Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

On the Occasion of the International Day of Older Persons 01/10/2024

The world celebrates the International Day of Older Persons on October 1st of each year in recognition of their efforts and to highlight the significant contributions made by the elderly for the society, in addition to raising awareness of the problems, obstacles and challenges that the elderly face.

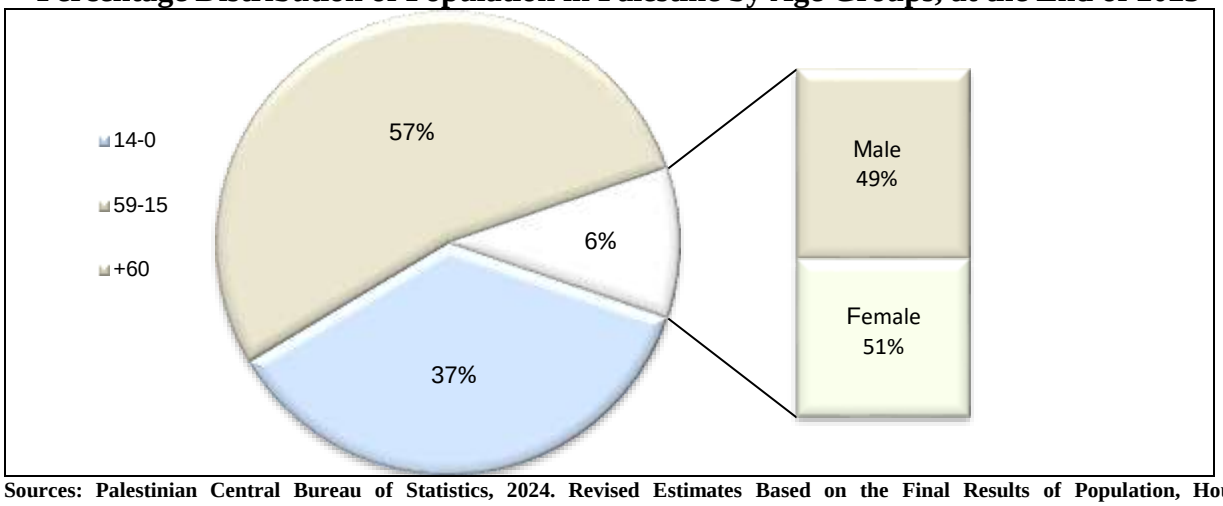
International Day of Older Persons occurs in Palestine at a time of the continued Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip and the ongoing violation of human rights. Since October 7th, 2023, the Israeli occupation forces have been waging a war of genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza Strip along with committing massacres and destruction of buildings, facilities and infrastructure there, in light of the lack of basic health and food services, with more than 41 thousand martyrs and about 2 million Palestinians, left their homes, out of about 2.2 million Palestinians who were residing in Gaza Strip on the eve of the Israeli occupation aggression. However, the longer-term damage resulting from this Israeli aggression, which will have negative and profound economic, demographic, social and psychological impacts that will affect most groups of the Palestinian people in Gaza Strip, and the expectations indicate that it will last for longer periods of time after the end of the war.

The demographic reality of the elderly in Palestine on the eve of the Israeli occupation aggression:

Data indicate that on the eve of the Israeli occupation aggression against Gaza Strip on October 7th, 2023, about 5.6 million Palestinians were residing in the State of Palestine, including 321 thousand persons aged 60 years and above, constituting 6% of the total population in Palestine at the end of 2023, this percentage in the West Bank reached about 6% compared to 5% in Gaza Strip.

Even though the percentage of the elderly will be increasing during the coming years in Palestine, their percentage will remain relatively low and would not exceed 6% during the current decade. It is expected to start increasing after the mid of next decade.

Percentage Distribution of Population in Palestine by Age Groups, at the End of 2023



Sources: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024. Revised Estimates Based on the Final Results of Population, Housing and Establishments Census, 2017. Ramallah, Palestine.

In light of the Israeli occupation aggression, data showed terrifying numbers of martyrs and injured

Since the Israeli occupation aggression on October 7th, 2023, more than 41 thousand Palestinians have been martyred, constituting 1.8% of the total population of Gaza Strip, where about 7% of them were elderly (aged 60 years and above). Several thousand Palestinians have also left Gaza Strip since the beginning of the aggression. The number of martyrs who died of famine reached 36 martyrs, and there are about 3,500 children at the risk of death due to malnutrition and lack of food. While the number of the injured reached more than 100 thousand, 70% of whom were women and children, in addition to about 10 thousand missing persons. Moreover, the number of martyrs in the West Bank reached 703 martyrs, of them about 1.3% martyrs were elderly (aged 60 years and above), while the percentage of martyrs under the age of 30 reached about 75%.

About 76% of the elderly in Palestine suffer from chronic diseases

In 2023, data prior to the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip showed that about 76% of the elderly in Palestine suffer from chronic diseases, with around 75% in West Bank and 78% in Gaza Strip. The percentage of those suffering from chronic diseases reached approximately 70% among males and 82% among females.

The elderly with chronic diseases and the injured in Gaza Strip are among the most affected groups due to the Israeli aggression. They face significant challenges that could lead to a deterioration in their health because of the cut off medications and healthcare services, as well as the difficulty in accessing hospitals and care centers, especially with many facilities destroyed or out of service. According to data from the Emergency Medical Teams Coordination Cell (EMTCC) and the World Health Organization, around 58,915 patients with chronic diseases are at risk of their conditions worsening. The total number of required medical evacuations reached 14,469 cases, including 2,497 elderly (aged 60 and above), which includes 1,380 cancer patients and 126 kidney patients, as of September 8th, 2024.

18% of the Elderly in Palestine Hold an Intermediate Diploma and Higher

About 29% of the elderly did not complete any educational stage; 18% among males and 39% among females, whereas the percentage of the elderly who completed intermediate diploma degree and higher did not exceed 18% in 2023.

Educational status data for 2023 showed that there is a marked difference in percentage between males and females regarding educational attainment levels. In a sense, the percentage of the male elderly who obtained intermediate diploma and higher in Palestine reached 26% compared to 11% of the female elderly. Also, the percentage of individuals aged 18 years and above who obtained intermediate diploma and higher reached 26% of the total population aged 18 years and above in Palestine (23% among males and 29% among females).

By region, about 32% of the elderly in the West Bank did not complete any educational stage compared with 22% in Gaza Strip. Whereas the percentage of the elderly who completed intermediate diploma degree and higher was about 18% in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2023.

Variation in Participation Rates of the Elderly in Labour Market in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Data showed that the participation rate of the elderly in labour force during 2023 was 19% in the West Bank (35% for males and 4% for females), compared with 5% in Gaza Strip (9% for males and 0.8% for females).