H.E. Dr. Awad, highlights the Palestinian children's situation on the eve of the Palestinian Child Day, 05/04/2025.

H.E. Dr. Ola Awad, President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), on Thursday 03/04/2025, highlighted the Palestinian children's situation, as follows:

Children constitute 43% of Palestine’s population, with Gaza Strip leading at 47%

Demographic estimates indicated that the population of the State of Palestine reached approximately 5.5 million by the end of 2024, with 3.4 million residing in the West Bank and 2.1 million in Gaza Strip. The Palestinian society is characterized by being a young demographic structure, as children under the age of 18 constituted 43% of the total population, approximately 2.38 million children (1.39 million in the West Bank and 0.98 million in Gaza Strip). Meanwhile, the age group under 15 years accounted for 37% of the total population, around 2.03 million children (1.18 million in the West Bank and 0.9 million in Gaza Strip). The percentage of individuals under 18 years reached 47% in Gaza Strip, compared to 41% in the West Bank, while children under 15 years comprised 40.3% of Gaza Strip population versus 34.8% in the West Bank.

Gaza Strip Bleeds out Childhood: 534 Days of Aggression Steal Children's Dreams and Shatter their Innocence under the Rubble

During 534 days of the Israeli aggression against Gaza Strip (from October 7th, 2023, to March 23th 2025), Palestinian children faced an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, as they, along with women, accounted for more than 60% of the total victims. The Israeli aggression resulted in the martyrdom of 50,021 Palestinians, including 17,954 children, of whom 274 infants were born and martyred because of the bombing, 867 children under the age of 1 year, 17 children died as a result of the cold in displacement tents, and 52 children perished due to starvation and systematic malnutrition. Additionally, 113,274 people were injured, 69% of them were women and children. While more than 11,200 citizens are still missing, 70% of whom were children and women. In the West Bank, 923 citizens were martyred, including 188 children, and another 660 children were injured since the beginning of the Israeli aggression up to the date of this press release.

More than 1,055 cases of child arrests: Systematic Violation of Childhood Rights and a Flagrant Breach of International Law

A report released by the detainee’s rights institutions[1], showed an unprecedented surge in the Israeli occupation arrests of Palestinian children. In 2024 alone, at least 700 children were documented as being arrested, bringing the total number of detained children[2] since the outbreak of the war to over 1,055. These children have been deprived of their childhood and their right to education, facing severe violations during their arrests. These violations included night raids on their homes, physical assaults in front of their families, shootings, as well as handcuffing, shackling, blindfolding, and denial of legal assistance, which are clear breaches of the international law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As of early March 2025, more than 350 children are still detained in Israeli prisons. Under the ceasefire

[1]Includes Commission of Detainees and Ex- Detainees affairs, the Palestinian Prisoners Club, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association.

[2]The number of arrests includes both those who are still detained by the Israeli occupation and those who were released later on.

agreement in January 2025, 51 children from the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Green Line, along with 44 children from Gaza Strip, who were arrested after October 7th, were released[3] as part of the first phase of the detainee's exchange deal.

39,000 Orphans in Gaza Strip: The Largest Orphan Crisis in Modern History

Estimates have showed that 39,384 children in Gaza Strip have lost one or both parents after 534 days of Israeli aggression, including around 17,000 children who were orphaned. These children now face a harsh reality, struggling to survive without support or care. They are living in dire conditions, as many were forced to seek refuge in torn tents or destroyed homes, amidst a near-total absence of social care and psychological support. Their suffering goes beyond the loss of family and shelter, extending into severe psychological and social crises. They experience deep mental disturbances, such as depression, isolation, and chronic fear, in the absence of safety and proper guidance. Additionally, their weakened learning and social development leave them vulnerable to child labor and exploitation in a ruthless environment.

Children of Gaza Strip amid Bombardment and the Collapse of Healthcare: An Ongoing Tragedy

A report issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) revealed a catastrophic reality faced by disabled children in Gaza Strip as a result of the Israeli aggression. 15 children[4] are injured daily with permanent disabilities due to the use of internationally banned explosive weapons, bringing the total number of injuries to 7,065 children, hundreds who lost their limbs, sight, or hearing. Additionally, 4,700 cases of amputation were recorded, 18% of which (equivalent to 846 cases) were among children, a further complication to the tragedy. These children face a double disaster due to physical and psychological disabilities, in addition to the collapse of the healthcare system caused by the destruction of hospitals and the blocking of medical supplies and prosthetics. Furthermore, the spread of malnutrition exacerbates bone deformities and hinders wound healing. In addition, around 7,700 newborn[5] children are trapped in life-threatening conditions due to a lack of medical care, with the remaining hospitals operating at very limited capacity, putting the lives of children at risk. With the shortage of incubators, ventilators, and essential medications, the health conditions deteriorated, increasing the likelihood of their deaths.

Polio Returns to Gaza Strip After 25 Years: Vaccination Campaigns Face Major Challenges

Gaza Strip witnessed an outbreak of polio for the first time in 25 years in July 2024, due to a decrease in vaccination rates from 99% to 86% as a result of the difficult health conditions. In response, the World Health Organization, in collaboration with other UN agencies and the Palestinian Ministry of Health, carried out three vaccination rounds to combat the spread of the disease. During the first round, 559,161 children aged between 0 and 10 years were vaccinated with the new oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2). This was followed by the vaccination of 556,774 children in the second round, and the third round included the vaccination of 602,795 children. These efforts contributed to reducing the spread of the virus despite the ongoing challenges[6].

Famine and Malnutrition Threaten the Lives of Children in Gaza Strip: 60,000 Cases of Severe Malnutrition Expected

An Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)[7] report for the period from November 2024 to April 2025 revealed that approximately 1.95 million people across Gaza Strip are expected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity, classified within Phase 3 or higher (Crisis or worse). This includes nearly 345,000 individuals likely to face catastrophic food insecurity (IPC Phase 5).

[3]https://www.cda.gov.ps/images/2025/documents/1232025/file.pdf
[4]https://www.ochaopt.org/ar/content/humanitarian-situation-update-255-gaza-strip
[5]https://www.ochaopt.org/ar/content/humanitarian-situation-update-251-gaza-strip
[6]The OPT Health Cluster https://app.powerbi.com
[7]https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Gaza_Strip_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_Sep2024_Apr2025_Special_Snapshot.pdf

The report also forecasts around 60,000 cases of severe acute malnutrition among children aged 6 to 59 months between September 2024 and August 2025, meaning these children are experiencing a severe shortage of essential nutrients, which significantly impacts their health and growth. Of these, 12,000 cases are expected to be of the most severe form of malnutrition, which can lead to serious health complications, including organ failure or death. Additionally, 16,500 pregnant and lactating women will need treatment due to acute malnutrition, which has a significant impact on their health and the health of their children. This could lead to serious complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

From Bombing to Arrest: How the Israeli Aggression Destroyed the Right to Education for a Whole Palestinian Generation

Education in Gaza Strip has become a primary victim of the ongoing Israeli aggression for 471 days. Israeli forces have completely destroyed 111 public schools, with 241 public schools severely damaged. Additionally, 89 schools belonging to UNRWA have been bombed and sabotaged, depriving 700,000 students of their fundamental right to education for the 2024/2025 scholastic year. Around 39,000 students were also denied the opportunity to be placed for their Tawjihi exams for the 2023/2024 scholastic year. The destruction has not only affected the buildings but also claimed lives. 12,441 students and 519 teachers were martyred due to the bombing, while 19,819 students and 2,703 teachers were injured with varying degrees of severity. There is still no accurate information regarding the number of students and educational staff arrested by the Israeli occupation army during ground operations across Gaza Strip.

The aggression has led to a suspension of regular schooling for two consecutive scholastic years, with schools closed for 300 days as of January 28th, 2025. Despite the Ministry of Education's adoption of alternative educational paths such as synchronous and asynchronous online education and temporary schools, the Ministry of Higher Education reports that more than 298,000 students in Gaza Strip are enrolled in virtual schools. However, many of these students were unable to receive effective education due to the lack of safe areas, power outages, internet disruptions, and limited availability of necessary devices, warning of an educational gap that threatens the future of an entire generation.

In the West Bank, the situation has been no better, with 90 students martyred, 555 others injured, and 301 students and 163 educational staff arrested in a systematic policy aimed at dismantling the educational infrastructure[8].

A recent report by the Education Group[9] revealed a sharp decline in the ability of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian children in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, to access education in 2024. This is due to overlapping obstacles such as the Israeli restrictions on movement, home demolitions, settler violence, and intensive military operations. The Palestinian Ministry of Education documented 2,274 incidents of violence targeting the education system, including 109 attacks on schools through sabotage or direct assault, where armed settlers stormed classrooms, detained students and teachers, or mistreated children on their way to school. The report also indicated that more than half of the students in the most affected areas experienced harassment or forced delays while going to school, which resulted in around 806,000 students being deprived of safe access to education. Since the beginning of the Israeli large-scale military operation in the northern West Bank on January 21st, 2025, the educational process has been disrupted in about 100 schools.

[8]**Ministry of Education and Higher Education.** Israeli Occupation Violations against Education in Palestine 07/10/2023-28/01/2025. Ramallah – Palestine

[9]https://www.ochaopt.org/ar/content/humanitarian-situation-update-266-west-bank