

**Palestinian National Authority
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics**

**On the Anniversary of the International Day of the Elderly
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The Elderly in the Palestinian Territory: Facts and Figures

With the growth of the world's elderly population, there is increasing interest in the study of the elderly. Available statistics indicate a 2006 world elderly population of about 459 million, representing 7.0% of the world's total population. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics has produced this release to provide an overview of the elderly in the Palestinian Territory (PT), defined as people 65 years of age and above. Below, and in brief, are main indicators of the elderly in the PT:

- At mid-2006, the elderly in the PT numbered about 117,000 persons (of which 49,800 men and 66,200 women) with a projected 2010 population of 126,000 persons (7.6% growth relative to 2006) and a projected 2020 population of 172,000 (47.0% more compared to 2006). The proportion of the elderly in the total population is projected to remain stable due to the high Palestinian fertility rate especially in the Gaza Strip.
- The elderly accounted for 3.0% of the PT population in mid-2006 with regional variations; in the West Bank, they were 3.3% of the population compared with 2.5% in Gaza Strip. The sex ratio for the elderly was 74.8 males per 100 females.
- Life expectancy for women is greater than for men due to health and biological factors. Life expectancy in the PT is 71.7 years for men and 73.2 years for women. This compares with 73 years for men and 80 years for women in the OECD countries and 63 years for men and 67 years for women in other developing countries.
- The proportion of elderly in the PT population is expected to remain at about 3.0% in 2020, rather low compared to the OECD average of 15% and an average of 5% for other developing countries.
- While elderly head 10.3% of PT households, the average elderly-headed household consisted of 3.6 persons compared to an average for non-elderly-headed households of 6.3 persons and an overall average household size of 6.0 persons in 2006.

- About 10.2% of the elderly in the PT are widowed men while 60.6 % were widowed women. In addition to the higher life expectancy of women in all countries, the gender difference among the widowed is explained by the higher probability of re- marriage for widowed men relative to widowed women.
- In the PT, 9.8% of the elderly were active in the labor force in for 2005. This compared with 9.8% in Israel and about 6.0% in United Kingdom. About 73.2% of the Palestinian working elderly were self-employed while 8.5% were wage employees.
- Data indicates the PT elderly did not have good education opportunities. About 79.1% of elderly had not completed any stage of education in 2006 and they accounted for 32.1% of illiterate persons aged 15 years and above. Only 3.7% of the elderly had completed an associate diploma. Elderly women were significantly worse off in this regard, as 90.3% had not completed any stage of education compared to 64.2% of elderly men. This can be explained by relatively high involvement of women of that generation in agriculture activities.
- Some 49.4% of the elderly in the PT suffer from chronic illnesses, 33.8% suffer from hypertension and 6.1% from ulcers.
- About 40.6% of PT elderly did not suffer from any diseases with significant regional variation: 36.2% in the West Bank compared with 50.5% in Gaza Strip. Some 49.9% of elderly men had no chronic diseases compared to 33.6% of elderly women.
- Some 8.7% of the elderly are disabled compared with 1.7% for the PT population as a whole. Of the disabled elderly 35.2% had disabilities affecting their mobility while 27.3% suffered disabilities affecting their sight.
- A poverty survey in 2005 found 36.7% of the elderly lived below the poverty line and accounted for 3.3% of all the poor in the PT. The elderly in the Gaza Strip were more than twice as likely to be poor (59.2%) as compared to the West Bank (26.6%).
- The elderly spend an average of 14 hours and 35 minutes each day on personal care and self-maintenance¹, in addition to one hour and 15 minutes on other activities. On average, the elderly spend approximately 17 hours and 16 minutes each day at home.

- Data indicate that 82.0% of the PT elderly are satisfied with food that they consume, 81.9% are satisfied with their personal safety, 74.4% are satisfied with their housing and environmental conditions and 43.5% are satisfied with their social security.