



Dr. Ola Awad, reviews the conditions of the Palestinian people via statistical figures and findings, on the 73rd Annual Commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba.

**Annual Commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba On the 73rd
The number of Palestinians Worldwide has Doubled about Nine- 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 73rd 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 nation was destroyed and its population displaced systematically by gangs and individuals from all over the world. The *Nakba* resulted in the displacement of 800 thousand Palestinians out of the 1.4 million Palestinians who lived 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 and Gaza Strip and other countries in the world. Furthermore, thousands of Palestinians – who stayed in the area controlled by the Israeli occupation in 1948 – were driven out of their homes and lands, which were seized by the Israeli occupation.

According to the 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: Palestinian population has doubled nine times since the Nakba 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 while the number of Jews doubled more than six times during this period. 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, and the displacement of more than 200 thousand Palestinians (majority of them to Jordan) after the 1967 war, the Palestinian world population totaled 13.7 million by the end of 2020, which means that the number of Palestinians in the world has doubled more than 9 times since the events of the Nakba of 1948, and more than half of them live in historical Palestine by the end of 2020. Accordingly, their number reached 6.8 million (1.6 million in the occupied territories in 1948). Population estimates indicated that the number of population by the end of 2020 in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, was 3.1 million and around 2.1 million in Gaza Strip. As for the population of Jerusalem Governorate, it was about 467 thousand people of which approximately 65% (about 301 thousand people) live in those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by Israeli occupation in 1967 (J1). Hence, data showed that Palestinians represented 49.7% of the population living in historical Palestine, while

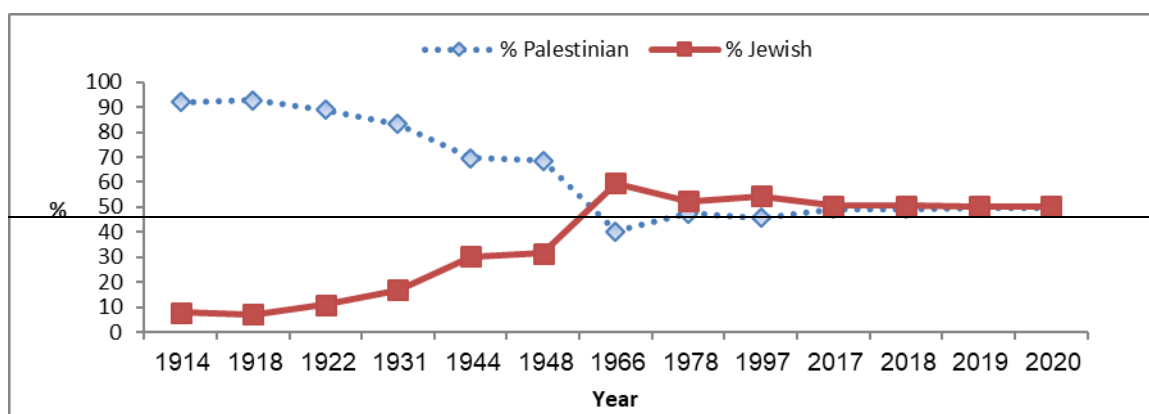


Jews constituted 50.3% by the end of 2020. The Israeli occupation continues its control over 85% of the area of historical Palestine, which amounts to 27 thousand square kilometers (km²). The remaining areas continue to endure further attempts of usurpation and control. It should be noted that Jews under the British Mandate used only 1,682 km² of historical land of historical Palestine which represents 6.2%.

Palestinian Refugees Status

Records of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in January 2020 showed that the total number of Palestinian refugees was around 6.3 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 the Palestinians displaced in the period from 1949 till the six-day war in June 1967. The 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.

Percentage of Palestinians and Jews in Historical Palestine in Various Years



Population Density: Gaza Strip has one of the highest population densities in the world

The population density in the State of Palestine by the end of 2020 was 857 individuals per square kilometer (km²): 545 individuals/km² in the West Bank and 5,693 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 72% of the youth aged 15-24 years are unemployed by the end of 2020. 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 martyrs killed in Al-Aqsa Intifada between September 29th 2000 until December 31st 2020 was 10,969. 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 2020, the number of Palestinian martyrs

¹ Several Sources



reached 43; 9 of whom were children and 3 women. While the number of the wounded Palestinians during the year 2020 reached about 1,650 persons. Since the beginning of 2021, there are 18 martyrs, 2 of whom were prisoners and one individual with special needs.

About 1 Million Detention Cases since 1967

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

By the end of 2020, there were 4,500 Palestinian detainees in the Israeli occupation prisons, 140 of them are children and 41 women. As for the number of arrests, it reached 4,634 during the year 2020, including 543 children and 128 women. Data also indicates that there are 570 prisoners serving life sentences, and 650 administrative detainees. Data also indicates that Israel is detaining more than 700 sick prisoners and six prisoners of parliament 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 shows 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. Data also indicates 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 2019, there were 461 Israeli occupation sites and military bases in the West Bank including 151 settlements and 26 inhabited outposts that were considered as neighborhood following established settlements, in addition to 140 settlement outposts. As for the number of settlers in the West Bank, it reached 688,262 settlers by the end of 2019; at a growth rate of almost 2.6%. Attracting Jews from abroad represents more than the third of the net population growth rate in Israel. Thus, data shows that around 46% of settlers live in Jerusalem Governorate, where their number reached about 316,176 settlers; out of which 232,093 settlers live in East Jerusalem (J1) that includes those parts of Jerusalem which were annexed by 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. This proportion was the highest in Jerusalem Governorate, where there were 69 settlers per 100 Palestinians. Accordingly, 2020 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 6,719 new settlement housing units as well as plans including another 12,159 colonial units during the same year, in addition to the approval of establishing 11 new settlement outposts.

Continuous Confiscation of Land

The Israeli occupation used the land classification according to the Oslo Accords (A, B and C) to tighten their control of the Palestinian land, especially in areas classified as (C) which are under full control of the Israeli occupation in terms of security, planning and construction, where 76% of the total area classified (C) is directly exploited by the Israeli occupation; settlements regional councils control 63% of it. While the area of authority regions in the Israeli settlements in the West Bank (Including closed regions and allocated for expanding those settlements) is about 542 km² as it is by the end of 2019; 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, over 219 Palestinian localities were badly affected by the establishment of the Annexation and Expansion Wall.



Jerusalem: Intensive and Systematic Judaization

During 2020, the Israeli occupation demolished and destroyed 976 Palestinian buildings; around 30% of which were in Jerusalem Governorate, 296 demolitions, of which 180 buildings inside the neighborhoods of Jerusalem. Whereas the number of self-demolitions reached 89 demolitions, most of which located in Jerusalem Governorate. During 2020, the Israeli occupation issued orders to demolish and stop the construction and restoration of about 1,012 buildings in the West Bank and Jerusalem, an increase of about 45% compared with 2019. The occupation authorities are also placing obstacles on the issuance of building permits to Palestinians.

The occupation forces policy of demolishing Palestinian-owned buildings and the resulting displacement of residents from their homes throughout the West Bank has not stopped. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has documented that the Israeli occupation forces have demolished 7,514 structures since 2009, including 1,343 donors-funded structures, which led to the displacement of 11,356 people. Accordingly, demolition operations were distributed as 19% in East Jerusalem, 79% in Areas classified as "C" and about 2% of the demolitions were in Areas classified as "A" and "B". OCHA documented about 851 structures that were demolished in 2020, of which 157 are donors-funded structures, which led to the displacement of 1,001 inhabitant. Khirbet Homsa in the Jordan Valley represented the vivid picture of the systematic demolitions. It was demolished three times during the last quarter of 2020, where dozens of families live in Khirbet Homsa, including more than 40 children.

More than 1,000 Settlers' Attacks

The settlers, under the protection of the Israeli occupation army, carried out about 1,090 attacks against Palestinian citizens and their property in 2020, an increase of 9% compared with 2019. Hence, the attacks varied from uprooting, destroying and burning of 8,925 trees, carrying out 21 run-over attacks, 8 kidnapping attempts, 26 shootings, and 47 A-leveling operation of citizens' lands. Livestock were not spared from those attacks, as 445 head of cattle were killed and stolen, in addition to burning, destroying and damaging 350 cars and vehicles.

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, Palestinian cities are forced to purchase water from the Israeli water company "Mekorot". In 2019, they purchased 84.2 MCM, which represents 20% of the water available in Palestine (417.9 MCM). Additionally, 40.6 MCM of the water were produced from the Palestinian springs while 289 MCM are pumped from groundwater wells and 4.1 MCM desalinated drinking water.

By subtracting 45.5% of the water available to Palestinians that is unsuitable for human use, by linking it to the quantities of polluted water in Gaza Strip, the quantities of water suitable for domestic use available to the Palestinians are only 219.8 MCM, including purchased and desalinated water.

79% of Available Water is from Groundwater

Data showed that the percentage of the exploitation of surface and groundwater from available water in 2019 was high with an average of 79%. On the other hand, the quantity of water pumped from the Palestinian wells in the West Bank in 2019 was 101.3 MCM from Eastern Aquifer, Western Aquifer and North-Eastern Aquifer. It should be noted that Palestinians have been denied by the Israeli occupation from accessing and extracting water from the Jordan River since 1967, which was estimated of about 250 MCM.

The amount of water extracted from the coastal aquifer for domestic use was 187.6 MCM in Gaza Strip in 2019. 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. More than 97% of the water pumped from the coastal aquifer in Gaza Strip does not meet the water quality standards of the World Health Organization, leading to the depletion of groundwater reserves, where the groundwater level in the coastal aquifer reached 19 meters below sea level.

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