

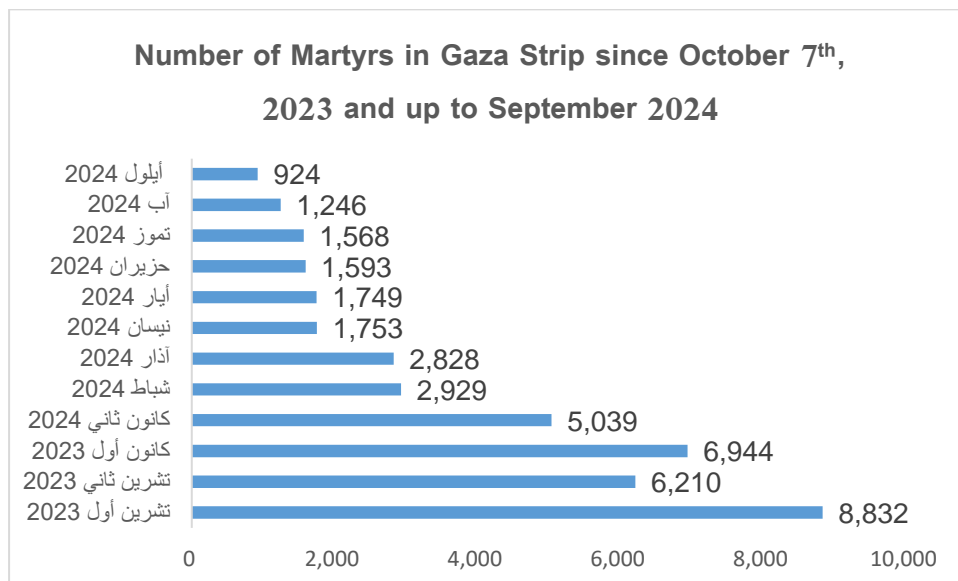
## The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics "PCBS" Highlights the Socio-economic and Environmental Conditions after One Year of the Ongoing Israeli Occupation Aggression against Gaza Strip and the West Bank

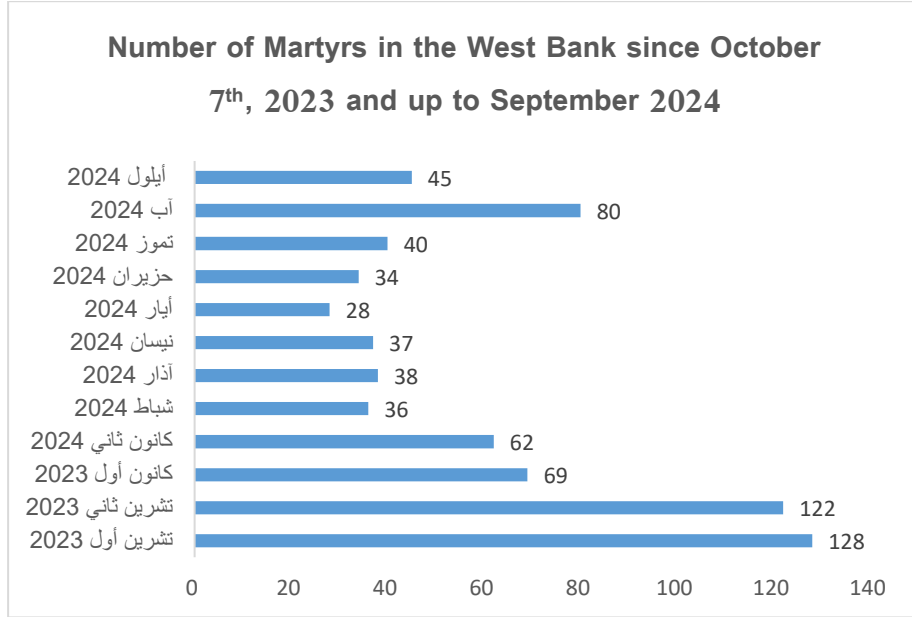
On October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Israeli occupation raged a brutal war against Gaza Strip targeting all kinds of life there, from humans, buildings and vital infrastructure. Cities became rubble and bombs branded the houses, walls, memory and pages of history with destruction, as entire neighborhoods became history, entire families were erased from the civil register. There are catastrophic human and material losses, yet this aggressive, brutal Israeli aggression against all of Gaza Strip continues. The West Bank wasn't spared from this brutal Israeli aggression, where it suffered from the continuous Israeli arrests, raids, closures and movement constraints. This ruthless aggression is an extension of the Israeli aggression against Palestine in general, and Gaza Strip in particular. For more than 17 years of extreme collective punishment, events are escalating into the crater of a crushing war that pours deadly bombs over Palestine every now and then to murder every soul and sign of life ruthlessly.

### 2.3 million Palestinians are facing continuous bombardment

In Gaza Strip, there are 2.3 million Palestinians living within 365 Km<sup>2</sup>. Gaza Strip has the highest population density, with over 6,000 people per square kilometer living in extremely difficult conditions. Moreover, poverty and unemployment rates had been alarmingly high before the current Israeli aggression.

According to figures released by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, 41,615 Palestinians in Gaza Strip were martyred and 96,359 injured persons as of the end of September 2024 as a result of the ongoing Israeli brutal aggression against Gaza Strip. The Israeli occupation continued its aggression against the West Bank, with 719 martyrs and 5,750 injured as a result of the Israeli occupation attacks and settlers.





### **Displaced persons are struggling to survive under the heavy bombardment**

People of Gaza has repeatedly been forced to leave their homes under duress. They have lost their houses and become refugees living in tents and in schools, trapped within walls of poverty and war, yet they have not been spared from the airstrikes and bombardment. Shelters where citizens sought refuge were bombed and women and children were martyred. As a result, more than 17,000 children are orphaned, and at least 15,000 women have lost their lives. Signs of life have disappeared, infrastructure such as electricity networks, mobile telephone networks, bakeries and food stores have been completely destroyed, leading to restricting access to basic resources such as water and food. This has transformed Gaza Strip into one of the world's most famine areas, and food has become a far-fetched dream. Access to a living has become a bitter struggle, while people's bodies end up weak and wasted in a densely populated prison because of closed borders.

Moreover, thousands of Palestinian citizens, including men, women and children, were illegally detained in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israeli occupation forces. Over the past 12 months, a number of men, women and children have been forcibly abducted from Gaza Strip, in addition to the displacement of tens of thousands of people there.

### **Systematic destruction of health and education sectors**

The impact of the Israeli aggression has been clearly reflected in health and education sectors, where these sectors suffer destructive setbacks that would have long-lasting consequences for development that are essential for future economic stability, disease prevention, social cohesion and cognitive development. The situation has deteriorated tragically since October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023,

resulting in the martyrdom of 16,891 children, 11,458 women and 986 healthcare employees, and disrupting periodic healthcare services. It is estimated that 16,854 children were unable to obtain their routine vaccinations, resulting in the spread of a number of epidemiological diseases, perhaps most notably hepatitis B, which confirms concerns on the healthcare future in Gaza Strip, the pressing need for humanitarian intervention and sustainable solutions to address the health crisis.

### **War has destructed the healthcare system in Gaza Strip**

Hospitals and health centers have been destroyed due to the Israeli bombardments, resulting in the collapse of the healthcare systems' ability to meet people's needs. Access to health services has been significantly shrunk. In addition, access to treatment and medication has become extremely difficult, which led to increasing the suffering of patients, especially those with chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, who need constant healthcare.

The acute shortage of essential medicines and medical equipment has made surgical operations and emergency care almost impossible due to the shortages in numbers of medical staff and facilities available. Pregnant women and children continue to suffer from the lack of adequate health care, resulting in high maternal and child mortality rates.

### **Health crisis threatens the lives of pregnant women in Gaza Strip because of the lack of healthcare**

- Approximately 60,000 pregnant women are at risk because of the lack of health care in Gaza Strip.
- 13,649 pregnant women are expected to give birth in the next month; 5,522 in Gaza Strip and 8,127 in the West Bank.
- 155,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women face difficult challenges in accessing prenatal and post-natal health care services.

### **Malnutrition threatens the lives and health of women and children**

- 96% of the population in Gaza Strip (2.15 million) faces high levels of severe food insecurity up to September 2024, of which there are about 49,300 pregnant women.
- More than 495,000 persons (22% of the population) face catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity (phase V); among which 11,000 pregnant women.
- 3,500 children are at risk of death due to malnutrition and food shortages.
- 36 children are martyrs due to famine and malnutrition.

### **Cutting of Palestinian Cities and Restriction of Access and Movement**

%65 of all road networks are destroyed; thus, destroyed roads hamper the movement of people, vehicles and animals carrying goods, affecting access to health facilities, shelters and access of

patients to hospitals. In a sense, this restriction in movement from one city to another has isolated localities and compounded feelings of fear and insecurity. According to satellite images analysis as of June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the UNOSAT report identified approximately 1,100 kilometers of destroyed roads, 350 kilometers of severely affected roads, and 1,470 kilometers of mildly damaged roads. Of these statistics, approximately 65% of the total road network has been calculated to have been damaged (including destroyed and damaged roads) throughout Gaza Strip.

**Due to the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip, education has become an unattained Luxury, with every bomb going off, the human right to a normal life in Gaza Strip is shattered.**

Education is a fundamental human right accorded to all under article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In Gaza Strip, the voices of bombs were louder than the voices of humanity, normal life and education. Schools and universities were destroyed and schools, which were taken as refuge and shelters, were bombed. Education, which was a milestone among the people of Gaza Strip, vanished from the ground and students are now trapped in the world of war, suffering and destruction.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 122 schools and universities were completely destroyed and 334 schools and universities were partially destroyed, up to the end of September 2024. In addition, access to education became unavailable to both kindergarten and high school students in Gaza for almost an entire scholastic year. In times before the Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip, these schools have provided education to more than 606 thousand students and jobs to 22,000 teachers during the scholastic year 2023-2024.

Higher education institutions ended up in a similar place, where 31 university buildings were completely destroyed as well as the partial destruction of 55 university buildings, resulting in the inability of 88,000 students and 5,000 teachers to join and reach their universities.

This brutal Israeli aggression took the lives of more than 10,449 school students, more than 613 university students, 419 teachers and school employees, 111 university employees and professors. In addition, 16,250 school students and 1,389 university students were injured.

Based on the available data and spatial analysis, fieldworkers confirmed that nowhere and no one is safe in Gaza Strip. These devastating statistics emphasize the pressing need for international support to rebuild the educational infrastructure, provide psychosocial support to traumatized students and employees, and ensure continued access to good quality education for survivors. The widespread destruction of housing, educational facilities and infrastructures has affected more than 40% of educational facilities, leaving 625,000 students without any access to education.

**A collapse of the economic system in Gaza Strip, a sharp contraction in the West Bank's productivity base, and an unprecedented increase in the unemployment rate**

Palestine is suffering from a socio-economic, humanitarian, and environmental catastrophe that led to the contraction of the production base and distorted Palestine's economic structure. Gaza Strip's contribution to the overall Palestinian economy decreased to less than 5% from about

17% before October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. One year after the Israeli occupation aggression against Gaza Strip since it first started on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and its repercussions on the West Bank, preliminary estimates show that GDP contracted by more than 85% in Gaza Strip and about 22% in the West Bank, and the Palestinian economy decreased by one third compared to times before October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Also, the unemployment rate increased to 80% in Gaza Strip and 35% in the West Bank, bringing Palestine's unemployment rate to 51%.

### **A Sharp decline in most economic activities, with constructions sector being the worst impacted sector of them all.**

At the sectoral level, a year upon the start of the Israeli occupation aggression against Gaza Strip and its repercussions on the West Bank, constructions activity is estimated to have declined by 47% (38% in the West Bank and 98% in Gaza Strip), agriculture activities decreased by 30% (8% in the West Bank and 93% in Gaza Strip), services activities decreased by 31% (21% in the West Bank and 70% in Gaza Strip). While the industry activities dropped by 35% (28% in the West Bank and 94% in Gaza Strip).

In a related context, it is estimated that the systematic destruction of Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip has caused the total or partial destruction of most tourism establishments, with approximately 4,992 establishments engaged in tourism activity, including 3,450 in restaurants and beverages serving activities (which constitutes 69.1% of the total number of tourist establishments in Gaza Strip), 921 establishments specialized in creative activities, arts and other entertainment activities (18.4% of the total number of tourist establishments in Gaza Strip), and 182 establishments in the manufacture and sale of handicrafts and souvenirs, in addition to 173 establishments in hotel, accommodation and similar establishments. Israeli aggression has also made 15,265 employees in the tourism sector lose their jobs, including 10,887 employees working in restaurants and beverages serving activities (which constitutes 71.3% of the total number of employees working in the tourism sector in Gaza Strip), including 2,277 employees working in creative, arts and other entertainment activities (which constitutes 14.9% of the total number of employees working in the tourism sector in Gaza Strip), in addition to 964 employees working in hotel, accommodation and similar establishments.

### **A Sharp decline in foreign trade to and from Palestine**

At the external level, the volume of foreign trade in Gaza Strip before 2006 was about 23% of Palestine's total trade. However, this percentage dropped to less than 4% during the ongoing Israeli aggression, as the near total cessation of supply chains to and from Gaza Strip led to health and food catastrophes throughout all of Gaza Strip as a result of the severe shortages of medicines, health supplies and foodstuffs. Such are currently provided at the minimum levels that do not exceed 5% of the quantities that should actually be provided to Gaza Strip. The value

of goods exports and services in Palestine has declined sharply by 30%, in addition to a drop of 29% in imports during the same period.

### **384,000 housing units were damaged as a result of the Israeli occupation aggression against Gaza Strip**

The number of housing units partially damaged by the Israeli occupation aggression against Gaza Strip since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 was 297,000, while 87,000 housing units were totally destroyed. Data from the UN Satellite Center (UNOSAT) indicated that the number of buildings damaged because of the Israeli occupation aggression against Gaza Strip since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 has reached 156,423.

### **Absence of access to safe drinking water**

The population of Gaza Strip lives on one fifth of the amount of available water before the Israeli aggression on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, where the average per capita of water consumption reached about 3-15 liter/capita/day, which is less than the amount recommended by the World Health Organization to meet the water needs of one person. During the ongoing Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip, 67% of the water and sanitation systems were destroyed, and vital facilities were severely damaged, including 194 water production wells, 40 large water reservoirs, and 76 desalination plants, either entirely or partially. In addition, all six wastewater treatment plants, which were operating at an operational capacity of approximately 220,000 cubic meters per day, stopped working. As a result, most wastewater is now disposed of without any treatment and it is disposed of into the sea, streets, and even inside homes leading to a severe exacerbation of the health and environmental crises in Gaza Strip.

Before the aggression, 98% of the collected waste was transferred to sanitary landfills; still, the situation has changed after the Israeli aggression began, as solid waste began to accumulate due to the depletion of fuel and the prevention of the municipal crews from reaching the main landfills in Gaza Strip by the Israeli occupation, in addition to the destruction of waste collection vehicles and their containers. Thus, the destruction of streets restricted movement, which made dealing with these huge quantities of waste difficult, where it is indicated that more than 270,000 tons of waste have accumulated in temporary landfill sites that municipalities have recently established near the areas. It is worth mentioning that the total rubble that has accumulated so far in Gaza is 42 million tons, and this number is increasing daily.

**Despite all of this, steadfastness, resilience and holding tight into life is the only choice ahead**, as the ongoing Israeli aggression has greatly scarred people's souls, as it has not only destroyed homes and lands, but also shattered lives and hopes, where people of Gaza Strip are living now under fear and loss, and witness their dreams shattering into pieces and having their memories turning into painful nightmares. Families have been torn apart, fathers have been lost, children have been murdered, and family ties have been shattered. Amidst the chaos of destruction and dust, a child's smile slips in when he/she manages to get a meal successfully, and a mother's as she fills her bottle with water.