

PCBS releases the final results of Gaza Strip Census 2007

Substantial changes in the size, structure, growth rate, and type of housing in the Gaza Strip between 1997 and 2007 Censuses

Dr. Luay Shabaneh, President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and National Director of Census released on Sunday, February 15, 2009 the final results of the Census in the Gaza Strip. The final results indicate that the total population of the Gaza Strip in the Second Census (2007) was 1,416,543, of whom 718,711 males and 697,832 females, compared with 1,022,207 individuals (518,813 males and 503,394 females) in 1997 census final results. The annual growth rate between the two censuses totaled 3.3%. Assuming a stable growth during the coming years, the Gaza Strip population will multiply in 21 years.

The President of PCBS indicated that due to the disturbances occurred during the data processing stage in Gaza Strip, the statistics presented in the final census results were compiled as follows:

1. Population totals by governorate and sex; and households totals by governorate are based on the actual census count conducted during the period 15/12/2007-08/01/2008.
2. Distribution of population by other characteristics were estimated using different household sample surveys that were conducted in Gaza Strip during 2006-2007. Therefore, it is possible that some changes on the estimation of the distribution by selected characteristics might occur after the completion of data processing of the census data in Gaza Strip when the situation allows.

The President of PCBS also indicated that the Population, Housing, and Establishment Census 2007 was the second Palestinian census to be executed upon an independent Palestinian decision. The census was one of the largest statistical activities to be carried out in order to provide necessary data for designing and implementing economic and social development. The census was also one of the key elements of the official statistics system; therefore, its success required employing diligent work by all social categories and private and government institutions through giving the support that meets the requirements of the national team who planned and implemented the census activities.

Sex ratio

The final results show that the sex ratio in the Gaza Strip between the two censuses of 1997 and 2007 had been balanced though it slightly declined from 103.1 to 103.0 males/100 females.

Households number

Census final results showed that the number of Gaza Strip households in 2007 numbered 219,220. The average size of a Gaza Strip household was 6.5 people. On the other hand, the 1997 Census final results showed that the Gaza Strip households numbers 148,146. Noticeably, there had been a decrease in the household average size between the two censuses from 6.9 in 1997 to 6.5 in 2007. This indicated a decline in fertility rate and a tendency towards nuclear family instead of extended family.

The final results also showed that the percentage of nuclear family in the Gaza Strip in 2007 reached 73.0% compared to 71.8% in 1997. On the other hand, the percentage of the extended family in the Gaza Strip decreased from 25.3% in 1997 to 24.5% in 2007, which substantiated the prevalent tendency to increase the percentage of nuclear family instead of extended family. Moreover, there was a little decrease in the percentage of Palestinian households of one person from 2.6% in 1997 to 2.4% in 2007. The other

families were compound families; however, they had a tiny percentage of 0.1% in 2007 compared to 0.3% in 1997.

Age structure

The final results showed that the Palestinian community in the Gaza Strip was still young since the past ten years had witnessed a 3.8% decrease in the percentage of children aged 0-14 years (from 50.2% in 1997 to 48.3% in 2007). On the other hand, the percentage of working age population (15-64 years) had noticeably increased from 46.9% in 1997 to 49.0% in 2007 (an increase of 4.5%). In any case, the Palestinian society, in comparison with other societies, was still young; however, the percentage of young people was decreasing with time due to a decrease in fertility rate, which totaled 5.3 in 2006 in the Gaza Strip compared to 6.9 in 1997.

PCBS President explained that the decrease in the percentage of the population aged less than 15 years meant an increase in the percentage of people ready to join the labor force. The age dependency ratio decreased from 113.3 in 1997 to 104.1 in 2007. This was due to a decrease in the total fertility rates, which led to a decrease in the percentage of people aged less than 15 years and the tendency towards nuclear family.

The percentage of the population aged 65 and over reached 2.7% in the Gaza Strip in 2007 compared to 2.9% in 1997 (in the Gaza Strip). Noticeably, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of elderly people. This is contrary to demographic expectations, which say that a decline in fertility rate means an increase in the percentage of elderly people. This means that the demographic transformation, which is reflected in the increase of the population in the age group of 15-64, has not affected the elderly people yet.

Education and illiteracy

The final results also indicated that the percentage of the illiterate population aged 10 and over in the Gaza Strip was 5.5% of the total population of the same age group in the Gaza Strip compared to 11.3% in 1997. There is also a decrease in the percentage of people who can read and write only from 16.8% in 1997 to 13.1% in 2007. This was accompanied by an obvious increase in the percentage of people with secondary education and below from 62.8% in 1997 to 70.6% in 2007. The other levels have not changed in a noticeable way.

The refugees

The final results show that the percentage of Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip in 2007 is 67.9% compared to 65.1% in 1997. The increase in the percentage of the refugee population could be due to an increase in the fertility rates among the refugees in refugee camps or due to lack of migration among this part of the population.

Participation in the labor force

Economic participation of the population aged 10 years and over in the labor force decreased from 32.2% in 1997 to 30.2% in 2007 due to the economic situations resulting from Israeli procedures and the difficulties in joining the Palestinian labor market during the Israeli siege. The percentage of people involved in elementary occupations, which occupied first place in 1997 census, decreased to 10.2%.

Marital status

Dr. Shabaneh stated that the percentage of married people in the Gaza Strip in 2007 was 49.6% compared to 53.8% in 1997. Additionally, the percentage of married males in 1997 was 54.1% compared to 48.7% in 2007. The percentage of married females in 1997 was 57.2% compared to 50.5% in 2007. This indicates a decrease in marriage rates in the Gaza Strip, which could be due to Israeli siege and the resulting economic impacts.

on the other hand the divorce rate for the males was changed between the two censuses from 0.3% in 1997 to 0.2% in 2007, while for females was changed from 1.4% in 1997 census to 1.1 in 2007 census.

Housing conditions

The average number of individuals in a room between the two censuses decreased from 2.1 individuals per room in 1997 to 2.0 in 2007. This shows an increase in individual's share in rooms, which is due to the decrease in the average number of individuals in a household and increase in the average number of rooms in a housing unit.

The comparison of the types of occupied housing units between the two censuses showed that the percentage of apartments had increased from 46.5% in 1997 to 51.2% in 2007. On the other hand, the traditional house percentage had decreased from 51.6% in 1997 to 47.4% in 2007, which was in line with the urban tendency and family structure tendency towards nuclear family. The percentage of villas slightly decreased from 0.6% in 1997 to 0.5% in 2007.