



**Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)
and the Ministry of Telecommunication and
Digital Economy issue a joint press release on
the eve of the World Telecommunication and
Information Society Day, 17/05/2024.**

This year's World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) focuses on "Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development" and how the power of digital innovation can help connect everyone and unleash sustainable prosperity. This day comes amidst the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip and the continuous violations of human rights, including the freedom of communication and expression, within a fierce aggression by the Israeli occupation on Gaza Strip. There is a deliberate and systematic targeting of the telecommunication and information technology sector to isolate Gaza Strip from the rest of the world, in an attempt to obscure the truths and crimes of genocide that are now being conveyed to the world through various communication channels.

More than two million citizens have been completely cut off from telecommunication more than 10 times

The telecommunication sector in Gaza Strip has been subjected to direct and systematic targeting, where the Israeli occupation deliberately cut off communication and internet services in Gaza Strip repeatedly which led to escalating, exacerbating suffering, and making it hard for rescue teams to provide assistance and efforts, as well as isolating residents, limiting their ability to communicate, seek help, and hindering the work of journalists and field reporters. Such actions violate international laws and fundamental rights stipulated in international conventions and serve as a mean to conceal war crimes. Telecommunication services have been completely cut off in Gaza Strip about 10 times, mostly coinciding with the escalated acts of Israeli aggression.

According to a report by the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor issued on February 13th, 2024, the Israeli occupation deliberately targeted Palestinian citizens, including journalists, as they attempted to use mobile service, internet and electronic SIMs to communicate with their families, relatives, or employers, through direct sniper fire or drones in various parts of Gaza Strip.

Destruction of the infrastructure of ICT and Post sector

Before the Israeli aggression, Gaza Strip witnessed a significant growth in telecommunication, where the number of active cellular phone subscriptions reached 1,041,198, as indicated by the Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Economy. The percentage of households in Gaza Strip that have internet access was 93% on the eve of the war according to PCBS data. However, the infrastructure feeding telecommunication companies in Gaza Strip has been deliberately and directly targeted by the Israeli occupation. There are five main telecommunication companies: (Palestine Telecommunication Company (Paltel), Jawwal, Ooredoo, Mada Al Arab, and Fusion Net).

The main and sub-switches were targeted, disabling and destroying towers and sites, fiber optic networks, as well as the main transmission lines connecting Gaza Strip internally and externally. Hence, shortages of fuel necessary to operate generators, and power outages are additional reasons for telecommunication breakdown in Gaza Strip.

Data from the Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Economy, indicated that there were 841 towers belonging to mobile telecommunication companies before the Israeli aggression, and as of mid-April 2024, 75% of mobile phone towers were out of service. Moreover, the losses of the infrastructure of information and communication technology and post sector during the first six months of the Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip amounted to approximately USD 223 million.

A huge decline by 91% in the value added of information and communication activity in the first three months of Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip

Quarterly national accounts estimates for the fourth quarter of 2023, e.i. the first three months of the Israeli aggression, issued by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, indicated that the information and communication activity in all of Palestine was negatively affected, where value added at constant prices reached USD 106 million in the fourth quarter of 2023 compared to USD 132 million in the third quarter of the same year with a decrease of 20%. In the West Bank, the value added in the fourth quarter was USD 105 million compared to USD 128 million



in the third quarter of 2023, a decrease of 18%. In Gaza Strip, the value added for information and communication activity in the fourth quarter was USD 400 thousand compared to USD 4.4 million in the third quarter of 2023, representing a decrease of 91%.

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