

**Press Release by the Palestinian Central  
Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and  
Environment Quality Authority on World  
Environment Day under the theme  
"Gaza in WED: Stifling Environmental and  
Humanitarian Crisis"**

The World Environment Day (WED) is annually celebrated on June 5<sup>th</sup>, since 1972. WED is the United Nations' principal tool for encouraging worldwide awareness and action for the environment.

The theme of WED 2025 will highlight the solution to plastic pollution under the title "Beat Plastic Pollution".

- **65% of Gaza population receives less than 3-5 liters/person/day for drinking and cooking purposes (which is less than the minimum humanitarian requirement in emergency situations, according to the World Health Organization).**
- **An increase by more than 400% in the prices of water tankers.**
- **An Almost total collapse of the water and sanitation sector: more than 85% of the water and sanitation infrastructure has been destroyed, and all six major wastewater treatment plants have stopped working.**
- **Half a million tons of piled-up waste and 50 million tons of rubble in Gaza Strip in an area not exceeding 365 km<sup>2</sup>.**
- **81% of agricultural lands in Gaza Strip were destroyed.**
- **More than 60,000 tons of electronic waste from the Israeli occupation are disposed of annually in the West Bank.**

This year, World Environment Day comes as the Palestinian people continue to face an unprecedented environmental and humanitarian catastrophe, particularly in Gaza Strip, which has been suffering from the ongoing Israeli aggression since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Water and sewage networks are being torn apart, agricultural lands are being buried under contaminated explosives, toxins are spreading in the soil and air due to the use of internationally banned incendiary and phosphorus weapons, while

coastal areas are being transformed into biodiversity graveyards due to the leakage of sewage and chemical waste into the Mediterranean Sea.

This is not just "collateral damage" from aggression; it is a deliberate environmental crime aimed at turning Gaza Strip into a wasteland uninhabitable, with the potential radioactive contamination resulting from the bombing of industrial facilities and toxic emissions that will continue to destroy the health of future generations for decades, not only in Gaza Strip but also in the surrounding region, where the environmental catastrophe in Gaza Strip threatens the ecosystem of the entire Eastern Mediterranean<sup>1</sup>.

What Israel is committing is a double genocide: for humans and nature, something unprecedented historically that places the international community before a fateful test to hold accountable those who transform the environment into a weapon of war in violation of all international conventions, from the Geneva Conventions to the Principles of International Environmental Law.

**Lost Water Security: 65% of Gaza  
Population Receives Less than 3-5  
liters/person/day for Drinking and Cooking  
purposes**

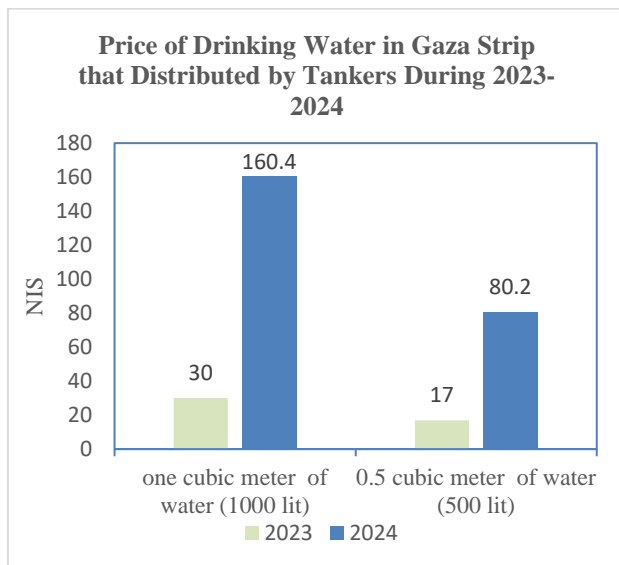
Palestine relies primarily on water extracted from groundwater and surface sources, accounting for 73.1% of the total available water. The main reason for the limited use of surface water is the control of the Israeli occupation over the Jordan River.

Due to the ongoing Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 91% of households in Gaza Strip suffer from water insecurity. 65% of the population in Gaza receives 3-5 liters/person/day for drinking and cooking, while only 35% of the population receives less than 15 liters/person/day for drinking, cooking, and basic hygiene (which is less than the minimum humanitarian requirement in emergency situations, according to World Health Organization).

The aggression also destroyed or damaged more than 80% of water stations and 330,000 linear meters of water networks.

## **An Increase by more than 400% in the Prices of Water Tankers**

The extensive destruction of water, desalination, and treatment plants in Gaza Strip has led to a significant increase in the price of potable water, particularly that distributed by tankers. The price of a cubic meter of water (1,000 liters) reached approximately 160 shekels in 2024, compared to only 30 shekels in 2023. The price of half a cubic meter (500 liters) rose to 80 shekels in 2024, compared to 17 shekels in the previous year. These figures represent an increase of more than 400%. This massive price increase reflects the scale of the challenges facing the population, as fresh water has become a scarce and expensive commodity, burdening households.



## **An Almost Total Collapse of the Water and Sanitation Sector in Gaza Strip and Being Destroyed in the Northern West Bank**

Gaza Strip has witnessed a catastrophic collapse in sanitation services due to the widespread destruction of infrastructure since October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

More than 85% of the water and sanitation infrastructure across Gaza Strip has been partially or completely destroyed, including all six major wastewater treatment plants.

85% of wastewater pumping stations (73 out of 84) and their networks<sup>iii</sup>, as well as more than 650,000 linear meters of sewage networks, have also been destroyed. Some have been repaired but urgently require fuel to operate them. This has led to an almost complete paralysis of the sanitation system

and has caused untreated wastewater to flow into the surrounding environment.

Since the beginning of 2025, the Israeli occupation has escalated its operations in the northern West Bank, particularly in the Palestinian refugee camps. In Jenin Governorate, the aggression caused significant damage to infrastructure. According to international reports, more than 3.3 km of sewage networks and 21.4 km of water pipes were damaged.

In Tulkarm Governorate, damage was recorded, including the destruction of 8.4 km of sewage and rainwater drainage networks, in addition to 15 km of water lines, in Tulkarm and Nur Shams refugee camps.

In Tubas Governorate, damage affected more than 4 km of water and sanitation infrastructure.

The destruction of sewage and drainage infrastructure leads to the spread of wastewater and its seepage into the ground, with more than 78% of the population of Gaza Strip exposed to sanitation-related health risks due to rodents and pests in the absence of basic services and deteriorating sanitary conditions.

## **Gaza Strip Has No Landfills... And Half a Million Tons of Piled-Up Waste and 50 Million Tons of Rubble in an Area Not Exceeding 365 km<sup>2</sup>**

Gaza Strip is suffering from a serious environmental disaster due to the accumulation of more than half a million tons of solid waste in light of the almost total collapse of the waste management system due to the ongoing Israeli aggression. Most waste collection vehicles have been destroyed and roads damaged, hindering municipal crews from reaching the main landfills. They have been forced to establish temporary landfills near residential areas, causing air pollution, the spread of skin and respiratory diseases, and the proliferation of insects and rodents. In addition, waste decomposition and the emission of toxic gases expose more than 42% of the population to health risks from this waste.



Environmental degradation was not limited to solid waste alone, but also extended to the massive amount of rubble and debris resulting from the total or partial destruction of more than 173,000 buildings. The accumulated quantities are estimated at approximately 50 million tons of rubble, of which 2.3 million tons are mixed with hazardous waste such as asbestos, thousands of tons of hazardous and medical waste have accumulated, and more than 100,000 tons of explosives and bombs have been dumped, representing an unprecedented environmental and humanitarian challenge.

**81% of Agricultural Lands in Gaza Strip Were Destroyed**

A recent assessment conducted by UNSTAT, based on aerial imagery and damage analysis up to March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, showed that the Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip caused widespread destruction to the agricultural sector, with approximately 81% of agricultural lands destroyed as a result of systematic bulldozing, the movement of heavy military vehicles, and continuous shelling. The report noted a significant increase in the rate of destruction in Khan Yunis Governorate, recording an 8% increase compared to the previous analysis issued in December 2024. Rafah Governorate also witnessed a sharp increase in the rate of destruction made to agricultural lands, rising from 67% to 74%, reflecting the rapid and ongoing deterioration of the agricultural infrastructure.

These findings confirm that agriculture in Gaza Strip is at risk of complete collapse, threatening the food security of more than two million people.

**Percentage of Agricultural Lands Destroyed by the Israeli Aggression against Gaza Strip by Governorate Until 30/03/2025**

Governorate	% of Destroyed Agricultural Land
North Gaza	88
Gaza	84
Dier Al-Balah	82
Khan Yunis	76
Rafah	74
Gaza Strip	81

**Israeli Waste and Settlements... a Continuing Suffering for the Palestinian Environment: Israel Disposes of 60,000 tons of Electronic Waste Annually in the West Bank**

Israel dumps massive quantities of its hazardous waste in the West Bank, turning the Palestinian territories into an open dumping ground for toxic waste. This waste includes sewage, burnt oil, chemical solvents, heavy metals, medical and electronic waste, and batteries. An estimated 60,000 tons of electronic waste are smuggled into the West Bank annually<sup>iv</sup>, where it is burned to extract copper, further exacerbating environmental pollution. These practices are not only an environmental violation; they also pose a direct threat to the lives of millions of Palestinians by contaminating water and soil resources and exacerbating health and environmental damage.

In this context, a total of 535 environmental violations<sup>v</sup> were recorded by the Israeli occupation authorities in the West Bank in 2024, reflecting the extent of the encroachment on the Palestinian environment.

Regarding settlements, the Israeli occupation continues to seize Palestinian agricultural lands under the pretext of settlements expansion. During 2024, the Israeli occupation authorities confiscated more than 46,000 dunums of West Bank land as part of an ongoing plan to impose geographic and demographic control.

In addition, Israeli settlements in the West Bank directly contribute to the pollution of the Palestinian environment by discharging large quantities of wastewater into agricultural lands and nearby valleys. In 2021, approximately 35 million cubic meters of wastewater from approximately 50 settlements were estimated to be released without adequate treatment, leading to a decline in soil fertility and the contamination of groundwater<sup>vi</sup>.

**Plastic Economy in Palestine**

Data from the economic surveys 2023 indicate that the number of establishments operating in the plastics industry in the private and civil society sectors in the West Bank (excluding J1) reached 193 establishments, employing 2,770 workers. The total added value of the plastics industry reached approximately USD 84 million in 2023.

The total value of Palestinian imports of plastics and related products reached USD 291 million in 2023, compared to USD 324 million in 2022.

The accumulation of large quantities of plastic and its disposal in environmentally unsound ways, such as burning, leads to the spread of unpleasant odors and toxic elements into the air and soil pollution. Therefore, the Environment Quality Authority, in cooperation with relevant authorities, has sought to combat the burning of plastic materials and reduce the amount of plastic disposed of by encouraging recycling and reuse.



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<sup>i</sup> Environment Quality Authority, Environmental Damage Assessment Report, 2023/2024

<sup>ii</sup> Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH, State of Palestine)

<sup>iii</sup> Oxfam International Headquarters

<sup>iv</sup> The Palestinian Forum for Israeli Studies (MADAR)

<sup>v</sup> Environment Quality Authority, Annual Report, 2024

<sup>vi</sup> Study implemented by Premiere Urgence