



## Press Release by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) on the occasion of International Literacy Day on 08/09/2023

### The illiteracy rate in Palestine is one of the lowest rates in the world

According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an illiterate person applies to persons unable to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one's daily life. This rate reached 2.2% among Palestinian population (15 years and above) during 2022. Thus, the illiteracy rate among Palestinians aged 15 years and above in the occupied Palestinian territory in 1948 reached 3.6% in 2017, according to the data of the Galilee Society (Rikaz). According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the illiteracy rate among persons (aged 15 years and above) in *Western Asia and Northern Africa* was 19.5% in 2020; 14.2% among males, compared to 25.1% among females. In the same year, the rate was 13.3% in *the world* among the same age group; 9.9% among males compared to 16.7% among females.

### Illiteracy rates for persons (aged 15 years and above) in Selected Arab Countries

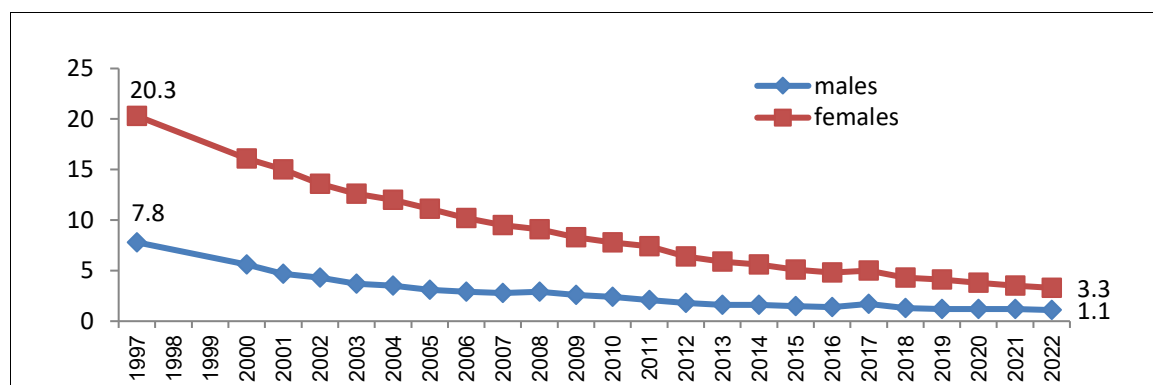
Country & Base Year	Rate	Country & Base Year	Rate	Country & Base Year	Rate
Palestine (2022)	2.2	Kuwait (2020)	3.5	Algeria (2018)	19.6
Jordan (2021)	1.6	Oman (2018)	4.4	Morocco (2021)	24.1
Bahrain (2018)	2.6	Saudi Arabia (2020)	2.4	Egypt (2017)	28.8
Lebanon (2019)	4.7	Iraq (2017)	14.4	Sudan (2018)	39.4

**Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics homepage** (<http://data.uis.unesco.org/>).

### The illiteracy rate decreased in Palestine by 84% throughout the last two decades

Illiteracy rate among the Palestinian population (aged 15 years and above) in Palestine decreased during the period 1997-2022 from 13.9% to 2.2%. The rate declined from 7.8% in 1997 to 1.1% in 2022 among males, and declined from 20.3% to 3.3% among females during the same period.

### Illiteracy rates for persons (aged 15 years and above) in Palestine by sex for the years 1997, 2000-2022



Illiteracy rate by region decreased from 14.1% in 1997 to 2.4% in 2022 in the West Bank, and decreased from 13.7% in 1997 to 1.8% in 2022 in Gaza Strip.



### Illiteracy rate and number of illiterate persons (15 years and above) by region and sex, 2022

Region	Both Sexes		Males		Females	
	Rate	Number (thousands)	Rate	Number (thousands)	Rate	Number (thousands)
Palestine	2.2	72.0	1.1	18.0	3.3	54.0
West Bank	2.4	48.6	1.1	11.5	3.7	37.1
Gaza Strip	1.8	23.4	1.0	6.5	2.7	16.9

#### More than half of illiterate persons are elderly

The illiteracy rate varies considerably by age groups. The age group (65 years and above) recorded the highest rate, while the lowest rate was among the age group (30-44 years). In 2022, the illiteracy rate among older persons 65 years and above reached about 21.5% (around 39 thousand illiterate persons). The rate was about 2.4% (around 17 thousand illiterate persons) among the age group 45-64 year, 0.7% (around 7 thousand illiterate persons) among the age group 30-44 year and 0.6% (around 9 thousand illiterate persons) among youth 15-29 years for the same year.

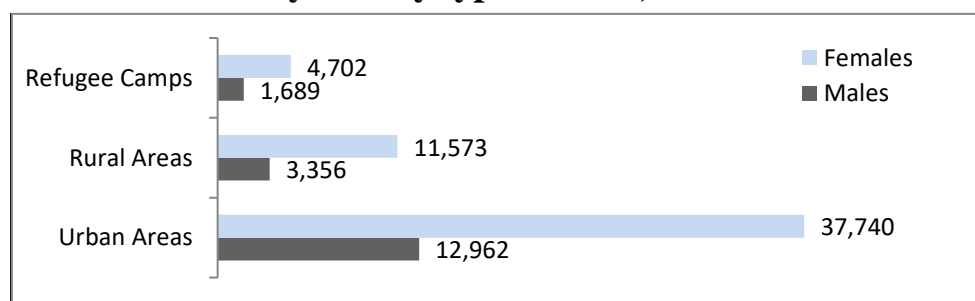
#### Number of illiterate persons (15 years and above) by age group and sex, 2022 (in thousands)

Age group	Both Sexes	Males	Females
15-29	9.3	4.6	4.7
30-44	6.9	3.3	3.6
45-64	16.5	3.4	13.1
65 years and	39.3	6.7	32.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>54.0</b>

#### About 51 thousand illiterate persons live in urban areas

In 2022, the illiteracy rate reached 2.9% in rural localities (around 15 thousand illiterate persons), 2.3% in refugee camps (around 6 thousand illiterate persons) and 2.0% (around 51 thousand illiterate persons) in urban areas.

#### Illiteracy rate and number of illiterate persons (aged 15 years and above) by locality type and sex, 2022



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