

Dr. Ola Awad, reviews the conditions of the Palestinian people via statistical figures and findings, on the 74th Annual Commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba.

**On the 74th Annual Commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba
The Number of Palestinians Worldwide has doubled about 10 Times**

H.E. Dr. Ola Awad, President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), via figures, historical and current data, reviewed the geographical, demographical and economic situation of the Palestinian People on the 74th Annual Commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba, which occur takes place on May, 15th; and those figures and data run as the following:

The Nakba: Ethnic cleansing, displacement of Palestinians and settler colonialism

Nakba in Palestine describes a process of ethnic cleansing in which an unarmed native nation was destroyed and its population displaced systematically to be replaced by Jewish occupiers from all over the world. The *Nakba* resulted in the displacement of 800 thousand Palestinians out of the 1.4 million Palestinians who were living in historical Palestine in 1948 in 1,300 villages and towns. The majority of the displaced Palestinians ended up in neighboring Arab countries, in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and other countries in the world. Furthermore, thousands of Palestinians – who stayed in the land controlled by the Israeli occupation in 1948 – were driven out of their homes and lands that were seized.

According to the historical documentary evidence, the Israeli Occupation controlled 774 towns and villages and destroyed 531 Palestinian towns and villages during the *Nakba*. The atrocities of Zionist forces also included more than 70 massacres in which more than 15 thousand Palestinians were martyred.

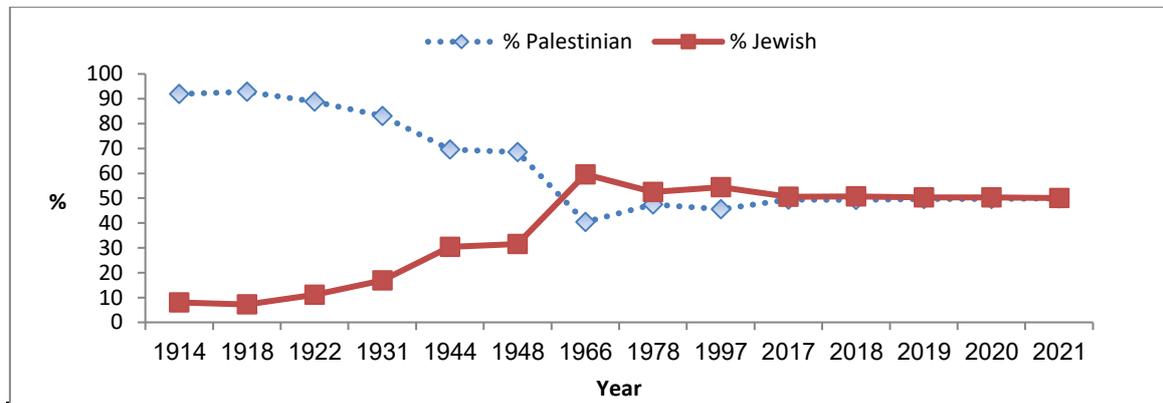
The Demographic Reality: The Palestinian population has doubled about 10 times since the Nakba in 1948

The population of Palestine in 1914 was around 690 thousand; of whom only 8% were Jewish. In 1948, the number of Palestinians in Palestine exceeded 2 million; 31.5% of them were Jews. Between 1932 and 1939, the largest number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine reached 225 thousand Jews. Between 1940 and 1947, more than 93 thousand Jews poured into Palestine. Thus, Palestine received around 318 thousand Jews between 1932 and 1947 and 540 thousand from 1948 to 1975.

Despite the displacement of more than 800 thousand Palestinians in 1948, as well as the displacement of more than 200 thousand Palestinians (majority of them to Jordan) after the 1967 war, the Palestinian world population was 14 million by the end of 2021, which means that the number of Palestinians in the world has doubled about 10 times since the Nakba, and more than half of them lived in historical Palestine by the end of 2021. Accordingly, their number reached 7 million (1.7 million in the occupied territories in 1948). Population estimates indicated that the number of population by the end of 2021 in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, was 3.2 million and around 2.1 million in the Gaza Strip. As for the

population of Jerusalem Governorate, it was about 477 thousand of which approximately 65% (about 308 thousand) lived in those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by the Israeli occupation in 1967 (J1). Data showed that Palestinians represented 49.9% of the population living in historical Palestine, while Jews constituted 50.1% by the end of 2021. The Israeli occupation continues its control over 85% of the area of historical Palestine, which amounts to 27 thousand square kilometers (km²).

Percentage of Palestinians and Jews in Historical Palestine in Various Years



Palestinian Refugees Status

In December 2020, the records of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) showed that the total number of Palestinian refugees was around 6.4 million, 28.4% of whom live in 58 camps (10 in Jordan, 9 in Syria, 12 in Lebanon, 19 in the West Bank and 8 in Gaza Strip). Estimates, however, indicated that this is the minimum number of refugees, as many of them are not registered. This number does not include Palestinians displaced during the period from 1949 till the six-day war in June 1967. UNRWA definition of refugees does not cover Palestinians who migrated or those who were displaced after 1967 because of the war and who were not registered refugees.

Gaza Strip has one of the highest population densities in the world

The population density in the State of Palestine by the end of 2021 was 878 individuals per square kilometer (km²): 557 individuals/km² in the West Bank and 5,855 individuals/km² in Gaza Strip, noting that 66% of the total population of Gaza Strip are refugees. The flux of refugees turned Gaza Strip into one of the highest population densities in the world. Despite the small area of Gaza Strip, the Israeli occupation set up a buffer zone over more than 1,500 meters along the Eastern border of Gaza Strip. Consequently, the Israeli occupation controls about 24% of the total area of Gaza Strip (365 km²). Also, the continuous Siege on Gaza Strip, which is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, led to a sharp rise in unemployment in Gaza Strip. Hence, the unemployment rate reached 47%, around 69% of the youth aged 15-24 years are unemployed by the end of 2021. The siege also shook the economy of Gaza Strip and turned over half of its population into poor (53%).

More than 100 Thousand Martyrs since the Nakba 1948

The number of Palestinian and Arab martyrs killed since the Nakba in 1948 and until this day (inside and outside Palestine) reached about 100 thousand martyrs¹. Moreover, the number of

¹ Several Sources

martyrs killed in Al-Aqsa Intifada during September 29th, 2000 until April 30th, 2022 was 11,358. It is said that the bloodiest year was 2014 with 2,240 Palestinian martyrs, 2,181 of them were from Gaza Strip during the war on Gaza. During 2021, the number of Palestinian martyrs reached 341, 87 of whom were children and 48 women. While the number of wounded Palestinians reached about 12,500 in 2021.

About 1 Million Detention Cases since 1967

25 prisoners have spent more than a quarter of a century in occupation prisons

By the end of April 2022, there were 4,450 Palestinian detainees in the Israeli occupation prisons, 160 of them are children and 32 women. As for the number of arrests, it reached 8,000 during the year 2021, including 1,300 children and 184 women, while the number of administrative detention orders against citizens who were not charged with any charges reached 1,595. Data also indicate that there are 570 detainees serving life sentences, and 650 administrative detainees. Moreover, data indicate that Israel is detaining more than 700 sick prisoners and six prisoners of parliament members in the Legislative Council, in addition to the presence of 25 prisoners who were arrested before the Oslo Accords in 1993 and they are still languishing in Israeli prisons.

Data clearly indicate that the number of martyrs among the prisoners has reached 226 prisoners since 1967 due to torture or willful killing after arrest or medical negligence against the prisoners. In addition, data indicate that the martyrdom of 103 prisoners since September 2000, where the year 2007 witnessed the highest percentage of prisoners' martyrdom inside Israeli prisons as seven prisoners were killed, five of them died as a result of medical negligence.

Israeli Occupation: Continuous Expansion of Settlements

By the end of 2020, there were 471 Israeli occupation sites and military bases in the West Bank, including 151 settlements and 26 inhabited outposts that considered as neighborhoods following established settlements, in addition to 150 settlement outposts, and 144 classified as other sites (industrial, tourists, service areas and Israeli army bases). The number of settlers in the West Bank reached 712,815 settlers by the end of 2020, at a growth rate of almost 3.6%. Attracting Jews from abroad represents more than the third of net population growth rate in Israel. Thus, data show that around 47% of settlers live in Jerusalem Governorate, where their number reached about 332,294 settlers; out of which 246,909 settlers live in East Jerusalem (J1) "including those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by the Israeli occupation in 1967". In regards to demographics, the proportion of settlers to Palestinian population in the West Bank is about 23 settlers per 100 Palestinians, and it was the highest in Jerusalem Governorate, where there were 71 settlers per 100 Palestinians. Accordingly, the year 2021 witnessed a significant increase in the pace of construction and expansion of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, where the Israeli occupation approved the construction of more than 12,000 new settlement housing units, including 9,000 settlement housing units on the lands of Qalandia Airport in Jerusalem Governorate. In addition, plans were approved to construct thousands of settlement housing units in the West Bank and Jerusalem Governorate.

Continuous Confiscation of Land

The Israeli occupation used the land classification according to the Oslo Accords (A, B and C) to tighten their control over the Palestinian land, especially in areas classified as (C) which are under the full control of the Israeli occupation in terms of security, planning and

construction, where 76% of the total area classified as (C) is directly exploited by the Israeli occupation; settlements regional councils are controlling 63% of it. While the area of authority regions in the Israeli settlements in the West Bank (Including closed regions allocated for expanding those settlements) is about 542 km² as it is by the end of 2021; representing about 10% of the total area of the West Bank. Whereas the confiscated areas for the purposes of military bases and military training locations represent about 18% of the West Bank area, in addition to the Annexation and Expansion Wall that has isolated more than 10% of the area of the West Bank. Consequently, more than 219 Palestinian localities were badly affected by the establishment of the Annexation and Expansion Wall.

Jerusalem: Intensive and Systematic Judaization

As part of the policy of deportation and replacement, the Israeli occupation authorities are taking accelerated judaizing measures to Jerusalem in order to obliterate the Islamic landmarks and displace Palestinians from the city of Jerusalem, to replace them with Israelis from all over the world. During 2021, the Israeli occupation authorities approved the construction of more than 12 thousand settlement units, most of them in Jerusalem, at a time that the Israeli occupation authorities demolished more than 300 buildings and issued demolition orders for more than 200 Palestinian buildings. This is in addition to approving a project to seizure 2,050 Palestinian real-estates over an area estimated of 2,500 dunums during the year 2021. At the same time, in the neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan in East Jerusalem, the Israeli authorities strengthened the Israeli occupation attempts to seizure Palestinian houses and expel its long-time residents. They did so under a discriminatory law, upheld by Israeli courts, that allows these Israeli settler groups to pursue claims to land they claim Jews owned pre-1948 in East Jerusalem. While the Israeli law prohibits Palestinians, including residents of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighborhoods who are due to be displaced, from reclaiming property they owned in the occupied territories in 1948.

More than 1,600 attacks by settlers

In 2021, settlers, under the protection of the Israeli occupation army, carried out about 1,621 attacks against Palestinian citizens and their properties, an increase of 49% in 2020, and the attacks varied from uprooting, destroying and burning of 19,000 trees, carrying out 33 run-over attacks, 76 shootings, and 30 leveling operations of citizens' lands, in addition to burning, destroying and damaging cars and vehicles of 450 Palestinian citizens.

Since the beginning of 2021, settlers have established ten new outposts for the seizure and control of Palestinian lands, including Jabal Sabih, which is located to southeast of Nablus city. The area of the mountain (Jabal Sabih) is about 840 dunums, where Israeli settlers seized so far 20 dunums of it, where they have built an outpost that includes a number of settlement units that are rapidly increasing in recent days, while the Israeli occupation authorities have initiated measures to legitimize the outpost to turn it into an Israeli Settlement. Israeli settlers also exploit about 120 thousand dunums of Palestinian lands for agriculture.

A Bitter Reality for Water in Palestine, 20% of Available Water in Palestine Purchased from Israeli Water Company "Mekorot"

With scarce water and Israeli restrictions on access to resources, Palestinians are forced to purchase water from the Israeli water company "Mekorot". In 2020, they purchased 90.3 MCM, which represented 20% of the water available in Palestine (448.4 MCM). Additionally, 53.3 MCM of the water were produced from the Palestinian springs while 299.1 MCM are

pumped from groundwater wells and 5.7 MCM desalinated drinking water, representing 1% of the available water.

As for water available to Palestinians that is unsuitable for human use due to the quantities of polluted water in Gaza Strip, it reached 201.8 MCM, whereas the quantities of water suitable for domestic use available to the Palestinians are only 246.6 MCM, including purchased and desalinated water.

79% of the Available Water is from Groundwater

Data showed that the percentage of the exploitation of surface and groundwater from available water during 2020 was high with an average of 79%. It should be noted that Palestinians have been denied, by the Israeli occupation, to access and extract water from the Jordan River since 1967, which is estimated of about 250 MCM. On the other hand, the quantity of water pumped from the Palestinian wells in the West Bank in 2020 was 108.6 MCM from Eastern Aquifer, Western Aquifer and North-Eastern Aquifer.

The amount of water extracted from the coastal aquifer was 190.5 million cubic meters (MCM) in Gaza Strip in 2020. However, this quantity is obtained via unsafe pumping that jeopardizes the sustainability of the source, as the basin sustainable yield should not exceed 50-60 MCM a year, where the groundwater level in the coastal aquifer reached 19 meters below sea level leading to the depletion of groundwater reserves, this led 97% of the water pumped from the coastal aquifer in Gaza Strip does not meet the water quality standards of the World Health Organization.

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