



Dr. Ola Awad, reviews the conditions of the Palestinian people via statistical figures and findings, on the 72nd Annual Commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba.

**Annual Commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba On the 72nd
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 72nd 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 and 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 occupation.

According to the documentary evidence, the Israel 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. 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 13.4 million by the end of 2019, 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 2019, where their

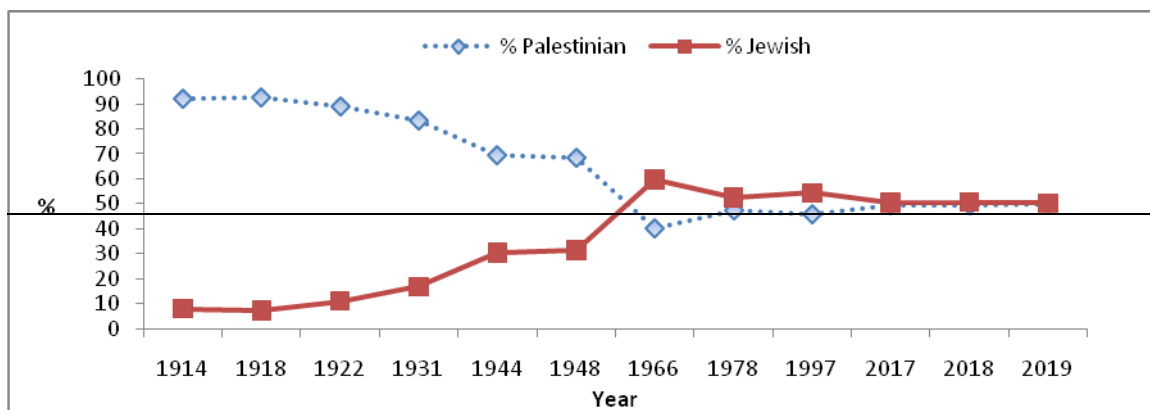


number reached 6.64 million (1.60 million in the occupied territories in 1948). Population estimates indicated that the number of population by the end of 2019 in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, was 3.02 million and around 2.02 million in Gaza Strip. As for the population of Jerusalem Governorate, it was about 457 thousand people of which approximately 65% (about 295 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 2019. 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) reported on 2019 that the total number of Palestinian refugees was around 5.6 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 since 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 2019 was 836 individuals per square kilometer (km²): 534 individuals/km² in the West Bank and 5,533 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, where the unemployment rate reached 45%, around 67.4% of the youth aged 15-24 years are

unemployed by the end of 2019. The siege also shook the economy of Gaza Strip and turned over half of its population into poor 53% and 11% of households use an improved drinking water source in Gaza Strip due to the deterioration in the quality of water extracted from the coastal basin.

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 2019 was 10,926. 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 2019, the number of Palestinian martyrs reached 151; 29 of whom were children and 9 women. While the number of the wounded Palestinians during the year 2019 reached about 8 thousand persons, since the beginning of 2020, there are 9 martyrs in the West Bank and 6 martyrs in the Gaza Strip

About 1 Million detention Case since 1967

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

By the end of 2019, there were five thousand Palestinian detainees in the Israeli occupation prisons, 200 of them are children and 42 women. In regards to the number of detention cases during the year 2019, it amounted to be about 5,500 cases, including 889 children and 128 women. Furthermore, the occupation authorities continued to issue the order of administrative detention against the Palestinians. In 2019, the number of administrative detention orders reached 1,035; 4 of which were against children and another 4 against women. The institutions concerned with prisoners affairs confirm that since the beginning of the year 2020, the Israeli occupation has arrested (1,324) Palestinian citizens, including (210) children and (31) women, and (295) administrative detention orders have been issued against prisoners, and since the beginning of the outbreak of the new Covid 19 virus (Corona), the occupation continued to arrest Palestinian citizens: The occupation forces arrested (357) Palestinians during the month of March 2020, including (48) children and four women, and it should be noted here that during the past year 2019, five prisoners martyred in prison due to medical negligence and torture: Fares Baroud, Omar Awni Younis, Nassar Taqatqa and Bassam Sayeh, and Sami Abu Diyak.

Israeli Occupation: Continuous Expansion of Settlements

By the end of 2018, there were 448 Israeli occupation sites and military bases in the West Bank including 150 settlements and 26 inhabited outposts that were considered as neighborhood following established settlements, in addition to 128 settlement outposts. As for the number of settlers in the West Bank, it reached 671,007 settlers by the end of 2018; at a growth rate of almost 2.7%. Moreover, attracting Jews from abroad represents more than the third of net population growth rate in Israel. Thus, data showed that around 47% of settlers live in Jerusalem Governorate, where their number reached about 311,462 settlers; out of which 228,614 settlers live in East Jerusalem (J1) "including 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, and it was the highest in Jerusalem Governorate, where there were 70 settlers per 100 Palestinians. Accordingly, 2019 witnessed a significant increase in the pace of construction and expansion of the Israeli

¹ Several Sources



settlements in the West Bank, where the Israeli occupation approved the construction of 8,457 new settlement housing units. It also approved the establishment of 13 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 its 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. Moreover, data indicated that there are about 2,700 establishments isolated between the Wall and the Green Line, and about 5,300 establishments damaged by the Wall. Furthermore, 35 thousand households were also badly affected by the establishment of the Wall. Nevertheless, there are about 67 thousand Palestinians living in isolated buildings between the Wall and the Green Line. Also, the Israeli occupation imposes all kinds of obstacles to tighten their lives and make it almost impossible for the Palestinians urban expansion, especially in Jerusalem and areas classified as (C) in the West Bank and that are still under full control of the Israeli occupation.

Jerusalem: Intensive and Systematic Judaization

During 2019, the Israeli occupation demolished 678 Palestinian buildings; around 40% of which were in Jerusalem Governorate (268 demolishing operations). The demolished buildings were divided into the following: 251 residential buildings and 427 establishments. Also, in 2019, the Israeli occupation issued orders to stop the construction of and demolish 556 buildings in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Hence, the Israeli occupation forces continue to demolish Palestinian houses and put obstacles and impediments to the issuance of building licenses. According to the Al-Maqdese for Society Development and Abdullah Hourani Center for Studies and Documentation, about 2,130 buildings were demolished in East Jerusalem J1 during 2000–2019. Also, it demolished about 50 thousand residential units entirely and over 100 thousand residences partially in the Palestinian Territories since 1967. Moreover, data from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs indicated that around 110 thousand Palestinians suffer from internal displacement around the occupied Palestinian Territories during the last decade. Accordingly, the majority of those were forcibly displaced during the conflict that erupted in 2014 in Gaza Strip. Yet, 7,400 of them are still displaced until this moment. In the West Bank, 900 Palestinians were displaced during 2019 after their houses were demolished or confiscated, especially in area (C) and East Jerusalem because they lack building licenses issued by the Israeli authorities; such licenses are considered something impossible to obtain by the Palestinians.

Moreover, data showed that there is an increase in the pace of self-demolition of the houses since 2006 and afterwards, where the occupation authorities forced more than 400 citizens to demolish their houses by their own hands. Also, the year 2010 has witnessed the highest rate of self-demolitions, which reached 70 demolitions, 49 self-demolitions in 2009 and 48 documented self-



demolitions in 2019. According to Al-Maqdese for Society Development and Abdullah Hourani Center for Studies and Documentation, there are many self-demolitions that people preferred to keep silent about and they didn't report to the media nor to the human rights institutions or civil society institutions. Furthermore, Palestinians constitute 30% of the population in Jerusalem but they pay 40% of the total value taxes that the occupation municipality collects; however, the municipality only spends 8% of those taxes on the services provided to the Palestinians.

The Human Rights Watch estimates that there are 90 thousand Palestinians in East Jerusalem currently living in buildings with notice of demolition. It is worth mentioning that the Israeli housing policies in East Jerusalem racially discriminate against Palestinians, where it allocated only 12% for the Palestinian establishments, whereas it allocated 35% of East Jerusalem lands to building Israeli settlements. Even in this small area, the Palestinians cannot afford the costs to issue building licenses, which is a very complicated and expensive process.

Motivations and Facilitations for Settlers

Data of the annual report of the Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission indicated that the total expenditure on settlement activities during the period 2011 – 2016 reached NIS 1 billion, while the total expenditure in 2017 reached NIS 1.7 billion. Also, NIS 1.4 billion were spent in 2018. Moreover, data from the Israeli organization, Peace Now, indicated, in terms of the establishment of settlement outposts, that this phenomenon has mainly started during Netanyahu's era as a Prime Minister in 1996, and it stopped in 2005. It is noticed that the government of Netanyahu went back, once again, to establish illegal settlement outposts; where out of 134 sites that were built: two settlement sites were evacuated (Migron and Amuna); and 29 settlement locations were approved (3 as independent settlements and 26 as "neighborhoods" for established settlements); and over 35 sites under approval.

A racist discrimination policy for the use of streets cost the Palestinians more than USD 400 million

The Israeli checkpoints divided the West Bank into more than 100 cantons that prevent the communications between the Palestinians geographic components in the West Bank through the existence of 165 iron gates at the entrance of the cities and villages, as well as 600 military checkpoints for facilitating the process of isolation and separation of Palestinian localities from one another. Also, the Israeli occupation restricts the movement of the Palestinians in some roads that the occupation allocated for settlers, where the length of the roads that Palestinians are deprived from using reaches 40 km; 7 km in Hebron city, in addition to 20 km where partial restrictions are imposed on the use of such roads by the Palestinians. A study by the Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem / Society (ARIJ) indicated that Palestinians lose around 60 million working hours per year due to the Israeli checkpoints and the restrictions on movement, where the total losses reached USD 270 million as well as the additional use of fuel that is about 80 million liters per year at a cost of USD 135 million.

A Bitter Reality for Water in Palestine, 22% of Available Water in Palestine Purchased from Israeli Water Company "Mekorot"

With scarce water and Israeli restrictions on access to resources, Palestinian are forced to purchase water from the Israeli water company "Mekorot". In 2018, they purchased 85.7 MCM, which represented 22% of the water available in Palestine (389.5 MCM). Additionally, 25.5 MCM of water were produced from the Palestinian springs while 274.2 MCM are pumped from



ground water wells and 4.1 MCM are desalinated drinking water. By subtracting the amount of water extracted from the coastal basin in Gaza Strip which constitutes 45.5% of the water available to the Palestinians that are stated above) as it does not conform to the specifications of the World Health Organization, the quantities of water available for all uses of the Palestinians are only 211.9 MCM that include groundwater, purchased water and desalinated water.

77% of Available Water is from Groundwater

Palestine mainly relies on water extracted from ground water resources, where its percentage reached 77% of available water. Also, the quantity of water pumped from groundwater wells (Eastern aquifer, Western aquifer and North-Eastern aquifer) in the West Bank in 2018 was 99 MCM.

The main reason behind the low use of surface water is due to the fact that the Israeli occupation prevents Palestinians from accessing and extracting water from the Jordan River, in addition to preventing them from using water from valleys.

According to 2018 data, it showed that Palestine has started producing quantities of desalinated water that is expected to increase in the upcoming years with the start of operating limited quantities of desalinated water stations in Gaza Strip; however, these quantities will greatly increase with the implementation of the program of the Central Desalination Station.

Accordingly, the amount of water extracted from the coastal aquifer for domestic use was 177.6 million cubic meters (MCM) in Gaza Strip in 2018. It is worth mentioning that this quantity is obtained via over pumping which led to the depletion of groundwater reserves, where the groundwater level in the coastal aquifer reached 19 meters below sea level. It also led to the overlapping of sea water and sewage water filtered into the basin. Moreover, 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.

Trump's Plan (the Evaporation of the Two-States solution)

The plan suggests to extort about 1,860 km², which is about 30% of the West Bank lands, and then to annex them to Israel; about 23 km² is classified as area (B). Also, the number of the Palestinian localities that will be isolated in the area is 178 population localities, where about 330 thousand Palestinians live in and distributed on 33 localities in the area classified as (B) and its population is about 103 thousand persons; 52 localities in areas classified as (C) and its population is around 16 thousand persons; 20 localities in Eastern Jerusalem, where the population reached about 220 thousand persons; and 73 Bedouin localities. The plan also proposes the annexation of all Israeli settlements to Israel, with keeping 15 Israeli Settlement Enclaves in the territories of the State of Palestine, which means that those 15 settlements will continue to expand in order to form a geographic connection between them as they continue cutting the ties of the remaining geographic lands for the Palestinians on what is left of the West Bank. Furthermore, the plan defines the swap of 833 km² from the occupied territories in 1948 (equals 13.5% of the total area of the West Bank), where these areas are distributed as follows: the plan suggests the annexation of about 180 km² from the lands of Naqab Desert to the South of the West Bank; this area, according to the aerial photos, is a desert of steep rocky hillsides, in which no source of water is available and without any development value.

Additionally, the plan provided an additional proposal according to which about 290 km² are exploited and used as an industrial area for advanced technology. Also, 230 km² from Naqab Desert to be used in farming and for residence, which is located along the line borders that separate the Egyptian Sinai from the Palestinian Naqab. It is worth mentioning that this area is also full of steep rocky hills with no available water sources and it is not suitable for the implementation of such proposals as shown by the aerial photos. Moreover, the plan suggests to make an amendment on the borders of the Armistice line for 1948 in order to amend the border tracks to include more than 10 Palestinian localities at the west of the Armistice line, in which 300 thousand Palestinians reside and live in Al-Muthalath and the area near the borderline of the Armistice line in the surrounding of Kafr Qasem. Furthermore, the plan suggests extorting about 340 km² from the agricultural lands in the West Bank and annex those lands to Israel "about 89 km² of those agricultural lands that are located in the area of the Jordan Valley".

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