



**The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
 and the Ministry of Tourism and
 Antiquities jointly issue a press release on
 the occasion of World Tourism Day
 27/09/2021**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous social and economic impact. Both developed and developing economies have been hit. The marginalized and the most vulnerable were the most affected of all. The resumption of tourism will help kick-start recovery and growth. To that end, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has therefore designated World Tourism Day 2021 as a day to focus on “Tourism for Inclusive Growth”, as tourism plays a key role in the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs), particularly Goals 1 (end poverty), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), and 10 (reduce inequalities).

Bethlehem Governorate is the Most Affected by COVID-19 Pandemic

The performance of tourism sector continues to decline due to COVID-19 pandemic, especially in Bethlehem Governorate, which annually receives more than 60% of the total number of hotel guests and visitors coming to the West Bank. The number of hotel guests during the first half of 2021 in the West Bank reached 58,765, and there were not any hotel guest accommodations recorded in Bethlehem during this period, making it the most affected nationwide. It is reported that 77.2% of hotel guests in the West Bank are of Palestinians residing in the 1948 territory, 22.5% are local residents/visitors, and only 0.3% are visitors from outside Palestine.

On the other hand, Jericho and Al-Aghwar Governorate witnessed a record increase in the reception of hotel guests, to record 72% of the total guests in the West Bank during 2021, where its

share during previous years did not exceed 7% of the total hotel guests to the West Bank.

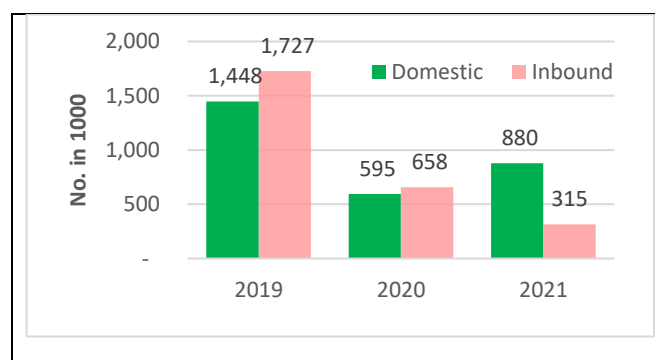
Number of Hotel Guests in the West Bank by Governorate, during the First Half of (2018-2021)

Governorate	2018	2019	2020	2021
Jericho and Al-Aghwar	8,005	20,451	5,991	42,258
Jerusalem	54,571	57,660	17,539	1,666
Bethlehem	203,638	232,457	56,274	0.0
Other Gov.	35,208	52,817	10,766	14,841
Total	301,422	363,385	90,570	58,765

Continuous Decrease in Inbound Visits to the West Bank during the First Half of 2021¹

The number of inbound visits (same day visitors) to tourist sites in the West Bank reached 314.8 thousand during the first half of 2021, (99.3% of whom were Palestinians residing in the 1948 territory). In comparison with previous years, the number declined even further reaching 52% compared to the same period in 2020, and decreased to about 82% compared to the same period in 2019.

Number of Visits during the First Half of the Years 2019-2021 by Type of Visitor



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



The number of inbound visits during the first half of the current year 2021 was distributed by governorate as follows: 46% in Jericho and Al-Aghwar, 24% in Nablus, 14% in Jenin, and 16% of visits were to the rest of the West Bank governorates.

A Slight Increase in Domestic Visits

During the first half of 2021, the tourist sites in the West Bank witnessed a slight improvement in the movement of local visitors, which reached 880 thousand visits to the various tourist sites, gardens and parks. Compared to the same period in 2020, the number of domestic visits increased by 48%, while when compared to the same period in 2019, the percentage decreased by 52%.

Local visits were concentrated in Nablus Governorate with 29%, followed by Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate with a percentage of 20%, and Jenin and Qalqiliya Governorates with a percentage of 16% and 14%, respectively.

An Improvement in the Number of Employees Working in the Tourism Sector in the Second Quarter of 2021.

The number of employees working in activities related to the tourism sector reached 42.4 thousand employees during the second quarter of the year 2021, with a percentage of 4% of the total workers in Palestine. Accordingly, the number of employees working in tourism activities increased by 18% compared to the same period of 2020. In 2019, the number of employees working in the tourism sector is still low, at a percentage of 2%.

It is noteworthy that the estimated losses of the inbound tourism sector during 2020 reached USD 1.021 billion, after the decrease in the expenditure of inbound tourism to Palestine by 68% compared to 2019.

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