



## **Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)**

### **Press release on the occasion of the International Day Of Persons with Disabilities, 03/12/2023**

#### **About 115 thousand persons with disabilities in Palestine before the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip (October 7, 2023)**

The number of persons with disabilities in Palestine is estimated at about 115 thousand persons, constituting 2.1% of the population, with approximately 59 thousand persons in the West Bank, constituting 1.8% of the West Bank population, and approximately 58 thousand persons in Gaza Strip, constituting 2.6% of Gaza Strip population. While, the disability rate reached 3% among adults (18 years and above), 2.6% in the West Bank and 3.9% in Gaza Strip. The percentage of disability varies greatly between governorates, as North Gaza Governorate recorded the highest percentage of disability, reaching nearly 5%, followed by Dier Al-Balah Governorate (4.1%). On the other hand, the lowest percentage was recorded in Ramallah & Al-Bireh, and Jericho & Al-Aghwar Governorates, at about 2% for each.

#### **The number of persons with disabilities has doubled in Gaza Strip**

Reducing disability rates is an important goal in the field of public health and healthcare. From 2007 to 2017, the number of persons with disabilities in Gaza Strip doubled from 24,608 to 48,140 persons. According to the annual health report in Gaza Strip for the year 2022, the number of registered persons with disabilities reached 55,538 persons, of which walking disabilities constitute 47%. The Israeli measures and the war on Gaza Strip caused walking disabilities for about 2,000 adults, representing 9% of adults with walking disabilities and about 3% of children under the age of eighteen with disabilities. It is worth noting that the reasons related to Israeli measures and wars caused at least one disability for about 6% of the persons aged 18 years and above, 8% in Gaza Strip compared to 4% in the West Bank.

According to reports issued by UNRWA, as a result of the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip in 2014, about a third of the injuries caused permanent disabilities for those injured at that time<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, the number of persons with disabilities is likely to increase as a result of the Israeli aggression in 2023 by approximately 12,000 persons until the date of issuing this press release, due to the increasing number of injured people, the decrease in healthcare capacity, the closure of border crossings, the prevention of basic medical supplies from entering Gaza Strip and the direct attacks on hospitals, care centers and medical teams.

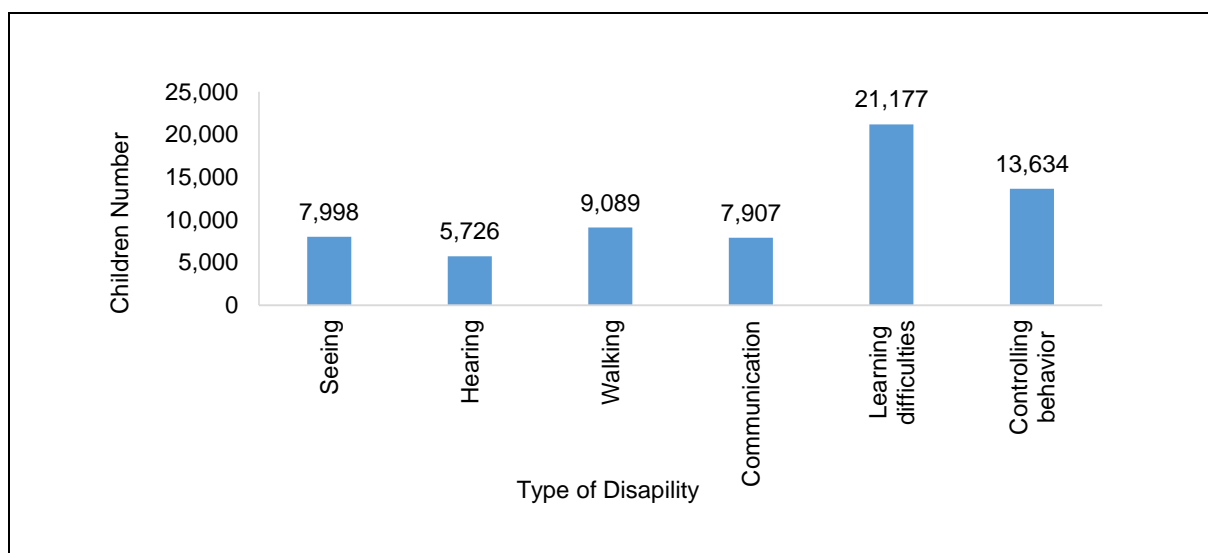
Persons with disabilities face great challenges as they are exposed to risks due to the harsh conditions associated with Israeli aggression, as well as the unhealthy and unsuitable conditions in displacement areas. Additionally, they contend with a lack of healthcare and an inability to access health services.



**3 out of every 25 children suffer from one or more types of functional difficulties**

By tracking the range of functional abilities in the Palestinian Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019-2020 for children aged 2-17 years, it was found that about 12% of the children in Palestine suffer from one or more types of functional difficulties. According to estimates before the aggression on Gaza strip, it was expected that the number of children with disabilities in Gaza strip in 2023 would reach about 98 thousand children in the age group 2-17 years\*, including about 6 thousand children in the age group 2-4 years and approximately 92 thousand children in the age group 5-17 years. Learning disabilities were the most common disability among children aged 2-17 years in Gaza Strip and their number is estimated to be around 21,200 in 2023, while hearing disabilities were the least common.

**Estimates of children aged 2-17 years who suffer from functional difficulties in Gaza Strip by type of some disabilities, 2023**



Source: Estimates based on Palestinian Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey data 2019-2020.

The injured of the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip since October 7<sup>th</sup> until the date of issuing this press release, especially children, who constitute 17% of the total injured individuals, suffer from various repercussions, represented by serious physical injuries that leave long-term effects on their health and lives. They may need several surgeries and expensive medical treatments. In addition, the injuries may lead to a permanent disability, which prevents them from achieving their ambitions and negatively affects their future. It may also prevent the children from accessing education, which would affect their future opportunities, and they might suffer from psychological trauma as a result of the injuries resulting from the Israeli aggression, which would also affect their psychological and social development. It is worth mentioning that the injured might face great challenges and difficulties in coping with their injuries, which might lead to a loss of hope, frustration and uncertainty of the future.

## **More than two-thirds of the persons in Gaza Strip suffer from depression**

Mental health is considered one of the most affected areas during wars and conflicts, and the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip was unfortunately no exception. The psychological impact of aggression and wars on the population of Gaza Strip could be a significant and devastating one. According to the psychological conditions survey carried out by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in cooperation with the World Bank in 2022 on mental health and the war on Gaza Strip, it was found that more than two-thirds of the persons in Gaza Strip suffer from depression, and levels of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms rise among younger age groups (18 to 29 years old) and tends to decrease with age. On the other hand, the highest percentage in the range of functional difficulties among children in the age 5-17 years in Gaza Strip was anxiety, which was about 13%. It is estimated that approximately 52,450 children aged 5-17 years are expected to suffer from stress in 2023, while approximately 13,000 children will suffer from signs of depression, according to 2023 estimates based on the results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019-2020, before the aggression on Gaza Strip on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

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<sup>i</sup> [2014 Gaza conflict | UNRWA](#)

\*: The functional domains of children at the age 2-4 years old include: seeing, hearing, walking, fine motor, communicating, learning, playing, and controlling behavior. The functional domains of children at the age 5-17 years include: seeing, hearing, walking, communication, learning, controlling behavior, self-care, remembering, concentrating, accepting change, making friends, anxiety, and depression.