

PCBS President: Despite tragic circumstances, Palestinians have multiplied seven times since the *Nakba* (Catastrophe) of 1948

Dr. Luay Shabaneh, President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and National Director of the Population, Housing, and Establishment Census 2007, considered the *Nakba* of Palestine as a black point of departure in the modern history of the Palestinian people. The Palestinians were driven out of their homeland and their properties, homes were taken away from them, and they were banished and displaced all over the world to face all kinds of suffering and woes. More than three quarters of historic Palestine were occupied in the *Nakba* of 1948. Moreover, 531 Palestinian towns and villages were destroyed and 85% of the Palestinian population were banished and displaced.

Dr. Shabaneh described the situation of the Palestinian people on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the *Nakba* using the following statistical facts and figures.

Nakba: Ethnic cleansing and population replacement

Nakba in literary terms is expressive of natural catastrophes such as earthquakes, volcanoes, and hurricanes. However, the *Nakba* of Palestine is an ethnic cleansing process as well as destruction and banishment of an unarmed nation to be replaced by another nation. Contrary to natural catastrophes, the Palestinian *Nakba* was the result of man-made military plans and conspiracy of states. unfolded a major tragedy for the Palestinian people. More than 800,000 out of 1.4 million Palestinians (the Palestinian population in 1948 living in 1,300 Palestinian towns and villages) were driven out of their homeland to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, neighboring Arab countries and the remaining countries of the world. According to the data documentation of www.palestineremembered.com, Israelis controlled 774 towns and villages during the *Nakba*. They destroyed 531 Palestinian towns and villages. Israeli forces atrocities also include more than 70 massacres against Palestinians killing 15,000 Palestinians during *Nakba* time.

Demographic situation: Palestinians have multiplied 7.5 times since the 1948 *Nakba*

According to statistical data, the Palestinian population in 1948 totaled 1.4 million compared to approximately 10.5 million in 2008. Hence, the number of Palestinians worldwide has multiplied 7.5 times since the *Nakba* in its 60th anniversary. Moreover, data show that the total number of Palestinians living in historic Palestine (between Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea), or, by end of 2007 totaled 5.0 million compared to 5.5 Jews. In light of new review of the population number resulting from the Population, Housing, and Establishment Census 2007, it is expected that the numbers of Palestinians and Jews in historic Palestine will be balanced by 2016.

Statistical data show that the Palestinian refugees constitute more than half of the Palestinians in the world. UNRWA records at end 2007, show that the number of Palestinian refugees in UNRWA five working areas is amounted to 4.6 million people, Of which 42% of them live in Jordan, 10% in Syria, 9% in Lebanon, 16% in the West Bank, and 23% of them live in Gaza Strip. About one third of the Palestinian registered refugees live in 59 refugee camps, of which 10 in Jordan, 10 in Syria, 12 in Lebanon, 19 in the West Bank, and 8 in Gaza Strip. The average size of the Palestinian household in Jordan is approximately 5.1 compared to 4.1 in Syria and 3.8 in Lebanon.

These figures based on the minimum annual increase of the Palestinian refugees. according to UNRWA estimates and taking into consideration the non-registered refugees, the Palestinian refugees is more than one-half of the Palestinian population in the world in the Nakba 60th anniversary , . It is worth to note that the mentioned figures applied for the UNRWA definition and not include the Palestinians who were displaced between 1949 and 1967 war or the non refugees who left or were driven out during the 1967 war if. The number of Palestinians who did not leave their homeland in 1948 was estimated to 154,000; compared with 1.2 million Palestinian in the 60th anniversary of the Nakba. Their sex ratio is 103.7 males to 100 females and the average size of their household is 4.7. Moreover, the percentage of persons who are under the age of 15 years amounted to 40.2% compared with 3.2% for those who are 65 years old and over. This shows that their society is young and a natural extension of the Palestinian society as a whole.

The results of population, housing and establishment census 2007, showed that the number of the Palestinians in the Palestinian Territory was 3.76 millions as in 01/12/2007, of which 2.34 millions in the West Bank and 1.42 millions in Gaza Strip. The number of Palestinians in Jerusalem governorate was about 363 thousands, 60% of them live in those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed forcefully by Israel in 1967.

The database shows that 44.6% of the population in the Palestinian Territory are refugees (approximately 1.7 million) , of which 31.0% are in the West Bank and 67.6% are in Gaza Strip. The fertility rate in the Palestinian Territory is high compared to other countries. The total fertility rate in 2006 was 4.6 births, (4.2 births in the West Bank and 5.4 in Gaza Strip).

Population density

The Nakba has made Gaza Strip the most crowded place on the World

The population density of historic Palestine in 1948 reached 73 individuals/km² of Arabs and Jews compared to 389 individuals/km² in 2007. The population density in the Palestinian Territory reached 625 individuals/km² of which 415 individuals/km² in the West Bank and 3,881 individuals/km² in Gaza Strip. In Israel, on the other hand, the population density reached 317 individuals/km² of Arabs and Jews in 2007.

Settlements: Most settlers live in Jerusalem to make it judaize

Most Jewish settlers live in Jerusalem governorate. According to data, the number of Israeli settlements in the West Bank totaled 144 in 2007. Primary estimates show that the number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank totaled half a million in 2007. Data reveal that most settlers live in Jerusalem governorate which represent 54.6% of the total settlers in the west bank, including 42% in J1 (those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by Israel in 1967).

The Expansion and Annexation wall still swallowing about 15% of the West Bank area

The total length of expansion and annexation wall is 770 kilometers. 406 kilometers (52.7%) of the wall have been completed. There are an additional 322 kilometers planned to be constructed and the construction of 42 kilometers is under construction. The wall isolates 733 square kilometers of the lands. The eastern wall, which expands from the north to the south, is estimated at 200 kilometers in length. This wall allows Israel to isolate and control the Jordan Valley area, which is considered as the food basket of Palestine and the main source of food for the Palestinian people.

The construction of the wall in the West Bank between 2003 and 2006 affected eight governorates containing 159 localities. The number of localities affected by the wall by the end of May 2008 will rise to 180. Most of these localities have had the construction of the wall completed such as the localities of the northern West Bank and Jerusalem governorate. The construction of the wall is still underway in other localities in Ramallah and al Bireh and Hebron governorates. The total length of the wall in Jerusalem is approximately 168 kilometers including 5 kilometers on the Green Line and the rest is inside the West Bank. The construction of the wall in Jerusalem was largely sped up in 2006 and 2007. The wall separates localities like Shufat, and Kufur Aqab from Jerusalem. These localities have 30,000 people with Jerusalem identity cards.

Land use: Israeli restrictions deprive Palestinians of using more than one-third of the West Bank

The area of the Palestinian Territory is 6,020 square kilometers including 5,655 square kilometers in the West Bank and 365 square kilometers in Gaza Strip. The percentage of Built-up land in Israeli settlement is 3.3% of the West Bank area (excluding areas surrounding settlements, military locations, and bypass roads...etc). The rate of agricultural land is 24.6% of the Palestinian Territory.

Water: Palestinians have water shortage while Israelis consume 10 times of the Palestinian water consumption

The Palestinian Territory consume 270 million cubic meters of water annually, including 150 million cubic meters in the West Bank and 120 million cubic meters in Gaza Strip. However, the actual need of the Palestinian Territory of water is 400 million cubic meters. Hence, the water deficit is 130 million cubic meters, at a time of increasing population and economic projects that needs water. Moreover, the water sources are non increasing due to Israel disallows upgrading and maintenance of the Palestinian water sources.

According to the recommendations of WHO with respect to individual daily allocation of water, an individual requires a minimum of 100 liters of water per day. A Palestinian, on the other hand, consumes 30-50 liters of water per day compared to 150 liters of water per day for an Israeli individual and to 300 liters of water per day per individual at Israeli settlements. Additionally, Israel prohibits Palestinian development of Palestinian water sources at a time rainwater level is decreasing, moreover, Israel isolated 26 water wells behind the annexation and expansion wall (production capacity of 7 million cubic meters) which considered a Major Sources of Water for Tulkarem and Qalqilia governorates.

Oslo Accords stipulate an increase of the percentage of water for Palestinians per year of 70 or 80 million cubic meters from the eastern and northeastern basins and western basin as well as the water from the Jordan River. However, for the past 12 years Israel has allowed only using water from the northeastern basin. This basin requires digging 600-1000 meters deep to reach water and sometimes leading to salty water that requires desalination, thus increasing cost. Hence, it is futile to talk about an independent and viable Palestinian state without integrated land and water. Israel has always stolen land and by controlling them, it controlled their water sources. There will be no independent Palestinian state without realizing the Palestinians' rights to their water sources as well as their rights to return, Jerusalem, and all legitimate rights.

Continuous struggle to liberate the land and build the state

Martyrs

The number of the al Aqsa Intifada martyrs between September 29th 2000 and March 31st 2008 reached 5,368 including 5,061 males and 307 females. The number of martyrs in the West Bank reached 2,130 including 2,107 males and 123 females. The number of Gaza Strip martyrs reached 3,201 including 3,019 males and 182 females. The rest of the martyrs are from the 1948 land and outside the Palestinian Territory. The year 2002 was the bloodiest year of the Intifada when 1,192 Palestinians were killed followed by 2004 when 895 Palestinian were killed. The number of martyrs below 18 years of age totaled 969 (18.1%). Most martyrs were in the age group of 18-29 at 2,966 martyrs (55.3% of the total number of martyrs). The total number of martyrs in the age group of 30-49 reached 992 (18.5%). The number of martyrs above 50 years of age reached 298 (5.6%). Data show that the number of injured people reached to 32,700 people between 29th 2000 and March 31st 2008. 26.6% of the wounds were caused by live ammunition, followed by metal and rubber bullets at 21.7% and 20.5%, respectively.

Detainees

According to data from the Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees published in a report on the Prisoner's Day (April 17, 2008), Israel detained more than 60,000 Palestinians during Al-Aqsa Intifada. The report also shows that there are 11,000 Palestinians still behind Israeli bars including 98 female detainees, 355 children, hundreds of sick people, and 352 people detained before the signing of the Oslo Accords. The detainees also include 237 people who had spent more than 15 years in detention and dozens of Arab detainees.

The data of the Ministry also show that Israel has since 1967 detained 800,000 people which represent 20% of the population. This percentage is the highest in the world. Moreover, in addition to thousands of people who were arrested and detained for short period and then released.

Living conditions in the Palestinian Territory

The Nakba of 1948 and the Israeli occupation of 77% of Palestine have led to major deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinian population. The Israeli occupation has systematically uprooted the Palestinian people from their homes and lands, which constitute their livelihoods. The Palestinians have consequently been displaced, left without homes and without income or work, and suffer abject poverty. The occupation has continued to impose its arbitrary measures for the past 60 years; such measures aim at weakening and impoverishing the Palestinian population and driving them out of their native land.

Poverty: Palestinians suffer poverty after 60 years of Nakba

Since 1948, and due to the Israeli measures, Israeli theft of natural resources, and strengthening dependency on Israeli economy, the Palestinian economy has suffered deep scars and deterioration in all economic and social indicators of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The quality of life of the Palestinian people has worsened. According to estimates, poverty rates among Palestinian households during 2007 in accordance with actual consumption patterns totaled 31.5% including 20.4% for the West Bank and 51.4% in Gaza Strip. The monthly income of 58.3% of the Palestinian households is below the national poverty line including 46.5% for the West Bank and 79.3% for Gaza Strip.

The health situation: Slow improvement in health indicators for Palestinians

Data show that the improvement in the indicators of the health situation of Palestinians is slow. Moreover, no progress in limiting infant mortality and children below five years of age took place in the past decade. According to a UNICEF report, Palestine occupies the 108th place in the world with respect to limiting infant mortality. The rate of limiting such mortality reached 40.0% of the required rate. Moreover, chronic malnutrition hits 10% of children below five years of age at an increase of 36.0% in comparison with 1996. The situation worsens in Gaza Strip where 50,000 children suffer malnutrition. One-half of the total number of children below 2 years of age suffer anemia and 70% suffer lack of vitamin A.

There was a 31.0% increase in the number of individuals suffering from chronic diseases between 2004 and 2006. This means that the risk factors leading to the spread of such diseases is on the rise. Additionally, there are many challenges facing any tangible improvements in mother's health and limiting mother's mortality rates in the Palestinian Territory including lack of quality of services provided for women and lack of access to health services due to Israeli procedures. According to data, Palestinians in diaspora suffer a number of health challenges including most prominently high rates of infant mortality. The highest rates of mortality among Palestinian refugee children were in Lebanon compared with Palestinian refugee children in Jordan and Syria. These rates scored 26.0 and 31.0 per 1000 of live births in 2006 in Lebanon, respectively. There is also high-rise of malnutrition rates among Palestinian refugee children below five years of age, which recorded 27.0% in Syria and 20.0% in Lebanon.

Agriculture: Israeli measures extend to the trees, stone and animal after occupation of about 90% of Palestine.

Estimated data show that the number of horticulture destroyed from 28/09/2000 till 31/12/2007 in the Palestinian Territory reached about 1.6 million trees. While the destroyed area about 2,851 dunums of greenhouses, 13,147 dunums of vegetables, and 14,076 dunums of field crops. On the other hand the number of killed animals were 15,862 head of sheep and goats, 1,350 head of cattle, and 1.310 thousand birds from poultry, in addition to the destruction of 18,508 beehives. Moreover Infrastructure and Agricultural firms Destroyed from 28/09/2000 – 31/12/2005 were 455 wells with their equipments, 37,929 dunums of irrigation networks, 1,070,940 meters of the main pipelines, 1,878 of irrigation pools, 930 agricultural stores and 1.862 of animal barns and stable.

The results revealed that (1,826) thousand dunums of the Palestinian farm land were cultivated in the Palestinian Territory during the agricultural year 2005\2006 of which (90.2%) in the West Bank and (9.8%) in Gaza Strip, fruit trees constituted (62.2%) of the cultivated area of the Palestinian Territory. While vegetables and field crops comprised (10.6%) and (27.2%) of the cultivated Palestinian areas respectively, (69.1%) of the cultivated area in Gaza Strip rely on irrigation, compared with only (8.4%) for the West Bank.

Housing conditions: Crowded housing units and high number of damaged housing units by the occupation

According to the 2007 data of the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, the number of buildings in the Palestinian Territory damaged since the outbreak of Al-Aqsa Intifada until April 30, 2007 due to Israeli measures is 77,433 buildings including 69,330 with partial damage and 8,103 demolished or largely damaged.

The data of Housing Conditions Survey 2006 show that the average number of persons per room in the refugee camps of the Palestinian Territory is 2.0 persons per room including 1.8 persons per room for the West Bank refugee camps and 2.0 persons per room for Gaza Strip refugee camps. The average of housing density of three or more persons per room in the refugee camps of the Palestinian Territory is 23.3% including 18.0% in the West Bank and 25.5% in Gaza Strip. Moreover, 99.5% of the Palestinian households are connected to the electricity network, according to Household Energy Survey of July 2006.

Labor market: High unemployment rates and low participation in economic activity

The participation rate in the labor force in the Palestinian Territory in 2007 reached 41.9% (40.0% among the refugees and 43.3% among the non-refugees). The participation rate in the West Bank reached 44.1% (43.8% among the refugees and 44.2% among the non-refugees) compared to 38.0% in Gaza Strip (37.0% among the refugees and 39.8% among the non-refugees). The unemployment rate in the Palestinian Territory reached 21.6% (25.3% among the refugees and 16.8% among the non-refugees). The unemployment rate in the West Bank is 18.6% (20.1% among the refugees and 16.8% among the non-refugees) compared to 29.7% in Gaza Strip (30.2% among the refugees and 28.7% among the non-refugees). The service sector considered is the largest employed sector of the refugees in the West Bank at 35.8% followed by trade sector at 21.1%. In Gaza Strip, the service sector employs more than half employed persons (57.8%) of the refugees followed by trade sector at 16.1%. The daily wage in the Palestinian Territory is NIS 74.3 (NIS 72.9 for refugees and 75.4 NIS for non-refugees). In the West Bank, the daily wage is 78.5 NIS (77.0 NIS for refugees and 79.2 NIS for non-refugees). On the other hand, in Gaza Strip, the daily wage is 65.4 NIS (69.0 NIS for refugees and 57.1 NIS for non-refugees). The average of dependency ratio in the Palestinian Territory for 2007 is 5.6 ; 4.9 in the West Bank and 7.3 in Gaza Strip.

Education: Palestinians invest in education as a strategic option

The primary data for the scholastic year 2007/2008 indicated that the number of schools in the Palestinian Territory was 2,430 schools, distributed by supervising authority as follows: 1,833 governmental schools, 309 UNRWA schools, and 288 private schools. Of these, 1,809 schools were in the West Bank, and 621 schools were in Gaza Strip. The number of pupils in these schools was 1.1 million, of which 549,000 were males and 549,000 were females. The number of students in the West Bank was 654,000 and in Gaza Strip 448,000 and distributed according to supervising authorities as follows: 767,000 enrolled in governmental schools, 253,000 enrolled in UNRWA schools, and 78,000 enrolled in private schools. The number of school teachers was 43,559 19,430 males and 24,129 females, of which 27,448 were in the West Bank and 16,111 in the Gaza Strip. As well, the illiteracy rate among individuals aged 15 years and above was 6.3% in 2007. This rate varies between males and females: 2.8% for males and 9.7% for females.

In the Palestinian Territory, there are 11 universities and 13 university colleges offering programs leading to the bachelor degree: 3 universities and 4 university colleges are in Gaza Strip, and 8 universities and 9 university colleges are in the West Bank. There are 19 intermediate community colleges, with 14 in the West Bank and 5 in Gaza Strip.

On the contrary indicators of poverty and unemployment, the illiteracy rate among Palestinian refugees living in the Palestinian Territory less when compared to other non-refugees, the

illiteracy rate of Palestinian refugees in 2007 among individuals aged 15 years and above was 5.7% while the value of non-refugees of 6.5%. It also increased the proportion of Palestinian refugees 15 years and above obtaining a bachelor's degree and above, amounting to 9.2% of all refugees above 15 years, while the value of non-refugees of 8.4% only. Figures released in 2007 on literacy rates for individuals 15 years and above that there is no statistical differences at the level of refugee status since those rates amounted to 94.3% of refugees (by 97.6% for males and 90.9% for females), while the rates for non-refugees 93.5% (By 97.0% to 89.9% for males, females).

It is clear from the data of 2006, the enrolment rates for individuals 6 years and above to the Palestine refugees have reached 47.2% at 46.6% for males and 47.8% for females, which is higher than the rates for non-refugees, amounting to 45.2% (at 44.8% for males and 45.5% for females). The percentage of school dropouts in the Palestinian Territory in 2006 for the refugees 6 years and above at 22.6% 23.4% for males and 21.8% for females, while the value of this proportion to the non-refugees by 27.2% to 28.6% for males and 25.7% for females.

Data from Al-Haq institution show that the number of schools and universities closed by Israeli military orders until May 22, 2006 was 12. Teaching at 1,125 schools and universities was hindered by Israeli acts of aggression. Moreover, 359 schools and education departments and universities were shelled by Israeli troops, who also made 43 schools into military barracks and killed 845 students and wounded 4,780 students and employees from the education sector.

Macroeconomics: Price increase, Gaza under siege, drop in performance of economic sectors

The Consumer Price Index increased in the Palestinian Territory by 6.85% during December 2007 compared with December 2006 (5.67% in the West Bank, and 10.17% in Gaza Strip). While the Consumer Price Index increased during December 2007 compared with September 2000 by 33.50% in the Palestinian Territory (33.58% in the West Bank, and 27.60% in Gaza Strip). The Consumer Price Index increased during the December 2007 by 64.01% compared with the base year 1996 (65.56% in the Remaining West Bank, and 55.42% in Gaza Strip). While the Consumer Price Index increased in the Palestinian Territory in March 2008 compared with 38.58% in September 2000 (38.55% in the West Bank, and 34.81% in Gaza Strip). The prices increased in the Palestinian Territory and the siege imposed on Gaza Strip, and the repeated closure of the crossings, increased barriers in the Palestinian Territory, in addition to repeated Israeli aggression on the land and rights and wealth, all privies things had been significant impact on the Palestinian economy , As the siege imposed on Gaza Strip led to a collapse in the domestic trade sector and prevent external trade from and to Gaza Strip in addition to the construction sector has been affected negatively, because Israel prevent entry of construction materials from and to Gaza Strip, in addition to services sector affected like The privies sectors.

The Palestinian National Accounts 2007 at constant prices indicate that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Remaining West Bank and Gaza Strip was US \$ 4,136 million. The per capita share of GDP amounted to \$1,178. the GDP in service activities, construction activities and the activities of mining and manufacturing decreased by 3.6%, 0.2%, 0.7% respectively during 2007 compared with 2006. In addition, the GDP recorded a decline rate of 2.9% compared with 2000, also the growth rate 29.5% compared with 1995, and the GDP per capita in 2007 decreased by 19.2% in Compared with 2000, also by 15.1% compared with 1995.

Trade exchange

According to data, the value of imported goods in 2006 totaled U.S.\$ 2.835 million; on the other hand, the value of imported services for the same year totaled U.S.\$ 93.2 million. The value of exported goods in 2006 totaled U.S.\$ 339 million. The value of exported services to Israel totaled U.S.\$ 102.4 million. The net goods trade balance had a deficit of U.S.\$ 2.469 million in 2006, with a 6% increase in comparison with 2005. The net service trade balance for 2006 scored a surplus of U.S.\$ 9.2 million.

Economic establishments: Rising in spite of the siege

The final results of the Establishment Census 2007 show that the number of economic establishments in the Palestinian Territory between October 20th 2007 and November 10th 2007 totals 132,874 establishments. The figure does not include those parts of Jerusalem governorate which were annexed by Israel in 1967. The figure; however, includes 94,205 establishments in the remaining West Bank and 38,669 establishments in Gaza Strip. There is 109,686 operating establishments in the Palestinian Territory, in the private sector, NGOs sector, and the government companies. These establishments employ 296,965 person.