carries out high-quality studies and collects data despite all the significant challenges in the field and administration in Palestine, stands out as the most reliable source. While we accessed the data of other ministries affiliated with the Palestinian National Authority through PCBS, we compiled the data on the Israeli blockade and violence from the publications of the Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission (CWRC), an independent body affiliated with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Another local source that we utilized for the data on Israeli violence was B'Tselem.

In addition to Palestinian sources, we also analyzed international databases such as the World Bank, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC). Therefore, we were able to create a comprehensive list of data.

The fragmentation of governance in Palestine may raise questions about the scope of the data. The West Bank is under the control of the State of Palestine, with Ramallah as its administrative center, while the Gaza Strip is governed by Hamas. Despite the administrative differences, the Ramallah-based PCBS creates general data on Palestine by calculating the average of the data on two regions, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. PCBS has developed indicators by region in many data sets and categorized them according to governorates. The institution also added additional notes to the data on Palestinians who are separated by the Separation Wall and hold Israeli-issued ID cards, and most of the data excluded households in East Jerusalem and historic Palestine. The general data does not include the areas of Jerusalem occupied in 1967. In short, the data given in this report refers to the combined data for both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip when referring to general data on Palestine.

In terms of data reliability and standardization, the PCBS operates in accordance with international standards. It has collected a significant portion of its socio-economic indicators through the Socio-Economic Conditions Survey, which is a household survey. PCBS has prepared its studies using a methodology that is in accordance with world standards, and it has cooperated with international organizations such as WFP, FAO, UNRWA, and UAWC while preparing and conducting these surveys.

The Outlook of Palestine report is divided into two sections. The first part provides an overview of what was happening in Palestinian society before 7 October. In the second part, it explores the extent of the Israeli occupation and violence that preceded October 7 and has intensified since then. One of the points we want to emphasize in this report is that the violence perpetrated by the occupying forces is not a new phenomenon. In light of the data,



we examine the pressure that the settlement projects and strategies, which are planned in a very precise manner, exert on the Palestinians together with the law enforcement agencies.

The first part of the report is titled Socio-Economic Indicators for Palestine before October 7 and consists of five sub-headings containing periodic data. These headings include Demography, Labor Force and Employment, Economy, Health, and Education. Thus, we address different social issues through a data-driven approach while displaying the demographic structure of Palestine and the reflection of the economy on social life. The data for 2023 is generally based on the third quarter before October 7. So, we added additional notes about the data for 2023 under the graphs in order to avoid confusion. With this part, we aim to address the issues that Palestinian society encounters more explicitly. For example, when we analyze the data by region according to the indicators, we see that there are significant socio-economic differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. One of the social problems that can be seen at first glance is that the socio-economic situation in the Gaza Strip, where the blockade is felt more intensely, falls behind the West Bank, which means that different policies should be implemented in each region to address their specific needs.

The second part of the report is entitled Israeli Violence: The Blockade in Data. In this part, the impact of the Israeli blockade on Palestinian

society is analyzed under three subheadings: The Impact of the Blockade and Restrictions on the Daily Life of Palestinians, Colonial Settler Violence, and Palestinians in the Diaspora. From the amount of land appropriated from Palestinians to the number of trees deliberately damaged by the occupation forces, from the difficulties Palestinians face in accessing food and health because of the blockade to settler violence, we address the extent of the Israeli occupation that has been ongoing since 1948. We discuss the occupation, which began as part of a settlement plan, and the pressure it exerts on Palestinian civilians through different and comprehensive strategies employed by the Israelis. In this section, where we examine the period before October 7, we highlight that Israeli violence is not a new phenomenon but that the systematic attacks have evolved in nature.

The Outlook of Palestine report aims to serve as a reference for reports on Palestine that will be prepared in Türkiye. With this report, we expand our knowledge of Palestine by presenting indicators, data-driven findings, and analyses related to Palestine and its people. We hope that this report will serve as a witness to history and leave a footprint for the future while providing valuable insight as a resource on Palestine. We present our report to our readers with the aim of sharing the suffering that Palestinians have endured so far and contributing to future studies on Palestine and Palestinians.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR PALESTINE BEFORE OCTOBER 7







Demography

The demographic balance is a significant issue that reflects the quantitative aspect of the conflict between Palestine and Israel. Therefore, Israel attempts by all means, both natural and unnatural, to increase the Jewish population in the territories it occupies. On the other hand, as a demographic reality, the Palestinians continue to form the majority in every region they reside in.

When analyzing the demographic structure of the Palestinian community, we encounter a dynamic and young population. The concept of family is deeply rooted, and early marriage and children are highly valued within Palestinian society, leading to a steadily increasing demographic structure. Furthermore, fertility rates remain higher than those in Israel.

The total population refers to the combined populations of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank comprises 60% of the total population for years. According to population estimates shared by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in mid-2023, the population of the West Bank before October 7 was 3.3 million, while the population of the Gaza Strip was 2.2 million. Since 2000, the total population has grown by 83%, with a 73.6% increase in the West Bank and a 100% increase in the Gaza Strip. According to current total fertility rates in Palestine and Israel given in the PCBS' population projections, it was estimated that Palestinians would make up 50.4% of the population in historic Palestine by the end of 2023. However, because of the ongoing attacks and death toll in the Gaza Strip, the situation at the end of 2023 could not be calculated yet.

Fertility rates across Palestine remain quite high as marriage is an important social practice. One of the main reasons for this is that marriages generally take place at an early age. Infant mortality rates in Palestine are below the global and Arab world averages. Although there has been a decline in crude birth rates from 2010 to 2023, they remain above the global average. In 2023, the birth rate per 1000 people in the West Bank was 28.1, while it was 32 in the Gaza Strip. As of mid-2023, the estimated population under age 18 in Palestine was 2.4 million, with 1,067,986 in the Gaza Strip. While children make up 43% of the total population, the rate is 41% in the West Bank and 47% in the Gaza Strip. Due to the high number of children, the rate of dependent population reaches nearly 70%. According to PCBS data, the average household size in Palestine has decreased from 5.5 members in 2010 to 5 in 2023, and households in the Gaza Strip are generally larger than those in the West Bank. The most recent data from 2022 indicates that the average household size in the West Bank is 4.7, while in the Gaza Strip, it is 5.5. According to data from 2010, 42.7% of the population aged 20-24 and 74% of the population aged 25-29 were married (UNFPA, 2017, p. 67). In 2023, the distribution of the population by age showed that 47.4% of the population was between 0-19 years old. This rate was 50.9% in the Gaza Strip and 45% in the West Bank, which indicates that every other person in the Gaza Strip is under the age of 19. In 2023, while the average child population rate in the world was 29.8%, the Gaza Strip ranked ninth among regions with

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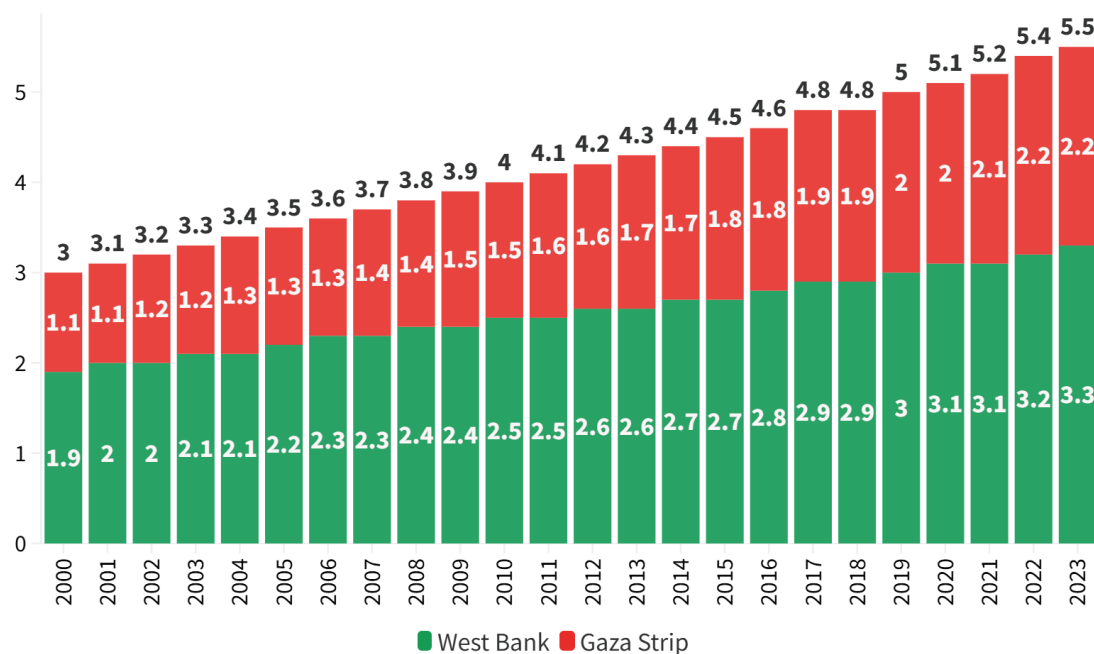


Figure 1. Population (In Millions of People, 2000-2023)

Source: PCBS, Palestine in Figures 2023.

Note: The data for 2023 is the mid-year data shared before October 7.

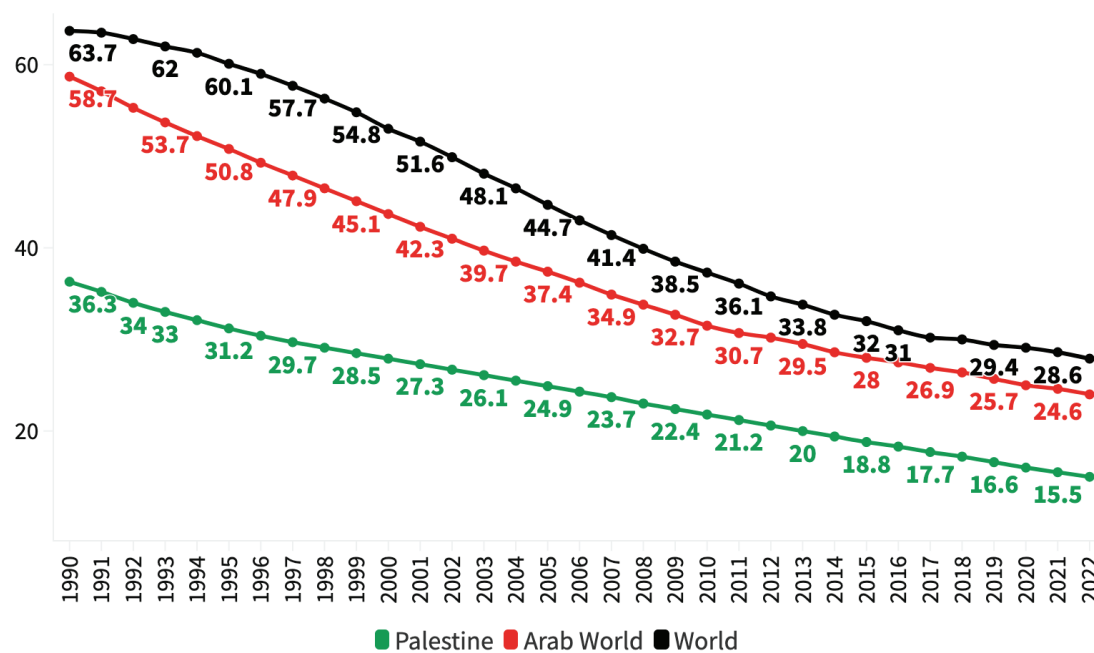


Figure 2. Infant Mortality Rate (% , 1990-2022)

Source: WHO, Health Indicators.

the highest child population.¹ As a result, main population indicators such as average and median age in Palestine have remained around 20 in recent years. Globally, this age is 30.5, while in Israel, it is 29.1. Additionally, 66% of the Palestinian population is under the age of 30. Given the longstanding trend of early marriages since 1996, it is understandable that the population remains consistently young due to high birth rates. It is worth noting that the life expectancy at birth in the Gaza Strip is higher than the global average and continues to rise. In 2023, the life expectancy at birth, a key demographic development indicator, was 74.4. However, the mid-2023 data indicates that only 3% of the Gaza Strip's total population is aged 65 and over.

While Palestine's population growth rate continues to rise, population growth among those living in Israel has been declining. Consequently, the demographic balance between Jews and Arabs is shifting in favor of the Palestinians, and despite settler colonialism, the Palestinian population in historic Palestine is increasing. The relationship between conflict and demography is a topic of significant debate: Some argue that birth rates rise in response to conflict, while others suggest that conflict leads to a more vulnerable demographic structure (Goldstone, 2002; Thayer, 2009). The demographic changes that Palestine has undergone for decades have transformed Palestinian society into a continuously renewing, youthful community. According to PCBS projections that are based on current birth and fertility statistics, the percentage of Palestinians in

historic Palestine will continue to rise. By 2030, it is projected that Palestinians will make up 51.8% of the population, while the percentage of Israelis will fall to 48.2%. It is also known that the population of Arab citizens of Israel is increasing while the Jewish population is decreasing, which has been widely discussed in the Israeli media and is one of the key issues on the Zionist regime's agenda. In this context, the growth of the Palestinian population is seen as another form of resistance. This situation, often referred to in the literature as the "demographic advantage," is considered a form of resistance to the fragmentation of Palestine (Ladadweh & Shikaki, 2022).

The pressure, restrictions, and limitations imposed by the occupation regime on the Palestinian people have resulted in an excessive concentration of population in certain areas. Gaza Strip is the region where this policy of spatial concentration is most visible. With an area of only 365 km², the population density in the Gaza Strip exceeds the average of Arab countries and the European Union. The population density in the Gaza Strip is also twice that of Israel. In terms of population density, the Gaza Strip is comparable to London; internal migration to the Gaza Strip has also played a significant role in this situation. It is also known that Palestinians displaced from other regions have predominantly migrated to the Gaza Strip since 1948. The UNRWA refugee camps in the Gaza Strip are one of the primary reasons for such high population density. According to 2023 PCBS data, 66% of the Gaza Strip's population are refugees.

1 TURKSTAT, World Population Day 2024, 2023 & United Nations, 2022 World Population Prospects, 2023. Retrieved from: [https:// bit.ly/4dDoxny](https://bit.ly/4dDoxny).

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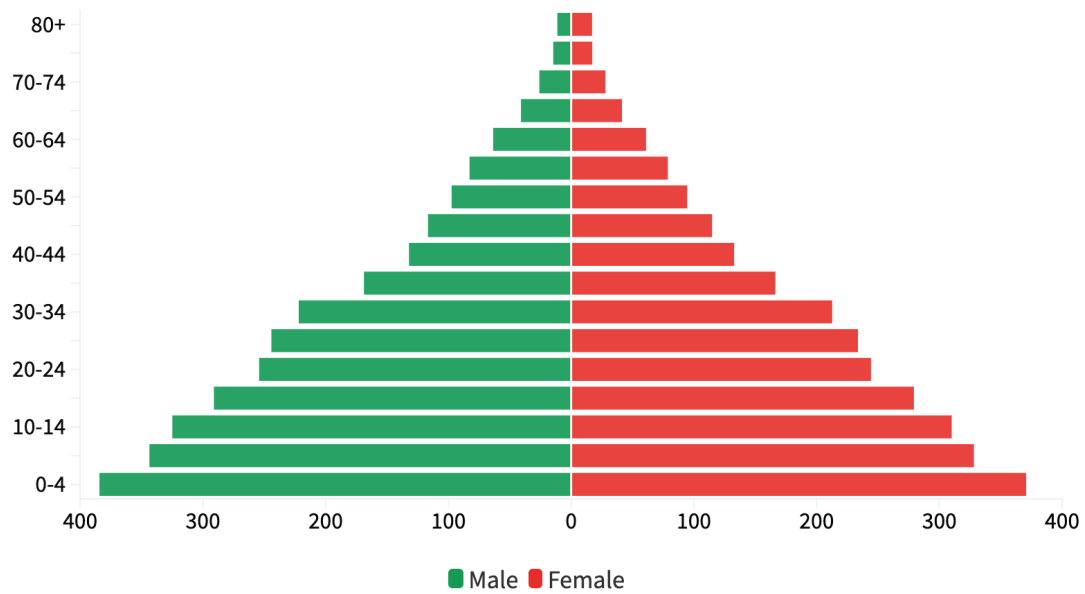


Figure 3. Age Pyramid (In Thousands of People, 2023)

Source: Created by the author based on PCBS Palestine in Figures 2019-2023 reports.

Note: The data for 2023 is the mid-year data shared before October 7.

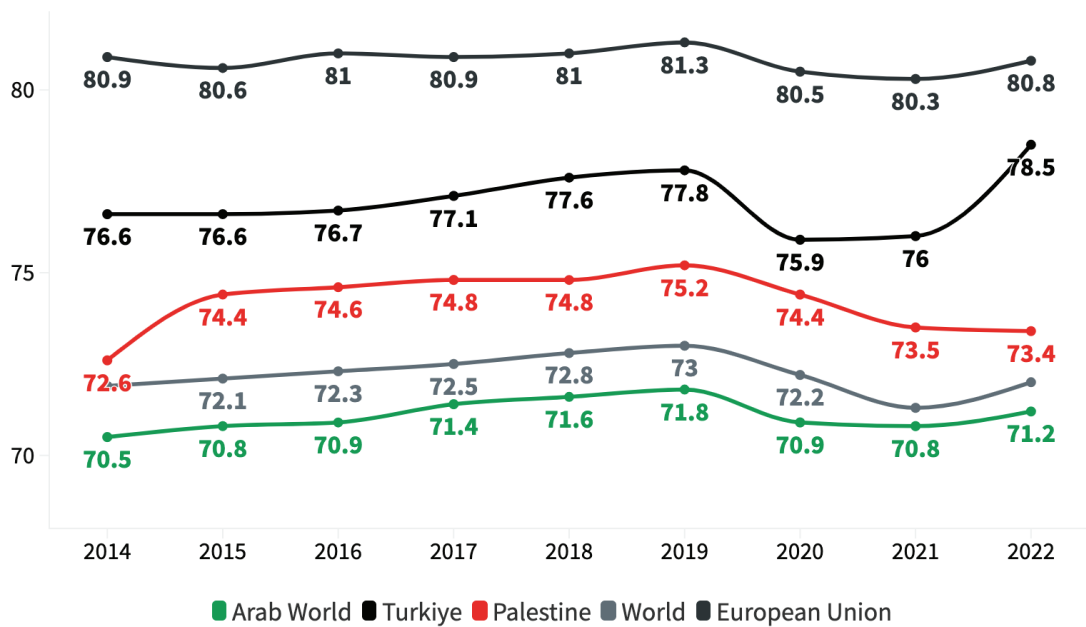


Figure 4. Life Expectancy at Birth (Age, 2010-2023)

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators.

The population distribution shows that the northern Gaza Strip has a higher population density. Another region with a significant population concentration is Khan Yunis, which has many refugee camps. Refugees who migrate internally are particularly concentrated in Khan Yunis. According to UN-RWA, the Gaza Strip's refugee camps are among the most densely populated areas in the world. The percentage of people who have not been internally displaced does not exceed 40% in the Gaza Strip, which is a major point of distinction between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While the majority of the population in the West Bank consists of non-refugees, 26.3% are classified as refugees (PCBS, 2024a). One of the indigenous people of Palestine, Bedouins, mostly reside in the West Bank.

PCBS reports calculate the total Palestinian population by summing up all Palestinians in

the State of Palestine, 1948 territories, Arab countries, and foreign countries. Accordingly, As of the end of 2023, the total Palestinian population was estimated at 14.6 million. Palestinians living in Palestine represent only 37.9% of this total population. Palestinians living in Arab countries make up 44.8%, while those in foreign countries make up 5.3%. It is also worth noting that Palestinians living in the 1948 territories are not included in this Palestinian population since they have Israeli-issued ID cards. It is estimated that Palestinians living in the 1948 territories make up 12% of the total Palestinian population, with around 1.7 million Palestinians estimated to live there. Denying these Palestinians the right to be governed by the Palestinian Authority and compelling them to live under Israeli-issued identification is another policy implemented by the Zionist government to disrupt the demographic balance.

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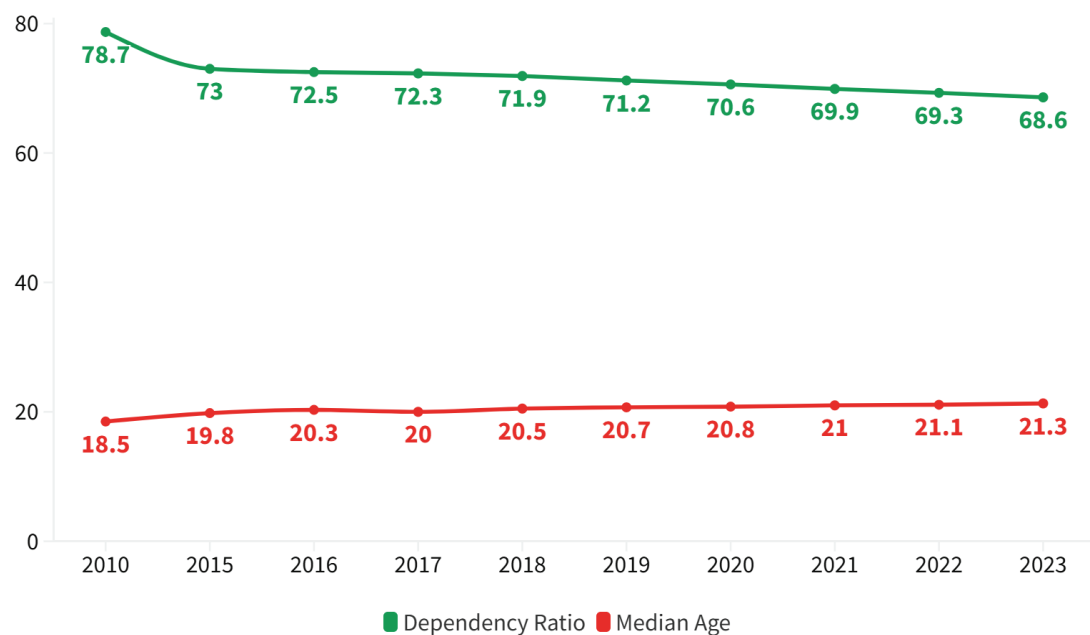


Figure 5. Median Age and Dependent Population Ratio (2010-2023)

Source: Created by the author based on PCBS Palestine in Figures 2019 & 2023 reports.

Note: The data for 2023 is the mid-year data shared before October 7.

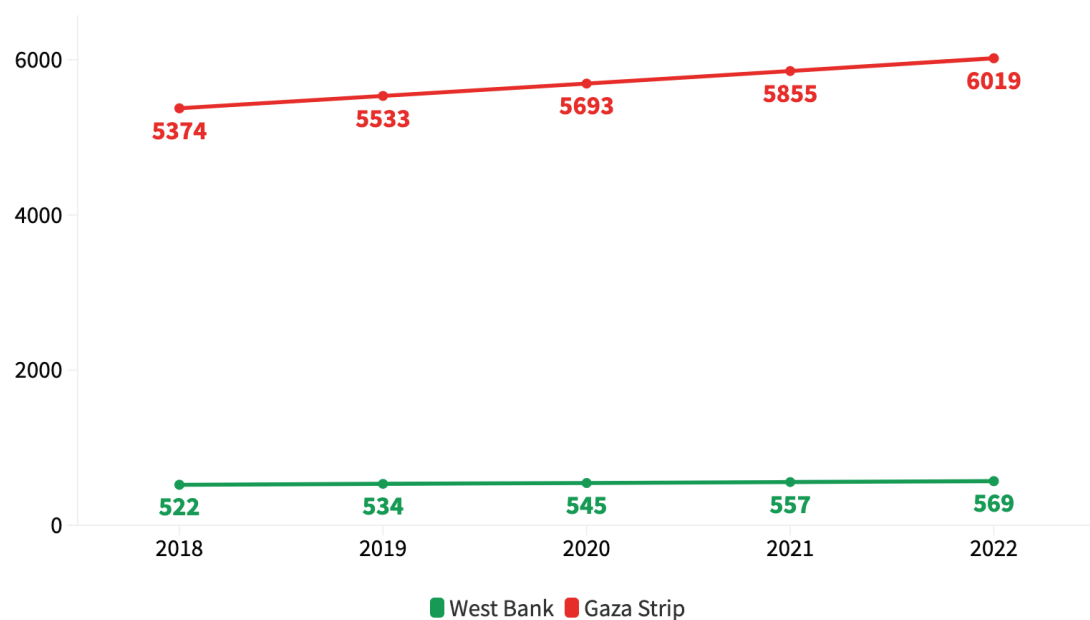


Figure 6. Population Density (Population/km², 2018-2023)

Source: Created by the author based on PCBS Palestine in Figures 2019&2023 reports.

Note: The data for 2023 is the mid-year data shared before October 7.



Labor Force and Employment

The restriction of the Palestinian economy through different control mechanisms has led to a reduction in employment. The occupation authorities pursue a policy of destabilizing the labor market by intervening in the domestic economy. These interventions are another aspect of their strategy to constrain the local economy. The disparity in daily wages between Israel and the settlements causes unfair competition in the labor market. The main aim is to turn Palestinians in the labor force into wage laborers through systematic oppression and restrictions imposed on business owners. Due to these ongoing restrictions and attacks, many Palestinians are unable to maintain their businesses, leading to an increase in wage employment since the occupation began. According to data from the third quarter of 2023, 70.6% of workers in the West Bank were wage employees, while 18.4% were self-employed (PCBS, 2023b).

When we examine the bigger picture of the labor force in Palestine, it is evident that the labor force participation rate for people aged 15 and over is lower in the Gaza Strip compared to the West Bank, while the unemployment rate is higher in the Gaza Strip. Between 2000 and 2023, the labor force participation rate in the West Bank fluctuated between 40% and 50%, it is noteworthy that there is a general upward trend in labor force participation. However, we can observe that there has been no stability in the Gaza Strip since 2000 and that the region is being more heavily impacted by conflicts with Israel. Unemployment rates were notably higher in 2002, 2006, 2008, and 2014 due to

increased violence during those years. While unemployment in the West Bank decreased after 2008, unemployment reached its peak in 2008 in the Gaza Strip, due to the ongoing blockade.

Unemployment is also widespread among the youth, who make up the majority of the Palestinian population. Many young people drop out of school and enter the labor force in order to contribute to their family's income. Between 2015 and 2022, the youth unemployment rate, which rose to around 40%, declined to 35.9% in 2022. In the Gaza Strip, unemployment became more widespread after 2015 and reached 45.1% by the end of the third quarter of 2023. During the same period, 868,000 people were employed in the West Bank and 292,000 in the Gaza Strip.

Employment in Palestine is fragmented. The labor force is divided into three categories based on place of work: the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Israel and the settlements. While the number of Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements continues to rise, the largest share of the labor force remains in the West Bank. According to the PCBS's labor force survey results, between 2019 and 2021, the West Bank labor force constituted 60% of the total Palestinian labor force, while that of the Gaza Strip was around 25%. In 2022, the West Bank labor force decreased to 57.9%, while the share of the labor force in Israel and the settlements increased to 17%.

When we look at the distribution of the labor force by sector of occupation, it is clear that a large proportion of Palestinian workers are

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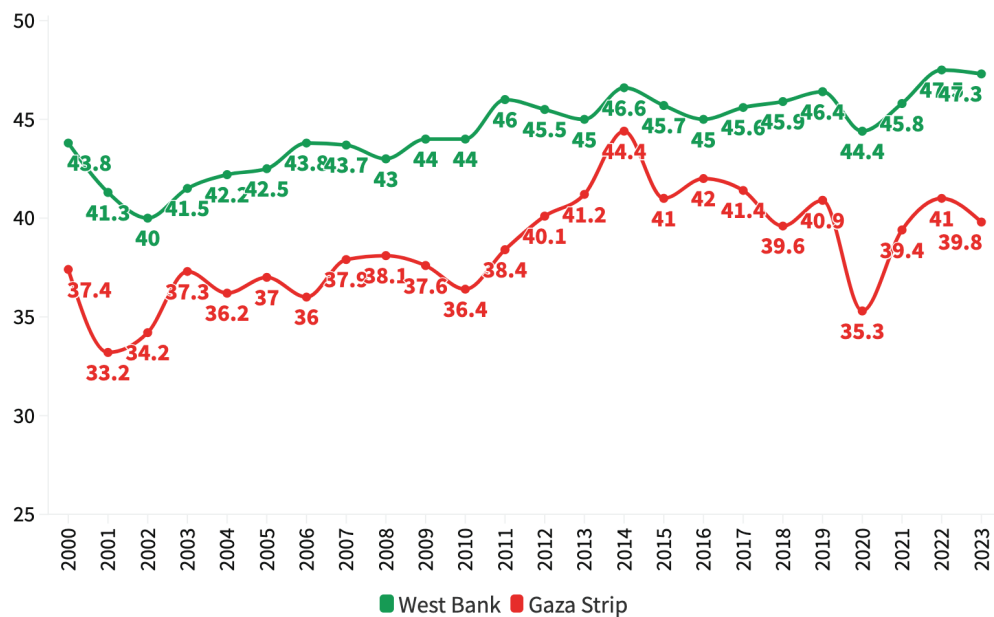


Figure 7. Population in Labor Force (15 years and above) (% , 2000-2023)

Source: PCBS, Palestinian Labour Force Survey, Annual Report 2016, 2022, 2023.

Note: The data for 2023 cover the July-September period, the third quarter of 2023.

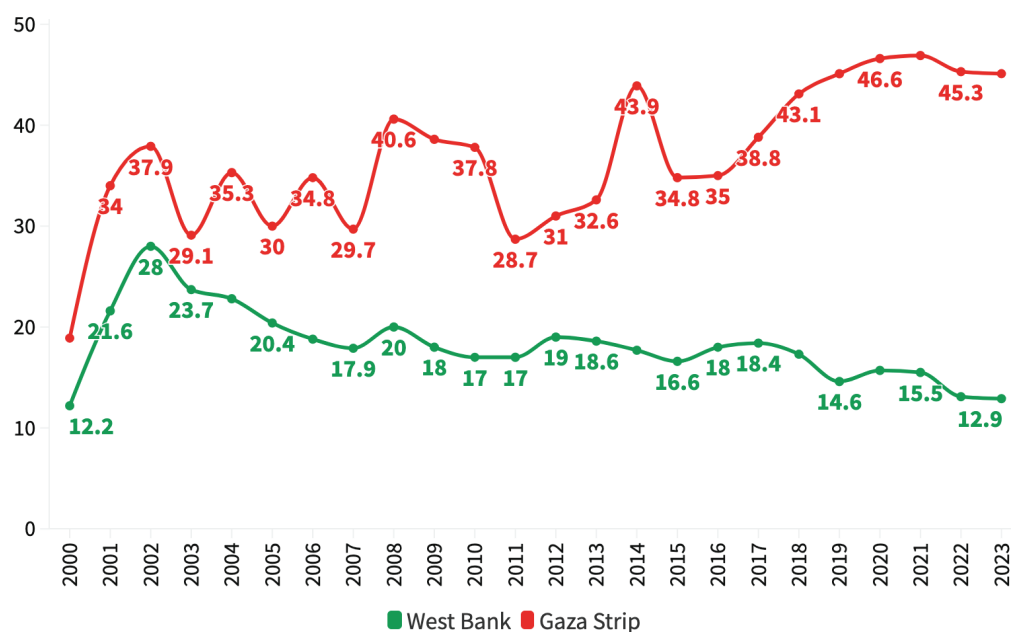


Figure 8. Unemployment Rate (15 years and above) (% , 2000-2023)

Source: PCBS, Palestinian Labour Force Survey, Annual Report 2016, 2022, 2023.

Note: The data for 2023 cover the July-September period, the third quarter of 2023.

Unemployment is becoming increasingly widespread not only among young people who have dropped out of school to join the labor force but also among university graduates.

employed in the service sector. Three out of every ten workers are employed in services and other related sectors. In the West Bank, 34.7% of workers are employed in services and other sectors; 24.2% work in trade, restaurants, and hotels; and 14.5% work in mining, quarrying, manufacturing, and construction. While not all sectors in Israel and the settlements are open to Palestinians, they are mostly employed in unskilled labour. Manual labor sectors are open to them, but they are prohibited from entering markets where they could use their skills. According to data from the third quarter of 2023, just before the events of October 7, 64.4% of Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements were employed in construction, and 13.5% were in mining, quarrying, and manufacturing. Before October 7, between 18,000 and 18,500 Gazans were working in Israel and the settlements (ACAPS, 2023). Israeli authorities announced that 160,000 Palestinians from the West Bank held work permits to work in Israel. On October 10, Israel canceled all work permits for Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements.

The current tightness in the labor market also hinders new entries into the market. Unemployment is becoming increasingly widespread not only among young people who have dropped out of school to join the labor force but also among university graduates.

In recent years, nearly half of all university graduates in Palestine have been struggling with unemployment. In 2012, the unemployment rate among university graduates was 28.9% in Palestine, 23.1% in the West Bank, and 37.1% in Gaza. According to the most recent survey conducted in 2023, unemployment among young people aged 19-29 with a university degree or higher was 47% in Palestine, 30% in the West Bank, and 73% in Gaza (July-September 2023).

The profile of the unemployed skilled labor force has changed significantly over recent years. Fields such as law, architecture, and medicine, which once had the lowest unemployment rates before 2015, have since experienced a steady increase in unemployment. For example, law graduates previously had the lowest unemployment rates, but after 2015, they became the group with the highest rates. This shift is also evident among graduates in architecture, construction, and healthcare, where unemployment has become widespread. Before 2015, law was the highest-earning profession in both regions; however, in recent years, earnings for engineers have risen. From 2020 onward, unemployment in more practical fields—such as mathematics and statistics, engineering and related disciplines, and personal services—has begun to decline, while law, architecture, and construction have faced contractions. Engineering professions, in contrast, continue to expand. Since 2010, teaching and education sciences have recorded the highest unemployment rates. While humanities graduates in the West Bank find jobs faster than those in Gaza, in 2022, fine arts graduates faced the highest unemployment rate in the West Bank, and in Gaza, journalists had the highest rates.

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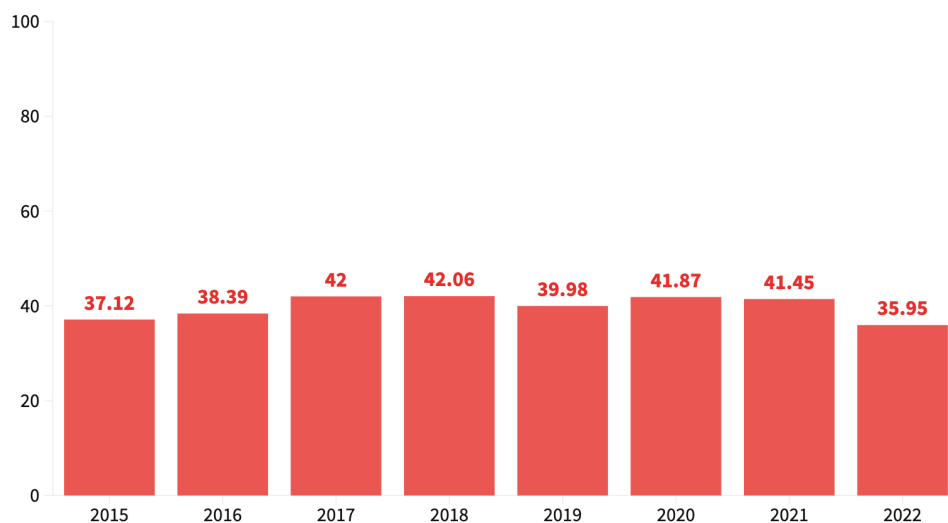


Figure 9. Youth Unemployment Rate (Age 15-24) (%), 2015-2022)

Source: PCBS, Unemployment Statistics.

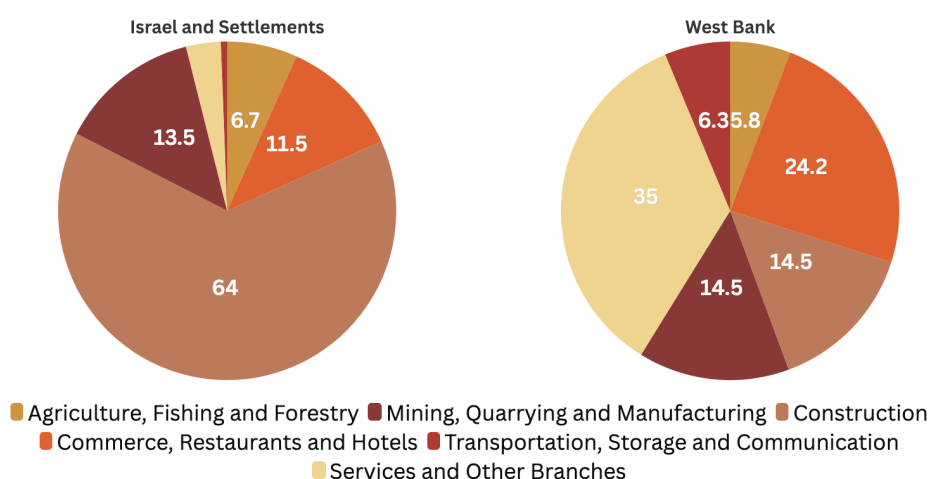


Figure 10. Labor Force Breakdown by Sector at Place of Employment (%), 2023)

Source: PCBS, Labour Force Survey (July-September, 2023).

Note: The data refer to the period before 7 October.

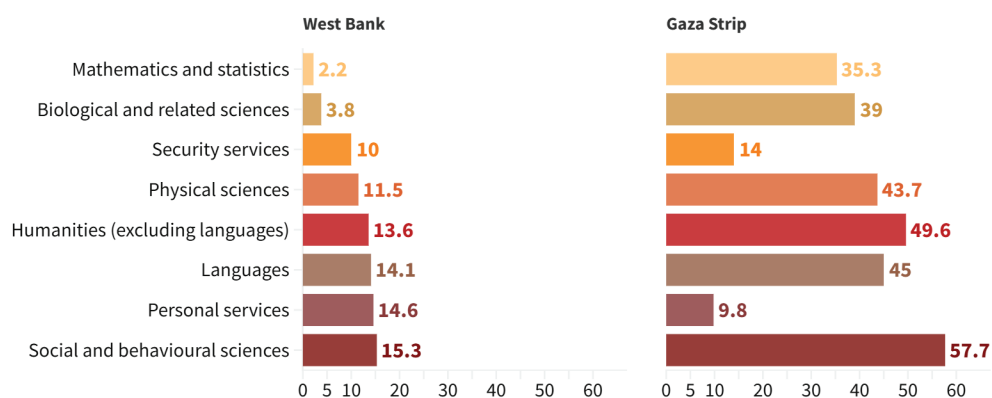


Figure 11. Unemployment Rate for Graduates who hold Associated Diploma Certificate (%), 2022)

Source: PCBS, Labour Force Survey, 2022.

In a labor market with limited entry opportunities, professions that experience the most substantial reductions in unemployment rates indicate a growing demand for skilled labor in the country. Over the past decade, sectors such as security and personal services have consistently shown the lowest unemployment rates in both the West Bank and Gaza. The personal services sector encompasses jobs providing essential daily services, including beauty salons, laundry, and cleaning services. In 2022, the unemployment rate among personal service workers was 14.6% in the West Bank and 9.8% in Gaza, which reflecting a shift that has also influenced earnings among skilled workers.

Wage disparities are further impacted by differences in wage policies based on employment location. The local economy in the West Bank is comparatively larger than that in Gaza, which inherently creates wage disparities between the two regions. Additionally, interventions in the West Bank's economy intensify these differences. The wage policy applied in Israel and the settlements exacerbates local economic imbalances, aiming to create further disruptions in the local economy. According to third-quarter 2023 data (July-September), Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements earned an average daily wage of 297.7 ILS (1 USD = 3.75 ILS, September 2024), while the average daily wage

in the West Bank was 139 ILS and 50.6 ILS in Gaza (PCBS, 2023b). As of the third quarter of 2023 (July-September), Palestinians employed in Israel and the settlements earned an average daily wage of 297.7 ILS (1 USD = 3.75 ILS as of September 2024), while the average daily wage was 139 ILS in the West Bank and 50.6 ILS in Gaza (PCBS, 2023b). Since 2015, the average earnings of Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements have been double those of workers in the West Bank and six times higher than those in Gaza. This trend, which devalues the local Palestinian economy, can be viewed as part of a broader policy aimed at transforming the West Bank's labor force into wage earners, akin to Gaza's less dynamic economy.

In addition to Israel and the settlements, another source of wage disparity lies in the gap between public and private sector wages. Public sector employees in the West Bank are employed by the Palestinian government, whereas in Gaza, they are employed by the local authority. Although public sector wages are generally higher than those in the private sector, they still remain considerably lower compared to wages in Israel and the settlements. Since 2015, average daily wages have risen by 49% in Israel and the settlements, 21.7% in the public sector, and 39% in the private sector.

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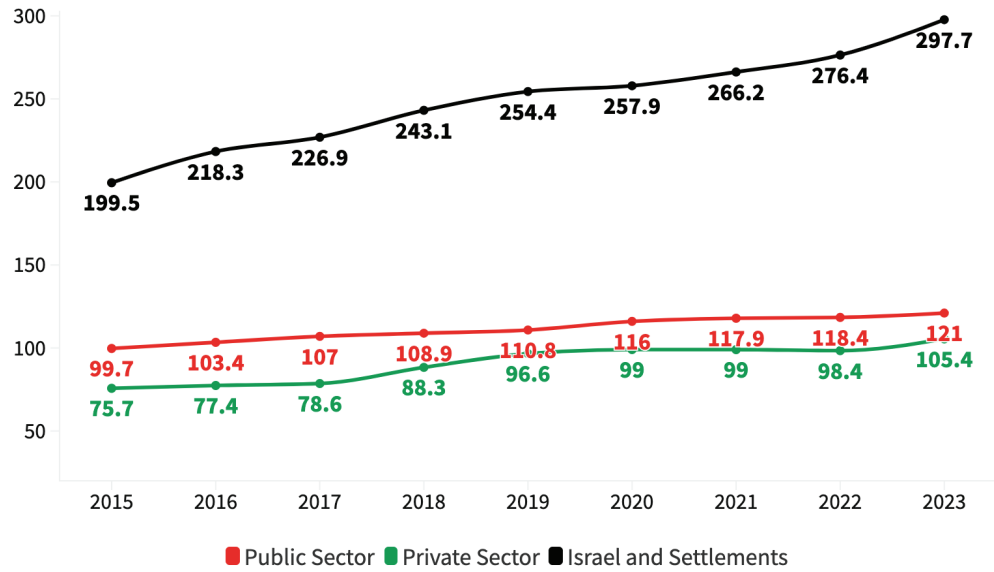


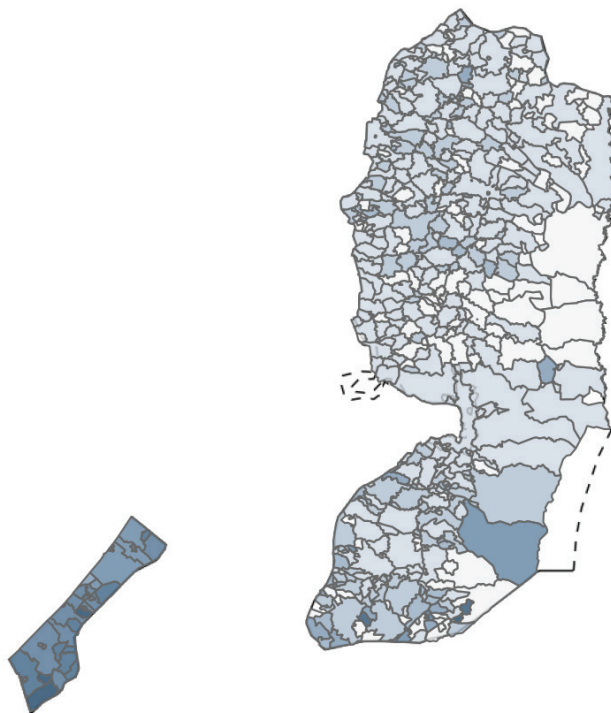
Figure 12. Average Daily Earnings of Employees by Place of Work (NIS, 2015-2023)

Source: PCBS, Palestinian Labour Force Survey, Annual Report 2016, 2022, 2023.

Note 1: The data for 2023 refer to the July-September period, the third quarter of 2023.

Note 2: Gazans were not allowed to enter Israeli territory in 2006-2021. Therefore, workers in Israel and settlements refer to the workers from the West Bank in the figure.

Note 3: The public sector refers to employees in the Palestinian Government and local government.



Map 1. Unemployment Rate by Region (15 Years and Above) (2017)

Kaynak: PCBS, One Indicator Map, Population Census 2017.



Economy

The expansion of occupation beyond the 1948 borders, the establishment of numerous checkpoints, and the imposition of Israeli legal systems in the occupied Palestinian territories have significantly restricted Palestinians' capacity for autonomous and free trade. With blockades and various restrictions, the Palestinian economy has become dependent on that of Israel. One prominent example is the tax system "imposed" by the Zionist government. By imposing its own legal framework, the occupation collects taxes from Palestinians on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA), resulting in considerable financial losses for Palestine. Israel transfers these taxes to the PA monthly but often with arbitrary deductions or delays, and in some cases, suspends transfers altogether. Moreover, escalating conflicts, interventions that target producers and tighter restrictions have led to substantial losses in Palestine's value-added economic sectors.

A country must invest to generate revenue, collect taxes to provide basic services, and manage its economy under free market conditions. However, these avenues are lacking in Palestine due to occupation-related interventions, which makes the economy heavily dependent on international aid. Limited access to free market conditions hinders the creation of added value and encourages unskilled, informal work, and perpetuates the fragile economic structure that underpins Palestine's economic

instability. As a result, low levels of gross capital formation discourage income-generating investments, and private consumption exceeds government revenues.

The structure of the Palestinian economy shows private consumption significantly exceeding state revenue, resulting in a trade deficit (UNFPA, 2017, p. 27). Despite this negative outlook, between 1994 and 2007, state expenditures increased and exceeded revenue from taxes and other sources (UNFPA, 2017, p. 27). This increase can be partly attributed to international aid to the Palestinian Authority, which also points to the economy's dependence on external support.

The Palestinian economy grew in the 1990s, but occupation policies gradually eroded local production. Agriculture, a sector with the potential to be a cornerstone of Palestine's economy, has faced severe restrictions. According to an OXFAM report (El-Jazairi, 2010), the olive oil sector, which has the potential to contribute over \$100 million annually in favorable years, is vital to some of Palestine's poorest communities. An estimated 10 million olive trees cover 45% of agricultural land in the West Bank and Gaza, with the potential to yield up to 34,000 metric tons of olive oil in optimal conditions. From 2001 to 2009, annual olive oil production averaged about 17,000 tons, providing critical income for low-income families (El-Jazairi, 2010).

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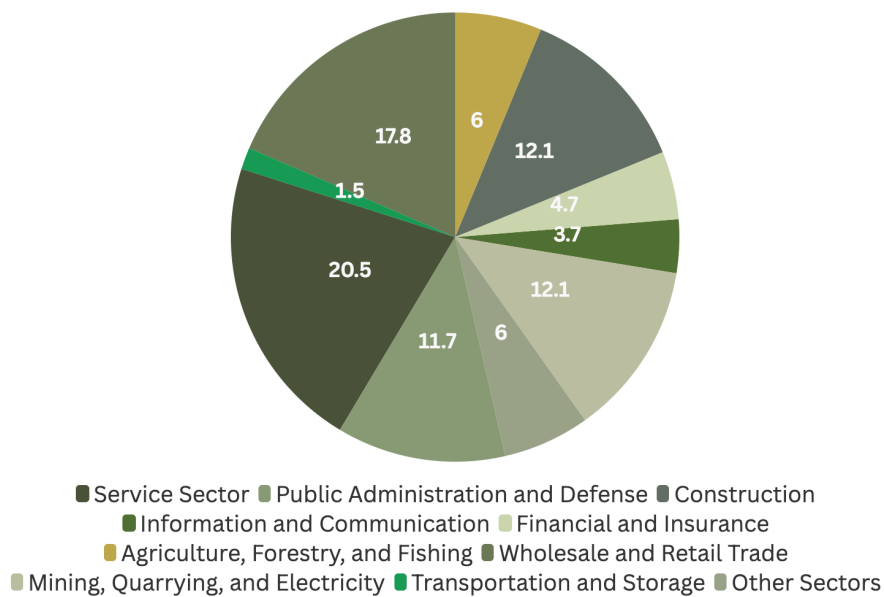


Figure 13. Contribution of Economic Activities to GDP (% , 2022)

Source: PCBS, Labour Force Survey, 2022.

Note: Based on 2015.

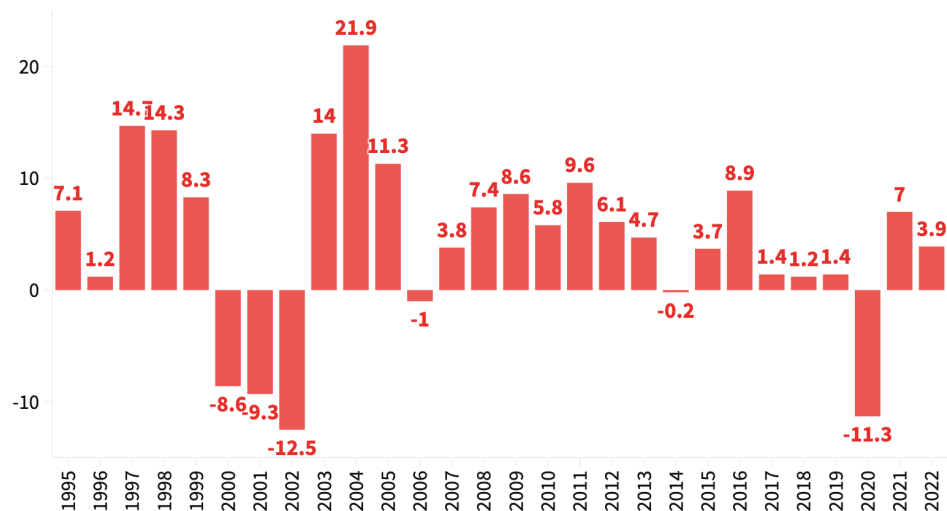


Figure 14. GDP Growth Rate (% , 1995-2022)

Source: PCBS, National Accounts (GDP) Statistics & World Bank.

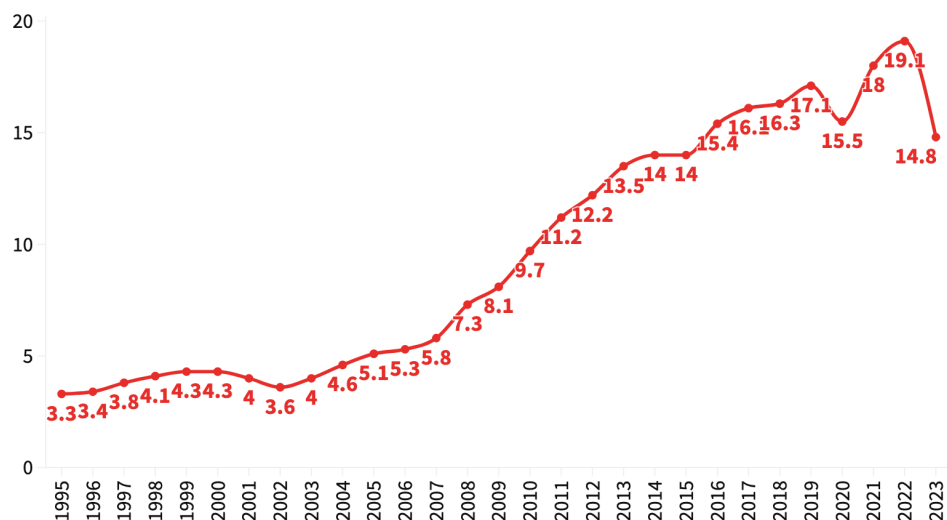


Figure 15. GDP (Billion USD, 1995-2023)

Source: PCBS, National Accounts (GDP) Statistics & World Bank.

Since 2007, Gaza has been under blockade, with strict controls on the movement of goods in and out of the West Bank. Especially in the agricultural sector, products often pass through several checkpoints during the export process while also having to make payments to occupying forces and contend with vehicle restrictions. Reports from international organizations note that Palestinians often face high costs even before products leave the West Bank. Many goods are subject to “occupation costs” as business owners, producers, and traders navigate constant interference. This pressure has gradually shifted GDP contributions from agriculture and manufacturing to services. Agriculture’s share of GDP dropped from 12.1% in 1994 to 6% in 2022, while manufacturing’s share declined from 22.2% to 12.1% (ILO, 2024). According to PCBS data, the service sector became the largest component of Palestine’s economy in 2022, contributing 20% to GDP.

Economic instability intensified after 2006. Although Hamas won the democratic election, it was banned from governing in Ramallah, setting up administration in the Gaza Strip in 2007 (Mercan, 2018). Consequently, the Gaza blockade continued, and economic disparities between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip deepened. Between 2000 and 2022, Gaza’s annual GDP growth remained negative, while the West Bank experienced minimal growth. GDP growth rates from pre-2006 have yet to be matched between 2006 and 2022. Chronologically, the Israeli attacks in 2008, 2012, and 2014, along with the blockade, have

been significant destabilizers. In 1995, GDP was approximately \$3.3 billion, reaching \$19.1 billion by 2022. Since 2006, the West Bank’s share in the economy has risen steadily, comprising 84% of Palestine’s economy in 2023, with Gaza contributing 16%. PCBS and MAS reports noted growth in the first three quarters of 2023 compared to the previous year. However, events on October 7 led to marked losses in the fourth quarter, impacting the West Bank as well. By the end of 2023, GDP had dropped by 26%, down to \$14.8 billion.

In a nation with limited economic self-sufficiency, per capita GDP has remained around \$3000 from 2012 to 2022. The West Bank has consistently shown higher per capita GDP than Gaza, with the gap widening nearly fourfold over recent years. However, per capita GDP remains below the poverty line in both regions. Inflation has also been on the rise, particularly affecting fresh food and beverages. In 2022, per capita GDP was \$3.8 thousand, which fell by 26% to \$2.8 thousand in 2023. This decline in per capita income also reduces purchasing power, with poverty more prevalent in Gaza than in the West Bank. Additionally, purchasing power in Palestine remains significantly lower than in Israel, where per capita GDP has consistently been 15 to 19 times higher over the past two decades. Israel’s economy benefits from sectors like information technology, construction, and tourism. Following October 7, tourism in Israel nearly ceased, and other sectors suffered due to the draft in the IDF, resulting in a 5% decrease in Israel’s per capita GDP in 2023.

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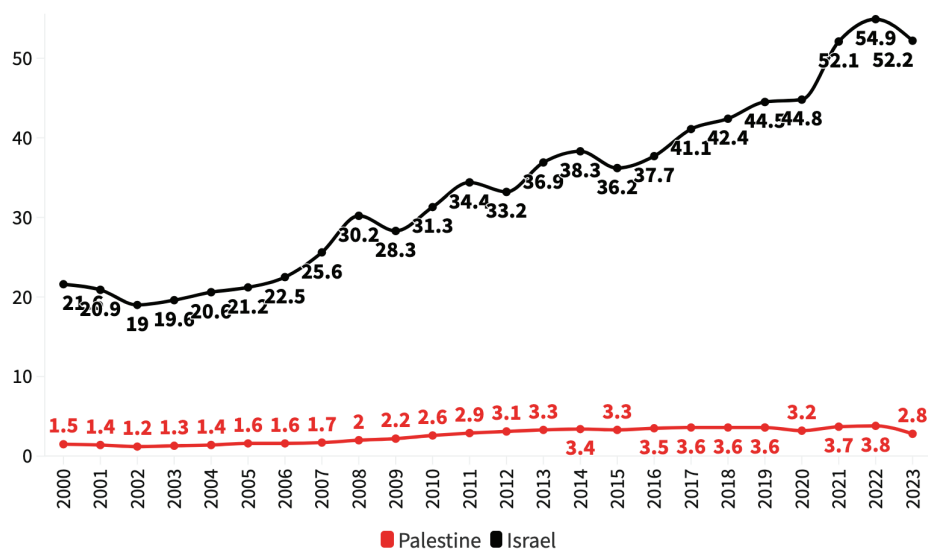


Figure 16. GDP per capita in Palestine and Israel (Thousand Dollars, 2000-2022)

Source: PCBS, National Accounts (GDP) Statistics & World Bank.

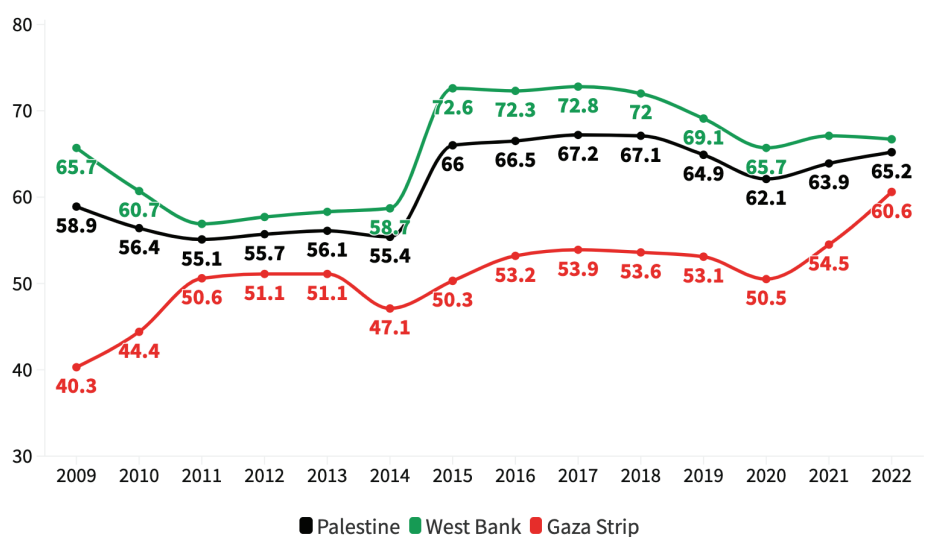


Figure 17. Informal Employment (% , 2009-2022)

Source: PCBS, Labour Force Survey Database.

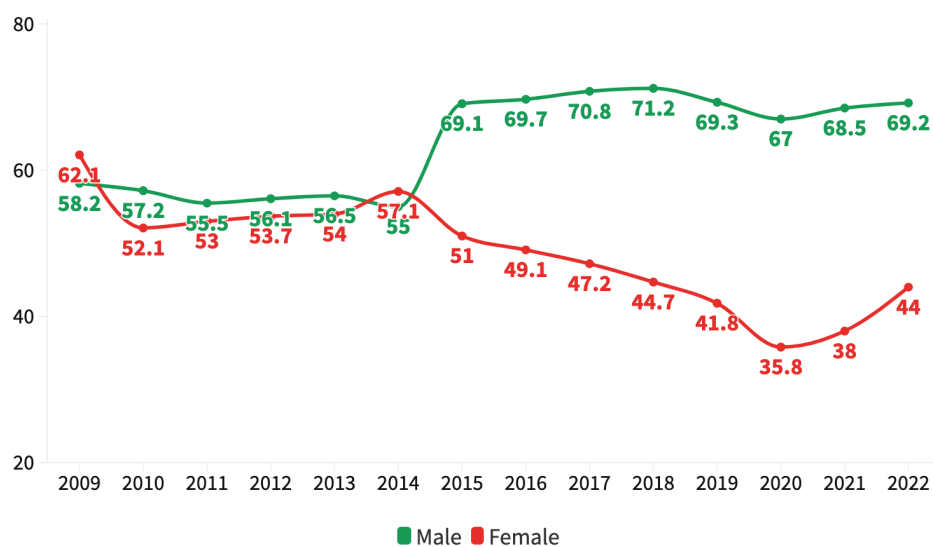


Figure 18. Informal Employment by Gender (% , 2009-2022)

Source: PCBS, Labour Force Survey Database.

***Limited opportunities
push the labor force
into low-paying,
precarious jobs.***

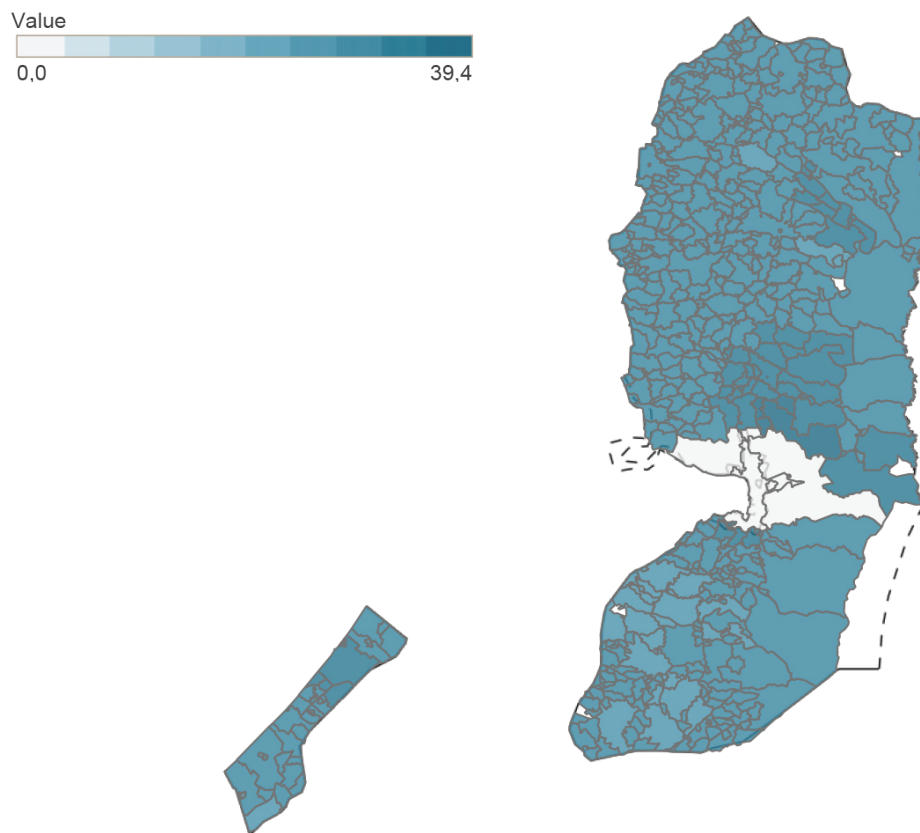
Informal employment represents another major issue for the Palestinian economy, both as a cause and consequence of market instability. Limited opportunities push the labor force into low-paying, precarious jobs. Although work permits are required to work in Israel and the settlements, informal

employment remains prevalent even with these restrictions. While Gaza's economic outlook is generally more negative, the West Bank sees higher informal employment rates due to easier access through the Jordanian border. The more active economy in the West Bank accounts for this difference. The rate of informal employment in Gaza dropped to 47.1% in 2014 but rose in succeeding years, stabilizing at around 60% across Palestine by 2020. Informal employment remains more common among men than women.

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Map 2. GINI by Region (2017)

Source: PCBS, One Indicator Map, Population Census 2017.



Health

The healthcare sector in Palestine is fragmented. The Palestinian Authority oversees healthcare in the West Bank, while Hamas manages its own Ministry of Health in Gaza. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) also provides healthcare services to registered Palestinian refugees. One of the major challenge facing Palestinian healthcare is the occupation's restrictions on access to medical services. The authorities responsible for civilian access to basic healthcare in occupied territories enforce a nine- step permit process for Palestinian patients who need treatment outside their region.¹ This process, intensified by the blockade on Gaza, also applies in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Hospitals in Gaza and the West Bank lack sufficient equipment and specialists for complex cases like cancer and heart disease, leading to about 50% of cancer patients needing exit permits for external treatment. Between 2019 and 2020, 65% of permit applications from Gaza and 84% from the West Bank were approved in time (World Bank, 2023), with men aged 18-40 being the most frequently denied (WHO, 2023).

Despite economic constraints, the Palestinian Authority has increased investment in healthcare. Health expenditures rose from \$408.3 million in 2000 to \$1889 billion in 2022, though this growth remains limited compared to other countries. Additionally, the share of healthcare expenditure in the central government budget has generally

declined since 2011. With financial aid, per capita healthcare expenditure has seen an upward trend since 2016, surpassing \$300 in 2011. Although it is close to the Arab world's average, it remains well below the global average and the amount spent in Israel. In 2021, Palestinian per capita healthcare expenditure reached a 22-year high of \$383.9, far below the global average of \$1,638.8. By contrast, Israel's per capita healthcare expenditure was \$4,339—11 times higher than Palestine's. The gap in health indicators between Palestine and Israel is widening, yet Palestine's efforts to reduce healthcare costs for households can be partly attributed to international aid.

Government expenditures play a positive role in the healthcare sector, although the limitations in the system increase out-of-pocket expenses for households, covering services not included in health insurance or government healthcare. In countries with strong social welfare systems, these expenses are relatively low. In Palestine, however, poverty is widespread, making out-of-pocket healthcare costs a burden on low-income families and a factor contributing to healthcare inequality. Between 2010 and 2017, households with out-of-pocket health payments rose as government expenditure on healthcare fell, whereas, between 2018 and 2021, increased government contributions helped reduce the share of out-of-pocket payments to about 30% of total healthcare expenditures.

The widespread poverty in Palestinian society highlights the urgent need to strengthen

1 WHO, Infographics, Timeline for Gaza Patient Referral 2022. Retrieved from: https://www.emro.who.int/images/stories/palestine/WHO_infographic_timeline_for_gaza_patient_referrals_2022.pdf?ua=1

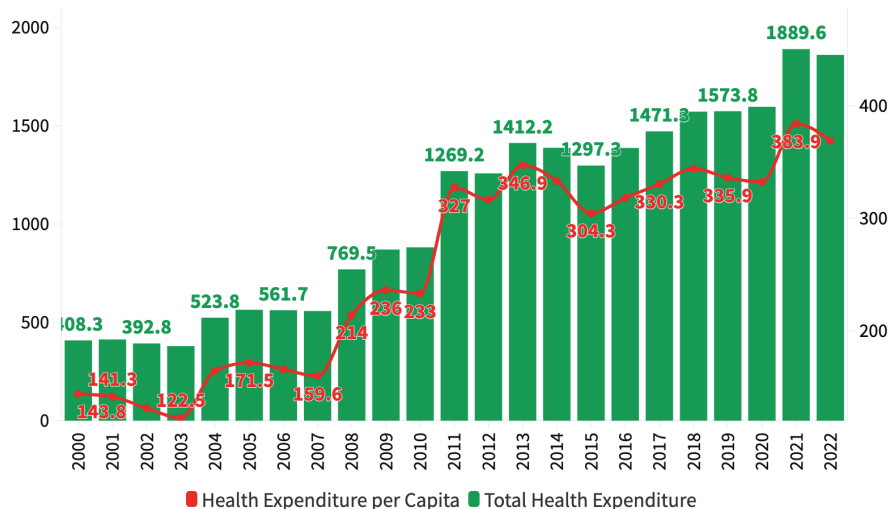


Figure 19. Total Health Expenditure and Per Capita Health Expenditure (USD & Million, 2000-2022)

Source: PCBS-Ministry of Health, Palestinian Health Accounts 2000-2018, 2020 & PCBS-Ministry of Health, Palestinian Health Accounts 2022, 2024.

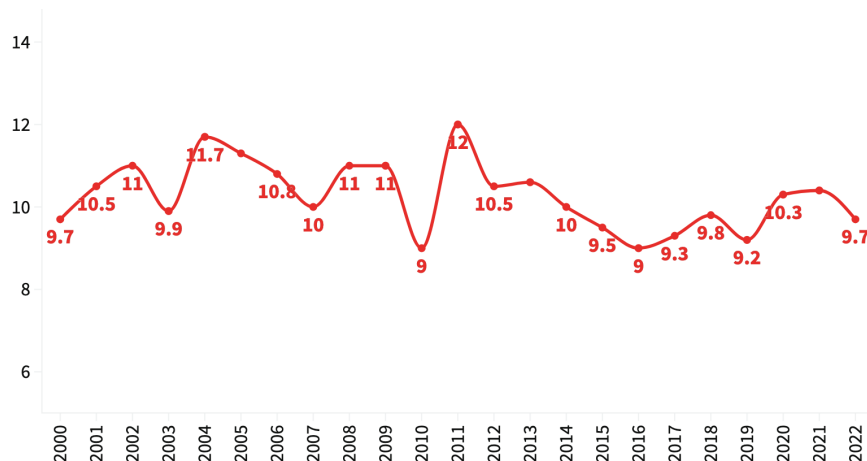


Figure 20. The ratio of Health Expenditures to GDP (% , 2000-2022)

Source: PCBS-Ministry of Health, Palestinian Health Accounts 2000-2018, 2020 & PCBS-Ministry of Health, Palestinian Health Accounts 2022, 2024.

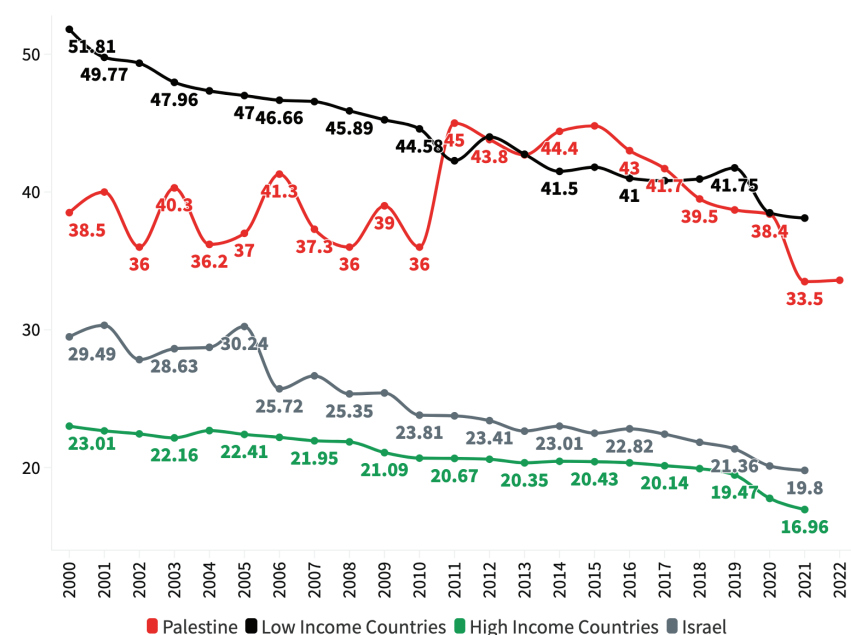


Figure 21. Share of Household Out-of-Pocket Expenditures in Health Expenditures (% , 2000-2022)

Source: WHO, The Health Observatory, Health Expenditure Indicators & PCBS-Ministry of Health, Palestinian Health Accounts 2000-2018, 2020 & PCBS-Ministry of Health, Palestinian Health Accounts 2022, 2024.

Investment in medical research and formal development assistance for healthcare has also been an upward trend since 2010.

healthcare providers. Between 2010 and 2017, general government expenditures in the healthcare sector declined, while household out-of-pocket health expenditures increased. However, from 2018 to 2021, healthcare improvements gained momentum, with the majority of the increase in health expenditures comprised of general government expenditures. In recent years, the influence of central government financing has become more apparent, reducing the share of out-of-pocket payments in total healthcare expenditures to around 30%. Notably, in the early 2000s, there was minimal difference in this indicator between Palestine and Israel; however, over time, Palestine's expenditure pattern has come to resemble that of other low-income countries, which highlights the growing impact of poverty on the healthcare sector in Palestine.

Primary healthcare expenditures were prioritized, accounting for 55% of total healthcare expenditures in 2022, while curative care accounted for 75.5%. Expenditure primarily focuses on maintaining current services rather than expanding capacity, as reflected in the limited increase in hospitals, doctors, or hospital beds per capita. In 2022, Palestine had 29 public hospitals and 64 non-governmental hospitals. Despite this, there is no increase in the number of beds in hospitals.

The number of beds per thousand people between 2012 and 2020 was 1.3. By comparison, the global average for this indicator was 2.9 in 2017, and Israel's was 3 in 2018. In 2021, with the opening of a new hospital, the ratio rose to 1.4 beds per thousand people, but by 2022, this figure fell back to 1.3, with a total bed capacity of 6900. Additionally, in Palestine, UNRWA operates 65 primary healthcare facilities—22 in Gaza and 43 in the West Bank—providing services to 48% of registered refugees in the West Bank and 83% in Gaza (WHO, 2023).

Palestine performs close to the global average in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) healthcare indicators, with infant and under-five mortality rates below the global average. However, attacks by occupation forces have, at times, restricted access to food challenging, which led to malnutrition and stunting among children. Between 2000 and 2019, the rate of malnutrition in children remained below 4%, although the stunting rate among children under five reached 8.7% in 2019.

According to the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Index, which measures access to basic services like vaccinations, maternal care, and treatment for infectious diseases, Palestine scored 65. Although this is lower than Israel's, it is not considered high-risk. The relatively strong performance in SDG health indicators can be attributed to international aid. Investment in medical research and formal development assistance for healthcare has also been on an upward trend since 2010.

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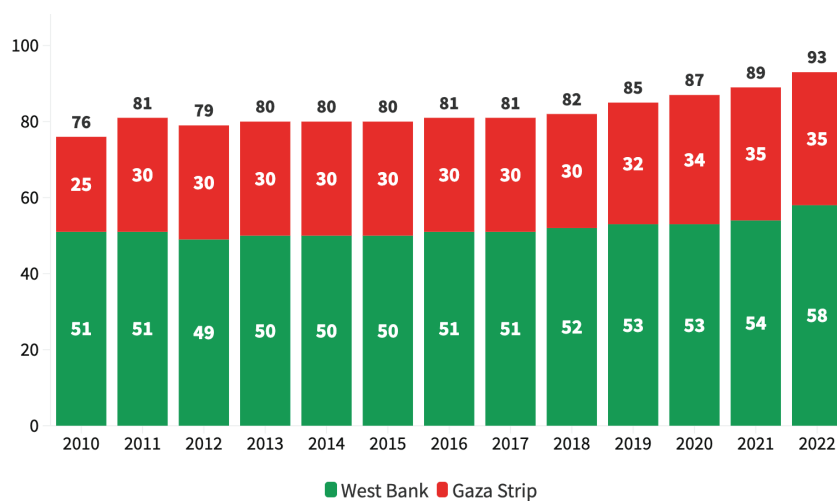


Figure 22. Number of Hospitals (2010-2022)

Source: PCBS, Health Indicators & PCBS, Statistical Yearbook of Palestine 2023, No. 24.

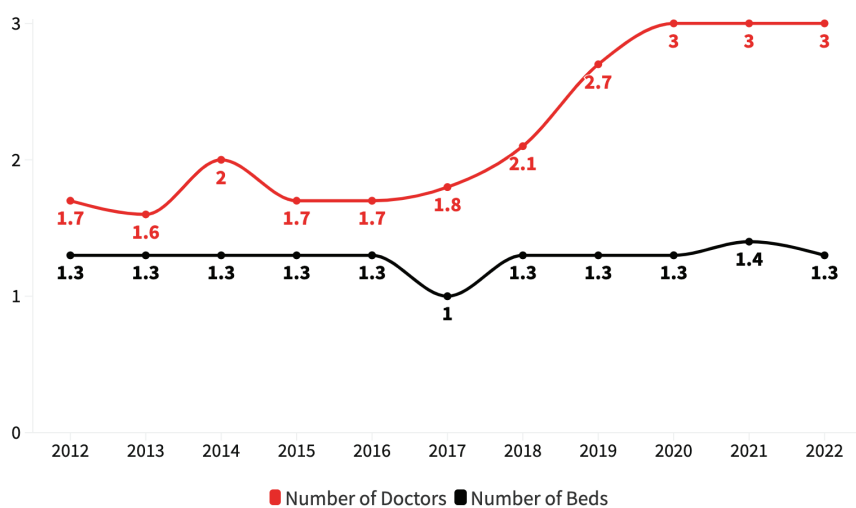


Figure 23. Number of Doctors and Beds per Thousand People (2012-2022)

Source: PCBS, Palestine in Figures 2023, 2024.

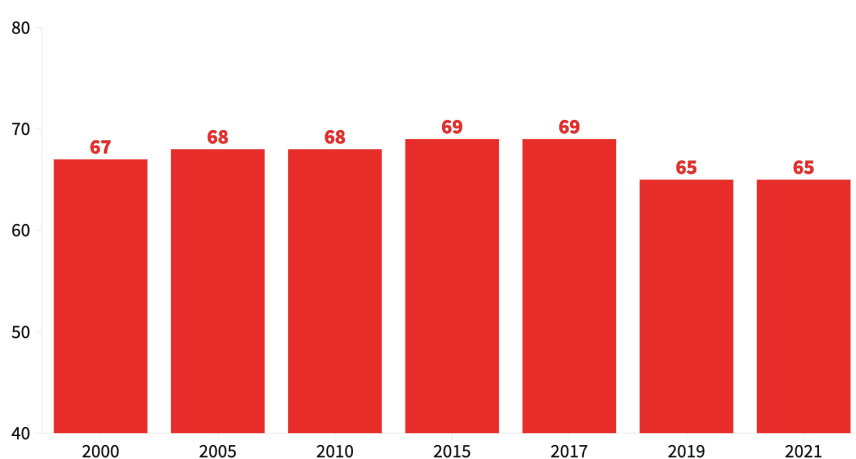


Figure 24. Universal Health Services Coverage Index Score (2000-2021)

Source: WHO, Sustainable Development Goals, 3.8.1 Universal health coverage (UHC) service coverage index.



Education

Education is one of the primary areas targeted by the Zionist regime, which has implemented policies of restriction and intimidation. Despite these constraints and the global disparities in access to education, Palestinians have maintained a high level of education. Compared to other Arab nations, Palestine boasts one of the highest literacy rates, and overall educational attainment has steadily improved over the years. Since 1995, illiteracy rates among individuals aged 15 and older have declined, while the percentage of people completing primary and secondary education has risen.

Education in Palestine is provided through public schools, private schools, and schools run by UNRWA, each offering varying levels of education and certifications. Basic education, also referred to as primary education, is compulsory and spans grades 1 to 10. It is divided into two stages: preparatory (grades 1-4) and empowerment (grades 5-10) stages (UNICEF, 2018). Between 1995 and 2022, while primary education completion rates, including the empowerment stage, have declined, the proportion of individuals with preparatory-level education has increased. On the other hand, secondary education in Palestine is split into academic and vocational tracks, with the percentage of the population achieving secondary education rising from 13.8% in 1995 to 22.1% in 2022. Although there has been minimal change in the percentage of the population holding a two-year vocational diploma, the spread of secondary education has led to an increase in the proportion of individuals holding bachelor's degrees or higher—from 4.3% in 1995 to 17.8%

in 2022. The average years of schooling in Palestine also increased from 8.8 years in 2000 to 11.2 years in 2022, reflecting a significant increase in the level of education across the population.

Between 1993 and 2023, the number of students in Palestine doubled alongside population growth. Participation in education remains high, with 1383 million students enrolled during the 2022-2023 academic year—56% in the West Bank and 44% in the Gaza Strip. In a 2023 Household Cultural Survey by PCBS, nearly half of these students were reported to engage in sports and cultural activities. The same survey reported that 40.2% of Palestinian students were memorizing the Quran (becoming hafiz), with rates of 39.8% in the West Bank and 40.7% in the Gaza Strip (PCBS, 2023a).

One of the most important issues is the high number of students affected by attacks from the Zionist regime. In the 2022-2023 school year, there were 5141 disabled students enrolled in state schools in the West Bank and 2200 in the Gaza Strip, comprising 0.5% of all students. Access to education remains a critical issue for these students, yet a significant number of schools in Palestine have been adapted to meet their needs. As of the 2022-2023 school year, seven out of every ten schools were adapted for disabled students.

The total number of schools in Palestine has increased from 1474 in the 1994-1995 academic year to 3190 in 2022-2023, representing a 46% rise. While primary and middle school completion rates hover around 90%,

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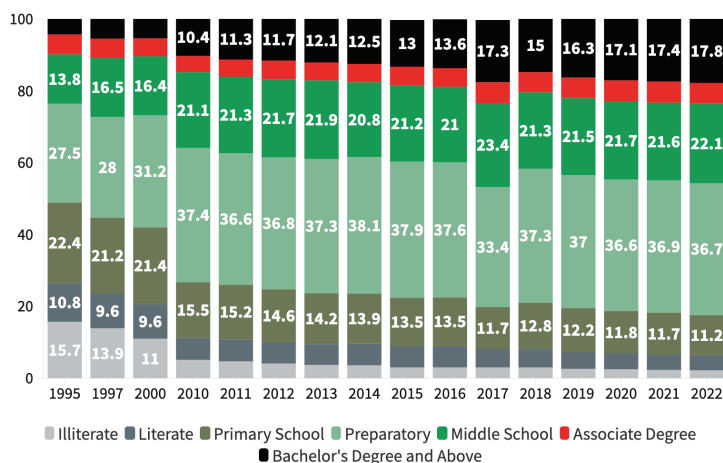


Figure 25. Population by Education Level (% , 1995, 1997, 2000, 2000-2022)

Source: PCBS, Education Statistics.

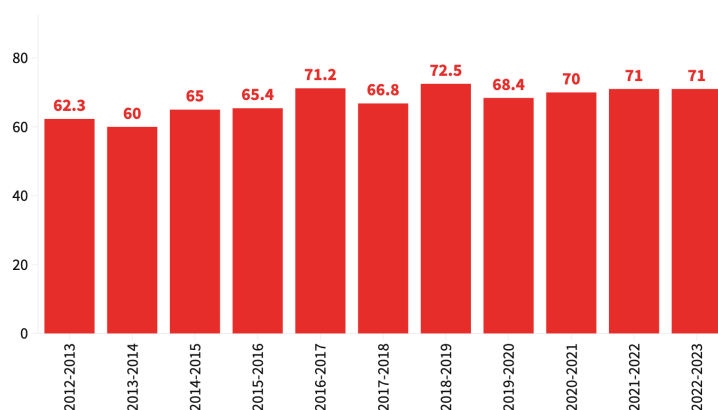


Figure 26. The proportion of Schools in Palestine with Infrastructure and Materials Adapted to the Needs of Students with Disabilities (% , 2012-2023)

Source: PCBS, (2023). Palestinians at the End of 2023. Ramallah - Palestine.

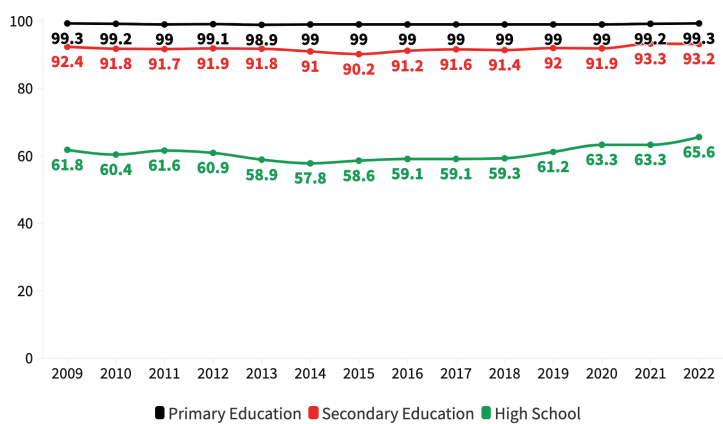


Figure 27. Completion Rate of Education Level (% , 2009-2022)

Source: PCBS, Education Statistics.

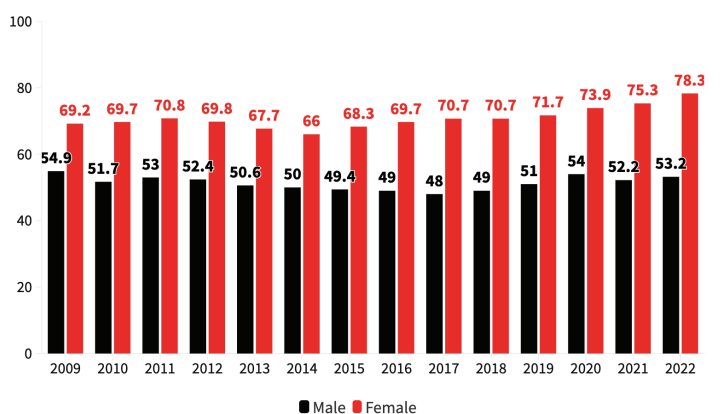


Figure 28. High School Completion Rate by Gender (% , 2009-2022)

Source: PCBS, Education Statistics.

Whereas one in two male students leaves high school before graduation, only three out of ten female students drop out of school.

high school completion drops to about 60%. Regionally, high school completion is higher in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank. The Tawjihi—Palestine’s secondary school certificate and university entrance exam—achieved a success rate of around 80% between 2016 and 2021, with rising rates in the West Bank but minimal change in Gaza.¹

Female students represent a majority of those continuing their education in Palestine, and their success rate in the Tawjihi consistently surpasses that of male students. Whereas one in two male students leaves high school before graduation, only three out of ten female students drop out. Economic pressures increase dropout rates among boys as many enter the labor force to support their families. Additionally, restrictions imposed by the Zionist regime drain students’ motivation to pursue higher education, leading to elevated high school dropout rates. The NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rate is particularly high in Gaza, where restrictions are more severe. From 2012 to 2019, the NEET rate in Palestine displayed a general upward trend and peaked in 2020, largely due to the pandemic. Another notable point is that this rate began to decrease in the following years.

Universities in Palestine, mainly located in the West Bank, also face significant challenges because of the Zionist regime. Students encounter difficulties accessing universities in the West Bank due to checkpoints, and university administrators and academics face similar restrictions, which reduces their opportunities for academic development (Cemmell, 2009). The occupation authorities often deny visas to academics seeking international opportunities, further limiting regional academic mobility (Cemmell, 2009).

In addition to traditional universities, Palestine also has three types of higher education institutions: university colleges, community colleges, and traditional universities. These are established to address restrictions imposed by the Zionist regime. For students unable to attend formal institutions, Al-Quds Open University, which was founded by Fatah in 1991, offers distance learning. In the 2021-2022 academic year, Palestine had 51 higher education institutions, with 34 in the West Bank and 17 in Gaza. These include 19 traditional universities, 15 university colleges, and 17 community colleges. Most students attend traditional universities, with 225,975 enrolled in 2021-2022, 55% of whom were women. During this period, the most popular fields of study were business, management, law, and health, with 24.7% of students pursuing business, management, and law, and 22.8% studying medicine and health disciplines.

¹ For more information about the education system in Palestine see: Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE). (2013). Palestinian National Qualifications Framework. Palestine.

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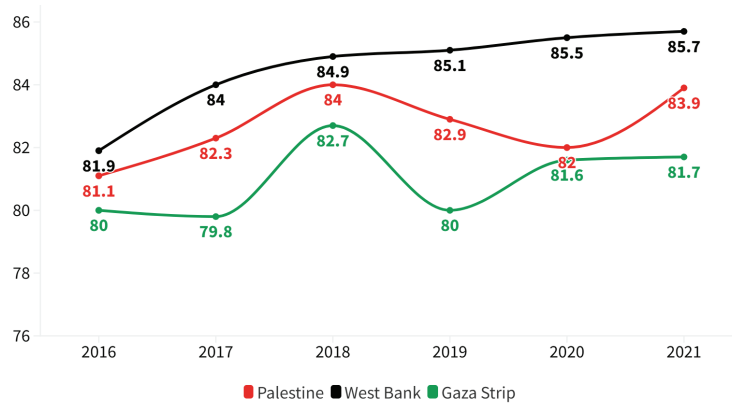


Figure 29. Tawjihi Success Rate (% , 2016-2021)

Source: PCBS, Education Statistics.

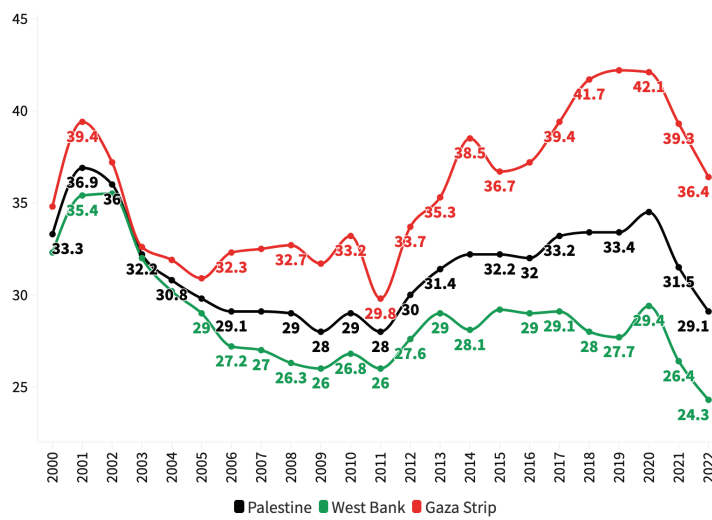
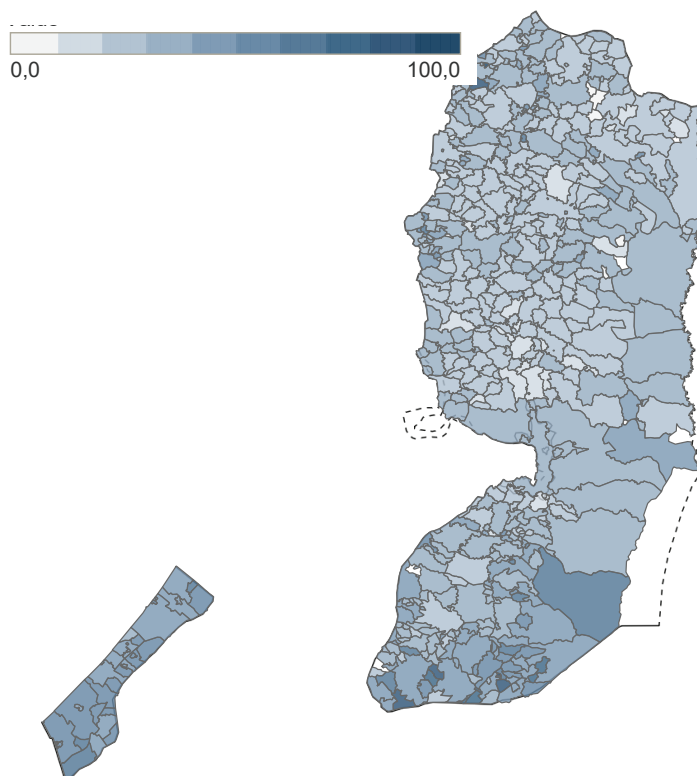


Figure 30. NEET Rate (Age 15-24) (% , 2000-2022)

Source: PCBS, SDG Statistics.



Map 3. NEET Population Density by Region (2017)

Source: PCBS, One Indicator Map, Population Census 2017.

To access the figures in this section



ISRAELI VIOLENCE: THE BLOCKADE IN DATA





The Impact of the Blockade and Restrictions on the Daily Life of Palestinians

The Israeli project to settle Jews in Palestine has a long history. Palestinians have been subject to a continuous blockade since 1948 owing to the policies of settler colonialists and the occupation state. Strategies like agricultural cooperatives, settlements, colonies, and the construction of the separation wall—actions unrecognized by international law—are all components of a broader settler-colonial project. Moshav and Kibbutz, cooperative agricultural villages planned and supported by the Israeli state, serve to assert control over Palestinian natural resources, aiming ultimately to seize them completely. On the other hand, it is clear that the settlements that served as outposts and were allegedly built for the purpose of “ensuring security” have been an key apparatus of the occupation plan. These outposts increase Zionist presence, facilitate settler violence, and lead to further displacement of Palestinians. As the number of outposts increases, so does the violence against Palestinians, who are often forcibly removed from their homes or land to make way for expanded settlements. The separation wall, also known as the “wall of shame,” restricts the movement of Palestinians, infringing on the fundamental human right to freedom of movement. Indeed, it is an indication that Israel is an apartheid regime.

The 1947 UN General Assembly Resolution 181¹ laid the groundwork for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. As a

Partition Plan aiming to divide the Palestinian lands into 56.2% for Jews and 43% for Palestinians, with Jerusalem designated as an “international city” (*corpus separatum*), Resolution 181 remains the only legally binding agreement between Palestine and Israel (D’Amato, 2007, p. 6). However, after the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-49, Zionist forces expanded Israel beyond the borders outlined in the resolution. In violation of UN Resolution 181, Israel expanded its occupation into the West Bank and East Jerusalem in 1967, where settlements were established as part of a broader policy of Judaization. Since 1967, the number of Jewish settlers in these areas has grown, becoming a major obstacle to the establishment of an independent and unified Palestinian state. This entire expansion can be seen as Israel’s *de facto* annexation policy, whereby it establishes legal and administrative control over the occupied territories without any legal justification (Aral, 2019, pp. 160-161).

The Oslo Accords, negotiated between 1993 and 2000, was the first step for the expansion of the blockade and the transformations seen today. The Oslo Accords, signed between Israel and the PLO, led to the PLO recognizing Israel as a state. A major outcome of the agreement was the division of the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C, allowing Israel to maintain military control over these areas. While Areas A and B are densely populated by Palestinians, Area C contains

1 UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) Future Government of Palestine. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-185393/>

THE OUTLOOK OF PALESTINE

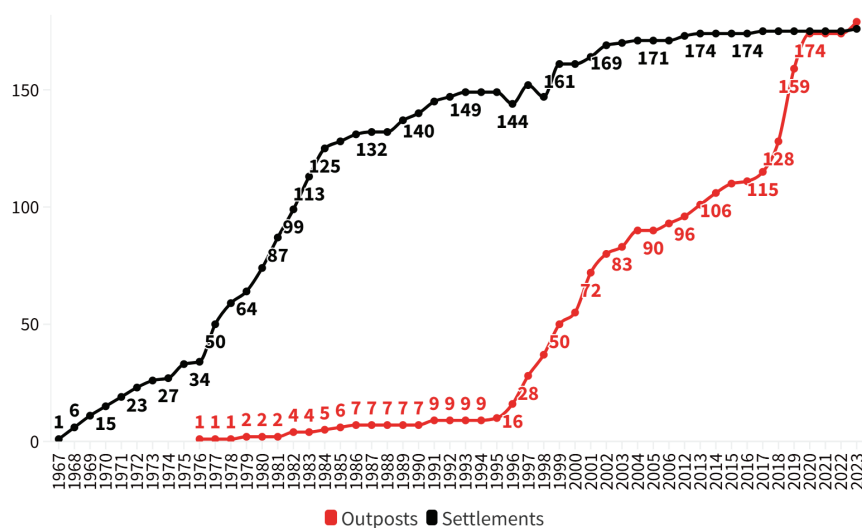


Figure 31. Number of Outposts and Number of Settlements (1967-2023)

Source: PCBS, Israeli Violations Indicator & CWRC, List of Settlements and Outposts.

Note: The data cover the West Bank and Jerusalem.

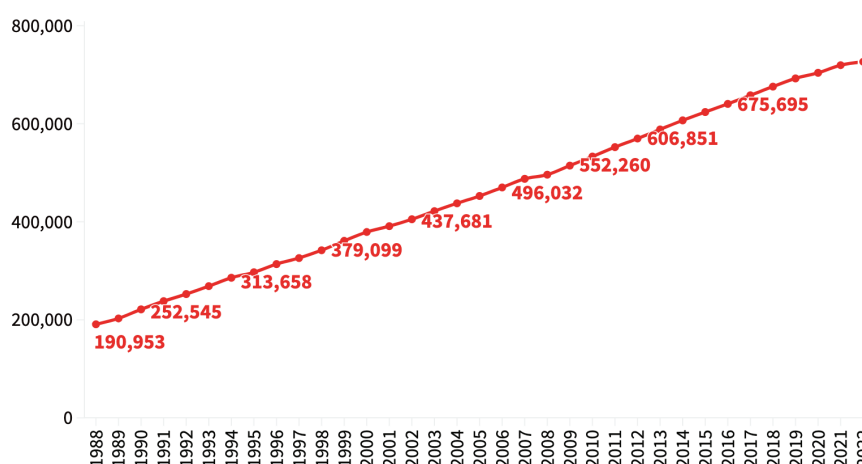


Figure 32. Number of Settler Colonial Occupiers (Thousands, 1988-2022)

Source: PCBS & Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of Israel. Jerusalem, Various Years, (2003 - 2022) & The Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies 2022, Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem 2021 (No 36). Jerusalem.

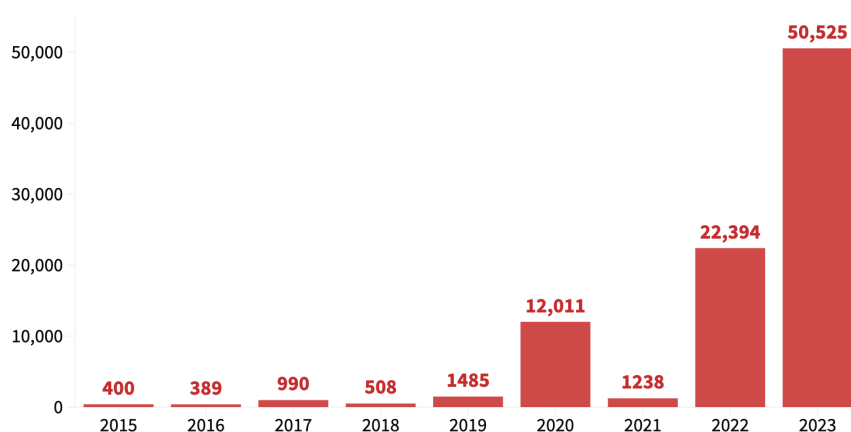


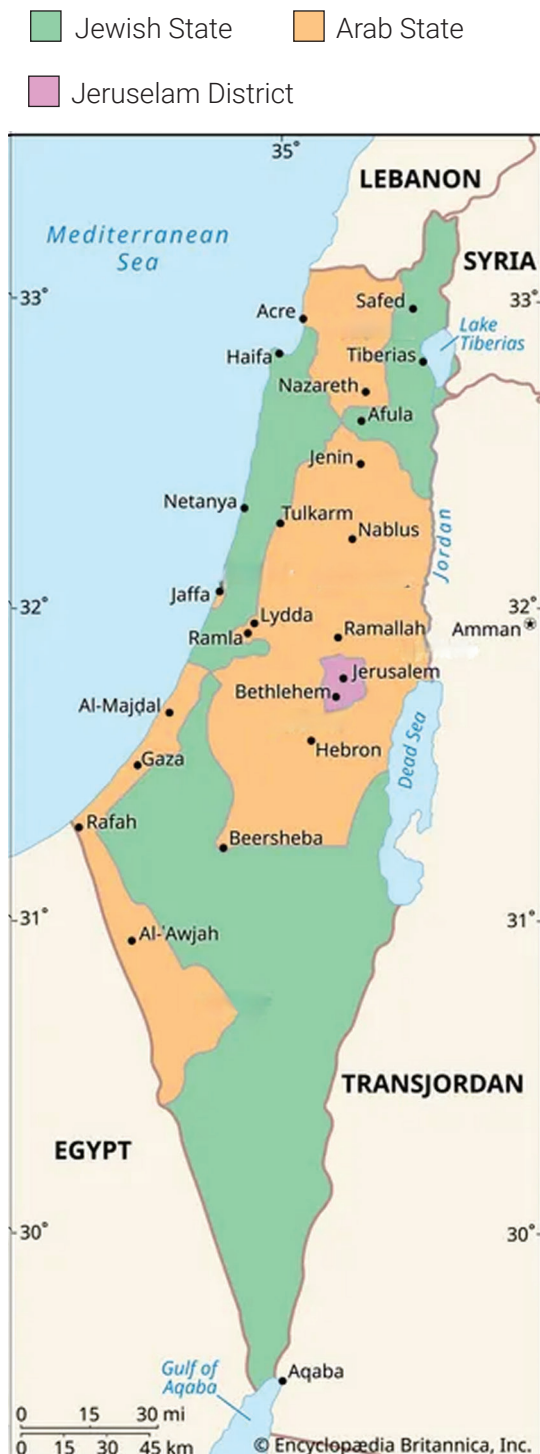
Figure 33. Amount of Area Occupied by Israel during the Year (Acres, 2015-2023)

Source: CWRC, (2024). Summary of Israeli Occupation State and Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine 2023. Ramallah: CWRC. p. 84.

Note: These data cover the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Map 4. United Nations Resolution 181 Partition Plan (1947)

Source: Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2024, October 15). United Nations Resolution 181. Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Resolution-181>



the most fertile agricultural land and natural resources and has become the primary focus of Israeli settlements. The Oslo negotiations fragmented Palestine, stripping Palestinians of their right to self-determination and turning the process into one of submission (Aral, 2019, p. 85). As of March 2024, Israeli occupation forces control 2380 square kilometers of Palestinian land, comprising approximately 42% of the West Bank, with the occupation forces controlling 69% of the C areas (CWRC, 2024).

When we examine Israel's colonial expansion into Palestinian lands, four main phases are identifiable. The first phase, between 1967 and 1976, involved the establishment of colonies under the Allon Plan, with 34 colonies—settlements—concentrated in Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley. During the second phase, from 1977 to 1984, the number of new settlements increased to 125, with five major settlement blocks established. During this period, 91 colonies were built in various parts of the West Bank, rapidly expanding the Jewish settler population. This expansion was met with condemnation from the UN Security Council, leading to the passing of Resolution 465² in 1980, which called for the dismantling of existing settlements and Israel's withdrawal from Arab lands occupied since 1967. Nevertheless, the occupation continued. The third phase, from 1985 to 1990, saw a significant increase in the number of settlers, and the fourth phase, which has continued since 1991, has focused on increasing the settler population in existing colonies. Following

2 UNSCR, Resolution 465 of 1 March 1980, The Security Council. Retrieved from: <http://unsr.com/en/resolutions/465>.

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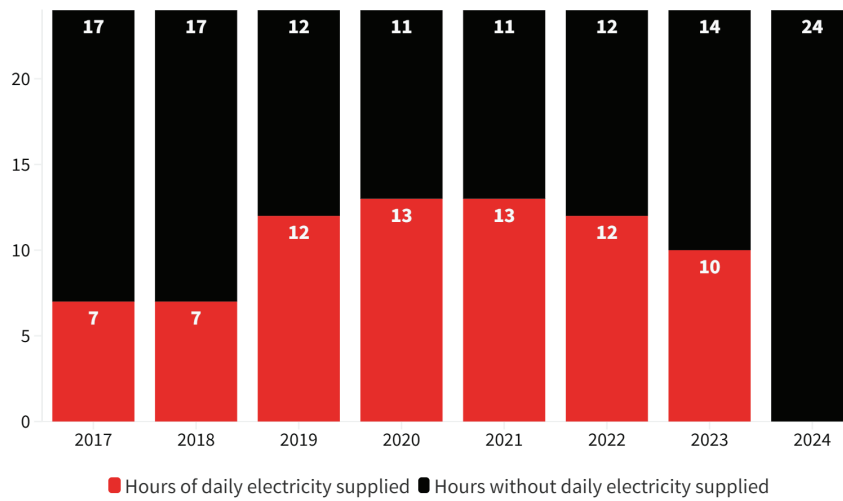


Figure 34. Average Daily Electricity Availability in Gaza (Hours, 2017-2024)

Source: OCHA, Electricity in the Gaza Strip. Retrieved from: <https://www.ochaopt.org/page/gaza-strip-electricity-supply>, 04.09.2024.

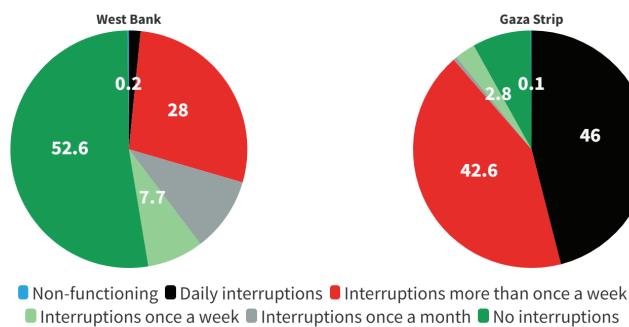


Figure 35. Distribution of Water Outage Frequency (% , 2020)

Source: PCBS, Socio-Economic Conditions Survey, 2020.

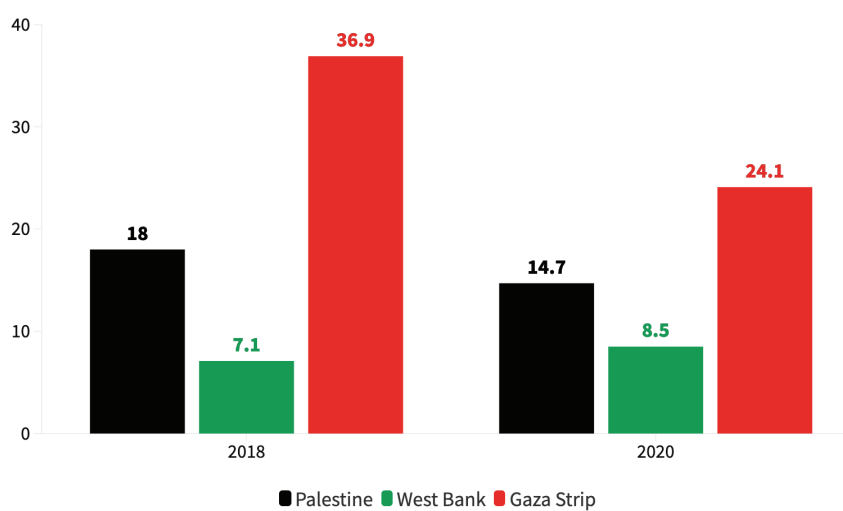


Figure 36. Proportion of Households where at least One Member of the Household Cannot Receive Treatment due to Lack of Medication (% , 2018-2020)

Source: PCBS, Socio-Economic Conditions Survey, 2018 & 2020.



Map 5. Division of West Bank According to Oslo Accords and Separation Wall (1995)

Source: OCHA, West Bank: Area C Map, 2011. Retrieved from: https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_area_c_map_2011_02_22.pdf.

the Oslo Accords, Israel's de facto occupation gained momentum. Far from withdrawing its forces, Israel intensified its military control, and the number of settlements surged after 2000. The division of the West Bank into regions facilitated the expansion of settlements. The number of settlements continued to rise, particularly between 1997 and 2004, with this trend persisting in the following years. A more rapid increase in settlements occurred between 2017 and 2020. The UN Security Council's Resolution 2334, adopted in 2016, reiterated the illegality of

Israeli settlements and called for a halt to all settlement activities in occupied Palestinian territories (UN, 2016). However, instead of complying with, there was a significant increase in the number of settlements after 2016. While there was only one settlement in 1976, by 2023, the number had reached 179.

Settlements are strategically located as part of the occupation plan, and though entirely illegal, they are legalized by decisions made by the Zionist regime. The CWRC reported that 17 new Jewish settlements were established in the first half of 2024, while 11 previously

existing ones were legalized.³ This legal legitimization indicates a shift in the nature of the occupation, as it signals increased pressure on Palestinians and further territorial expansion for settlers. The rising number of settlements explains the growth in the settler population. The settler population, which stood at 190,000 in 1988, quadrupled to 726,000 by 2022. However, Israeli media has noted that, despite the occupation policies, the number of Jewish settlers has not met expected targets.

In addition to the occupation and settler strategy across Palestine, the blockade on the Gaza Strip serves as another tool of the Zionist regime's annexation efforts. Following the failure to fulfill promises made in the Oslo Accords and the expansion of settlements, Palestinians launched the Second Intifada in response in 2000. Although the withdrawal of Jews from Gaza in 2005 was initially seen as a step toward de-escalation, it soon became clear that it was a facade. The construction of the separation wall around Gaza, turning it into an open-air prison, was the first step. After Hamas won the 2006 elections, the blockade was expanded, and by 2007, an embargo was imposed, followed by a naval blockade in 2008. Since then, access to basic necessities in Gaza has been restricted, and electricity shortages have plagued the region. According to OCHA data, Gaza received only an average of 7 hours of electricity per day in 2017 and 2018, which increased to 12 hours in 2019, 13 hours in 2020 and 2021, but fell back to 10 hours in 2023. Following October 7, 2023, the ongoing conflict resulted in Gaza receiving no electricity at all by 2024.

Due to the blockade and restrictions, 23.3% of Palestinian adults in 2020 were found to skip meals so that their children could eat. This rate was 47.4% in Gaza and 7.2% in the West Bank (PCBS, 2021a, p. 75). According to international law, civilians in blockaded areas must be able to have access to basic necessities, and humanitarian aid must be able to reach them. Furthermore, Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits collective punishment and intimidation during war-time (ICRC, 1949). However, Israel continues to violate international law through its blockades and restrictions.

In some areas, the restrictions imposed by the occupation authorities have completely isolated the local population, enabling complete control by the settler-colonial forces. In Hebron, a heavily contested area, the movement of Palestinians is severely restricted, while Israelis can move freely throughout the city. In 2016, to minimize Palestinian movement in the area, they were prohibited from crossing from one street to another. These high-level restrictions on an entire population have been labeled by Amnesty International as "collective punishment" (Amnesty, 2016). According to the OCHA map of Hebron, the Israeli settlements there alone affect 40,000 Palestinians (OCHA, 2018). Among the 111 barriers in the area, there are 20 checkpoints and 41 blocked roads. By the end of 2023, the number of permanent and temporary checkpoints had reached 694 (CWRC, 2024b). As of 2024, the total number of military checkpoints had increased to 840, with more than 140 established after October 7 (CWRC, 2024a).

3 CWRC, (2024). The Israeli Occupation & its Colonizers' Violations in the Occupied Palestine during the first half of 2024. Retrieved from: <https://cwrc.ps/page-2056-en.html>.

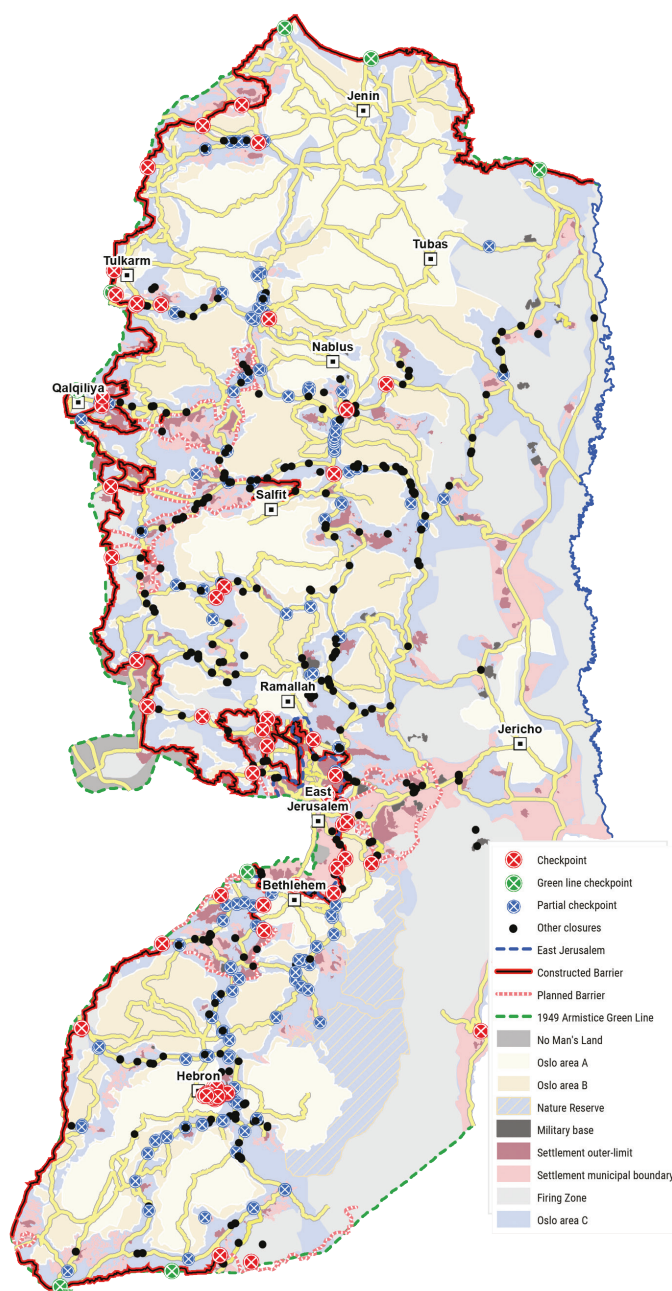
The restrictions and prohibitions imposed by the occupation authorities, which affect various areas from the economy to health, have severely limited economic production and access to basic needs.

Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip must obtain special permits from the Israeli occupation authorities to cross into occupied Palestinian territories through the Beit Hanoun (Erez) checkpoint. Even patients requiring medical transfers often fail to receive the necessary permission to pass through this checkpoint. Additionally, the Rafah and Kerem Abu Salem crossings are significant for Gaza's commercial potential. Due to pressure on Egypt, the number of commercial trucks passing through the Rafah crossing on the Egyptian side is negligible. While Kerem Abu Salem serves as Gaza's main commercial crossing, the number of loaded trucks entering Gaza through this gate far exceeds the number of trucks leaving Gaza, reflecting a deliberate effort to restrict Gaza's export potential. Between 2015 and 2022, the number of trucks leaving Gaza for export increased—largely due to Egypt's influence. Moreover, it is known that the fenced border in Gaza is divided into 300-meter sections and is considered dangerous therefore, it hampers agricultural activities in these areas. This highlights the visible impact of the blockade in severely restricting movement in the region.

In the West Bank, the Separation Wall continues to be constructed, with its current length reaching 489 kilometers, and it will reach its originally planned final length once an additional 225 kilometers are completed

(CWRC, 2024b). The total area isolated by the wall now amounts to 295 square kilometers (CWRC, 2024b). By 2024, it is known that Palestinians comprise 85% of the total population in the West Bank. As of March 30, 2023, 31% of the West Bank was under the control of the Israeli occupation authorities (CWRC, 2023). Settlements and settler outposts in the region block access to more than 390,000 acres of private Palestinian land. The expansion of the Separation Wall, much like in Gaza, clearly illustrates a policy aimed at compressing the Palestinian population in the West Bank. In addition to the checkpoints established along the Separation Wall, there are settlements, outposts, bypass roads, military bases, closed military zones, and areas declared by Israel as nature reserves. According to this plan, approximately 40% of the West Bank is either severely restricted or entirely inaccessible to Palestinians (World Bank, 2007). The wall, moreover, cuts through the most fertile agricultural lands of the Palestinians, rendering a tenth of these lands unusable and disrupting water sources for farmers (Al-Jazairi, 2010). It has been noted that after the construction of the wall, access to one million olive trees in the area will be severed (Al-Jazairi, 2010). The occupation authorities prioritize attacks on private property in order to dispossess Palestinians and eliminate any opportunities for them in the region. Over the past four years, there has been an increase in the amount of private property expropriated by the occupation regime. The fact that this escalation occurred before October 7 indicates a premeditated preparation for the attacks.

The restrictions and prohibitions imposed by the occupation authorities, which affect various areas, ranging from the economy to health, have severely limited economic production



Map 6. Restrictions on Movement and Access in the West Bank (2023)

Source: OCHA, Movement and Access in the West Bank, August 2023, Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/movement-and-access-in-the-west-bank-august-2023-ocha-factsheet/>

and access to basic needs. According to PCBS data, the electricity cuts experienced in Gaza have also been reported in the West Bank. Power outages, water shortages, and food insecurity are widespread throughout Palestine, with Gaza residents facing particularly severe restrictions on access to healthcare. It is known that the amount of water reaching households in the West Bank and Gaza has decreased as a result of these restrictions. In 2020, 46% of households in Gaza experienced daily water cuts, and 42.6% had more than one water outage per week. In contrast, 52.6% of households in the West Bank did not experience water cuts, while 27.2% experienced multiple outages per week.

Palestinians face significant difficulties in accessing daily necessities due to the blockade. The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), developed by the FAO to assess the food experiences of adults, shows that from 2014 to 2016, the average rate of moderate to severe food insecurity among the population was 26.3%, which remained consistent from 2017 to 2019. According to a 2020 survey by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the national average for food insecurity rose to 37.9%. This figure varies by region: in Gaza, food insecurity reached 65.9% in 2020, compared to 16.57% in the West Bank. That same year, the rate of food insufficiency in urban areas was 39.9%, 15.22% in rural areas, and 57.59% in refugee camps. Additionally, due to difficulties in obtaining necessary treatments and the challenges of maintaining treatment, 8.5% of households in Palestine reported that at least one family member was unable to receive medical care due to a lack of medication.

Check out categories of **Israeli Violence, and Social Life and Welfare** to access the figures in this section



Settler-Colonial Violence

Israel's ongoing settler-colonial project continues through systematic violence against Palestinians. As the number of settlements, colonies, and settler populations has grown, so has the violence inflicted upon Palestinians. Both Israeli authorities and settler-colonialists regularly violate international humanitarian and human rights laws. According to international law, Israel is responsible for maintaining public order and security in the territories it occupies and for safeguarding the civilian population (ICRC, 1949). Thus, the forcible displacement of civilians, whether individually or collectively, is explicitly prohibited. Despite these obligations, Israel has, for years, disregarded international law by expanding its settler presence in occupied territories and implementing a de facto annexation policy against Palestinians. This annexation is further supported by various forms of violence perpetrated by Israeli occupation authorities and settler-colonialists against Palestinians. Numerous reports from international organizations, such as Amnesty International and B'Tselem, have documented these acts of violence, and additional data reflects Israel's detention of Palestinian civilians.

A report by Amnesty International identifies 12 distinct violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws committed by Israel (2019, pp. 31-34), the first of which is the violation of Palestinians' right to life.

Evidence shows that, regardless of whether active warfare is ongoing or not, Israel has consistently targeted civilians since 1948. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), between 2008 and 2024, Israeli forces and settler-colonialists have killed approximately 7000 Palestinians, excluding casualties from the events of October 7.¹ Furthermore, the PCBS reports that, as of August 2024, the number of civilians killed by Israeli occupation forces since October 7 exceeds 40,000.

The Zionist regime's frequent violations of Palestinians' rights to personal liberty, security, and equality before the law are well-documented. According to Yesh Din, a human rights organization established in Israel and led by volunteers, 81% of police investigations into incidents of Israelis harming Palestinians or damaging their property between 2005 and 2023 were unsuccessful, and 93.7% of investigations in the West Bank were closed without indictments. This lack of accountability signals to Israeli settlers that legal consequences for unlawful actions against Palestinians are unlikely. Israeli authorities continue to overlook legal protections for Palestinians, who, under international law, are entitled to protection. Local human rights organizations periodically report on this ongoing situation.²

1 OCHA, Data on Casualties. Retrieved from: <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>.

2 For more information see: Yesh Din, Law Enforcement on Israeli Civilians in the West Bank (Settler Violence) reports; Amnesty reports; B'Tselem.

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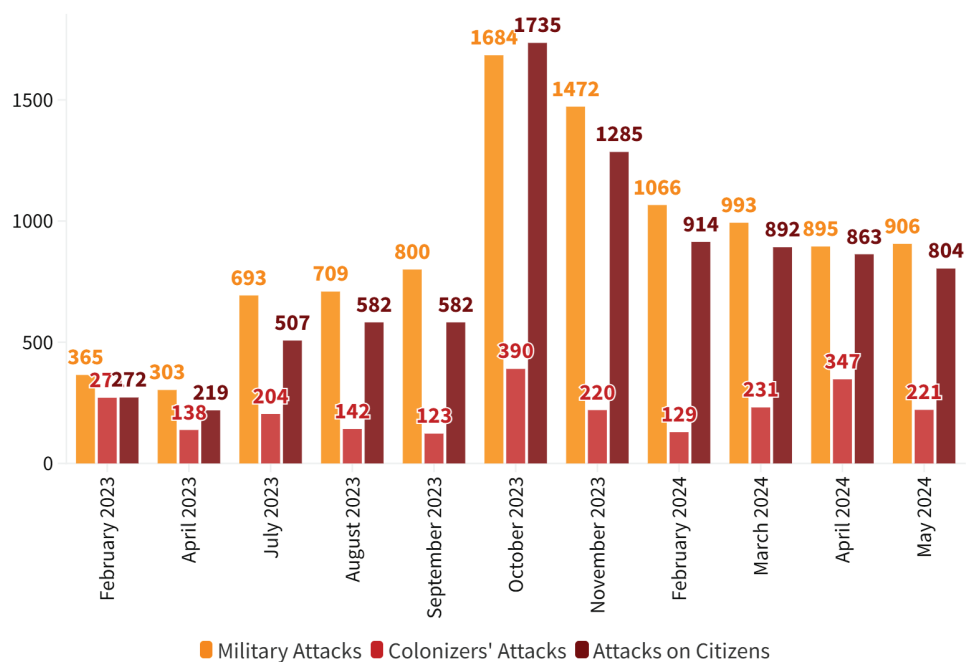


Figure 37. Number of Military Attacks, Colonizer's Attacks and the Attacks on Citizens (2023-2024)

Source: Created by the author based on CWRC infographics. Retrieved from: <https://cwrc.ps/page-797-en.html>.

Note: These data cover the West Bank and Jerusalem.

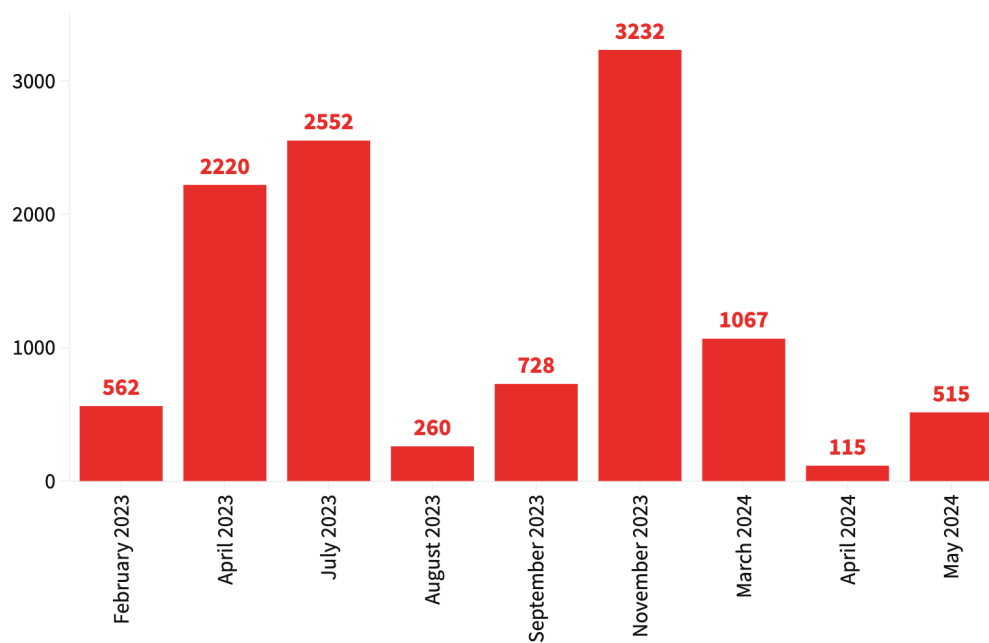


Figure 38. Number of Trees Uprooted by the Occupation in the West Bank and Jerusalem (2023-2024)

Source: Created by the author based on CWRC infographics. Retrieved from: <https://cwrc.ps/page-797-en.html>.

Note: Includes the West Bank and Jerusalem.

While Palestinians in Gaza cannot leave the area, those in the West Bank face significant challenges even when traveling locally.

Palestinians' right to an effective remedy and a fair trial is another frequently violated right. In 2022, no action was taken against Israelis who harmed Palestinians, and in 2023, 57.5% of Palestinian victims did not file complaints against those responsible (Yesh Din, 2024). Between 2005 and 2023, only 3% of cases related to ideologically motivated attacks by Jewish individuals resulted in convictions, a strong indication that Israeli authorities obstruct legal channels for Palestinians seeking justice.

Palestinians also face severe restrictions on their freedom of movement. This infringement is closely related to violations of the rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association. While Palestinians in Gaza cannot leave the area, those in the West Bank face significant challenges even when traveling locally. Military checkpoints regularly impede their passage, often accompanied by violence. Palestinians are perceived as inherently "dangerous," and gatherings of any kind are restricted. This perception is institutionalized in Military Order No. 101, titled "Order Regarding Prohibition of Incitement and Hostile Propaganda," which permits any gathering of ten or more Palestinians to be deemed "political" and, therefore, prohibited (B'Tselem, 2011). The vague definition of "political" grants occupation authorities extensive powers to suppress Palestinians' freedom of expression, protest, and assembly, thus rejecting their fundamental rights through military order.

Amnesty International report (2022) reveals that between 1967 and 2021, over 400 Palestinian aid and solidarity organizations reporting on human rights violations and providing medical and legal aid were declared illegal by Israel without legitimate justification (p. 13). Alongside movement restrictions, Palestinians' right to healthcare is frequently violated. Health services for Palestinians in occupied territories face severe limitations (Amnesty, 2022). In Gaza, patients requiring treatment outside the area or even needing medication must obtain Israeli permission (WHO, 2020). Although crossing into Egypt does not require Israeli permission and only necessitates Egyptian authorization, Egypt rarely permits this option for Gazans. In contrast, Israelis living in Israel do not face such human rights violations, which underscores the extensive rights violations against Palestinians. Israel operates as an apartheid regime (Amnesty, 2022), systematically discriminating against Palestinians in Gaza and other occupied territories (Amnesty, 2019). Israel's policies on settlements, which it actively promotes or allows through inaction, violate Palestinians' rights to equality and non-discrimination. This settler-colonial policy also violates Palestinians' right to adequate, decent housing. The practice of establishing settlements directly denies their housing rights.

The United Nations' 2001 Declaration on the Fourth Geneva Convention reaffirms that Israeli settlements in Palestine violate international humanitarian law while highlighting their illegality. The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an occupying power from forcibly displacing the population in occupied territories (ICRC, 1949). Nonetheless, Israeli authorities continue to issue demolition orders forcibly evict Palestinians from their

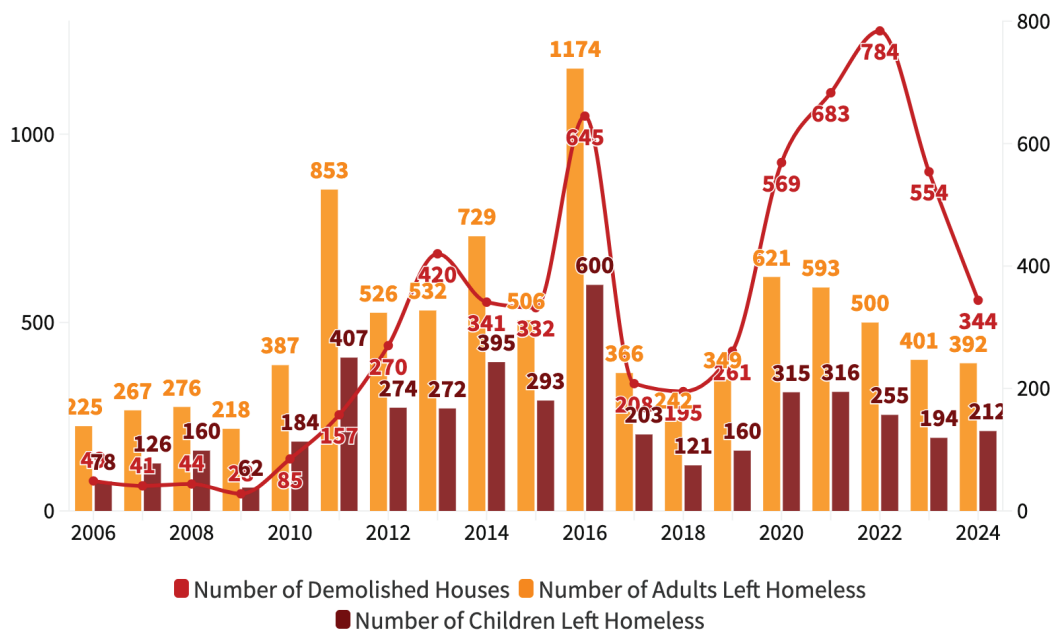


Figure 39. House Demolitions by Israel on the Grounds of Illegality (2006-2024)

Source: B'tselem, House Demolitions Database: Demolition on the pretext of unlawful construction, 2023.

Note: These data cover the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

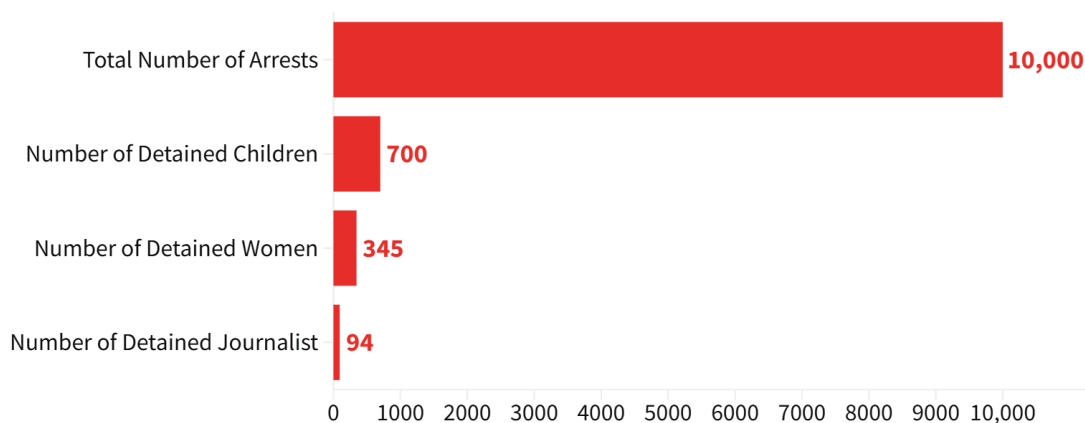


Figure 40. Arrests by Israel (7 October 2023 - 12 August 2024)

Source: Palestine Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, Summary of detention campaigns in the West Bank since the beginning of the genocide.

Note: Does not include arrests in the Gaza Strip.

homes. They also damage essential infrastructure, such as water and electricity, depriving Palestinians of basic needs and pressuring them to abandon their homes. When settlements and outposts are established in an area, violence by settler-colonialists and the Israeli military against Palestinian civilians often intensifies, with homes raided and seized.³

In addition to demolition orders, evacuation orders are issued in certain areas, forcing entire communities to relocate. One example is the nomad communities that face settler-colonial violence and are targeted by displacement orders of the occupation authorities. The Palestinian Bedouins are semi-nomadic communities living in rural areas of the West Bank, primarily engaged in agriculture and livestock farming. Before the establishment of Israel, Bedouins made up 25% of the population in the region, and under Israeli rule, they constituted 10% of the minority Palestinian Arab population within Israel (Abu-Saad, 2005). In Israeli-occupied areas, numerous restrictions have been imposed on Bedouins, severely limiting their agricultural activities and freedom of movement. As a result, many have faced forced displacement. This de facto annexation further exemplifies Israel's colonial practices, as settlers benefit from policies that allow them to establish agricultural cooperatives, such as Moshav and Kibbutz (Abu-Saad,

2005, p. 122). Abu-Saad (2005) observed that, in the early 2000s, these communities attempted to reclaim their lands through legal channels. However, the region's policy of Judaization obstructed these efforts. With the increasing concentration of Jewish settlements in rural areas during the 2000s, pressure on the remaining Bedouins has only intensified.

A 2017 OCHA study on Bedouin communities reported that 46 Bedouin communities were facing forced displacement.⁴ Between 2009 and 2017, Israeli forces and settler-colonialists conducted 114 demolition incidents in areas where these Bedouin communities lived, destroying 668 structures. These demolitions displaced 1538 people, leaving 73% of the Bedouin population—approximately 5,975 out of a total of 8174—as refugees. Due to settler-colonial violence and demolitions carried out by the Zionist regime, Palestinians are forcibly displaced within their own country, often ending up in refugee camps. According to CWRC and other human rights organizations, between 2022 and 2023, 23 Bedouin communities in the rural West Bank were forcibly displaced by militias from settler-colonial outposts (Sha'aban, 2023). After October 7, intensifying pressures and violence in areas with settlements led to the forced displacement of an additional 40 Bedouin communities by August 2024.⁵ Since October 7, a total of

3 See: AA, Yahudi yerleşimciler Kudüs'te Filistinli ailenin evine el koydu, 05.03.2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/yahudi-yerlesimciler-kuduste-filistinli-ailenin-evine-el-koydu/1409933>.

4 OCHA, 46 Bedouin Communities at Risk of Forcible Transfer in the Central West Bank: A Vulnerability Profile, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.ochaopt.org/page/46-bedouin-communities-risk-forcible-transfer-central-west-bank-vulnerability-profile>.

5 AA, Filistin: Batı Şeria'da yerinden edilen bedevi toplulukların sayısı 40'a ulaştı, 2024. Retrieved from: <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/filistin-bati-seriada-yerinden-edilen-bedevi-topluluklarin-sayisi-40a-ulasti/3307160>.

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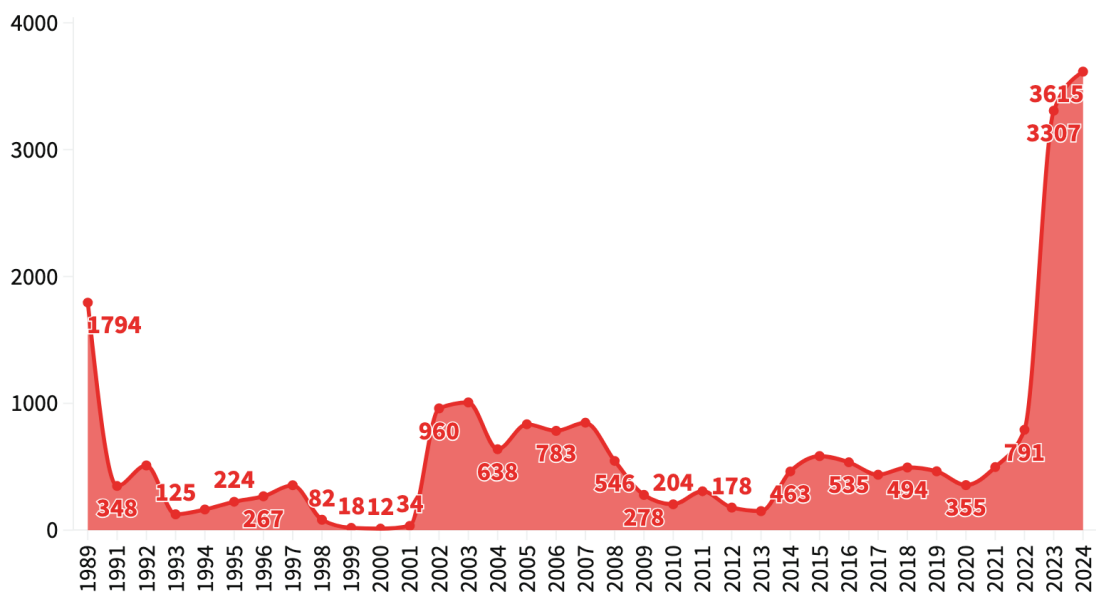


Figure 41. Administrative Detentions by Israel (1989-2024)

Source: B'Tselem,, Statistics on Administrative Detention in the Occupied Territories.

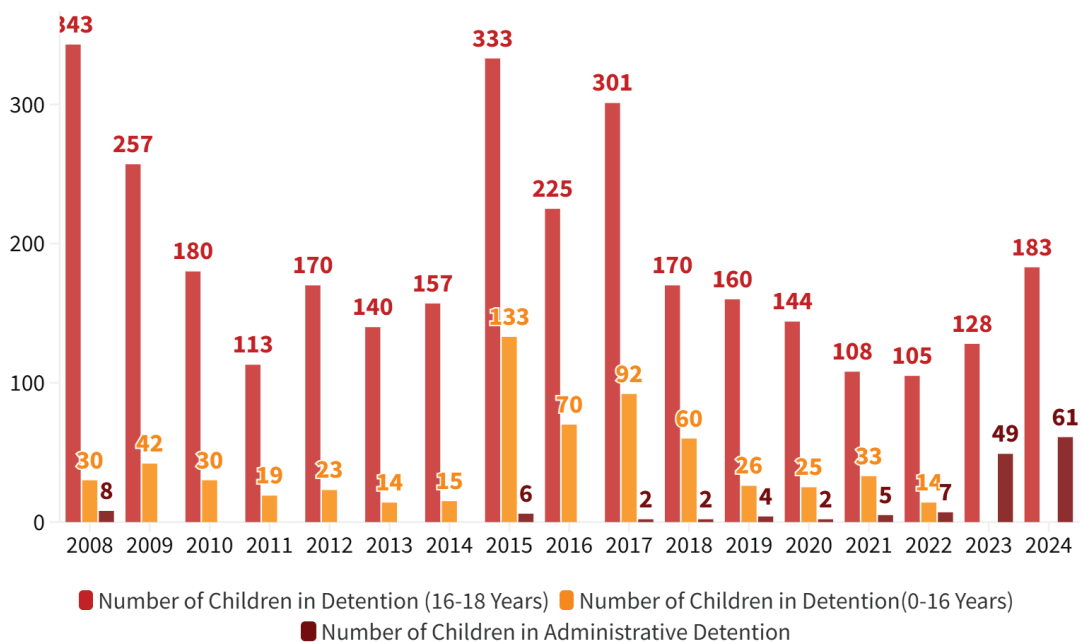


Figure 42. Number of Children in Detention and Administrative Detention (2008-2024)

Source: B'Tselem, Statistics on Palestinian Minors in Israeli Custody.

Another method of violence employed by Israeli occupation forces is arbitrary arrest, often conducted through administrative detention—a process of detaining individuals without charge or trial.

7611 attacks have been recorded across the West Bank and Jerusalem, with 6277 being military assaults and 334 committed by settler-colonialists. In these attacks, seven Palestinians were killed by settler gunfire.

The given examples also show the occupation regime's broader efforts to seize local production while also violating Palestinian labor rights. Numerous international reports document attacks on agricultural lands and commercial areas, targeting Palestinian farmers and producers. Since 2015, data on settler-colonial violence show that most attacks have targeted private Palestinian property. Civilians are the second-most frequent targets, followed by attacks on agricultural lands, especially during harvest season. Beyond farmland and farmers, attacks by settler-colonialists against trees, particularly olive trees, are also notable. Since 1967, tens of thousands of olive trees have reportedly been uprooted or burned by occupation authorities and settlers. These attacks on trees have severely impacted the livelihoods of Palestinian farmers. In the West Bank, agricultural lands are routinely targeted, and over a two-month period in 2018 alone, more than 2000 trees were damaged, resulting in losses exceeding \$100,000 for affected farmers (B'Tselem,

2018). In 2023, settler militias uprooted or damaged 21,731 trees (CWRC, 2024b), and in the first half of 2024, 9957 trees, including 4097 olive trees, were recorded as uprooted. These attacks, which have become routine for settler-colonialists, occur with impunity, as Israeli security forces typically fail to take preventive action, often turning a blind eye or even participating. Even when Palestinian farmers file complaints, their grievances rarely reach the courts; between 2005 and 2009, not a single complaint regarding these attacks in the West Bank resulted in police investigation or indictment (Yesh Din, 2009).

Another method of violence employed by Israeli occupation forces is arbitrary arrest, often conducted through administrative detention—a process of detaining individuals without charge or trial. This practice has been a tool of psychological and physical oppression for thousands of Palestinians. While Israel claims these detentions are necessary for security, Amnesty International reports that administrative detention is frequently used as a form of political imprisonment, facilitating the arbitrary arrest of Palestinians (2012, p. 11). Detainees are given no opportunity to defend themselves, access legal representation, or even be informed of the reasons for their arrest. Administrative detentions can be renewed indefinitely, leaving detainees uncertain about their release dates (Amnesty, 2012, p. 12; B'Tselem). B'Tselem has documented cases where detainees have been denied family visitation rights for years, including cases involving detained children and released prisoners who are re-arrested under administrative detention.⁶

⁶ For more: B'tselem Updates. Accessed: <https://www.btselem.org/ota/131/all>.

According to B'Tselem's report on administrative detention, which was published on June 23, 2024, over 22,000 such detentions have occurred in the West Bank and Jerusalem since 1989. The numbers surged during the First and Second Intifadas, and in 2023, following October 7, the rate of administrative detentions reached its highest recorded level, with the number of detentions in the first half of 2024 surpassing the total for the entire previous year. While administrative detentions typically last up to six months, most are extended at least once. In 2023, the duration of these detentions increased, and by 2024, many administrative detentions had been extended to 6-12 months.

Importantly, these detentions are not limited to adults; children are also frequently detained. Data indicates that most detained children are aged 16-18, although children younger than 16 have also been arrested. The application of administrative detention to minors is especially concerning, as many children are repeatedly detained without any stated reason. Amnesty's report also details the abuse and torture Palestinian prisoners experience during their detention, as documented through interviews with former detainees (2012, pp. 21-37). Additionally, detention is sometimes used as a tool for forced displacement, with detainees offered release on the condition that they leave

Palestinian territories (Amnesty, 2012, pp. 35-37). According to recent data from the Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, 10,000 Palestinians are currently imprisoned in Israeli jails, including 700 children and 345 women. Since October 7, the number of detained journalists has also risen, with 94 journalists arrested and 53 still in detention. However, Israel has not provided information regarding arrests in Gaza, particularly following October 7, which means that these data do not include detainees from Gaza. The commission estimates that, beyond those arrested in the West Bank, at least 4000 Palestinians have been detained in Gaza.

For decades, Palestinians have endured a daily onslaught of violence from occupation authorities and settler-colonialists. From the right to work and self-defense to fundamental rights such as housing, freedom of thought, and even the right to life, a wide range of Palestinian humanitarian and human rights continue to be violated by Israeli occupation authorities. When analyzed over the years or by month, data on this violence reveal a steady increase in aggression since 2022. The surge in violence outside Gaza since October 7, driven by both occupation forces and settler-colonialists, reflects how October 7 has been used as a pretext for intensifying these violations.

Check out the category of
Israeli Violence to access the
figures in this section



Palestinian Diaspora

The term Nakba, or “Great Catastrophe,” refers to the forced displacement of Palestinians by Zionist forces and Jewish militias during the establishment of Israel in 1948. Following the official creation of the Israeli state, violence against the Palestinian population escalated, leading to mass expulsions beginning on May 15, 1948. Nearly one million Palestinians were driven from their birthplaces and homes, with almost 80% of the population displaced and rendered refugees. The Nakba of 1948 signifies the beginning of both the Palestinian refugee crisis and the Palestinian diaspora.

In response to this crisis, the United Nations established the Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in 1950 to address the refugee issue. Over time, as conflicts evolved, the locations of Palestinian refugee concentrations shifted, and UNRWA established refugee camps accordingly. The Palestinian diaspora began to form as displaced Palestinians moved within Palestine and to neighboring Arab countries. Today, refugees displaced in 1948 continue to relocate within the West Bank and Gaza Strip as internally displaced persons. Initially, Lebanon hosted the largest population of Palestinian refugees, but after repeated Israeli attacks in the region, many refugees relocated to Jordan. Social and economic factors have since diversified migration destinations, further spreading the Palestinian diaspora worldwide.

According to UNRWA, the number of registered Palestinian refugees has risen from 750,000 in 1950 to 5.9 million in 2023. By

2024, the global Palestinian population has reached 14.8 million, with 37.8% living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the majority—6.3 million—residing in Arab countries. Of the Palestinian population in Arab countries, a significant portion remains in refugee camps. Additionally, 1.1 million Palestinians live in other foreign countries, comprising 7.5% of the global Palestinian population. Of the registered Palestinian refugees, 1.5 million—comprising one-third of the total—currently live in 58 refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, and the West Bank. These camps are occasionally targeted by attacks from the Israeli authorities, which demonstrates a broader objective not only to suppress Palestinians in these regions but to dismantle the Palestinian identity as a whole.

Known for their deep attachment to their land, Palestinians are generally reluctant to leave unless compelled by force. However, migration driven by social, economic, and opportunity disparities is an undeniable reality, as is emigration to offer support during times of crisis. According to a survey by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS, 2010), 6.7% of Palestinian families reported that at least one member had migrated. Given the escalation of conflict since 2010, this percentage has likely increased. Additionally, data shows that only 13.3% of Palestinians between the ages of 15 and 59 would opt to migrate under non-compulsory circumstances (UNFPA, 2017, p. 85). Despite this reluctance to leave their homeland, the

THE OUTLOOK OF PALESTINE

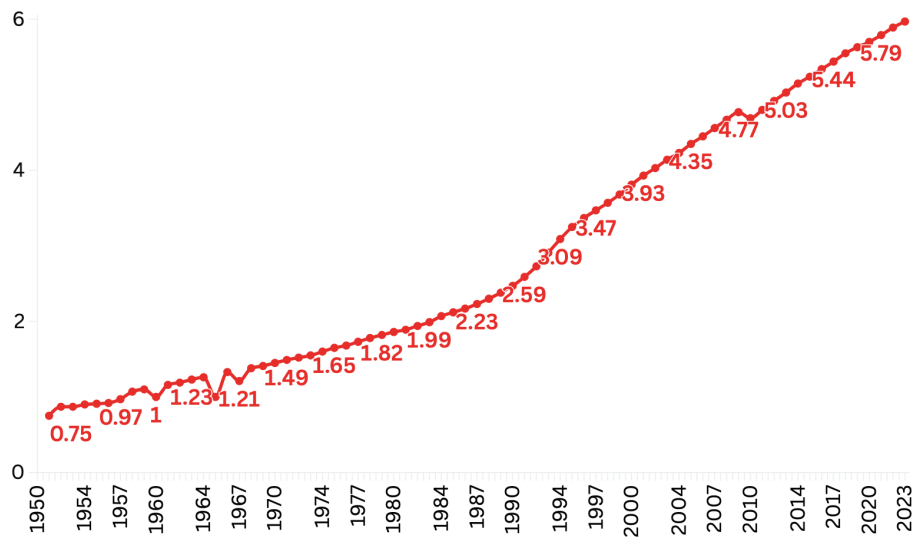
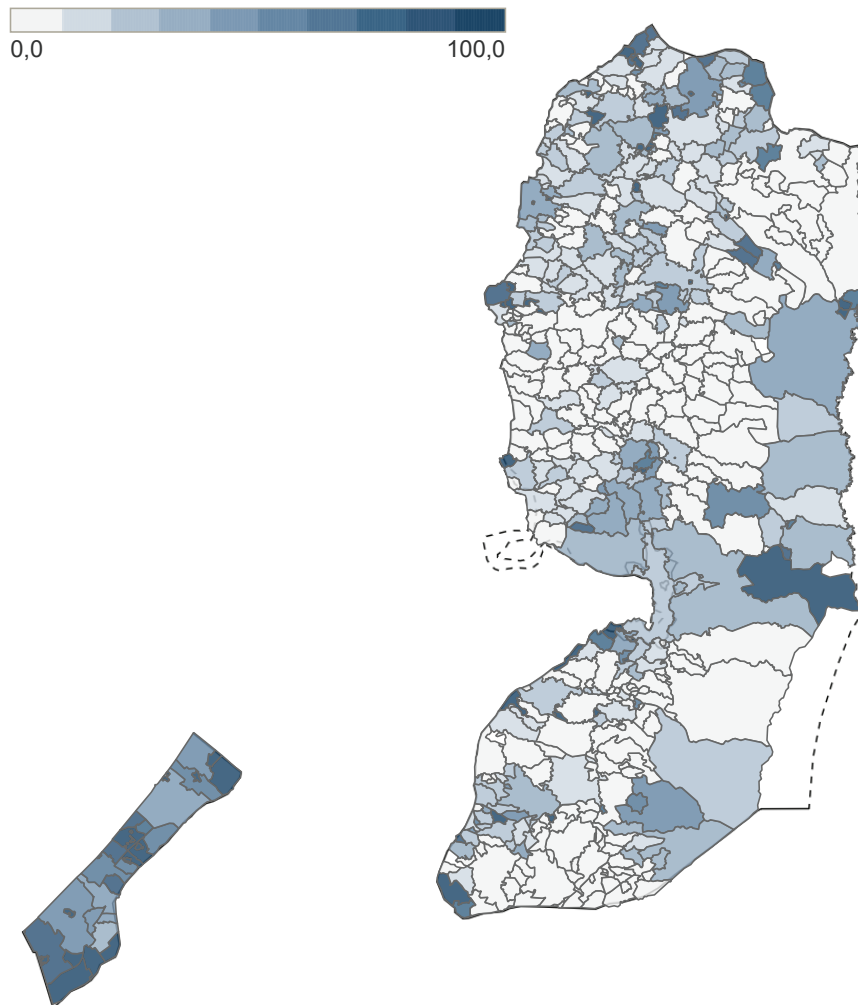


Figure 43. Registered Palestinian Refugees According to UNRWA Records (Million People, 1951-2023)

Source: UNHCR, Refugee Data Finder, Retrieved from: [at: https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=jb4QZY](https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=jb4QZY)



Map 7. Distribution of Refugees inside Palestine by Regions (2017)

Source: PCBS, One Indicator Map, Population Census 2017.

Known for their deep attachment to their land, Palestinians are generally reluctant to leave unless compelled by force.

occupation regime has implemented various methods to pressure Palestinians into emigration. Amnesty International (2012) documents a striking example: Palestinians held in administrative detention—detained without charge or trial—are sometimes offered release if they agree to leave Palestine. While Palestinians' strong connection to their homeland generally prevails, some detainees have accepted such offers to support their families.

Examining the migration patterns within the Palestinian diaspora reveals that most Palestinian migrants originate from those initially displaced in 1948, along with a significant number of forcibly displaced refugees residing in Jordan (PCBS, 2024a). These mass migrations stem directly from Israel's policies of forced displacement. Reports based on interviews with Palestinians

indicate a widespread desire to return to Palestine, highlighting a shared narrative rooted in the Nakba of 1948. For Palestinians in the diaspora, this aspiration to return is fundamentally tied to their humanitarian right under international refugee law.

International refugee law enshrines refugees' right to return to their homeland (Boling, 2001). Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, UN General Assembly Resolution 194 established that Palestinian refugees hold the legal right to return to their land, with responsible authorities required to compensate them for their losses. However, the Israeli state has since seized land belonging to Palestinians displaced in the Nakba and continues to deny their right of return in defiance of international law (Aral, 2019, p. 94). Reports suggest that the rights of the diaspora have been compromised during negotiations between Palestinian representatives and Israeli authorities (Aral, 2019, p. 97). The Oslo Accords, which contributed to the fragmentation of Palestinian governance, also failed to address the needs of the diaspora. The status of the Palestinian diaspora remains yet another facet of Israel's ongoing violations of international law.

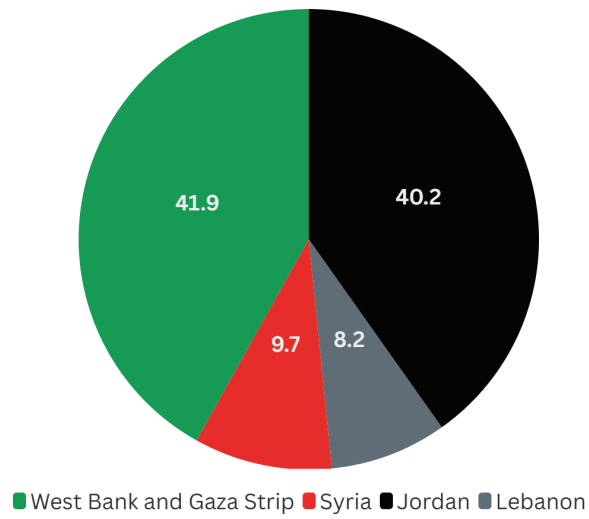


Figure 44. Distribution of Palestinian Refugees by Place of Residence according to UNRWA Records (%). (2022).

Source: UNRWA, Registered Population Dashboard.

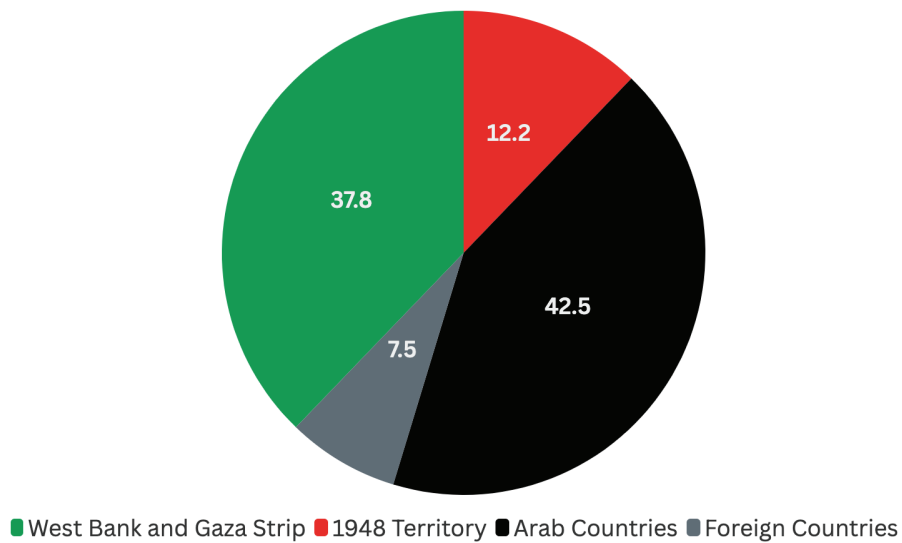


Figure 45. Distribution of the Total Palestinian Population Worldwide (%). (2024).

Source: PCBS, The Conditions of the Palestinian Population on the Occasion of the World Population Day, 11/07/2024.

Since October 7

The genocide perpetrated by Israeli occupying forces against the people of Gaza has continued for over a year. The relentless attacks by the occupation regime have left every household in Gaza grieving, with orphans, widows, and parents mourning the loss of loved ones. Each Palestinian carries a unique, invaluable life story; they are far more than statistics. The figures presented here starkly record the undeniable reality of genocide and reflect the occupation regime's maneuvers to complete its territorial ambitions following the attacks initiated on October 7.

Since the state of emergency and declaration of war, the number of settler outposts established by occupying militias has surged, which includes not only an increase in new outposts but also the legalization of existing ones and the proposal of an additional 13,730 ones (Shaa'ban, 2023). According to the PCBS, the intensity of the current attacks far surpasses that of the Nakba in 1948. Before October 7, Gaza was home to 2.2 million people, 66% of whom were descendants of Palestinians displaced during the 1948 Nakba.

As of mid-2023, Gaza's child population was 1,046,040. Between October 7, 2023, and August 2024, 16,365 children lost their lives to Israeli forces. By August 2024, the total death toll in Gaza had reached 40,265, with children accounting for 40.6% of this figure—an average of four children killed every hour since October 7. In 2020, there were 26,349 orphans in Gaza. Between October 7, 2023, and April 2024, an additional 17,000 children

became orphans (PCBS, 2024b). Furthermore, an estimated 10,000 people remain missing, with 47% of them women and children (August 2024). The deliberate targeting of children and hospitals by Israeli forces is well-documented. As of August 2024, 33 hospitals, 64 health centers, and 161 healthcare facilities have become inoperable, with 131 ambulances also destroyed. Since the start of the attacks, 885 healthcare workers have lost their lives. Approximately 10,000 cancer patients now face life-threatening risks, and an additional 3000 require urgent medical treatment abroad (PCBS, 2024b). Moreover, nearly 100,000 individuals have been infected with Hepatitis B, while infectious diseases have spread among 1,660,942 people.

Imprisonment has also been a prominent tactic of violence employed by occupation forces, especially in the West Bank. Leveraging the October 7 attacks, the Zionist regime intensified control over the active population there, arresting 10,500 people in the West Bank and 5000 in Gaza. In 2023, 1085 children were detained, with 500 of these arrests occurring in Gaza after October 7 (PCBS, 2024c). Between October 7, 2023, and May 2024, 243 mosques were completely destroyed, 321 were damaged, and three churches were demolished (PCBS, 2024d). Additionally, 195 government centers and 206 archaeological and heritage sites were destroyed (PCBS, 2024b). By the same period, 70% of Gaza's residential areas had been entirely demolished, amounting to the obliteration of 150,000 housing units.

As of May 2024, 57% of Gaza's agricultural land had been destroyed, 70% of livestock had perished, and fishing had become impossible due to environmental devastation (OCHA, 2024). Research from the Famine Review Committee confirms that Gaza is enduring a severe famine (GNAFC, 2024). By June 2024, the entire population faced acute food insecurity. Between February and April 2024, 80% of households in the Rafah region relied on food aid, yet by June, this figure had declined to 25% in Rafah, 57.5% in Gaza and North Gaza, and 48.3% in southern areas such as Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis (IPC, 2024, p. 13).

The famine continues to worsen as occupation forces block humanitarian aid. According to recent reports, 3500 children are at risk of death due to malnutrition and starvation (PCBS, 2024b). The UNRWA reports that 90% of children aged 6 to 23 months, along with pregnant women, suffer from severe malnutrition. Gaza is also experiencing a critical water shortage, with 2.15 million people—96% of the population—facing extreme hunger as of August 14, 2024, marking the 313th day of assaults by occupying forces (OCHA, 2024).

Another significant consequence of the attacks has been the devastating impact on education. The occupation regime has rendered educational institutions non-functional, depriving Gazans of their fundamental right to education. With a predominantly young population, Gaza has been completely cut off from resources for education. According to PCBS (2024b), 93 schools and universities have been completely destroyed, and 330 have sustained partial damage. Since the beginning of the Israeli attacks, all schools and universities in Gaza have

remained closed, depriving about 620,000 of education. Approximately 88,000 university students have also been unable to attend, and the academic progress of 39,000 students eligible for the Tawjihi this year has been halted.

Since the onset of the attacks, 8227 students in Gaza and 67 students in the West Bank have lost their lives, 8294 students killed in total. Injuries among students have reached 13,582, with 99% of the injured residing in Gaza. In the West Bank, 178 students have been detained. Among university students, 647 have been killed, and 1312 have been injured, with 99% of these cases occurring in Gaza. The total number of teachers and school administrators killed in Gaza and the West Bank stands at 497, with 391 fatalities in Gaza and one in the West Bank. In Gaza, 105 university staff members have been killed. Meanwhile, in the West Bank, the occupation regime has intensified its unlawful actions, allegedly using connections to Hamas as justification. Over 111 teachers and administrators from West Bank schools have been detained by occupation forces, along with more than 179 university students.

One of the most challenging aspects of post-war recovery will likely be addressing demographic impacts. Given the severe post-traumatic stress Palestinians will endure, trends in marriage and birth rates are expected to shift significantly from pre-war patterns. Additionally, it remains uncertain how the

The famine continues to worsen as occupation forces block humanitarian aid.

One of the most challenging aspects of post-war recovery will likely be addressing demographic impacts.

destruction of living spaces and the intense confinement of the Palestinian population will be overcome. In previous years, efforts were made to facilitate exits from Gaza via the Rafah crossing, yet now, Gazans have nowhere to turn. Recent massacres have even seen Gazans seeking refuge in tents near the sea targeted and killed by occupation forces.

To access
the figures in
this section



EXPERT OPINIONS



The Socio-Economic Situation of Palestine

Dr. Ola Awad

President of PCBS

Since October 7, 2023, Israeli occupation forces have been conducting extermination against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. Massacres, the destruction of buildings and infrastructure, and the collapse of basic health and food services have accompanied this. To date, more than 50,000 people have been martyred or are missing, and around 2 million Palestinians, out of approximately 2.2 million who were living in the Gaza Strip before the Israeli aggression, have been displaced. However, the long-term damage caused by this aggression, which will leave profound and negative economic, demographic, social, and psychological impacts, will affect most segments of the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip. It is expected that these effects will last for a long time after the end of the aggression.

Demographic Outlook Before October 7

Data indicates that on the eve of the Israeli occupation aggression against the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, approximately 5.5 million Palestinians resided in the State of Palestine, of whom around 3.2 million lived

in the West Bank and about 2.2 million in the Gaza Strip¹. The population of the Gaza Strip is distributed across five Palestinian governorates that make up the Gaza Strip. According to mid-2023 estimates, around 1.2 million Palestinians lived in the northern Gaza governorates (Jabalia) and Gaza (known as North Wadi Gaza), while the remaining 1 million resided in Khan Yunis, Deir Al-Balah, and Rafah governorates.

The age structure of the population in the State of Palestine indicates that it is a young society. Approximately 44% of the population is under the age of 18, and around 65% is under the age of 30. Meanwhile, the elderly population aged 65 and above constitutes only about 3.5%.

Population after October 7

Since the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, approximately 41,000 Palestinians have been martyred, accounting for about 1.9% of the total population of the Gaza Strip². Among them, around 16,000 were children, and about 11,000 were women. Additionally, there are around 10,000 missing persons. Several thousand

1 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023. Palestinians at the End of 2023. Ramallah - Palestine.

2 Daily Report on the Impact of the Israeli Aggression in Palestine since October 7, 2023. <https://site.moh.ps/index/CategoryView/CategoryId/24/Language/ar>

Palestinians have been forced to leave the Gaza Strip since the aggression began. Furthermore, 34 people were martyred as a result of starvation, and about 3500 children are at risk of death due to malnutrition and food shortages. The number of injured has reached approximately 100,000, 70% of whom are women and children. The number of martyrs in the West Bank reached 685.

Based on this data, the estimated growth rate in the Gaza Strip for 2023 is expected to decline from around 2.7% (per PCBS estimates, 2023) to about 1% in 2024, particularly after mid-year. This decline is mainly due to a significant reduction in birth rates as couples avoid having children due to the prevailing conditions, fears for the health of mothers and children, and a substantial drop in the number of new marriages during the Israeli aggression.

It is also expected that the age and gender structure of the population will be directly affected due to the Israeli army's deliberate targeting of specific population groups, such as children and youth, leading to a distortion in the population pyramid, especially at its base. There is a medium to long-term impact expected on the age structure, reflected in a decrease in the number of births in the coming years, which would otherwise form the foundation of the population pyramid due to the martyrdom and targeting of the age group that contributes to childbirth or is expected to contribute to childbirth in the coming years.

Living Conditions Before October 7

The poverty rate among individuals in the Gaza Strip reached 63.6% during the first three quarters (January – September) of 2023. According to Deep Poverty, the percentage of individuals suffering from poverty was 43.5%. Compared to 2017, there was a noticeable increase in the poverty rate in the Gaza Strip.³

The poverty rate in the northern governorates (North Gaza and Gaza) of the Gaza Strip was 60.9%, while in the central and southern governorates (Dier Al-Balah, Khan Yunis, and Rafah), it was 66.8%. Furthermore, 39.1% of individuals in the northern governorates suffered from deep poverty, compared to 48.6% in the central and southern governorates.

According to PCBS (2024f), the national poverty line indicators show that 10.3% of the people in the West Bank were poor, and 3.7% of individuals were poor according to the deep poverty line. After October 7, the percentage of poverty in the West Bank increased as aggression significantly affected living levels. In 2023, the rate of poor individuals in the West Bank rose to 11.5%, with 4.3% of individuals living below the deep poverty line.

The Outlook of the Education System in Palestine

Before the October 7 aggression,⁴ the number of schools in the academic year 2022/2023 in Palestine reached 3190, including 2338 government schools, 380

3 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024. Main Findings of Living Standards in the West Bank (Expenditure, Consumption and Poverty), 2023. Ramallah – Palestine.

4 Ministry of Education, 2023. Education Census Database for scholastic years 2022/2023. Ramallah-Palestine.

UNRWA schools, and 472 private schools. By region, the number of schools in the West Bank reached 2394, including 1896 government schools, 96 UNRWA schools, and 402 private schools. The number of schools in the Gaza Strip reached 796, including 442 government schools, 284 UNRWA schools, and 70 private schools. The number of students in Palestinian schools for the same academic year reached about 1.38 million, and when we examine them by region, we see that there are about 775 thousand students in the West Bank schools and about 608 thousand students in the Gaza Strip schools. On the other hand, the number of teachers in Palestinian schools for the 2022/2023 academic year is approximately 40,000 in the West Bank and around 22,000 in the Gaza Strip.

As for higher education in Palestine, the number of higher education institutions in Palestine amounted to 50 in the academic year 2022/2023, with 33 institutions in the West Bank and 17 institutions in the Gaza Strip, in addition to an open education university whose centers are distributed between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. About 226 thousand students were enrolled in Palestinian higher education institutions, with 139 thousand male and female students in the West Bank and 87 thousand male and female students in the Gaza Strip. The number of workers in higher education institutions in Palestine amounted to about 17,000 male and female workers in the academic year 2022/2023, with 12,000 male and female workers in the West Bank and 5000 male and female workers in the Gaza Strip.

The Impact of October 7 on the Public and Higher Education in Palestine

The number of martyrs among students enrolled in schools in Palestine reached 9915, including more than 9839 martyrs in the Gaza Strip and 76 martyrs in the West Bank.⁵ The number of martyrs since the beginning of the Israeli occupation aggression among students enrolled in higher education institutions in Palestine reached 685, including 651 students in the Gaza Strip and 34 students in the West Bank. The number of martyrs among teachers and administrators in schools in Palestine reached 413, including 411 martyrs during the raids on the Gaza Strip and two martyrs in the West Bank. While 111 employees working in higher education institutions in the Gaza Strip were martyred as a result of the ongoing Israeli air strikes. More than 62 public schools have been completely damaged since the beginning of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, while 191 schools have been attacked and vandalized, including 126 public schools and 65 UNRWA schools. At the same time, 69 schools in the West Bank have been vandalized since the beginning of the Israeli aggression.

More than 35 university buildings in the Gaza Strip have been completely damaged. In comparison, 57 university buildings have been partially damaged, and more than 20 universities in the Gaza Strip have been severely damaged since the beginning of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip.

5 Violations by the Occupation Against Education, Palestinian Ministry of Education, 2024. <https://www.moe.edu.ps/prog/occupation-violations>

Meanwhile, five universities in the West Bank have been subjected to repeated raids, vandalism, and tampering with their properties.

The Outlook of Health Situation in the Gaza Strip

As of October 2023, 36 hospitals were operating in the Gaza Strip, providing secondary healthcare services to the population.⁶ However, after nearly a year of aggression, only about ten hospitals are partially operational, functioning with minimal equipment and essential medical supplies required to provide necessary healthcare services.

In general terms, the health situation in the Gaza Strip before the Israeli aggression was relatively good. According to the 2020 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (PCBS, 2021b), nearly 100% of births in the Gaza Strip occurred under the supervision of qualified medical staff. Additionally, the rates of under-five mortality (13.7 per 1000 live births) and infant mortality (12.7 per 1000 live births) reflected the effectiveness of healthcare services in the Gaza Strip before the Israeli aggression.

Around 10,000 cancer patients face the risk of death and are in need of treatment, and 3000 patients with various illnesses require treatment abroad. Moreover, infectious diseases have spread among displaced individuals. Data also indicates that 500 medical personnel have been martyred and 310 medical staff have been detained, in addition to the fact that most hospitals and health centers are now out of service.

The Outlook of the Economy in Palestine

Before October 7, the Palestinian economy was an economy that suffered from variation and fluctuation in the growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP), which reflects the weakness and fragility of the economy and its dependence mainly on the outside world and foreign aid (PCBS, 2024g). Hence, the Palestinian economy has witnessed a series of repeated aggressions in addition to different crises; as of 1995-1999, the GDP growth rate average increased by 9%. After that, during 2000-2003, the Palestinian economy was exposed to an economic shock from the Second Intifada, where GDP decreased by 10% on average. In 2006, the Israeli occupation imposed a political and economic siege on the Gaza Strip; in addition, the Gaza Strip has been subjected to a series of consecutive aggressions, and thus, the suffocating siege on the Gaza Strip for 17 years has been depriving the Palestinian economy of about \$7 billion of tax revenues.

In 2020, Palestine and the whole world witnessed the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in the decline of GDP in Palestine to 11% compared with the previous year. The beginning of the gradual recovery of the Palestinian economy in 2021, the GDP in Palestine recorded an increase of 7% while remaining below its pre-pandemic level, mainly resulted in easing the severity of the measures resulting from the pandemic, despite the almost complete cessation of external support provided to the State of Palestine to support the budget, the level of unemployment

6 Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023. Health Statistics Database, 2022. Ramallah-Palestine.

in Palestine reached 27% in 2021, and GDP per capita reached \$3 thousand. Regarding the relationship with abroad, data indicate a deficit in the trade balance, which continues and increases with time. We note that the volume of our Palestinian imports is about five times our exports.

In 2022, GDP witnessed a slowdown by 6%. The level of recovery in the Palestinian economy during 2022 is still limited due to several factors, the most important of which is the sharp decline in external support and the continuation of deducting a part of the Palestinian tax revenues by the Israeli occupation (clearance revenues). This policy, which continued throughout the year 2021-2022, along with the Israeli occupation policy of restrictions and closures between the governorates of the West Bank, has further increased the state of recession and decline in growth rates of the Palestinian economy and harshly affected the ability of the Palestinian government to fulfill its obligations towards the Palestinian society. The continuation of Israeli measures in 2023, in addition to Israeli aggression in the last quarter of 2023, led to a severe contraction of the economy in Palestine, where GDP declined by 6% in 2023 compared with 2022.

On the other hand, the Palestinian economy is primarily a service economy, with the services sector accounting for over 70% of the GDP. The productive sectors contribute less, with agriculture representing about 7%. Agriculture plays a vital role in partially meeting the need for food consumption and providing inputs for manufacturing, though it largely depends on rainfall and limited modern techniques. The industrial sector accounts for 12% of the GDP and is a key productive activity, supporting economic development

and contributing to exports. The construction sector represents 5%, playing a crucial role in gross fixed capital formation, though it has experienced significant fluctuations. The IT sector, comprising 3.4% of GDP, is one of the most promising sectors in Palestine, while the tourism sector, with high potential, requires political stability to thrive in both the short and long term.

The Outlook of the Economy in Palestine after October 7

The factors of production, human, land, and capital in the Gaza Strip were targeted by the ongoing Israeli aggression; accordingly, the Gaza Strip shrank to 5% as a percentage share of the Palestinian economy after it constituted about 17% before the continuing Israeli aggression. This reflects the extent of the distortion in the structure of the Palestinian economy simultaneously. There is a rapid and unprecedented increase in the unemployment rate during a time of ongoing Israeli aggression. While the anticipated unemployment rate in Palestine for 2024 was 15% before the Israeli aggression, it is estimated that it will be almost 90% after the aggression, which reflects the expanding gap between the number of employed and participating persons in the labor market.

Palestine is suffering from a socio-economic and humanitarian disaster that has led to the contraction of the productive base and the distortion of Palestine's economic structure. During the first quarter of 2024 (representing the period of the ongoing aggression against the Gaza Strip and the West Bank), GDP contracted by more than 85% in the Gaza Strip and 25% in the West Bank. Also, the unemployment rate rose to 82% in

the Gaza Strip and 34% in the West Bank, bringing the unemployment rate in Palestine to 45% in the fourth quarter.

We also know that the Palestinian economy is small-sized; about 89% of the Palestinian private sector establishments employ less than five employees, i.e., small and micro establishments. During the aggression, about half of the private sector establishments have stopped or decreased their production in Palestine as a result of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The number of establishments in the Palestinian private sector is about 176,000; 56,000 in the Gaza Strip and 120,000 in the West Bank. Estimates indicate that 29% of the establishments in the West Bank have been affected by the decline or suspension of their production, which is equal to 35,000 establishments. On the other hand, most of the establishments in the Gaza Strip have ceased operations as a result of the partial or complete destruction of such establishments. Israeli aggression is ongoing in the Gaza Strip, bringing the total number of establishments that have stopped or decreased production to more than 80 thousand establishments in Palestine. Moreover, the value of losses in Palestine due to the near-total halt in production of the Gaza Strip and its repercussions on the West Bank has reached about \$4 billion over the 6-month period following the Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, which is equivalent to about \$25 million per day, excluding direct losses of property and assets.

On the sectoral level, and during the first quarter of 2024, construction activity recorded a decline of 38% (27% in the West Bank and 96% in the Gaza Strip), and agriculture activity declined by 39% (13% in the West Bank and 93% in Gaza Strip) and services

activity declined by 33% (21% in the West Bank and 80% in Gaza Strip) while industry activity dropped by 33% (27% in the West Bank and 92% in Gaza Strip).

On the external level, the trade size for the Gaza Strip before 2006 reached 23% of Palestine's total trade, yet this rate dropped below 4% in the first quarter of 2024. During the recent aggression against the Gaza Strip, supply chains to and from the Gaza Strip were halted, resulting in a health catastrophe throughout the Gaza Strip as a result of the severe shortage of medicines and health supplies as they are being provided at minimal levels of percentages not exceeding 5% of what should be actually offered to the Gaza Strip. So, there was a sharp decline in the value of goods and services exported by 30% and a drop of 29% in imports during the same period.

On the price level in Palestine, inflation rates are directly affected by price levels in Israel and the repercussions of external crises due to the significant import of consumer goods from abroad and Israel, where it is affected by three main aspects. First, we are talking about a customs envelope between the Israeli occupation and Palestine, which dictates that VAT rates remain within the margin of two percentage points. The second aspect is our lack of control over borders and crossings, thereby controlling supply chains, and the third aspect is the absence of a national currency. Thus, we remain subject to global liquidity as a result of the recent Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip and its repercussions on the West Bank. Prices in the Gaza Strip have risen sharply by more than 240% over seven months of aggression. Consequently, overall prices in Palestine have increased by 49%

Conclusion

The data show that an immediate international intervention is crucial to address the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. The international community should prioritize emergency relief efforts to provide essential medical supplies, food, and shelter to the displaced population. Moreover, long-term strategies must be developed to rebuild Gaza's infrastructure and economy, which includes investing in the reconstruction of healthcare facilities, schools, and essential

services that have been destroyed. Support for economic recovery should focus on revitalizing agriculture, industry, and construction sectors to restore livelihoods and stimulate growth. Efforts should also be made to address the psychological trauma experienced by the population, with a focus on mental health support and counseling services. Finally, sustainable development plans should be implemented to ensure resilience against future crises, incorporating both short-term recovery and long-term development goals.

Bound by Loss: The Struggle of Palestinian Workers in Israel, From Dispossession to Exploitation

Dr. Ghassan Elkahlout

Director of the Center for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies, Doha Institute

Following Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank in 1967, the systematic exploitation of Palestinian workers was deliberately introduced and rapidly expanded as a military occupation strategy. As Israel's economy grew and the Palestinian territories struggled to generate sufficient employment opportunities, many Israeli businesses increasingly relied on Palestinian labor. This trend intensified after the Oslo Peace Process in 1993, during a brief period of relative stability from 1994 to 2000. The growing demand for cheap labor in Israel, coupled with the Palestinian economy's inability to absorb its workforce, fostered a dependent and highly asymmetrical economic relationship (Ellman & Laacher, 2003; Coulibaly et al., 2023).

By the early 2000s, approximately 200,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza were working in Israel, contributing an estimated three billion dollars annually to the Israeli economy. This dependence on Israeli jobs affected 13% of the total Palestinian workforce, with many laborers relegated to low-wage, exploitative roles in sectors such as construction, agriculture, and services

(Coulibaly et al., 2023; UNDP, 2023). Their contributions were vital for the development of essential infrastructure, including schools, housing, and bridges (Ross, 2021). However, Palestinian laborers faced significant mistreatment due to the lack of formal contracts and legal protections, resulting in issues such as unpaid wages, hazardous working conditions, and the constant threat of work permit revocation (ITUC, 2021). The Israeli war on the Gaza Strip following 7 October 2023 further exacerbated their precarious situation, with many being expelled from their jobs and losing their livelihoods. This analysis explores the experiences of Palestinian workers in Israel, both before and after the events of October 7.

Background

After the Six-Day War in 1967, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip faced a severe economic crisis. In response, Israel, now occupying what remained of historical Palestine and needing labor to support its expanding economy, began employing Palestinian workers. This strategy aimed to "win Palestinian refugees' hearts and minds" in Gaza

and the West Bank by providing economic opportunities. Rapid growth in sectors such as agriculture and construction created a high demand for inexpensive labor, which Palestinian workers from the occupied territories supplied. Prior to October 7, approximately 192,700 Palestinians were working in Israel daily (ILO, 2023).

However, instability significantly impacted the continuity of this economic relationship. Over time, the number of Palestinian workers, who were allowed into Israel, fluctuated, primarily due to punitive measures and security concerns. This was particularly evident following the First Intifada in 1987, which marked a pivotal moment in Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation. The uprising led to increased security measures and restrictions on movement, resulting in a decrease in the number of Palestinian workers entering Israel. These limitations intensified after the Second Intifada, further straining the fragile economic ties (Alhersh, n.d.).

Despite these challenges, Palestinians remained integral to specific industries, with 57.4% of employed Palestinians working in Israel's construction sector (PCBS, 2022). Moreover, despite the security measures in place, working in the occupation state has often been preferable for Palestinians due to the substantially higher wages compared to local employment opportunities in the Palestinian territories (Farsakh, 2002).

Statistics and Employment Trends Pre-2023

Before the war on Gaza that erupted in late 2023, approximately 193,000 Palestinians were employed in Israel (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022), with nearly

147,000 from the West Bank and the remainder from Gaza, primarily in manufacturing, services, construction, and agriculture (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023). However, stringent security measures made it increasingly difficult for Palestinian laborers from Gaza to gain access to employment. Generally, Gazans have been prohibited from entering Israel unless they apply under a strictly regulated permit system, which allows for very few exceptions, typically for work or medical purposes (OCHA, 2023).

Under this system, Israel permitted approximately 18,000 to 18,500 Palestinian laborers from Gaza to work in Israel (ACAPS, 2023). OCHA (2023) reported that in August 2023, 58,606 exits from Gaza into Israel were recorded, representing a 65% increase over the monthly average in 2022, with 87% of these exits being Palestinian workers. Despite this increase, only a tiny fraction of Gaza's labor force could secure employment in Israel due to the limited number of permits, compared to approximately 150,000 permits granted to workers from the West Bank (Human Rights Watch, 2022). Additionally, there were roughly 40,000 undocumented Palestinian workers from the West Bank (ILO, 2023). By the third quarter of 2023, it was estimated that around 193,000 Palestinians were working in Israel (ILO, 2023).

According to a 2020 assessment by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Palestinian laborers employed in Israel and its settlements earned significantly higher wages than their counterparts in the Palestinian territories. Nearly half of the wages in the West Bank were attributed to these workers, who earned an average of about 250 shekels per day (approximately \$68). In contrast, those working within the West Bank

averaged around 140 shekels per day (about \$38), while the average daily wage in Gaza was even lower, at approximately 68 shekels (about \$18). The International Trade Union Confederation noted that the cost of living in the West Bank was four times higher than the minimum wage, significantly increasing Palestinian dependence on employment opportunities in Israel (ITUC, 2021). This wage disparity was further compounded by restrictions on movement and trade, especially for workers in Gaza, who remained under blockade.

Given the more favorable job opportunities in Israel, many Palestinian workers sought employment there despite the vulnerability to exploitation that often accompanied this choice (ILO, 2023). Of the 27,000 work permits issued to Gazans in 2023, only 3% provided wage protection and social benefits, while the majority were “economic needs” permits for informal work outside the scope of Israeli labor law (ILO, 2023). Additionally, middlemen or “brokers” who facilitate work permits charged high commissions, further eroding the earnings of already exploited Palestinian laborers (ITUC, 2021). A study of 256 Palestinian workers found that half of them had paid brokerage fees, with around 17% paying between 1000 to 2000 ILS per month, 81% paying between 2000 and 3000 ILS per month, and nearly 2% paying between 3000 and 4000 ILS per month (Kedem, Jubran & Baron, 2022). Given that the average salary for a Palestinian working in Israel is approximately 6000 NIS, these fees represent a significant portion of their income. Moreover, many laborers faced mistreatment due to the absence of formal contracts and legal protections, leading to unpaid wages, hazardous working conditions,

and the constant threat of revoking their work permits (ILO, 2023). In some instances, Israeli businesses have refused to pay for work that has been completed before the war, as well as outstanding back pay, further exacerbating the economic hardships faced by workers from the occupied Palestinian territories (Guardian, 2024). As noted earlier, only 3% of work permits issued to Gazan laborers in 2023 offered wage protection and social benefits, leaving the majority without any form of security (ILO, 2023).

Impact of War Post-October 7

Following October 7, Israel revoked all work permits for Palestinian laborers, leading to the detention of thousands from the Gaza Strip, including those holding valid licenses (ACAPS, 2023). Harsh restrictions were imposed on the movement of workers from the West Bank, while work permits for Palestinians in Gaza were entirely banned. By mid-October, nearly all Palestinian workers had been forced to leave Israel due to escalating security concerns (Arab Center, 2024; Human Rights Watch, 2024). Estimates indicate that between 150,000 and 160,000 workers from the West Bank lost their jobs (ILO Bulletin, 2023).

The social and economic repercussions for the occupied Palestinian territories and the affected workers have been profound. Many families reliant on remittances from relatives employed in Israel faced immediate financial devastation. According to the ILO (2023), the expulsion of workers has made it increasingly difficult to cover daily expenses, pushing many toward loan defaults (Mafarjeh, 2023). The resulting loss of employment opportunities has heightened dependence on humanitarian aid, further straining

already overburdened social safety nets. The daily job losses are estimated to cost the Palestinian economy approximately \$25.5 million, severely undermining households' financial resilience and fueling social unrest. By January 2024, two-thirds of pre-war jobs had been lost, worsening the already dire humanitarian and economic conditions in Gaza (UNCTAD, 2024).

The impact on poverty has been acute, with 63% of Gaza's population dependent upon humanitarian assistance even before the conflict (Arab Center, 2022; ILO, 2024). Unemployment, which was already high, with the labor force participation rate at only 45% prior to the conflict, has surged (IMF, 2023). The ILO's 2024 assessment indicates that unemployment in Gaza has soared to 79.1% since the aggression began, with an estimated 400,000 Palestinians losing their jobs (Mafarjeh, 2023).

The ongoing aggression has also severely restricted access, crippling local industries already under strain. Businesses struggle to secure essential products, while workers often cannot reach their jobs due to military hostilities (ILO Bulletin, 2023), which is further exacerbated by the widespread destruction of factories and workshops, threatening the region's economic viability. The ILO reported that the private sector in the West

Bank has incurred losses of up to \$1.5 billion since the conflict escalated (ILO Assessment, 2024). In Gaza, the private sector has experienced an 85% reduction in production value, totaling approximately \$810 million, contributing to an alarming 83.5% decline in GDP (ILO Assessment, 2024; UNCTAD, 2024).

It is also crucial to note that the loss of Palestinian labor has significantly impacted Israel's economy. Residential construction activity fell by 95%, contributing to an overall 19% decline in economic output (Times of Israel, 2024). In response, Israel issued 8000 temporary work permits (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 2024).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the suffering of Palestinian workers in Israel has been significantly deepened by the war and aggression on Gaza since October 7. The ongoing aggression has profoundly compounded the working conditions and circumstances for Palestinian laborers, halting the movement of approximately 200,000 workers and severely undermining their livelihoods. With continuing aggression in the Palestinian territories, safeguarding Palestinian workers' rights should become an increasingly urgent and critical issue.

From “Spacio-cide” to Genocide: The War on Gaza and Western Indifference

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It can be challenging to reflect when the sound of missiles is louder than the voice of reason.

I am a Palestinian who grew up in a refugee camp. I live with the generational trauma that comes from the Israeli atrocities committed against my family and my people. Since October 7, millions like me have wondered how we might elevate our social and moral responsibility to understand Israel's war on Gaza. Some have used the history of Israeli violence in the region to exonerate Hamas, a designated terrorist organization by Israel and most Western powers. In contrast, others argue that demanding a balance of morality from Palestinians — whose very lives are at stake — is unjust. However, perhaps the reluctance among some of us to pass moral judgments on Hamas' actions — even if they appear to be wrong or politically disastrous from some detached observer position — is because we cannot know how we would act or react if we lived in a concentration camp under the same horrendous conditions.

It is ultimately my view that any attack that does not discriminate between civilians and combatants must be condemned. However, I certainly do not condemn the right of the colonized to resist the colonizers by violent means.

Any reasonable analysis of the ongoing and accelerated genocide of the Palestinian people cannot begin on October 7. The initial offensive could be read as a commemoration of the October 6, 1973 war, where Arab armies surprised Israel. It also comes precisely 30 years after the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993 between the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Israeli regime. The enduring legacy of this agreement explains (at least partially) how Israel intensified its oppression and, via successive governments, cruelly escalated its settler colonialism and erasure of the Palestinians while entrenching its apartheid regime (Amnesty, 2022). The peace deal led to the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which was meant to provide interim self-government for just five years while negotiations solved outstanding core issues in the conflict. Three decades later, the PNA remains in place but has lost much of its legitimacy, with 60% of the West Bank under Israeli control and Gaza under a 16-year-long siege and now facing annihilation. These were 30 years of daily violations of international law by Israeli Occupation Forces, their armed settlers, and their global allies (Amnesty, 2022).

The Israeli settler colonial project has long been “spacio-cidal” (as opposed to genocidal) in that it targets land for the expulsion of Palestinians.

In 1998, when I lived in Ramallah, I had a long discussion with Ilan Halevi— a dear late friend and an advisor to the Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath— about the absence of a particular item in the Oslo Accords regarding the cessation of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. He asked me to join him at a dinner with Shaath the following week. I went there well-armed with my criticism. Shaath admitted that this issue was the major stumbling block in the negotiations. Because of the power structure, there was no way that Israelis would accept to stop constructing the settlements. He considered it a “big mistake.” He noted that the agreed item in the Oslo Accords that “no one can change the geography without the consent of the other party,” was so broad that it could be interpreted in all directions. In fact, the poor Palestinian negotiators had relied on trust in the international community to force Israel to stop constructing its illegal settlements. UN statistics show that between the years 2000 and 2007, the number of illegal settlers in the West Bank tripled from 110,000 to 450,000.¹ They are now estimated at 800,000. In addition, Israel routinely siphons off water from Palestinian underground aquifers for the use of the settlers

while depriving Palestinians of access to their own water. All of these settlements are built on razed Palestinian villages and towns, cemeteries, or farmland.

From “Spacio-cide” to Genocide

Between 1999 and 2004, I lived in Occupied Palestine at the peak of the Second Intifada. At the time, I forged the concept of “spacio-cide,” as I was interested in both the question of Palestinian refugees and the political sociology of the conflict.

The Israeli settler colonial project has long been “spacio-cidal” (as opposed to genocidal) in that it targets land for the expulsion of Palestinians. By targeting the space upon which the Palestinian people live, this policy forces and makes inevitable the transfer of the Palestinian population. Spacio-cide is a deliberate ideology with a unified rationale of more land for Jews and less for Palestinians. It is a dynamic process that interacts with the shifting context, including the actions of the Palestinian resistance. It is the culmination of different “cides.” making the Palestinian land unlivable through the immobility of the Palestinians, killing Palestinian leaders (politi-cide), stealing groundwater so necessary for Palestinian agriculture, and undermining their potential economic viability (econo-cide). By describing and questioning different aspects of the Israeli military-judicial-civil apparatuses, the spacio-cidal project became possible through a regime that deploys three principles: colonization (confiscating more land), separation (between Israeli

¹ UN, Human Rights Council Hears that 700,000 Israeli Settlers are Living Illegally in the Occupied West Bank— Meeting Summary (Excerpts), 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/human-rights-council-hears-that-700000-israeli-settlers-are-living-illegally-in-the-occupied-west-bank-meeting-summary-excerpts/>

land and Palestinian land), and the state of exception that mediates between these two seemingly contradictory principles.

Since 2005, the Israeli violence has taken an increasingly cruel turn that it challenges all international, humanitarian, and human rights laws. Israeli casualty numbers have become so minimal, while the number of murdered Palestinians has become massive, laying the groundwork for the Israeli colonial project's intention of launching a genocidal war.

Per Giorgio Agamben, the thick description of the occupation regime shows that the suspension of law and the forsaking of life do not entirely overlap. The denial of Palestinian citizenship and the replacement of the rule of law by a tapestry of regulations, procedures, and decrees have set the stage for the regime's more active and violent disregard for Palestinian life (Ophir et al., 2009). To give an example of this Israeli brutality, according to UN statistics, from January 2008 to the end of August 2023, 6,407 Palestinians were killed and 152,560 injured by the Israeli Occupation Forces and the armed settlers it protects.² In contrast, a total of 308 Israelis were killed - a ratio of 21 to 1.

Since October 7, 1200 Israelis, including 22 children, were reportedly killed against more than 27,000 Palestinians, including more than 10,000 children in Gaza. Several Israeli ministers have publicly advocated for either

the expulsion of all Palestinians from Gaza or the murder of all Gazans.³ Prime Minister Netanyahu has publicly made the call for ethnic cleansing. The people have nevertheless resisted as Israel wages its second war of extermination against the civilian population. This is an intentional genocidal campaign that has massacred journalists, nurses, doctors, and UN staff (Abraham, 2023). It is defined as under international law: "The intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such"⁴ by the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Israeli Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant also made the country's genocidal intent perfectly clear on October 9 when he declared: "We are imposing a complete siege on Gaza: no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel. Everything is closed. We are fighting human animals, and we will act accordingly." There are many other declarations, including those made by Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who said: "There are no innocent civilians in Gaza."⁵ Many scholars and practitioners of international law, conflict studies, and genocide studies released a public statement warning of genocide in Gaza.⁶ This ghetto has been under Israeli siege (with the complicity of Egypt) since 2007. There is no sanctuary within the tiny landmass, which is less than the length of a marathon's distance and only five miles wide. On top of the constant bombing and deployment

2 OCHA, Data on Casualties. Retrieved from: <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>.

3 For the relevant explanation, see: <https://www.972mag.com/intelligence-ministry-gaza-population-transfer/>.

4 UN, The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948). Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Genocide%20Convention-FactSheet-ENG.pdf>.

5 For the relevant explanation, see: <https://thewire.in/world/northern-gaza-israel-palestine-conflict>.

6 For the relevant explanation, see: <https://twailr.com/public-statement-scholars-warn-of-potential-genocide-in-gaza/>.

of chemical weapons, the Israeli regime has cut off food, fuel, water, and electricity, provoking an appalling humanitarian crisis. Since Gaza was under Israeli siege since 2007, it was already a concentration camp and on October 9, it was officially declared an extermination camp. The ongoing Israeli genocide has been made possible because of how the Palestinian resistance project has been understood. At the same time, the silence and support of many Western countries have further enabled the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people.

A Strategic Blunder?

Given how ugly and brutal the Occupation has been in the West Bank and Gaza, why would anyone expect resistance to be pretty?

Political scientist Norman Finkelstein reminds us how ugly the slave revolts in the US were and how Black American sociologist WEB Du Bois and abolitionist Frederick Douglass never criticized their ugliness.⁷ American musician and activist David Rovics is also one of many to have likened the events of October 7 to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in the spring of 1943. “The Jewish Fighting Organization forced the German Army to take troops away from the front line in the war with the USSR that they were losing, in order to deal with this group of half-starved civilians and their homemade weapons,” he describes (Rovics, 2023). No one had expected a handful of Jews to defeat the German Army.

By launching an offensive, Palestinian resistance groups—who continue to pay a heavy price—made it clear that they would rather die quickly fighting for justice and freedom than suffer a slow death on their knees in humiliation. This reality has been met with the silence of the overwhelming majority of Western media outlets, scholars, and politicians.

Western Genocide-Enabling Silence

The Palestinians—after decades of Arab and international silence vis-à-vis the continuous Israeli settler colonial and apartheid project act—struck out in a game-changer. Hubris has finally caught up with the Israeli regime and its Arab allies. The Israeli leaders long thought themselves invincible and repeatedly underestimated their enemies. We can roughly speak of a division within the international community: the Global North—heavily dominated by the Israeli lobby—has mostly sided with the Israeli regime’s ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people (with perhaps the exceptions of Spain, Scotland, and Ireland) while the Global South, including the heavyweights of Russia, China, and Iran, are in favor of permanent ceasefire and a peace process.

The pro-Palestine demonstrations—despite some bans—were colossal in almost all major cities worldwide, including in the West. These increased significantly following the Israeli bombardment of al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza—founded in 1882 and run by the Anglican Church—which killed nearly

⁷ For Finkelstein’s statements, see: <https://forsea.co/professor-norman-finkelstein-on-genocide-in-gaza-an-interview/>.

500 Palestinians, triggering global outrage at the slaughter of people, many of whom were taking shelter from relentless Israeli bombing of the besieged enclave. Despite independent verification, including the recent articles from the Washington Post and French newspaper *Liberation*, some Western media and politicians parroted the Israeli lie that the explosion did not come from them. Some Western countries —notably Germany and France— do not merely support the Israeli colonial project. They also ban any demonstrations against genocide while banning Palestinian flags and kufiyas. They pretend that it is antisemitic to hold Israel to international humanitarian laws.

In the following sections, I will advance three factors that can explain the Western pro-genocidal Israeli position: the memory of the Holocaust, the false image of Israel as a secular state, and the image of Hamas as a fanatic organization rather than as a liberation organization.

The Holocaust Memory

When it comes to Germany, the best explanation is provided by Esra Özyürek (2023), who points out that German politicians, journalists, and academicians “subcontract” the guilt of the Holocaust to new minority immigrant arrivals, particularly Arab Muslims. The “general German social problem of antisemitism” is projected onto this minority, who are then further stigmatized as “the most unrepentant antisemites” in need of additional education and discipline. Pankaj Mishra (2024) refers to Andrew Port’s *Never Again: Germans and Genocide after the Holocaust* to better understand the widespread indifference in Germany to the fate of the Palestinians in Gaza. Examining the German

response to mass killings in Cambodia, Rwanda, and the Balkans, Port suggests that the Holocaust “may have unwittingly desensitized Germans. The conviction that they had left the rabid racism of their forebears far behind them may have paradoxically allowed for the unabashed expression of different forms of racism.” In Germany, some prizes were canceled because (of Palestinian novelist Adania Shibli and Russian-American journalist and writer Masha Gessen). Gessen was awarded the prestigious Hannah Arendt prize for political thought because of comparing Gaza before 7 October to the Jewish ghettos of Nazi-occupied Europe. Samantha Hill (2023) rightly argued that Arendt, who was critical of the nation-state of Israel from its founding, would not qualify for the Hannah Arendt Prize in Germany today. All German political leaders accept that Israel’s right to exist is equal to Israel’s right to annihilate the Palestinian people (either en masse, as in Gaza, or slowly, as in the West Bank). Gaza remains an Occupied Territory under the 4th Geneva Convention, giving Israel a primary responsibility for protecting the occupied civilian population. This framing makes Israel’s “war” discourse and the “right of self-defense” inapplicable.

However, it does not concern only politicians who care about groups of interests necessary for their funding and re-election but also many academics. Today, we can read more criticism about the Israeli genocide in Gaza in *Haaretz* than in mainstream American, Canadian, or European newspapers. Even the Israeli Sociological Association is more critical of the Israeli violation of international laws than other European academic associations. In a twisted turn of events, we recall how Robert Badinter rightly enacted

the abolition of the death penalty in France in 1981, while today, his wife —Élisabeth Badinter, a so-called philosopher and feminist— espouses her support for a collective death penalty against the people of Gaza. Needless to say, in the West, there are handfuls of honest scholars and human rights defenders, such as Craig Mokhiber, director of the New York office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. He resigned on October 31 with a scathing resignation letter, blasting the UN and Western complicity in Israeli abuses. We are also witnessing how —despite universities’ institutional support for the Zionist regime— university students demonstrate strong support for the struggle of the Palestinian people. Moreover, over the past few weeks, we have seen thousands of Western scholars and writers denounce the war on Gaza and call for an end to the occupation, despite the witch-hunt that has been conducted since October 7 by the Israeli lobby and its allies. In so-called democracies such as the UK, France, Canada, and Germany, a researcher posting against genocide on Facebook and X can be considered an apologist for terrorism.

Today, Western political authorities rely on so-called moderate Arab leaders to pacify the Palestinians, while this everyday settler colonial project evolves into industrial genocide. They relied on the Saudi-Israeli normalization deal, which would have forced the Palestinians into unacceptable conditions. Just one week before October 7, the U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan arrogantly said, “The Middle East region is quieter today than it has been in two decades.” The American rulers are satisfied when Palestinians die and suffer in silence, away from the cameras. Hence, one of the hard

lessons of October 7 was the sense of sham stability in the Middle East, the failure of imagination, and how the lack of a solution to the Palestinian cause could bring the region to the brink of an abyss.

Israel as a Secular State

For many in the West, Israel is a secular country that can do no wrong. However, if we look at one indicator alone —the expansion of illegal settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories— one will quickly realize that the Israeli leaders, both secularists and religious fanatics, both leftists and rightists, have engaged in this land theft (Hanafi, 2013). I recall a public talk by Alain Touraine at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris in 1993, where he evoked the Israeli “miracle” of absorbing 150,000 Russian Jews in a lapse of one year. When I contested this “miracle” with the fact that all of these Europeans were settled illegally in Occupied Palestine, I replied: “Those migrants will change the equation: grown up in the Soviet Union, they are secular so that they will support the peace process.”

Demonstrating perverse naivete, he did not realize that these illegal settlers would establish some of the most fascistic political parties in the Israeli regime —such as Yisrael Beiteinu (“Israel Our Home”) —and have allied themselves with the religious settlers movement in the West Bank. The reading of the Arab-Israeli conflict remains dominated by an Islamophobic secularism that is obsessed with Hamas. By considering it to be ISIS, Hamas becomes a target to be eliminated, while the Palestinian Gazians are *homo sacer* that can be murdered without holding their killers accountable.

Islamophobia and the Image of Hamas

Some contest that Hamas represents an essential portion of the Palestinian people. Hamas has, indeed, significant support from some Palestinian people, both within occupied Palestine and in the diaspora. Hamas was elected by the Palestinian people in 2006, and they were clear in their ideology to those who elected them. I even saw some Christian friends cast their votes in their favor. Over the last five years, they have still won the student body elections in Palestinian universities in the West Bank. Their popularity comes from the fact that there is no political solution to the genocidal Israeli regime. At the same time, there is the added necessity of inflicting a cost on the ongoing Israeli settler colonial project, which leaves the Palestinians with Hamas as the only group working for their interests in any natural way. Those who contest the actions of Hamas should tell us why the “moderate” Palestinian Authority was incapable of forcing Israel to give up on the West Bank and end the occupation. This authority had no cards in its hands after its leaders became dependent on their unconditional renunciation of violence against Israel in exchange for their livelihoods and aid from Western and Arab countries.

In the Guise of a Conclusion: Violence and Dialogue

I do not see any settler colonial project that was ever dismantled only through peaceful negotiations or before establishing a certain

balance of power... often at the cost of many lives. Algeria’s noble war of independence claimed 1.5 million lives. Palestinians have tried the Gandhian non-violence approach for at least 30 years since the Oslo process, with no results. History, therefore, cannot be taken as isolated events but as movement and contingency. States and societies respect strong actors, for better or worse. The emotional and psychological side of October 7 is significant for those who have been defending justice while seeing so many cruel violations of humanitarian and human rights laws by Israel. It is a game changer of the current status quo of the Palestinian question, but we still do not know in which direction things will go.

As the Palestinian resistance now becomes so important (compared to the weak PNA in Ramallah), I am still hoping that this war might force Israel and the international community to push for a fair political solution (there have been countless Western declarations about the necessity of two-state solution based on the 1967 lines, which was already accepted by Hamas in 2017) or at least to have a dialogue between equal partners. It is consistent with my recent call for a dialogical liberal project (Hanafi, 2023), a call against intolerance in debates related to social and political issues. However, I am afraid that another scenario is also possible: another Nakba, mass killing and displacement of Palestinians, and the acceleration of fascist trends akin to Sarajevo in 1914 or Kristallnacht in 1938. I dread what seems to be the more certain outcome in Gaza.

Conclusion

The Palestinian cause, which has been embraced by people of conscience for decades, has become a global issue since October 7. Engaging with this urgent topic requires a deeper understanding of Palestine's history and society. This report provides an overview of Palestinian society as it existed before October 7 while highlighting the resilience of this community despite an occupation that has left a painful mark on every Palestinian's life.

The first section, titled Socio-Economic Indicators for Palestine before October 7, explores the strengths and vulnerabilities of Palestinian society. It covers key socio-economic indicators such as demographics, employment, economic conditions, and healthcare access as they were before October 7. Data reveals that demographic shifts in Palestine have created a dynamic society. Unlike the increasingly stagnant settler Jewish population, the rapidly growing and young Palestinian population—especially in the Arab-Jewish demographic balance—has become a concern for the Zionist regime.

Despite this demographic potential, Palestine's economic structure and labor market have been heavily restricted by the occupation, which has severely hampered local economic development. Political and commercial barriers have obstructed progress at every turn, with the labor force frequently exploited in Zionist-controlled settlements. In a society where local markets are restricted and the workforce—regardless of education

level—has been relegated to low-skilled labor, poverty has emerged as a significant challenge.

The shrinking economy and rising poverty have severely impacted the welfare of the Palestinian people, limiting their access to healthcare and other essential services. Nevertheless, indicators for education in Palestinian society, compared to both Arab and global averages, remain remarkably high. Notably, in the early 2000s, education levels in Gaza compared favorably to those in many countries worldwide. Historically, Palestinians have prioritized education, with earlier generations often pursuing specialized or career-oriented fields. However, as poverty has deepened, there is an increasing shift towards more practical fields of study. The blockade and other restrictions have further diminished academic standards compared to their levels in the 2000s, which is just one of many losses inflicted on Palestine by the Zionist regime. Consequently, socio-economic indicators have deteriorated compared to previous years, emphasizing the substantial potential hindered by the ongoing occupation.

The second section, Israeli Violence: The Blockade with Data, provides a detailed account of how the Zionist regime has systematically claimed Palestinian lands, supported by relevant data. It examines the effects of the blockade and restrictions on Palestinians' daily lives, highlighting how Palestinian rights are violated. Data on different aspects

of the occupation are analyzed within the framework of humanitarian and human rights law, demonstrating how the expansive occupation plan has been carried out through settler movements. The colonial settler system's restrictions appear clearly designed to dispossess the Palestinian people of their lands.

Beyond individual and familial displacement, Palestinians have been dispossessed collectively as well. Analysis of infrastructure data reveals a significant increase in destruction caused by Israeli forces over the past two years, with essential services like electricity, water, telephone lines, and roads frequently disrupted or became unusable. The wave of attacks initiated on October 7 has intensified this destruction, elevating the assault on Palestinians to the level of genocide. This section illustrates that this genocidal process, deeply rooted in occupation, is not new but rather an extension of long-standing violence. This section also illustrates how settler colonial violence has rendered Palestine increasingly uninhabitable for Palestinians. It examines the historical development of the Palestinian refugee issue as a direct consequence of this violence, highlighting at least twelve violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws.

In addition to the infrastructural, environmental, and humanitarian losses endured by Palestinians, the report examines the growth of the Palestinian diaspora as another outcome of this violence, emphasizing the significant refugee population within the

West Bank and Gaza. These are individuals who have become refugees within their own homeland, a reality that profoundly affects socio-economic indicators. The post-October 7 expansion of the Palestinian diaspora raises pressing questions about its future.

The honorable Palestinian people, having withstood levels of destruction and suffering that few other societies could endure, have continually developed new forms of resistance in response to each challenge. Despite being deprived of fundamental rights such as education, healthcare, and stable livelihoods, Palestinian society remains demographically vibrant, with a growing, educated, and resilient population. The extensive destruction and losses do not obscure the fact that Palestinians possess immense potential across numerous domains. With the hope of seeing the free Palestinian people working to realize their potential in the near future.

"Invent hope for words,
Create a direction or a mirage
that prolongs hope.
Sing, aesthetic is freedom/
I say: Life, only known
by its opposite is death...
It is not life!"

Mahmoud Darwish

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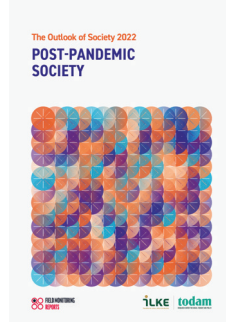
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For decades, Palestine has endured the hardships of Israeli occupation. Since October 7, 2023, the violence perpetrated by the occupying regime has escalated to genocide, pushing the Palestinian issue to the forefront of global public opinion and raising urgent questions about Palestine and the actions of the occupying power.

What are the longstanding administrative, economic, and social challenges faced by Palestinians? How has the occupation impacted Palestinian society, and how does that society continue to resist? This report, The Outlook of Palestine, seeks to answer these critical questions.

The report provides a comprehensive examination of Palestine's socio-economic situation before October 7 and analyzes the effects of Israeli occupation policies on Palestinian society. Using key indicators in demography, economy, education, health, and labor, the report presents data that reveals both the structural challenges and the resilience within Palestinian society. Additionally, it explores the impact of Israel's blockade and settlement policies on daily life in Palestine, the conditions of Palestinians in the diaspora, and the social consequences of the occupation.

The Outlook of Palestine report aims to be a resource for studies on Palestine in the world. The main purpose of this report is to meet the most basic need in the field of information in today's world, where the liberation of Palestine requires the partnership of power, will, and knowledge.



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