



The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) Antiquities issue a press release on the occasion of World Tourism Day 27/09/2020

World Tourism Day, which is annually celebrated on September 27th around the world, is a unique opportunity to raise awareness on tourism's actual and potential contribution to sustainable development. The **"Tourism and Rural Development"** is the theme of World Tourism Day this year.

The celebration of World Tourism Day 2020 comes at a critical moment, where tourism suffers from the devastating effects of the Coronavirus pandemic that led to a breakdown in all services and production sectors in the world in general and in Palestine in particular.

The tourism sector in Palestine has witnessed successive growth during the previous years in terms of increasing investments in this sector and its contribution to the GDP; affected by the political role that Palestine plays on the world tourism map in terms of religious tourism. The total value added for tourism activities (i.e. the value generated from any unit that is engaged in a productive tourism activity) in Palestine during 2018 reached a total of USD 408 million, constituting 2.5% of the GDP, while the number of establishments operating in this sector reached a total of (10,706) establishments in Palestine.

The total expenditures on the tourism sector in Palestine reached approximately 9% of the GDP, which is about USD 1.5 billion, distributed into 89% on inbound tourism expenditures and 11% on domestic tourism.

The tourism sector losses exceed USD 1 billion due to the Coronavirus pandemic

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic and its impact on the global and the Palestinian tourism activity, and the closure of borders and tourist facilities, in addition to a sharp decline in the inbound and the domestic tourism during the past ten months from March to December, 2020, the losses of the domestic tourism revenues, which include inbound tourism and domestic tourism, were estimated at approximately USD 1.15 billion.

Initial estimates indicate a decrease in inbound tourism expenditure in Palestine by 68% compared to 2019, to reach USD 466 million. Hence, losses of the inbound tourism sector in Palestine are estimated at about USD 1.021 billion compared to the normal situation in 2020.

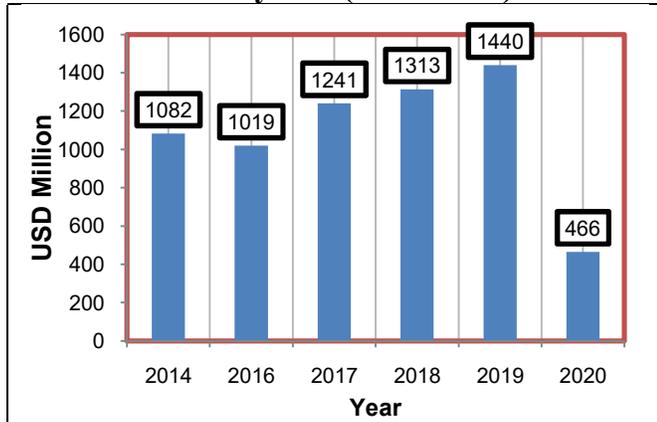
The losses of expenditure on domestic tourism in Palestine during 2020 were estimated at USD 134 million.

Bethlehem and Jerusalem Governorates are the most affected due to the Coronavirus.

The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on tourism activities was significant, especially in Bethlehem and Jerusalem Governorates that receive the largest number of guests and tourists, where 81% of the total number of hotel guests are located in Bethlehem and Jerusalem Governorates, which makes them the most affected nationwide.



Inbound tourism expenditure during selected years (2014-2020)



More than 10 thousand employees stopped working during the pandemic period

The number of employees working in activities related to the tourism sector during the second quarter of the year 2020 reached about 33 thousand employees, constituting 3.7% of the total employees in Palestine. When comparing it with the same period last year, it is found that the number of employees working in tourism activities has decreased by 23%, as it reached about 43 thousand employees.

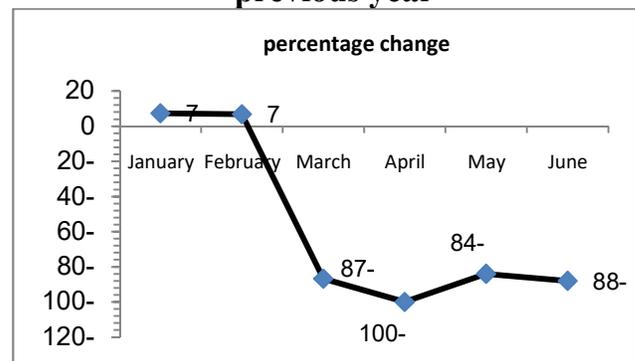
Asignificant decrease in the number of arrivals to the West Bank during the first half of 2020¹

Despite the increase witnessed by the tourism sites in the West Bank during the months of January and February of this year at a percentage of 7%, they witnessed a significant decrease in the number of inbound visits by 64% compared to the same period last. Thus, the number during the first half of 2020 reached about 658.2 thousand visits, of which 46% were Palestinians residing in territory 1948, where this decrease concentrated in the

number of visitors during the second quarter of 2020.

Regarding the governorates, the percentage of decrease in the number of inbound visits varied during the first half of the current year at rates ranging between 60% for each of Nablus, Jericho and Al-Aghwar Governorates, and 88% in Ramallah and Al-Bireh, while Tulkarm witnessed an increase of 17% compared to the same period last year.

The percentage change in the number of inbound visits by month during 2020 compared to the same month of the previous year



Despite the increase in the number of hotel nights in January and February at a percentage of 22% and 8%, respectively; there is a decrease in the number of hotel nights at a percentage of 60% during the first half of 2020, where it reached about 377.5 thousand nights.

For more information, please call:

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
Ramallah – Palestine
 Tel.: (970/972) 02-2982700
 Fax: (970/972) 02-2982710
 Toll Free: 1800300300
 E-mail: diwan@pcbs.gov.ps
 Website: <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps>



¹ Data of the inbound visits does not include Jerusalem Governorate.