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The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories

Report of the Director-General
Appendix

International Labour Conference
113th Session, 2025

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Report of the Director-General – Appendix

International Labour Office, Geneva

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Preface

I am presenting my report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories at the most difficult of times. Trauma runs deep among both Palestinians and Israelis, after the Hamas-led attacks on Israel and abduction of hostages in October 2023 and the devastating war on Gaza that has followed.

Gaza lies in ruins, with workplaces destroyed. Thousands of workers and employers have lost their lives. The magnitude of the destitution is unprecedented.

The chaos and violence have also reached the West Bank and workers there have also been displaced. Overall, as my report demonstrates, the Palestinian world of work is in tatters. There have been massive job losses, and unemployment is at a historic high. Many workers have given up hope of finding employment. Decent work has become scarce. Yet, there are also strong and encouraging signs of resilience, driven by the collective will of Palestinians to rebuild Gaza and develop the West Bank.

As in previous years, my report is based on the mandate given by the International Labour Conference in 1980. It presents the findings of an annual mission I sent to the Arab States region. Regrettably, the mission was not permitted to enter Israel and the occupied Arab territories. It had meetings with a broad range of stakeholders, both Arab and Israeli, and representatives of the United Nations and other international and non-governmental organizations. I am grateful for the cooperation, information and documents provided by all interlocutors. The mission conducted its work with full impartiality and fact-based accuracy, guided by the objectives and mandate of the ILO.

As always, my annual report examines key developments with regard to the labour market, workers' rights and labour governance as well as the overall political and economic context in which they are embedded. In view of the urgency of restoring employment and workers' welfare, I also propose an agenda for jobs for Palestine. Decent jobs are essential for recovery. They provide livelihoods and dignity. Palestinians deserve for jobs to be put at the heart of reconstruction planning. Workers must be empowered and their rights protected.

However, without a political solution to the conflict, there cannot be peace and workers cannot prosper. The only sustainable way forward is through a negotiated two-state solution, with Israelis and Palestinians living side by side in peace and security, as called for by successive Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. Lasting peace needs to be built upon social justice. The global community has a collective responsibility to support Palestine so that it can return from the brink.

May 2025

Gilbert F. Houngbo
Director-General

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Introduction

1. This Report of the Director-General presents the findings of the annual ILO mission mandated to assess the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. As in previous years, it was carried out in accordance with the resolution concerning the implications of Israeli settlements in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories in connection with the situation of Arab workers, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 66th Session (1980). [1] The mission was guided by the principles and objectives of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, including the Declaration of Philadelphia, and the body of international labour standards. It was also guided by relevant resolutions of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and Security Council [2] and international humanitarian and human rights law. [3]

2. The mission covered the situation of the workers of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza) and the occupied Syrian Golan.

3. The Director-General entrusted Frank Hagemann, Director of the Sectoral Policies Department, to lead the mission. The mission team included Kee Beom Kim, Macroeconomic and Employment Policies Specialist in the Employment Policy, Job Creation and Livelihoods Department; Martin Oelz, Senior Specialist on Equality and Non-Discrimination in the Conditions of Work and Equality Department; and Lisa Tortell, Senior Legal Specialist in the International Labour Standards Department. Rasha El Shurafa, Programme Officer in the Office of the ILO Representative in Jerusalem, and Dalal Abu Saleh, Operations Assistant in the Office of the ILO Representative in Jerusalem, helped prepare the mission and supported its work. Tariq Haq, a former long-standing mission member and currently Head of the Transport and Maritime Sectors Unit, Sectoral Policies Department, acted as technical adviser.

4. Contrary to long-standing practice and due to visas not having been granted by the Israeli authorities, the mission was regrettably unable to enter Israel and the occupied Arab territories, which prevented an on-the-ground appreciation of the situation. Instead, it conducted face-to-face and videoconference meetings with Palestinian and other interlocutors in Jordan from 1 to 13 March 2025. These included representatives of various ministries and institutions of the Palestinian Authority, Palestinian social partners, Israeli trade unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), research institutions, business people and workers. The mission also consulted representatives of the UN and other international organizations.

5. In addition, the mission leader held consultations with senior representatives of the League of Arab States and the Arab Labour Organization in Cairo from 20 to 21 February and with Syrian constituents in Damascus on 25 February 2025.

6. While Israeli Government institutions and employers' organizations did not take the opportunity to meet with his representatives, the Director-General was pleased to recognize that the mission

[1] ILO, Resolution concerning the Implications of Israeli Settlements in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories in Connection with the Situation of Arab Workers, International Labour Conference, 66th Session, 1980.

[2] These include Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 497 (1981), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008), 1860 (2009), 2334 (2016), 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), and 2728 and 2735 (2024)

[3] In particular, the Hague Convention of 1907 (respecting the laws and customs of war on land) and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 (relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war).

enjoyed the cooperation of a wide range of both Arab and Israeli interlocutors in obtaining the factual information, both written and oral, on which the findings of this report are based.

7. The report is structured as follows: Chapter 1 looks at the overall political, security and economic developments which are impacting the Palestinian world of work and significantly determining labour market outcomes. Chapter 2 portrays the current state of the labour market, both in Gaza and the West Bank, and examines key indicators. Chapter 3 analyses how Palestinian workers' rights are impinged by war, occupation and settlement. Chapter 4 elaborates on labour governance and workers' welfare initiatives, particularly as concerns measures to enhance resilience and prepare for early recovery. Chapter 5 sheds light on the situation of workers of the occupied Syrian Golan. The report concludes with a proposed agenda for jobs in Palestine, outlining priorities for job creation and workers' protection within the broader framework of future recovery and reconstruction efforts.

Chapter 1. Workers in the grip of war and occupation

8. The Hamas-led attacks on Israel in October 2023 resulted in the deaths of almost 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals and the taking of some 230 hostages to Gaza. In response, Israel launched a war on Gaza that has resulted in mass casualties of Palestinians, almost universal internal displacement and the destruction of the enclave's infrastructure. This has triggered an unprecedented economic downturn throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. After more than five decades of Israeli occupation and, in the case of Gaza, 16 years of blockade prior to the war, the Palestinian economy and labour market are now collapsing under the shock.

9. In Gaza, most businesses and workplaces have been destroyed or shut down, and entire industries have been decimated. Economic activity is almost at a standstill. The whole population is affected by multidimensional poverty. In the West Bank, the occupation has been tightened and settlement expansion accelerated. Workers' mobility is severely restricted. Israeli military operations in the northern areas have led to mass displacement. There is uncertainty, a lack of employment and hardship like never before in the last half century.

10. Looking ahead, once the conditions are in place for economic recovery and reconstruction, vast and multifaceted needs will have to be dealt with. The World Bank, European Union and United Nations estimate that US$53 billion will be required over the first ten years to rehabilitate physical and social infrastructure, restore services and bring workers into employment. [4]

Gaza in the second year of war

11. The military conflict in Gaza has taken a massive toll on the civilian population. Gaza's labour force will be scarred for decades to come. By late March 2025, more than 50,000 Palestinians had been killed; some 11,000 were missing and more than 110,000 injured. [5] It was estimated that 59 Israelis and foreign nationals remained captive in Gaza, including some who had been declared dead and whose bodies were being withheld. [6]

12. According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, there have been unprecedented levels of disregard for the principles of international humanitarian law. [7] Israeli restrictions on the entry of goods, including the delivery of humanitarian aid to people in need, have triggered a humanitarian catastrophe for workers and employers alike. During periods of total blockage imposed by the Israeli authorities, no goods were allowed to enter. Most of the population of Gaza has been made food-insecure during the war; children have died of malnutrition. [8] In 2024, an estimated 1.9 million Palestinians, or 90 per cent of the population of the enclave, were internally displaced, many of them numerous times. [9]

[4] World Bank, EU and UN, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment*, February 2025, 3.

[5] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Humanitarian Situation Update #275 – Gaza Strip", 25 March 2025; PCBS, "H.E. Dr. Ola Awad, President of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) presents a brief on the status of the Palestinian people at the end of 2024", 31 December 2024.

[6] OCHA, "Humanitarian Situation Update #271 – Gaza Strip", 11 March 2025.

[7] OHCHR, "HC Türk on Occupied Palestinian Territory: 'Any plans for a better future must deal with the past, so accountability is crucial'", 26 February 2025.

[8] UNHCR, "UN Experts Declare Famine Has Spread Throughout Gaza Strip", 9 July 2024.

[9] OCHA, "Humanitarian Situation Update #275 – Gaza Strip".

13. The war has almost totally debilitated business activities in the Gaza Strip through the destruction of productive private sector assets, blockage of market access and disruption of financial services. [10] Most workplaces, including training institutions, have been devastated. Thousands of workers have been killed at their workplaces, including at least 280 UN staff, 200 journalists and more than 1,000 healthcare workers. [11] More than 80 per cent of commercial facilities have been damaged and almost all agricultural assets destroyed. Fishing, once a lifeline for many households in the coastal enclave, has stopped. The Gaza port, its fishing boats and storage facilities have been reduced to debris. Most healthcare and educational facilities have been destroyed. Educational losses run deep; human capital formation risks being set back by years.

14. A brief negotiated ceasefire and subsequent extended cessation of hostilities, from mid-January to early March 2025, brought some respite. For the first time since October 2023, more adequate volumes of humanitarian aid could enter the enclave. Limited economic activity and key services were able to resume, albeit only on a small scale. A few bakeries and markets reopened, and tens of thousands of children went back to physical learning, often in temporary learning facilities. Nevertheless, the prevention of entry of commercial goods, in effect since October 2024, and restrictive entry regulations for humanitarian goods in the form of a "dual use list" [12] largely constrain any significant uptick of private sector activity and job creation.

Spillover in the West Bank and an ever-tightening occupation

15. While the eyes of the world have focused on Gaza, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank has deepened and settlement expansion advanced. Settlements on occupied territory are illegal under international law. There are now 365 settlements and outposts scattered throughout the West Bank. [13]

16. Severe settler violence and access restrictions imposed by the Israeli military have impeded business activity and also affected workers. In the north of the West Bank, intense military ground operations and airstrikes have resulted in mass displacement. The return of workers and employers to their homes and workplaces remains uncertain. There are now frequent incursions by the Israeli military into Palestinian towns and cities. In practical terms, the distinction between Areas A, B and C is rapidly losing its significance. [14] The Palestinian population and farming areas in the West Bank are becoming increasingly non-contiguous.

17. In total, 155,000 jobs have been lost by workers from the West Bank since October 2023. This includes about 140,000 jobs in Israel and the settlements, amounting to US$3 billion of lost wages annually. The crossings along the Separation Barrier have remained closed to most Palestinian workers from the West Bank. Only a few thousand workers retain permits to work in Israel, where wages are more than double those in the West Bank. There are also thousands of Palestinian

[10] UNDP, PFI and FPCCIA, *Impact of Gaza War on Private Sector and Pathways for Recovery*, October 2024, 4.

[11] UN, "Statement Attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Gaza", 19 March 2025; OHCHR, "Any plans for a better future must deal with the past".

[12] Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and the United Kingdom (E3), "E3 Foreign Ministers' Statement: Humanitarian Access to Gaza", 5 March 2025; Office of the Quartet, "Dual-Use Lists", undated.

[13] Peace Now, "West Bank Population", accessed on 7 April 2025. Outposts are smaller satellite settlements erected on land privately owned by Palestinians but taken over forcibly by Israeli settlers. In practice, they are the beginnings of a settlement.

[14] The West Bank is divided into three areas under different jurisdictions, Areas A, B and C, as defined by the Oslo II Accord. Area A includes urban centres and comprises 18 per cent of the West Bank; it is under Palestinian civil and security control. Area B covers small towns and near-urban areas; it is under Israeli security control and Palestinian civil control. Area C accounts for 61per cent of the West Bank and is under Israeli security and civil control.

workers crossing the Separation Barrier undocumented, often risking detention or even their lives.

18. Throughout 2024 and early 2025, senior Israeli officials spoke openly of formally annexing the West Bank, either in part or in full. [15] In mid-March 2025, similar announcements were made with regard to parts of Gaza. [16] In its Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024 on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's continued presence in the occupied territory was unlawful and that it was under an obligation to bring an end to its unlawful presence as rapidly as possible, including ceasing immediately all settlement activities, evacuating all settlers and providing full reparation for the damage caused. [17]

The economy in free fall

19. The economic ramifications of recent developments in Gaza and the West Bank are unprecedented, exceeding those of previous shocks such as the Second Intifada in 2000, previous wars in Gaza and the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall Palestinian gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 27 per cent in 2024 and sank to the level of 16 years earlier. [18] In Gaza, output contracted by 83 per cent, while in the West Bank it shrank by 17 per cent. Consequently, unemployment and poverty rates have risen sharply.

20. Scenarios for 2025 remain bleak. In a largely unchanged environment, GDP would stagnate at 2024 levels or perhaps regain 0.6 to 1.8 percentage points, depending on the underlying assumptions. [19] On the other hand, if the military confrontations in Gaza and the West Bank intensify and further restrictions on the movement of goods and people are imposed by the Israeli authorities, GDP could be expected to contract by another 5.5 per cent in 2025. Only a full and sustainable cessation of hostilities and lifting of occupation-related restrictions can boost economic activity and allow the Palestinian economy to rebound. In such a scenario, GDP would be expected to grow by an estimated 19.6 per cent.

[15] Noa Shpigel, "Smotrich Says Israel Is 'A Step Away' From Annexing West Bank After Trump's Election Victory", *Haaretz*, 12 November 2024.

[16] Emanuel Fabian, "Defense Minister Katz threatens to annex part of the Gaza Strip unless Hamas releases hostages", *Times of Israel*, 21 March 2025.

[17] ICJ, *Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, Advisory Opinion, 19 July 2024, paras 265–272.

[18] ILO calculations based on Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), "Press Report: Preliminary Estimates of Quarterly National Accounts (Fourth Quarter 2024)", March 2025.

[19] PCBS economic forecasts for 2025, available at "H.E. Dr. Awad, President of Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), Presents the following:", 31 December 2024.

No fiscal margin for the Palestinian Authority

21. The fiscal situation of the Palestinian Authority has remained highly precarious. Since October 2023, Israel has withheld a larger portion of clearance revenues [20] than previously, amounting to 250 million shekels per month on average. In addition, tax revenue decreased in line with the economic depression. Consequently, the revenue–expenditure gap widened. Donor-funded budgetary aid, which in the past could cover the shortfall, had already been waning for a number of years.

22. As a result, public service workers have been paid only part of their salary, often with a delay. Many have worked shorter hours in order to supplement their civil service income with a second job. In addition, the fiscal space available to the Palestinian Authority to contribute to social transfers for retrenched private sector workers and other vulnerable groups has narrowed dramatically.

A new regional dynamic but no political horizon

23. In the months following October 2023, the war between Israel and Hamas spread incrementally to the wider region, precipitating a profound transformation. Hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel led to a full-scale war in Lebanon in 2024, with the occupied Syrian Golan on occasion caught in the crossfire. In December 2024, after 14 years of civil war, the Syrian Government was toppled. The implications for the livelihood prospects of the Syrian citizens of the occupied Syrian Golan remain uncertain.

24. While the war in Gaza triggered significant regional developments, it continued unabated and international initiatives to bring it to an end were few and far between. A new chapter of peace has not yet been opened.

25. The Palestinian Authority, alongside regional and international leaders, has firmly rejected proposals to resettle Palestinians from Gaza to third countries. On the Arab side, the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002, with the two-state solution at its core, remains the foundation for seeking a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Final Communiqué of the Extraordinary Arab Summit on the question of Palestine held on 4 March 2025 [21] rejected any form of displacement of Palestinians from their land, in line with the Bahrain Declaration of May 2024, [22] emphasized Gaza as an integral part of Palestinian territory and adopted an Egyptian Plan for the early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza. [23] The plan lays out a proposal to rebuild Gaza in two phases within five-and-a-half years. It estimates that more than 200,000 jobs can be created in construction and reconstruction. Under the plan, a Gaza Administration Committee, composed of technocrats, will manage governance for the first six months until the Palestinian Authority steps in. The plan, which was endorsed by the UN Secretary-General, also calls for an international peacekeeping presence under the auspices of the UN.

[20] Clearance revenues, or taxes on Palestinian imports, as defined by the Paris Protocol, are collected by Israel and transferred to the Palestinian Authority. Israel has at times suspended transfers and/or deducted amounts equivalent to payments made by the Palestinian Authority to households of Palestinians imprisoned in Israel or killed in attacks against Israelis, and to payments made to Palestinian Authority civil servants in Gaza.

[21] Government of Egypt, "Arab Summit Adopts Egypt's Plan for Gaza Reconstruction", 5 March 2025.

[22] Bahrain Declaration adopted on 16 May 2024, A/78/896/Rev.1, Enclosure 1.

[23] Arab States, "Early Recovery, Reconstruction, and Development of Gaza", March 2025.

Two-state solution without alternative

26. Thirty years ago, in September 1995, the second Oslo Accord was signed in Taba, Egypt, and Washington, DC. It was meant to be an interim agreement, leading to permanent status agreements by May 1999 and a negotiated two-state solution. Yet, for most of the last three decades, progress towards the two-state solution has lacked momentum. Resolution 2735, adopted by the UN Security Council on 10 June 2024, reiterates its "unwavering commitment to the vision of the two-state solution where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions, and in this regard stresses the importance of unifying the Gaza Strip with the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority". [24] The two-state solution remains the only viable road to lasting peace and prosperity for Palestinian workers.

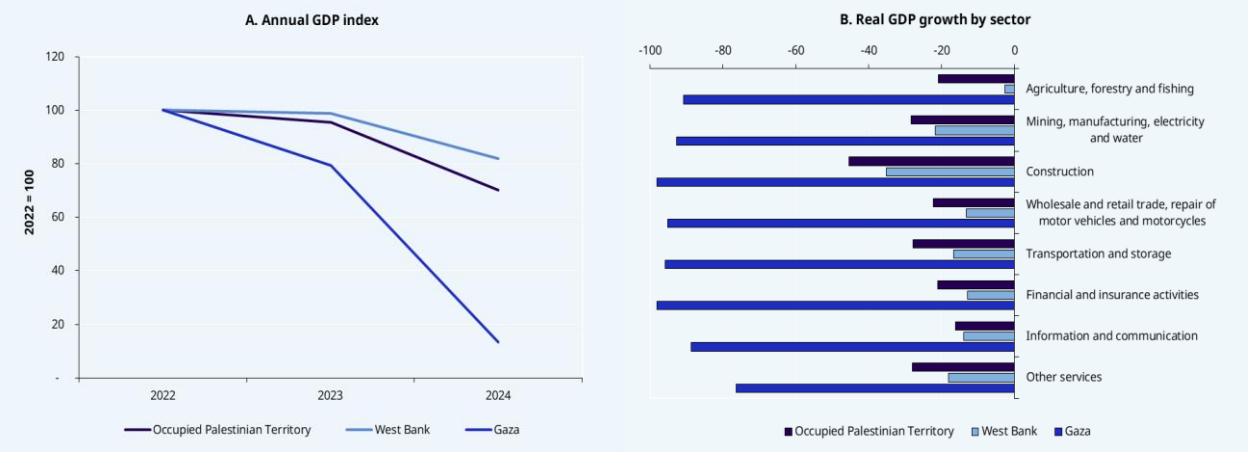
[24] UN, Resolution 2735 (2024) adopted by the Security Council at its 9650th meeting, on 10 June 2024, S/RES/2735 (2024), para. 6.

Chapter 2. Economic and labour market developments amid continuing war

Economic developments

27. The war in Gaza and its spillover effects on the West Bank have continued to exact a catastrophic toll on the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, compounding decades of economic fragility, de-development and structural constraints caused by the occupation. In 2024, overall economic output was 70 per cent of its 2022 level, with Gaza's output declining to 13 per cent of the 2022 level (figure 2.1.A). As a result, Gaza now accounts for just 3 per cent of the Palestinian economy, a decrease from 17 per cent prior to the war (2022) and 36 per cent at the time of the Oslo Accords.

Figure 2.1. Index of annual real GDP (constant 2015 prices) **and real GDP growth by sector, 2024** (year-on-year, per cent)



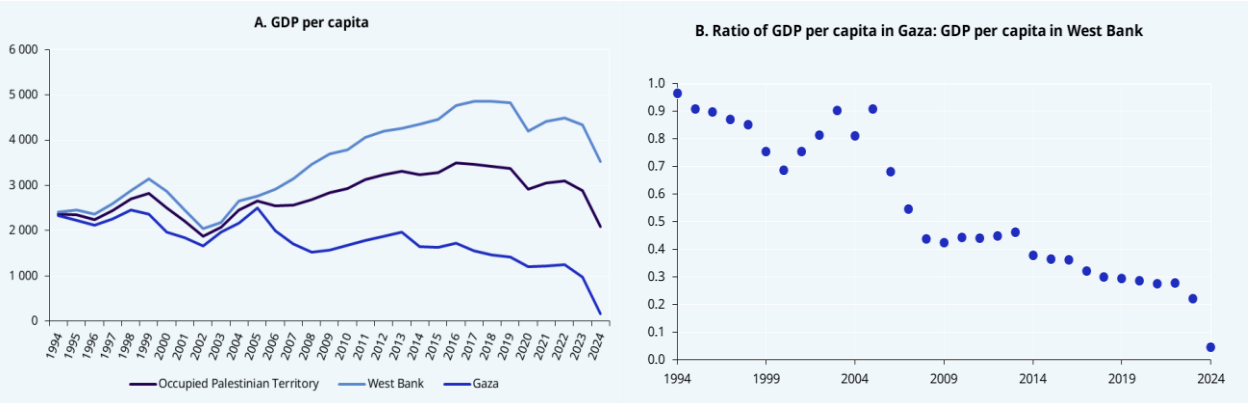
Note: Fourth-quarter 2024 GDP data on which the annual 2024 figure is based is a flash estimate and subject to revision.

Source: ILO calculations based on PCBS National Accounts, 2024.

28. The services sector, the largest contributor to GDP in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, contracted by more than a quarter, while agriculture and industry declined by 21.0 per cent and 32.2 per cent, respectively. While all sectors have been affected, construction suffered the sharpest downturn, shrinking by 45.4 per cent (35 per cent in the West Bank and 98 per cent in Gaza) (figure 2.1.B).

29. As a result of the economic downturn, GDP per capita declined by 27.8 per cent in 2024 to US$2,087, marking the steepest contraction in recent Palestinian history (figure 2.2.A). Standards of living in Gaza are now 4.6 per cent of those in the West Bank, a steep decline from 27.9 per cent prior to the war (figure 2.2.B).

▶ Figure 2.2. GDP per capita (constant 2015 US$) and ratio of GDP per capita in Gaza to GDP per capita in the West Bank, 1994–2024



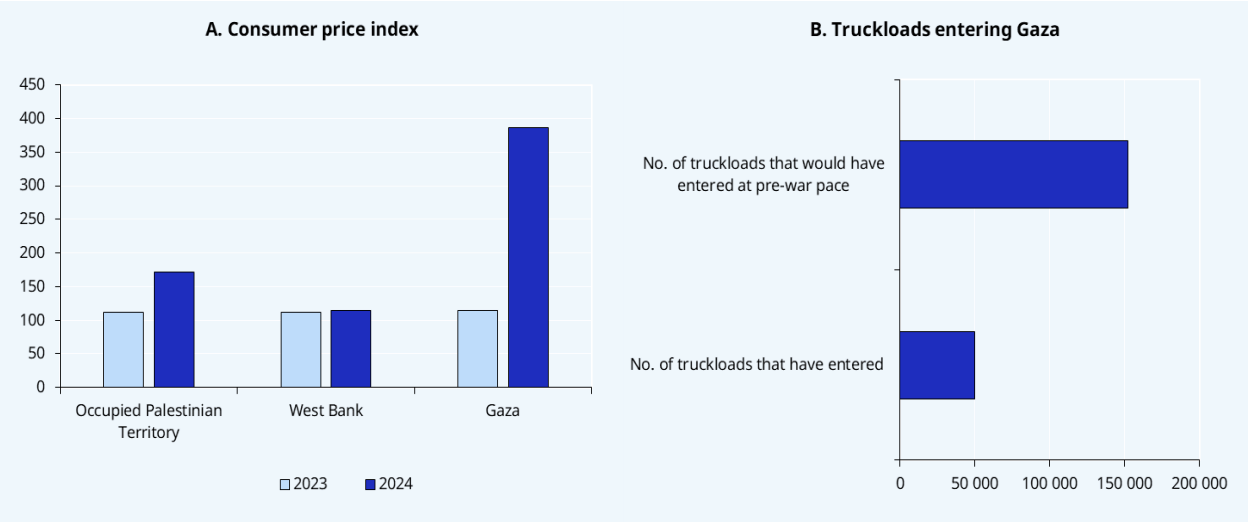
Note: Fourth-quarter 2024 GDP data on which the annual 2024 figure is a flash estimate and subject to revision.

Source: ILO calculations based on PCBS National Accounts, 2024.

30. In 2024, the consumer price index surged by 53.7 per cent year-on-year, predominantly driven by price dynamics in Gaza, where prices soared by 238 per cent compared to 2.5 per cent in the West Bank (figure 2.3.A). In Gaza, severe restrictions on the entry of humanitarian and commercial goods imposed by the Israeli authorities have driven a sharp increase in the prices of essential goods, in particular food. Between 7 October 2023 and 18 January 2025, the cumulative number of truckloads entering Gaza was only 33 per cent of the cumulative number that would have entered at the pre-war pace (figure 2.3.B). [25] Following the ceasefire on 19 January 2025, the number of incoming truckloads rose significantly to 4,000 per week, temporarily easing inflationary pressures; however, prices surged again after the Israeli authorities halted the entry of all humanitarian and commercial supplies into Gaza on 2 March 2025. The resumption of hostilities in Gaza on 18 March 2025 further exacerbated supply shortages and intensified price pressures. In the West Bank, weak consumer purchasing power has kept prices relatively stable, as producers have been unable to pass rising costs onto consumers, reflecting both subdued demand and deepening economic distress.

[25] Even the pre-war pace of the entry of goods into Gaza was severely restricted due to the blockade imposed since 2007.

▶ **Figure 2.3. Consumer price index** (2018 = 100) **and number of truckloads entering Gaza between 7 October 2023 and 18 January 2025**



Source: PCBS and ILO calculations based on OCHA, "Gaza Crossings: Movement of People and Goods".

31. Amid mounting economic challenges, the Palestinian Authority has been largely unable to implement counter-cyclical measures due to several constraints, including increased unilateral withholdings of Palestinian clearance revenues, declining domestic revenues and the absence of economic policy tools such as a national currency and monetary autonomy. In 2024, the Israeli authorities withheld 3.0 billion shekels (US$825 million), [26] equivalent to 6 per cent of Palestinian GDP, justifying this as offsetting Palestinian Authority payments to Gaza civil servants and those under the Martyrs Fund. [27] This marked a sharp increase from the 1.9 billion shekels withheld in 2023. As a result, in 2024 the Palestinian Authority received 4.4 billion shekels in clearance revenues – insufficient to cover even the public sector wage bill, which amounted to 6.1 billion shekels.

32. As economic activity weakened, domestic tax and non-tax revenues fell by 19.0 per cent from the previous year, declining to US$1.3 billion in 2024. Combined with shrinking clearance revenues, the fiscal strain has forced the Palestinian Authority to reduce public sector salaries to 60 to 70 per cent, take on additional debt and accumulate further arrears to the private sector and others.

Labour market developments in Gaza

33. Gaza's labour market remains debilitated, reflecting the destruction of infrastructure, workplaces, tools and other productive assets that has taken place since the war began. According to the Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, the total damage to Gaza's physical infrastructure was estimated at US$29.9 billion as of October 2024, while economic and social losses resulting from the war were estimated at US$19.1 billion. [28] The damage and losses amount to 360 per cent of Palestinian GDP in 2024.

[26] Public finance figures in this section are from the Palestinian Ministry of Finance, available at: www.pmof.ps/en/index.php.

[27] The Palestinian Authority Martyrs Fund provided financial support to families of Palestinian prisoners, released detainees, and those killed or injured in conflicts with Israel.

[28] World Bank, EU and UN, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment*, 3.

34. Among the physical infrastructure damages, the housing sector sustained the most severe impact, accounting for US$15.8 billion (53 per cent of total damages), followed by the commerce and industry sectors, which suffered damages amounting to US$5.9 billion (20 per cent). Furthermore, agriculture and food systems were estimated to have sustained losses of US$1.3 billion, whereas losses in commerce and industry totalled US$2.2 billion. Beyond the immediate collapse of businesses and mass job losses resulting from the destruction, cumulative income losses are estimated to total US$953 million.

35. Gaza is also experiencing a severe cash shortage as a result of the war, despite the growing use of digital wallet and payment systems. This liquidity constraint is disrupting economic transactions, affecting merchants, traders and wage earners alike. The mission was informed that individuals wishing to obtain cash often face significant broker fees, of up to 30 per cent, eroding their already diminished purchasing power.

36. A labour force survey adapted to wartime conditions that was conducted between November 2024 and December 2024 (fourth quarter of 2024) by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in Gaza underscores the severe fragility of the labour market. The labour force participation rate among individuals of 15 years and over stood at a critically low 29.9 per cent (47.7 per cent for men and 12.3 per cent for women) while the employment-to-population ratio was even lower at just 9.3 per cent (15.3 per cent for men and a mere 3.3 per cent for women). Meanwhile, the unemployment rate was 69.0 per cent (67.9 per cent for men and 73.2 per cent for women); however, it remains an insufficient indicator of an unmet need for a job. A broader measure of labour underutilization, the LU3 rate, stood at an alarming 80.1 per cent (77.0 per cent for men for men and 87.7 per cent for women). [29]

▶ Table 2.1. Key labour market indicators (age 15+), Gaza, fourth quarter 2024 (per cent)

	Total	Men	Women
Labour force participation rate	29.9	47.7	12.3
Employment-to-population ratio	9.3	15.3	3.3
Unemployment rate	69.0	67.9	73.2
LU3 rate	80.1	77.0	87.7

Note: Labour force survey instruments were extensively modified to adapt to wartime conditions, including a shift to full telephone data collection. As a result, the data is not strictly comparable with previous labour force surveys.

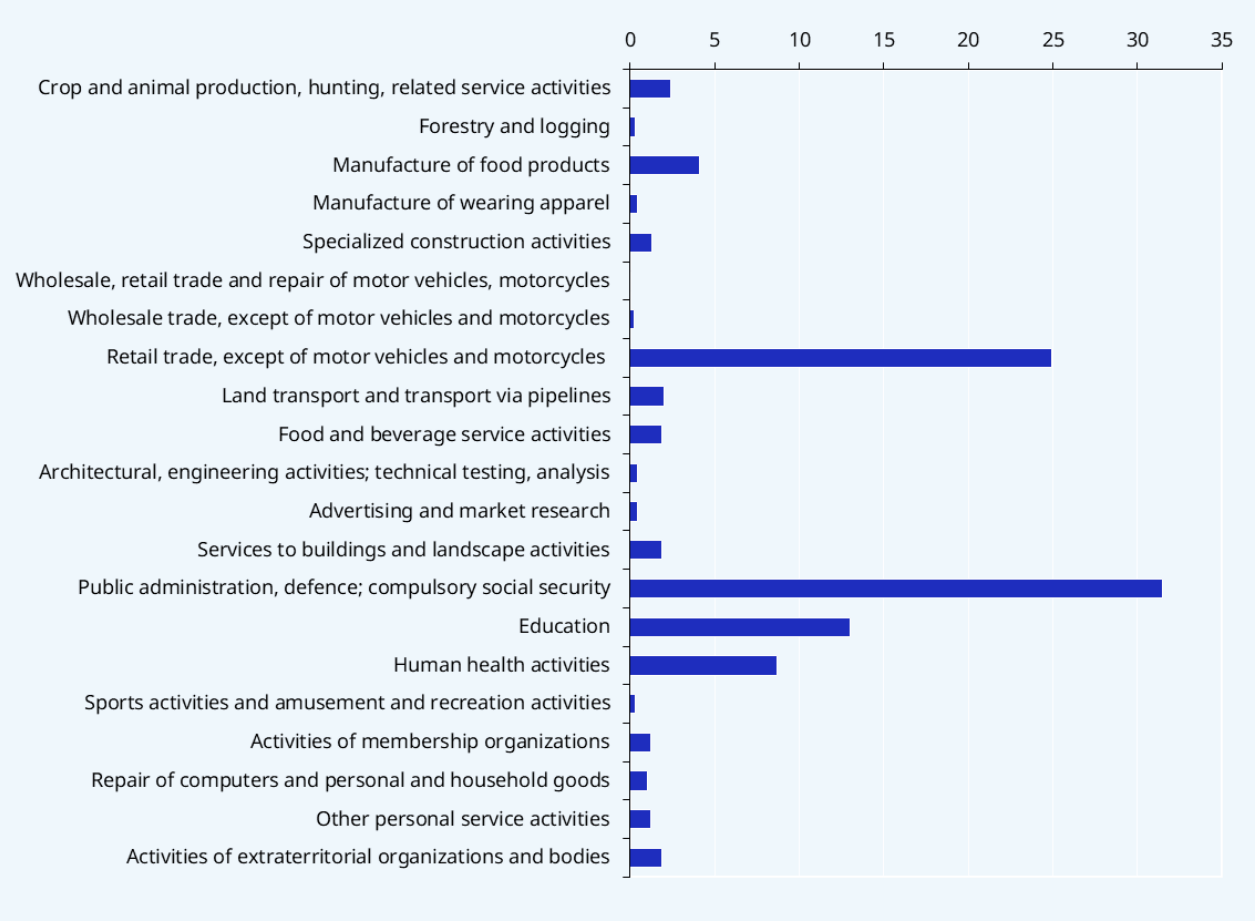
Source: PCBS, Labour Force Survey at time of War in Gaza Strip: Status and Realities, Round I: November-December 2024, forthcoming.

37. Among individuals classified as part of the potential labour force – those neither working nor seeking work but expressing a desire to work – the primary reason for not job-searching was "waiting for the war to end" (44.8 per cent). This was followed by "no hope in finding a job" (36.1 per cent) and "being tired of looking for jobs/believing no jobs are available" (18.3 per cent). Less than 1 per cent of respondents indicated they were waiting to return to a previous job or business activity or to start a new one.

[29] The LU3 rate is the combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force. The potential labour force includes individuals available for work but not seeking employment (for example, due to discouragement after unsuccessful job searches) and those seeking work but not available (for example, due to sickness). On the other hand, to be classified as unemployed (and hence part of the labour force), an individual must be both available and seeking work.

38. Employment in Gaza has been reduced to a narrow set of activities dependent on public services, humanitarian aid and informal markets. Among those still working in Gaza, the majority are in public sector services, such as public administration (31.5 per cent), education (13.0 per cent) and human health services (8.7 per cent), which collectively accounted for more than half of total employment in Gaza (figure 2.4). Retail trading accounted for a further quarter of total employment. The other branches of economic activity generally accounted for 2 per cent or less of total employment in Gaza, underscoring the severe erosion of Gaza's productive base. Agriculture, which prior to the war accounted for approximately 6 per cent of total employment in Gaza, has now contracted to less than half that share.

▶ **Figure 2.4. Share of persons working by branch of economic activity, Gaza, fourth quarter 2024** (per cent)



Source: PCBS, Labour Force Survey at Time of War in Gaza Strip: Status and Realities, Round I: November-December 2024.

39. While unemployment rates are alarmingly high, they are even higher among young people. Among individuals aged 15–29, the unemployment rate reached 80.3 per cent (79.9 per cent for young men and 82.2 per cent for young women). The share of youth not in employment, education or training was estimated at 73.8 per cent (75.3 per cent among young men and 72.1 per cent among young women). Among youth not in employment, education or training, job-seeking constitutes the primary activity for young men, whereas household or family responsibilities are the most common reason for young women. Additionally, a sizeable share of youth is not in employment, education or training due to long-term illness, injury or disability (4.6 per cent). Prolonged periods of unemployment and not being in education or training, as young people in Gaza have endured, lead to skills atrophy, reducing the ability of affected

individuals to integrate into the labour market once conditions improve, and can lead to long-term damage to potential output through scarring.

Labour market developments in the West Bank

40. The labour market in the West Bank continues to be severely impacted by the repercussions of the war in Gaza. The closure of employment opportunities in Israel for most Palestinians has led to a pronounced decline in jobs and incomes. Restrictions on the movement of goods and people under the occupation have historically exacted severe economic costs, and heightened movement restrictions since the war in Gaza have further disrupted labour mobility, impeding access to workplaces, obstructing supply chains and constraining business operations. Restrictions in Area C, which accounts for more than 60 per cent of the West Bank, are more stringent than in Areas A or B. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that reducing restrictions in Area C to levels of Areas A and B could add US$4.4 billion in additional household expenditure every year. [30] The escalation of military incursions in the north of the West Bank since January 2025 has further deepened uncertainty, weighing heavily on investment and consumer sentiment.

41. Against this backdrop, the pronounced weakening of labour market indicators in the West Bank comes as little surprise. Despite an increase in the working-age population (aged 15 and above) of 54,000 (or 2.6 per cent) between 2023 and 2024, the labour force actually decreased slightly. As a result, the labour force participation rate declined from 47.3 per cent to 46.0 per cent (from 75.4 per cent to 73.4 per cent for men and from 18.2 per cent to 17.8 per cent for women). The employment-to-population ratio experienced a sharp reduction, dropping by 7.9 percentage points from 39.5 per cent in 2023 to 31.6 per cent in 2024. Men, who made up the majority of Palestinian workers in Israel and who are now barred from employment there, accounted for most of the losses. The employment-to-population ratio for men fell by 14.3 percentage points, from 64.4 per cent in 2023 to 50.1 per cent in 2024. In contrast, the ratio for women decreased by a more modest 1.4 percentage points. However, with the ratio for women standing at just 12.4 per cent in 2024, the gender gap remains pronounced. Among those in employment, approximately half are in informal employment, with the informality rate higher among men than women, reflecting a larger share of women employed in the public sector.

[30] UNCTAD, *Occupation, Fragmentation and Poverty in the West Bank*, 2024, 31, 33.

▶ Table 2.2 Key labour market indicators, West Bank, 2023 and 2024

	2023	2024	Change (% or %pt)
Population 15+ ('000s)	**2 110**	**2 164**	**2.6**
Labour force ('000s)	**998**	**996**	**–0.2**
Labour force participation rate – total (%)	47.3	46.0	–1.3
Labour force participation rate – men (%)	75.4	73.4	–2.0
Labour force participation rate – women (%)	18.2	17.8	–0.4
Employment ('000s)	**833**	**683**	**–18.0**
of which in Israel and the settlements ('000s)	149	31	–79.1
Employment-to-population ratio – total (%)	39.5	31.6	–7.9
Employment-to-population ratio – men (%)	64.4	50.1	–14.3
Employment-to-population ratio – women (%)	13.8	12.4	–1.4
Informal employment ('000s)	**409**	**331**	**–19.1**
Informal employment rate – total (%)	49.1	48.5	–0.6
Informal employment rate – men (%)	51.0	50.6	–0.4
Informal employment rate – women (%)	40.1	39.6	–0.5
Unemployment ('000s)	**164**	**313**	**90.5**
Unemployment rate – total (%)	16.5	31.4	14.9
Unemployment rate – men (%)	14.6	31.7	17.1
Unemployment rate – women (%)	24.4	30.1	5.7
Potential labour force ('000s)	**9**	**25**	**165.9**
Discouraged workers ('000s)	2	15	632.6
LU3 rate – total (%)	17.2	33.1	15.9
LU3 rate – men (%)	15.2	33.4	18.2
LU3 rate – women (%)	26.0	32.0	6.0

Note: Totals may not tally due to rounding.

Source: ILO estimates based on PCBS, Quarterly Labour Force Surveys, 2023–24.

42. While unemployment rose significantly, the lack of jobs and unsuccessful job searches also led a large number of individuals to exit the labour force. The potential labour force almost tripled, with the number of discouraged workers increasing seven-and-a-half-fold, reflecting dramatically increased hardships in job-searching in a distressed labour market.

43. The more vulnerable segments of the labour market have been disproportionately affected. Before the war, the rate of unemployment was highest among those with tertiary education (18.5 per cent), compared to 13.0 per cent among those with less than basic education. However, by 2024, the pattern had shifted, with those possessing basic education experiencing the highest

likelihood of unemployment at 36.7 per cent, followed by those with less than basic education at 31.9 per cent. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate among tertiary graduates was 25.8 per cent. These shifts have been determined by changes in male unemployment patterns, which in turn were driven by the loss of jobs in Israel and the settlements. Among women, however, graduates of tertiary education remain the most likely to be unemployed, with the unemployment rate rising from 30.7 per cent in 2023 to 36.4 per cent in 2024, underscoring both the overall scarcity of job opportunities and the persistent gender-specific barriers that highly educated Palestinian women face in securing employment commensurate with their qualifications.

44. Employment growth was observed only in the transportation, storage and communications sectors, while job losses were widespread across all the productive sectors and non-market services. Between 2023 and 2024, employment in construction declined by more than half (55.9 per cent) while manufacturing, mining and quarrying saw a contraction of 12.3 per cent and agriculture a contraction of 7.2 per cent. Meanwhile tourism was also particularly hard hit, as movement restrictions and increased violence deterred foreign visitors while also stymieing domestic tourism due to both the constraints and diminished purchasing power. As a result, employment in commerce, restaurants and hotels declined by 9.8 per cent in 2024 compared to the previous year.

45. East Jerusalem has not been spared from the sharp economic downturn, as heightened restrictions have also impacted key sectors, particularly in tourism and commerce. According to the PCBS, the number of hotel guests in East Jerusalem in the first half of 2024 totalled 5,135, less than one tenth of the 57,619 guests during the same period in 2023. [31] East Jerusalem's economic marginalization has deepened in the context of occupation, including with an estimated 80 per cent of enterprises in the Old City partially or fully ceasing operations, further eroding the local economic base. [32]

46. Young people have also not been shielded from the impact of a weakening labour market. The youth unemployment rate surged by 13.7 percentage points, from 29.3 per cent to 43.0 per cent. The unemployment rate for young men more than doubled, reaching 31.7 per cent in 2024 (compared to 14.6 per cent the previous year), now surpassing the rate for young women, which rose from 24.4 per cent in 2023 to 30.1 per cent in 2024. The share of youth not in employment, education or training also increased, rising from 23.0 per cent in 2023 to 24.7 per cent in 2024. Among young men, the rate saw a significant increase of 7.2 percentage points to 25.6 per cent, while for young women, it rose more modestly by 0.2 percentage points, reaching 27.9 per cent.

47. The prolonged crisis has not only disrupted jobs but has also eroded job quality. Between 2023 and 2024, the share of wage employment in total employment declined from 71.4 per cent to 65.5 per cent, while the proportion of employed individuals who do not receive end-of-service indemnities and other benefits increased from 61.5 per cent to 63.9 per cent. Meanwhile, average daily wages in the West Bank fell by 2.3 per cent, from 139 shekels to 136 shekels. The steepest wage contractions were recorded in agriculture (11.6 per cent), followed by manufacturing (3.1 per cent).

[31] PCBS, "The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities jointly issue a press release on the occasion of the World Tourism Day, 27/09/2024".

[32] Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, *Palestine Economic Update*, February 2024, 2.

Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements

48. According to the PCBS, approximately 31,000 Palestinians were employed in Israel and the settlements in 2024, with 16,000 working in Israel and 15,000 in the settlements. This marks a sharp decline from the 2022 peak, when 193,000 Palestinians were employed in Israel and the settlements. Among those still employed in Israel and the settlements, around half were working with permits to enter and work in Israel while another half were working without. [33] However, interlocutors suggested that the actual number of undocumented workers is likely to be much higher, with some estimates between 40,000 and 50,000.

▶ Table 2.3. Palestinian work in Israel and the settlements: Key characteristics

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Employed in Israel and settlements ('000s) *	133	125	145	193	149	31
Employed with work permits ('000s)	95	78	89	113	112	14
Obtained permit from broker ('000s)	43	34	42	59	56	2
Obtained permit without broker ('000s)	52	44	46	53	56	12
Employed without work permit ('000s)	26	24	37	40	28	12

* Total includes those with an Israeli ID or a foreign passport.

Source: ILO estimates based on PCBS, Quarterly Labour Force Surveys, 2019–24.

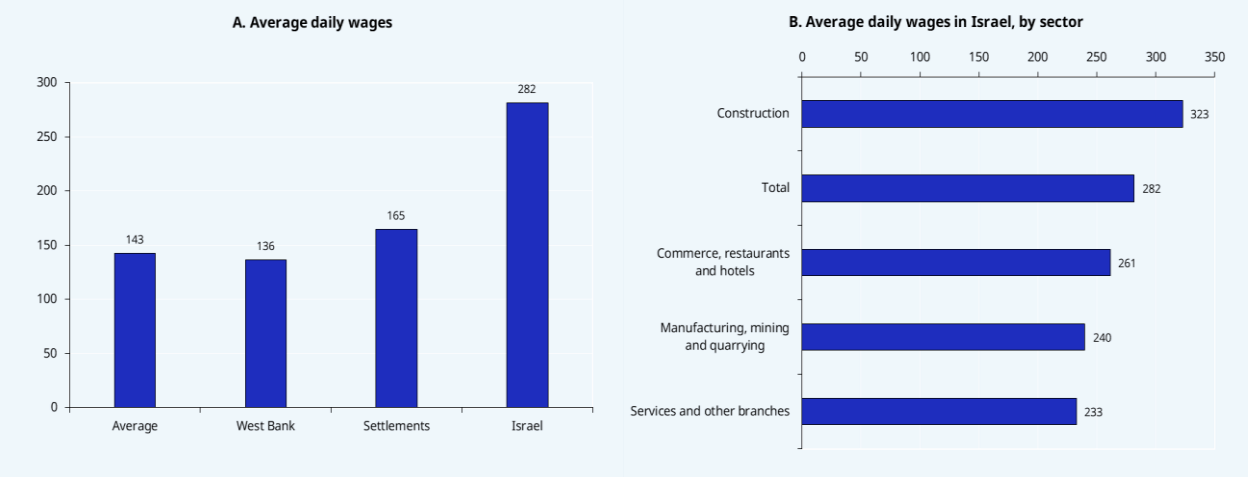
49. The sectoral composition of Palestinian employment in Israel and the settlements has also shifted significantly. In 2023, nearly two thirds of Palestinian workers in Israel and the settlements were employed in construction; by 2024, this share had fallen to around one quarter. Meanwhile, manufacturing emerged as the dominant sector in 2024, accounting for 36 per cent of total Palestinian employment in Israel and the settlements.

50. The substantial decline in employment opportunities has also been accompanied by falling wages, likely driven by the increased share of workers without permits − who typically earn lower wages than those with permits − and the erosion of bargaining power given the reduced alternative options for the workers. The average daily wages for Palestinians employed in Israel stood at 282 shekels in 2024 (figure 2.5.A), a decrease from 309 shekels the previous year. Similarly, average daily wages in the settlements fell by 11.5 per cent, from 186 shekels to 165 shekels. In 2024, average daily wages of Palestinian workers in the settlements were only 58.5 per cent of those in Israel.

51. Wage differentials across sectors further highlight disparities in earnings. The construction sector in Israel continued to offer the highest wages, with an average daily wage of 323 shekels, followed by manufacturing, where Palestinian workers earned an average of 240 shekels per day (figure 2.5.B). Similar patterns were also observed in the settlements, with daily average wages highest in construction (227 shekels), while those employed in manufacturing earned an average of 184 shekels per day.

[33] According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, an average of 26,500 wage slips of Palestinian workers were reported to social security in 2024. This figure is higher than the number of Palestinians with permits, as more than one wage slip can be provided to an individual.

▶ Figure 2.5. Average daily wages by place of work and by sector, 2024 (shekels)



Source: ILO estimates based on PCBS, Quarterly Labour Force Surveys, 2024.

Chapter 3. Palestinian workers' rights under occupation

52. In its 19 July 2024 Advisory Opinion, the International Court of Justice has affirmed the illegality of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.[34] Nevertheless, settlements expanded significantly in 2024 (table 3.1), further reducing the amount of land on which Palestinians can farm or develop other livelihood pursuits. Double the number of outposts – illegal also under Israeli law – were established in 2024 than in the previous year. Plans for large numbers of housing units in settlements were advanced, while none were advanced for Palestinians. The number of hectares declared to be state land, and so no longer available to Palestinians, exceeded the total amount made unavailable to Palestinians in this way since 2000.

Table 3.1. Selected indicators of settlement expansion in the West Bank (2022–24)

	2022	2023	2024
Number of outposts established (excluding East Jerusalem)	7	31	60
Plans for new housing units in settlements that have advanced by passing at least one planning stage (excluding East Jerusalem)	4 427	12 349	9 971
Plans for new housing units for Palestinians in Area C that have passed at least one planning stage	58	0	0
New tenders for the construction of housing units in settlements issued	659	2 905	3 618
Palestinian land declared to be state land, in hectares, after which it is no longer available to Palestinians	389	50	2 423
Demolitions of Palestinian structures, primarily due to lack of permits that Palestinians rarely receive, military operations or punitive orders	957	1 178	1 768

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the figures include East Jerusalem.

Sources: Peace Now, "Settlement Watch – Data" and OCHA, "Breakdown of Data on Demolition and Displacement in the West Bank", accessed on 7 April 2025.

53. A number of far-reaching administrative measures were taken in 2024, including the transfer of powers related to settlements from military to civilian authority; additional budgetary provisions for settlement infrastructure, outposts and settler farms; and legalization of outposts.[35] Settlement activity has accelerated in 2025. While three Palestinian villages were demolished in February 2025 for being in an area declared to be a "firing zone", ten Israeli outposts had been built in the same firing zone.[36] By the end of March, the Israeli Higher Planning Council had

[34] ICJ, *Legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem*, Advisory Opinion, 19 July 2024, para. 155.

[35] Peace Now, *2024 in the West Bank – The Year of Annexation and Expulsion*, February 2025; *The Israeli Government's Annexation Agenda*, June 2024; and *The Israeli Government Financed 68 Illegal Farms with NIS 15 Million*, 23 July 2024.

[36] Peace Now, "Extensive Demolitions for Palestinians in Masafer Yatta. The Outposts, on the Other Hand, Are Flourishing", 11 February 2025.

advanced more plans for housing units in settlements than in the whole of 2024. [37] The already high number of Palestinians displaced in 2024 was dwarfed by the approximately 45,000 Palestinians displaced from northern West Bank cities, towns and refugee camps by military operations.

54. Legal developments include two draft laws with the potential to further reduce the land available to Palestinians and the viability of the Palestinian economy and future State. One, which passed a preliminary reading in the Knesset in early 2025, would allow private Israeli citizens to purchase land in the West Bank, in a departure from the legal status quo that restricts the situations in which individuals who are neither Jordanian nor Palestinian may purchase land. [38] The other would annex 29 settlements near East Jerusalem, further isolating Palestinian communities located between the settlements and Jerusalem, and making it even harder to access work opportunities. [39]

Workers' rights in the West Bank

55. Amplified by the impact of large-scale security operations, three ongoing issues particularly affected labour rights in the West Bank.

56. First, restrictions on movement intensified in 2024. Interlocutors explained that all journeys by Palestinians in the West Bank were unpredictable and most were lengthy. In early 2025, 849 Israeli-installed obstacles (including checkpoints, gates, roadblocks, barriers and trenches) permanently or intermittently controlled, restricted and monitored Palestinian movement. [40] Connections between population centres were sometimes closed and there were prolonged delays at checkpoints. On the eight major roads running through the West Bank there was an average of nearly one closure per kilometre in September 2024. [41] In addition, Palestinian cities, towns and villages were often closed by military raids for a matter of hours or days. Movement restrictions had a significant impact on livelihoods and access to workplaces. For example, in the "seam zone", [42] 150 communities were generally barred from accessing their agricultural lands. [43] At times, workers could only access workplaces in different towns on foot or over fields, sometimes making it impossible to reach work. Women workers, more time-poor than men because of childcare and household responsibilities, were particularly affected as they are often unable to leave the towns in which they live; one interlocutor described women's worlds as having become smaller.

57. Second, the upsurge in violence in the West Bank following 7 October 2023 continued in the past year. During 2024, 503 Palestinians were killed and 3,147 Palestinians were injured in the West Bank in the context of occupation and conflict; 34 Israelis were killed and 159 Israelis were injured. [44] Near-daily raids into Palestinian communities were carried out by Israeli forces (see box). Some of the deaths and injuries caused by military operations or soldiers enforcing movement

[37] Peace Now, "Advancement of 1,344 Housing Units in the West Bank", 21 March 2025.

[38] Association for Civil Rights in Israel, "Against the Proposed Law Allowing for Private Land Purchases in the West Bank", 11 February 2025.

[39] Peace Now, "A Bill for the Annexation of Settlements around Jerusalem", 2 March 2025.

[40] OCHA, "Humanitarian Situation Update #274 - West Bank", 20 March 2024.

[41] OCHA, "Movement and Access in the West Bank - September 2024", 25 September 2024.

[42] The "seam zone" is the area in the West Bank between the Separation Barrier and the Green Line, designated by the Israeli military as closed to Palestinians. The "Green Line" is the Armistice Line between Israel and the West Bank, in place since 1949.

[43] OCHA, "Movement and Access in the West Bank - September 2024".

[44] OCHA, "Data on casualties", accessed on 18 March 2025.

restrictions occurred in the workplace or during travel between home and work. Additionally, there was a daily average of four attacks by Israeli settlers on Palestinians in 2024. [45] Sustained settler violence led to the displacement of over 300 Bedouin families, who were unable to carry out their traditional livelihood practices. During the six-week olive harvest, members of Israeli security forces reportedly failed to stop settler attacks. [46] After only 3 per cent of investigations into complaints of settler violence having resulted in convictions over the past 20 years, in 2024 there was a significant decline in the number of Palestinians who chose to file a complaint. [47]

▶ Spotlight on Jenin

Jenin is a city of some 50,000 people in the north of the West Bank. It is bordered by a densely populated refugee camp, home in 2024 to a further approximately 24,000 people whose families had been displaced in 1948.

In 2024–25, successive security force operations in Jenin refugee camp and surrounding areas resulted in displacements, demolitions, disruption of education and health services, and destruction of roads, sewage and water pipelines. A Palestinian security operation in December 2024 displaced about 2,000 families. An ongoing Israeli military operation involving air and ground forces emptied the camp, which was subsequently declared to be a closed military area. In March, the operation extended to neighbouring suburbs and villages, with the deployment of tanks and new obstacles to movement. At least 55 Palestinians have been killed and many buildings destroyed.

There was an immediate impact on livelihoods and the rights of workers. With the closure of all workplaces in the refugee camp and many in nearby neighbourhoods, workers lost their jobs. Many of the enterprises in the camp had been women-led workshops operating from homes, with an inability to weather economic storms. Amid movement restrictions and ongoing violence, neither workers, employers nor consumers can regularly access workplaces or local markets and it was impossible for employers to rely on delivery of raw materials or transportation of products to markets. A downturn in demand, caused in part by the unpredictability of the situation, hit all businesses alike. Alternative arrangements such as teleworking or relocation of workplaces will be a solution for only a minority. For many workers, these military operations have brought precarity and reduced income at a time when they are also managing the loss of homes, community and education for their children.

Sources: Mission interlocutors; OCHA, Humanitarian Situation Updates, various editions Jan.–Mar. 2025; UNRWA, "Official Statement on the Situation in Jenin Camp", 3 February 2025, and "Jenin Camp", undated.

58. Third, there was a continuing perception of unequal treatment of Palestinians before the law, including in relation to Israeli planning processes. In 2024, nearly three quarters of all Israeli-sanctioned demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, were attributed to the lack of Israeli-issued permits, which are almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain; over half of those structures had been used for agriculture or other livelihood purposes. [48] In East Jerusalem, 98 per cent of demolitions were for a lack of permit. A draft law blocking people with Palestinian degrees from teaching in schools in East Jerusalem without additional qualifications would have a discriminatory impact on Palestinian teachers, the majority of whom are women. [49]

[45] OCHA, "Humanitarian Situation Update #252 – West Bank", 2 January 2025.

[46] Yesh Din, "Summary of the 2024 Olive Harvest Season", 15 December 2024.

[47] Yesh Din, "Data Sheet: Law Enforcement on Israeli Civilians in the West Bank (Settler Violence), 2005-2024", 16 January 2025.

[48] OCHA, "Breakdown of data on demolition and displacement in the West Bank", accessed on 21 March 2025.

[49] Sam Sokol, "Government backs bill restricting teachers educated in Palestinian universities", *Times of Israel*, 23 December 2024; Haaretz editorial, "Israeli Lawmakers Are Engaged in Academic Terror Against Arabs", *Haaretz*, 31 December 2024.

59. All three of these issues have made it harder to enforce workers' rights in the West Bank. Movement restrictions impede the operation of key institutions that protect workers' rights, such as their representative organizations, the labour inspectorate, and the courts and dispute resolution system, as well as field visits by human rights defenders. Violence, the fear of violence and the perception that perpetrators have impunity reduce workers' trust in institutions and access to justice and remedies. A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental principle and right at work for all. Without the certainty provided by the rule of law and in the face of ongoing restrictions, businesses indicated that they had been rendered unprofitable and employers could not continue to ensure decent working conditions for their workers. In many cases, workers' earnings and working hours had been reduced.

Workers' rights in Gaza

60. Since 7 October 2023, there have been well-documented destruction of workplaces and mass displacements of workers and employers in Gaza. Interlocutors reported that there were very few opportunities for paid work in 2024, coupled with scarce food and water and hardly any buildings and infrastructure left undamaged. The ongoing blockade prevented the entry of new equipment, tools and materials. The buffer zone enforced by Israel along the perimeter fence and coast of Gaza, which Palestinians are barred from entering, was further expanded. [50] The mission was informed that Palestinians had been killed and injured while attempting to fish and that farming was almost entirely abandoned, not least as traditional agriculture was often in the buffer zone, the boundaries of which were difficult to identify as there were no markers on the ground.

61. All interlocutors from Gaza with whom the mission spoke wished to work; in fact, many trade union officials, business owners, and university and local NGO staff continued to work without pay. Last year's report of the Director-General described an almost complete regression to informal or unpaid work in the context of war. During the ceasefire in early 2025, a slight improvement was evident. Out from the shadow of constant fear, some shops and small workshops reopened, some seeds were planted, and basic work to repair some workplaces began. Rudimentary schooling in shifts recommenced and universities opened temporary learning spaces.

62. Nevertheless, workplaces were often not safe and pay was low and erratic. The paucity of reliable electricity, communications and equipment meant that this embryonic restart was susceptible to any resumption of hostilities, as occurred within days of the mission leaving the region. In these circumstances, and against a background of a long-term blockade by Israel and the effects of many years of de facto governance by Hamas, Palestinian workers in Gaza remain vulnerable to exploitation. Rule of law – and, accordingly, full and effective exercise of labour rights – was elusive.

Palestinian workers in the Israeli labour market

63. In 2024, work in Israel remained accessible to only a limited number of Palestinians. An Israeli Government Decision of 15 May 2024 formalized steps to increase the number of foreign workers in roles previously filled by Palestinians. [51] While Israeli employers' organizations and representatives of the Government regrettably did not meet with the mission, it was informed

[50] Gisha, "The Ever-expanding Gaza Buffer Zone", 30 June 2024, and "Changes to the Gaza "buffer zone" under the ceasefire agreement", 15 March 2025.

[51] Government of Israel, Decision No. 1752: Efficiency and improvement of supervision and enforcement of the employment of foreign workers and amendment of government decisions (in Hebrew), 15 May 2024.

that some employers continued to support the return of Palestinians to work in Israel, as was the case for workers' organizations such as Histadrut and MAAN-Workers' Association. During 2024, MAAN undertook public advocacy in this regard and continued to support its members; Histadrut planned to recommence training programmes for Palestinian workers in 2025, focusing on the hotels and industry sectors.

64. The impact on Palestinian workers of the decision to fundamentally close the Israeli labour market to them intensified in 2024. Interlocutors who had previously worked in Israel described desperate financial situations, with savings depleted and few opportunities for work. Some workers indicated to the mission that they were still waiting to receive wages due to them for the last weeks that they had worked in Israel before 7 October 2023.

65. In that context, Israeli social security entitlements were a lifeline. A large but unknown number of former workers who are assumed to have reached retirement age, and so would be eligible to receive benefits, have not accessed their entitlements, presumably for lack of knowledge. [52] Following advocacy by Israeli NGOs, benefit payments were reinstated in late 2024 for some of the few hundred workers from Gaza whose Israeli pension and work injury benefit payments had been stopped in late 2023, with payments made through West Bank bank accounts. Additionally, by October 2024, some 61,000 Palestinians working in Israel on 6 October 2023 had, in the absence of alternatives, terminated their legal relationship with employers and withdrawn their pension entitlements, rather than waiting for pension benefits to be paid in due course, as had another 20,000 Palestinians who were not working in October 2023. [53] Faced with complicated procedures, however, workers often hired lawyers to assist with withdrawals, losing up to two thirds in fees as well as their future security in old age.

66. Palestinian workers placed a high value on the few available permits allowing work in Israel. Some 8,000 Palestinians were understood to have permits under the 2023 Government Circular allowing work in specific sectors other than agriculture and construction, and an unknown number were believed to be working in Israel on other permits, including some that were apparently issued by the security forces. Additionally, Palestinians working in Israeli settlements are permitted to do so at the discretion of settlement security coordinators and without clear labour rights. Work is usually obtained through connections and is often precarious.

67. A large number of Palestinians working in Israel are doing so without work permits, often remaining clandestinely in Israel for many months. Some workers paid brokers considerable amounts of money in the hope of obtaining medical or other non-work permits that would allow them to enter Israel, but which did not always materialize. Other workers paid for assistance to enter Israel without permits, using ladders and ropes, crossing through holes in the Separation Barrier or being smuggled in cars. Over 4,000 Palestinian workers had been arrested for being in Israel without a permit in the first three months of 2025, most of whom had criminal cases opened against them; some were detained without charge for a matter of days, and others were sentenced to prison terms of up to a year. [54] Undocumented workers who succeeded in entering Israel described precarity and poor working conditions, earning half the wages of those with permits, and often working in backroom jobs to avoid detection.

[52] For many years, reports of the Director-General have noted the small numbers of Palestinians who had worked in Israel who were receiving old-age, disability and survivors' benefits from the Israeli social security system.

[53] Data from the Israeli Population, Immigration and Border Authority, sent to Kav LaOved in response to a formal request for information submitted by the Israeli NGO under the Freedom of Information Act, 1998.

[54] Josh Breiner, "Israel Police Chief Prioritizes Arresting Palestinians Without Permits Over Tackling Serious Crime", *Haaretz*, 26 March 2025.

68. The desperation of Palestinian workers exerts a negative effect on their ability to enforce their labour rights in Israel. Despite the reduction in the number of Palestinians working in Israel, Kav LaOved reported that 14 Palestinian workers died in occupational accidents in Israel during 2024, accounting for 20 per cent of all Israeli workplace fatalities. Interlocutors suggested that Palestinians working in Israel have less agency to bring complaints of poor working conditions out of fear of losing their job.

69. Finally, an unknown number of the thousands of Palestinian workers detained by Israeli security forces while legally in Israel in late 2023 were still in detention in March 2025. [55]

[55] B'Tselem, *Welcome to Hell: The Israeli Prison System as a Network of Torture Camps*, August 2024, 14.

Chapter 4. Labour governance for resilience and recovery

70. While the process of building Palestinian institutions under occupation has regularly faced challenges, the developments since October 2023 are constraining the efforts of the Palestinian Authority and social partners at a level not seen before, in addition to the Palestinian Authority's long-standing limitations on intervening in Gaza.

71. As the Palestinian Authority's focus shifted to developing emergency responses to the unfolding humanitarian and socio-economic crisis, it was unable to follow through on key national policy frameworks such as the Decent Work Programme 2023–2025 and the National Employment Strategy 2021–2025 as planned. Yet, certain interventions have been maintained, often related to crisis response and recovery planning. The development and reform agenda initiated in October 2024 includes dedicated social protection and education initiatives, as well as a focus on promoting business development and strengthening the rule of law. [56] However, the Authority's institutional fragility poses a serious challenge to the implementation of the agenda.

Palestinian institutions and social partners in crisis response

72. Following the ceasefire in January 2025, the Palestinian Authority moved to establish an emergency operations room for interventions in Gaza, bringing together key line ministries and institutions to deliver a coordinated response to the humanitarian crisis, along with UN partners. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour, the Palestinian Employment Fund oversees the coordination and implementation of emergency employment programmes in Gaza. The ILO has provided critical technical support to the Fund for executing an emergency employment initiative in Gaza and the West Bank. As of March 2025, this collaboration had generated over 1,200 jobs, predominantly in the public works, health services and sanitation sectors.

73. The economic and humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza has continued to seriously affect the ability of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (FPCCIA) to carry out their respective activities and support their members effectively. Premises of social partners have been damaged or destroyed. Representatives of the FPCCIA stressed the importance of involving the Palestinian private sector in emergency, recovery and reconstruction interventions, and called for a trade corridor between the West Bank and Gaza.

Social protection as a lifeline

74. With rapidly increasing poverty as a result of the war and exponentially growing unemployment, the need for social assistance as a lifeline until the labour market recovers has come further to the fore, particularly for Gaza. Launched in 2010, the National Cash Transfer Programme has so far reached some 115,000 poor households; however, since October 2023, payments have been limited to the West Bank. In August 2024, the Ministry of Social Development established a scheme for monthly social allowances targeting older persons and individuals with severe disabilities. As of February 2025, 18,242 older persons and 14,697 persons with disabilities in the

[56] Prime Minister's Office, "Draft of the First Phase of the 'National Program for Development and Reform'", 28 October 2021.

West Bank had benefited from this new scheme. [57] A small-scale pilot has been prepared to extend these allowances to Gaza. [58]

75. Without economic recovery, it will not be possible to overcome present socio-economic vulnerabilities and poverty levels. However, a scaling-up of social assistance for the most vulnerable is urgently needed now, including for newly widowed women and others who have lost their support networks due to the war in Gaza. Additional funding is required to enable the National Cash Transfer Programme to make payments to beneficiaries at an appropriate level and at regular intervals. Close coordination between the Palestinian Authority and humanitarian actors offering social transfers remains critical to ensure efficiency and avoid fragmentation of the Palestinian social protection system, while leveraging the humanitarian–development nexus.

76. In February 2025, President Abbas promulgated a Decree-law ending payments under the Martyrs Fund. [59] Instead, social allowances will be provided to all beneficiaries who qualify for them in accordance with a set of needs-based criteria, through the National Cash Transfer Programme.

77. Beyond the urgency of providing non-contributory social assistance, extending mandatory social security to the private sector has been a long-standing objective. A process of extensive tripartite consultations resulted in a tentative consensus on a revised Social Security Law in 2023. Once adopted and in force, it would gradually introduce maternity, employment injury and unemployment insurance, sickness benefits, health insurance and old-age pensions. The process towards the adoption and implementation of the revised Law is presently on hold.

Protecting and creating employment opportunities

78. The urgent need to respond to the staggering levels of joblessness in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is not the only rationale for interventions aiming at a job-rich recovery. By contributing to reconstruction, Palestinian women and men stand to regain agency, an objective that interlocutors emphasized as being essential for their resilience and building a sustainable future. Interlocutors from Gaza explained to the mission that work was also a way to contribute to their community and to retain hope and a sense of purpose.

79. Various institutions aim to foster job creation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. During 2024, the Palestinian Employment Fund created some 4,400 job and paid training opportunities, in addition to supporting some 360 small entrepreneurial projects. The Cooperative Work Agency has implemented an emergency support programme for cooperatives in Gaza affected by the war. The Istidama-Plus Fund created by the Palestine Monetary Authority in October 2023 continued to provide financial support to entrepreneurs, aiming at ensuring business continuity, preventing dismissals and supporting new employment-generating projects. By March 2025, it had supported some 200 projects with 357 million shekels in funding. [60]

80. The war in Gaza has left thousands of people with severe disabilities, who not only need food aid, financial support and medical and psychological attention, but also rehabilitation and labour

[57] ILO, "ILO ERP Recovery Programme: Progress update on ILO emergency recovery efforts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", 5.

[58] ILO, "Palestinian authority Allocates Domestic Funding for Social Allowances Supporting Persons with Disabilities and Older Persons in the West Bank", 4 December 2024.

[59] WAFA News Agency, "President Mahmoud Abbas Issues Decree-Law Restructuring the Social Welfare System", 10 February 2025.

[60] Communication from the Palestine Monetary Authority, 27 March 2025.

market inclusion. [61] In addition to the envisaged roll-out of social assistance payments to persons with disabilities in Gaza, the Ministry of Labour is promoting investments into digital skills literacy, which can open up new opportunities for persons with disabilities to access jobs in the global digital economy.

81. The persistently low labour force participation of Palestinian women risks becoming further entrenched as a result of the war in Gaza and the associated increase in gender-based violence, the surge of movement restrictions imposed by Israeli security forces in the West Bank, and the deepening economic and humanitarian crisis. The mission's interlocutors recommended that women's contributions be fully leveraged in the context of recovery and reconstruction, including promoting employment of women graduates in technical disciplines, promoting digital skills, scaling up support for women entrepreneurs, ensuring access to finance and addressing the lack of care services.

82. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) plays a critical role as an employer, particularly for Palestinian women, many of whom are working in its education and health institutions. In Gaza alone, UNRWA employs some 18,000 staff and contractors, whose wages support over 100,000 persons. [62] At the end of January 2025, Israeli legislation entered into force prohibiting UNRWA from operating within Israel and the Israeli authorities from having any contact with UNRWA. [63] As steps to enforce the legislation accelerate, UNRWA operations, including its role as an employer contributing to the economic security of Palestinian families, are increasingly under threat.

Boosting technical and vocational education and training

83. In the context of the current economic crisis, interventions to strengthen technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are not only urgent, but highly strategic. Most TVET centres and technical colleges and universities offering TVET in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. Still existing schools are now often serving as shelters for internally displaced people. [64]

84. In addition to upskilling and reskilling workers to help them rejoin the labour market, overcoming the disruption to education and training will be critical for young women and men in Gaza and the West Bank who will be seeking employment for the first time. Offering training opportunities to conflict-affected youth can support them in dealing with trauma and planning for the future.

85. The mission's interlocutors stressed that reconstruction required the rehabilitation and modernization of TVET, and training in relevant trades and crafts. The Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment called for TVET in information technology, healthcare and renewable energy. [65] The private sector and trade unions would need to play a key role in identifying skills gaps and making TVET attractive for students, teachers and businesses alike. A focus in curricula on competencies for establishing and running businesses would aid in the creation of successful enterprises.

[61] OCHA, "Humanitarian Situation Update #245 – Gaza Strip", 10 December 2024.

[62] UN News, "How has the war in Gaza affected UNRWA's ability to support Palestinians?", 6 November 2024.

[63] A press statement by the UN Security Council expressed grave concern over the adoption of the legislation: "Security Council Press Statement on United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in Near East (UNRWA)", 30 October 2024.

[64] World Bank, EU and UN, *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment*, paras 24 and 97.

[65] *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment*, 57.

Labour law reform and enforcement of labour rights

86. Despite the overall adverse context, the Ministry of Labour continued its consultations with representative employers' and workers' organizations through the established social dialogue mechanisms, aiming to finalize the labour law reform process. Agreement has not yet been reached on several aspects of the reform, including provisions concerning dismissal, economic restructuring, severance pay and maternity protection. Intensified social dialogue can play a critical role in finding solutions acceptable to all parties. Other legislative reforms, including the strengthening of legal protection from discrimination, violence and harassment, and the reform of the Trade Union Law, remain on hold.

87. Labour inspection services continue to function in the West Bank, albeit in a limited manner. In addition to a lack of adequate numbers of inspectors and vehicles, the inability of the Palestinian Authority to pay its employees in full and the reduction in the working hours of civil servants has restricted the scope of labour inspection activities. The labour inspectorate has continued to send cases to the courts, but the courts are unable to process them in a timely manner. The objective of establishing dedicated labour courts to enhance access to labour justice has remained on the Ministry of Labour's agenda.

88. In Gaza, the absence of a functioning labour administration and governance institutions impedes the protection of workers' rights. In the current context, this also poses a challenge for addressing the rising risk of child labour. The number of unaccompanied and separated children in Gaza – who are particularly vulnerable to child labour practices – has been estimated at between 17,000 and 18,000. [66]

[66] *Gaza and West Bank Interim Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment*, para. 24.

Chapter 5. Workers of the occupied Syrian Golan

89. Occupied since 1967, the Syrian Golan was annexed by Israel in 1981. UN Security Council resolution 497 (1981) stipulates that Israel's decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan is null and void and without international legal effect. On 4 December 2024, the UN General Assembly again called on Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and in particular to desist from the establishment of settlements. [67]

90. Throughout 2024 and early 2025, workers and employers of the occupied Syrian Golan have been impacted by the cross-border hostilities along the Israel–Lebanon border, as well as developments in the Syrian Arab Republic. In December 2024, Israeli forces entered the demilitarized area of separation between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic, breaching the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement of Forces. [68] In contravention of UN Security Council resolution 2766 (2024), Israeli authorities established military outposts in the area of separation [69] and indicated that Israeli forces would remain indefinitely, citing security concerns and the need to protect Israeli and Druze communities in and around the area. [70] Reports indicate that workers, employers and other civilians residing in the area of separation are subject to curfews, limits on freedom of movement, destruction of infrastructure, forced displacement, and land access restrictions. [71]

91. In December 2024, Israeli authorities also approved a budget of 40 million shekels (US$11 million) to increase settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan, which represented an amendment to a plan previously announced by the Government of Israel in 2021 to make significant investments in the area with a view to doubling the number of settlers by 2027. [72] At the beginning of 2024, the population of the occupied Syrian Golan totalled 56,900, of which 28,800 were settlers and 27,400 were Syrian citizens. [73] This represents a shift from the previous year, when the number of settlers, at 27,000, was equal to that of Syrians. [74]

92. In 2024, the labour force participation of Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan remained constrained by structural challenges and limited economic opportunities, including as a result of the security situation, which had severely affected tourism in particular. The Syrian labour force participation rate was estimated at 52.3 per cent, with an unemployment rate of 4.0 per cent. [75]

93. The labour force participation rate for Syrian men reached 64.7 per cent – almost 1.7 times higher than that of Syrian women, which stood at 37.9 per cent. Syrian women were predominantly

[67] UN General Assembly, The Occupied Syrian Golan, resolution 79/90, 4 December 2024, para. 2.

[68] UN, "Daily Press Briefing by the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General", 9 December 2024.

[69] Yaniv Kubovich and Avi Scharf, "Satellite Images Reveal Israel Built Seven Outposts in Syria", *Haaretz*, 18 February 2025.

[70] Emanuel Fabian, "Defense Minister, in Syria Buffer Zone, Says IDF to Stay Indefinitely", *Times of Israel*, 28 January 2025.

[71] See, for example, Al-Marsad, "The Syrian Golan – The Twice-Forgotten Occupation: The Rights of Golan Syrians Must Be Respected", 2 February 2025.

[72] Jonathan Lis and Adi Hashmonai, "Netanyahu's Plan to Develop Golan Heights Is Actually an Amendment to a Decision by the Bennett Gov't", *Haaretz*, 17 December 2024.

[73] Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), "Population – Statistical Abstract of Israel 2024, No. 75", 2 July 2024.

[74] For the purposes of data analysis, the category of "Arabs" in the population statistics is used as a proxy for the Syrian citizens of the Golan.

[75] CBS, Israel Labour Force Survey data on the Golan, as communicated by the CBS via email to the mission on 20 March 2025.

concentrated in wage employment (93 per cent), mostly in the education, health and social work sectors. A smaller share of men was engaged in wage employment (66 per cent), while the remaining 34 per cent were in self-employment or were an employer. Syrian men were more widely distributed across industries, including in construction (31 per cent), manufacturing (13 per cent) and agriculture (10 per cent).

94. Since 2013, the Quneitra crossing has remained closed, restricting the movement of goods and people between the occupied Syrian Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Following the entry of Israeli forces into the area of separation, the Israeli authorities have permitted Druze community leaders from the Syrian Arab Republic to enter the occupied Syrian Golan for pilgrimage purposes. [76] The Israeli authorities have also discussed measures allowing Syrians residing in the area of separation to enter the occupied Syrian Golan for employment in agriculture and construction in settlements. [77]

[76] *Times of Israel*, "'New Chapter': Syrian Druze Clerics Enter Israel for First Pilgrimage Since 1948", 14 March 2025.

[77] *Times of Israel*, "IDF Reportedly Offering Syrians from Buffer Zone Work in Israel", 25 February 2025.

Chapter 6. Towards an agenda for jobs in Palestine

95. The destruction of Gaza has been almost total. The economy has been decimated, jobs are scarce and labour rights illusory. The West Bank has not escaped the downward spiral of violence, economic depression and job losses. The occupation has tightened and settlements are expanding. There is economic and social collapse across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

96. Yet, in this bleak context, it is important not to lose hope and to look forward and plan for a better future. It is crucial to ensure that the recovery of Palestine will be job-rich and rights-driven, that Palestinians can fully contribute to the reconstruction and that the restoration of the labour market rightfully benefits workers, employers and their families.

97. Meaningful recovery can only take place once the violence has ceased and all remaining hostages have been released. A lasting political resolution to the conflict is indispensable to ensure that recovery and development efforts achieve sustainable and inclusive outcomes. Only a way forward that is based on the valued principles of social justice and social dialogue can open up sustainable opportunities for a human-centred reconstruction and labour market recovery.

98. The following ten agenda points should be prioritized to foster a job-centred recovery. All elements are important in their own right; there is no hierarchy. Critically, the proposed agenda complements the current recovery and reconstruction plans, seeking to place labour considerations upfront in future planning and programming processes so that jobs can be maximized, rights protected, and work made decent.

99. The ILO stands ready to promote the agenda points below, mobilize resources for their implementation and provide policy advice and development assistance services. Effective support would require unfettered access and the full cooperation of all parties.

100. **Rapidly restore employment in agriculture, healthcare and education in Gaza:** Access to food, health and schooling must be urgently re-established in the early stages of recovery. Financial aid should be provided to repair or replace damaged or destroyed agricultural and fisheries assets, and adequate access to fishing zones and agricultural land should be ensured. Both the health and education sectors have suffered heavily during the war, their key infrastructure now in ruins. Investments in all three sectors and the removal of supply constraints hold significant potential for job creation.

101. **Make reconstruction of infrastructure employment-intensive:** Once rubble removal and reconstruction can meaningfully begin, the right balance will have to be struck between capital and labour intensity. The reconstruction of infrastructure must prioritize local Palestinian workers and contractors and utilize, as far as possible, locally sourced materials, expanding supply-chain linkages to the West Bank. There is potential to create some 200,000 jobs in the construction sector, [78] with significant multiplier effects in auxiliary activities. Strengthening the trades through TVET is key for reconstruction efforts. Global experience from post-crisis and post-conflict countries should guide the setting up of scalable employment-intensive infrastructure programmes – ensuring fair wages and robust occupational safety and health standards – without impeding rapid project delivery.

[78] Arab States, "Early Recovery, Reconstruction, and Development of Gaza", 56.

102. **Support the private sector:** Private sector losses have been immense since October 2023, both in terms of assets destroyed or damaged and revenue lost. The private sector, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, should play a key role in the reconstruction effort and labour market rehabilitation. Financial assistance in the form of loan guarantees, access to affordable credit lines and the removal of costly barriers to supplier and market access will need to be put in place in order to facilitate the rapid recovery of the private sector.

103. **Boost women's economic empowerment:** Women have traditionally been under-represented in the Palestinian labour market and concentrated in a few sectors such as healthcare and education. It is high time that obstacles to women's entrepreneurship and employment are removed, both in law and practice. On average, Palestinian women are highly educated, with more women graduating from high school or university than men. Reconstruction requires these skills to be employed.

104. **Expand social protection:** A large segment of the Palestinian population is now classified as poor. Many require urgent cash assistance. War-affected groups, such as children, single-parent headed households and persons with disabilities, have a particular need. Current cash transfer programmes should be dramatically expanded, which requires strong donor support. Meanwhile, efforts to establish social security coverage for private sector workers have been stalled since October 2023. It is important to regain momentum for reform and bring the initiative, in gestation now for more than ten years, to fruition. Tripartite dialogue and consensus-building will be critical for the success of the endeavour. If done properly, both workers and the private sector stand to benefit from the reforms.

105. **Prevent child labour:** Child labour rates used to be relatively low in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. An emphasis on, and culture of, education and training acted as a critical buffer. There is a risk that child labour will surge in the immediate aftermath of the crisis. In the reconstruction of Gaza, the urgent re-establishment of schooling, reconstruction of infrastructure and prevention of child labour should go hand in hand. Special attention needs to be paid to the thousands of newly orphaned children.

106. **Strengthen labour governance:** Labour law reform, a process that has been under way for years, should be finalized. A reboot of the Palestinian labour market in the context of recovery and reconstruction needs a solid and updated legal foundation along with effective labour administration and dispute settlement and enforcement mechanisms. Equally critical is prioritizing the strengthening of institutions for labour market services. Good labour governance relying on strong and representative employers' and workers' organizations and effective tripartite consultations is critical for recovery, reconstruction and sustainable development.

107. **Facilitate pension payments across the Green Line:** Over decades, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian workers employed in Israel have contributed to the Israeli pension fund. Many workers or their survivors are eligible for regular monthly benefit payments that they do not receive. The pensions are currently administered by Amitim, an Israeli organization mandated by the Government. The system remains opaque and is underperforming. Transfers of rightful benefits across the Green Line should be actively facilitated through outreach to and support for beneficiaries. Pension benefits are an entitlement for former contributors. They would provide critical support for household income in the West Bank and Gaza, help alleviate poverty and financially boost recovery efforts.

108. **Reopen the Israeli labour market to Palestinian workers:** Since October 2023, Palestinian workers remain largely shut out from the Israeli labour market. There is a marked loss of income among West Bank households. Many Palestinian workers who formerly worked in Israel have not found any alternative employment and have accumulated debt. In Israel, there are acute labour

shortages in many sectors. An opening of the crossings and the cessation of the illegal practices of permit brokers would benefit both parties.

109. Lift restrictions on movement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Restrictions on the movement of goods and people, whether in Gaza or the West Bank, fundamentally hamper economic activity. Access to markets and productive resources, particularly land and water, is needed for any sustainable expansion of private investment and job creation.

Annex: List of interlocutors

Palestinian Authority and other public institutions

Ministry of Labour

Enas Attari Dahadha, Minister
Rami Mehdawi, Deputy Assistant, International Cooperation
Abdel Kareem Mardawi, Director-General, External Employment
Firas Abu Hammad, Director General, Occupational Safety and Health
Walid ElBayed, Director General, Labour Relations
Dana Ismail, Adviser to the Minister

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Omar Awadallah, Ambassador, Multilateral Affairs, Head of United Nations and its Specialized Agencies Department

Ministry of Social Development

Samah Hamad, Minister
Taha Irani, Deputy Minister
Manal Abu Ramadan, Director General of Planning
Rana Riady, Adviser to the Minister

Ministry of Women's Affairs

Mona AlKhalili, Minister
Shireen Abu ElRub, Director, International Relations
Hanna Nakhleh, Special Adviser to the Minister
Ismail Hammad, Adviser to the Minister

Ministry of Education

Wissam Nakhleh, Director General of Buildings – West Bank
Ziad Abu Mustafa, Member of Governmental Interventions Committee, Educational sector – Gaza

Palestine Monetary Authority

Yahya Shunnar, Governor
Rafe Amraish, Head of Reserve Management Unit

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

Jawad AlSaleh, Chairman of Statistical Affairs
Mohammedd Qalalwa, Director General of Economic Statistics Department
Suha Kana'an, Director of Labour Statistics Department
Ahmad Omar, Director of Analysis and Forecasting Department

Palestinian Employment Fund

Mohamad Abu Zeiter, Deputy Chairman – Gaza
Majd Ishtawi, Project Coordinator – West Bank

Cooperative Work Agency

Banan Tantour, OIC/Head of Legal Unit
Rabei Al Qassem, OIC/Head of Planning and Policies Unit

National Democratic Assembly

Nasser Al Kidwa, President

Economic Empowerment Agency (Tamkeen)

Ahmad Majdalani, Head, Member of PLO Executive Committee and Secretary-General of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front

Palestinian workers' and employers' organizations

Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions, Nablus

Shaher Sae'd, Secretary-General
Mahmoud Hawasheen, Treasurer of PGFTU, Head of General Services Union
Sameh Al Jabari, Head of Trade Unions Organization
Khaled Barakat, Head of Minimum Wages Unit
Abdel Hakim Shebani, Adviser for Legal Unit, Trade Union in Jenin and Coordinator for disability unit at PGFTU

Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions, Gaza Section

Bashir Alsisi, Member of General Secretariat, Head of General Union for General Services
Zaki Khalil, Member of General Secretariat, Head of General Union for Textile
Tariq Al Hindi, Member of General Secretariat, Head of General Union for Agriculture
Salameh Abu Zeiter, Member of General Secretariat, Head of General Union for Health Services
Wael Khalaf, Member of General Secretariat, Deputy Head of Public Sector Employees Union
Eatimad Abu Jalalh, Women's Committee Chairperson, Textile union, Head of Gender Unit

Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, Ramallah

Abdo Idrees, Chairman of the Board of Directors for FPCCIA, Chairman of Hebron Chamber
Jamal Jawabreh, Secretary-General

Jenin Chamber

Thoqan Abu Baker, Chairman
Mustafa Saies, Vice-Chairman
Mohammad Kameel, Director General
Thaer Abahra, Secretary
Mohammad Khamaysa, Treasurer

Nablus Chamber

Samih Al Masri, Chairman

Jericho Chamber

Tayseer Al Hamidi, Chairman

Gaza Chamber

Ayed Abu Ramadan, Chairman
Nabil Shurab, Board of Directors
Faysal AlShawa, Board of Directors
Maher AlTaba, Director General
Salah AlMaqadma, Treasures
Hussam AlHweiti, Deputy Treasurer
Riyad AlSawafiri, Deputy Secretary
Khalil Atallah, Director of Public Relations

North Gaza Chamber

Bahaa Al Amawi, Secretary

Khan Younis Chamber

Khairi AlMasri, Chairman

Rafah Chamber

Fathi Qeshta, Chairman
Abdallah Al Satari, Deputy Chairman

Deir AlBalah Chamber

Mohammad AlTalbini, Chairman

Palestinian civil society organizations and other stakeholders

Palestinian Research Center

Mohammad Shtayyeh, Chairman, Former Prime Minister, member of the Central Committee of Fatah

Palestinian Medical Relief Society

Mustafa Barghouthi, President of the Palestinian Medical Relief Society and Secretary-General of Palestine National Initiative

Independent Commission for Human Rights, Ramallah

Ammar Dwaik, Director General

Al Mezan Center for Human Rights – Gaza

Sameer Zaqout, Deputy Director

Al-Haq, Ramallah

Shawan Jabarin, General Director
Tahseen Elayyan, Programme Director
Murad Jadallah, Head of Monitoring and Documentation Department

Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research

Khalil Shikaki, Director

Palestinian NGO Network

Amjad Al Shawa, Executive Director
Mahmoud Hamada, Advocacy Coordinator

Association of International Development Agencies – Gaza

Tarneem Hammad, Humanitarian Deputy Coordinator

Women's Affairs Center – Gaza

Amal Syam, Director

UCAS Technology Incubator, Gaza

Mohammed Mushtaha, Deputy Chairman for External Relations

Al-Tawfeek Cooperative for Fishermen – Gaza

Marwan Baker, Director

Agricultural & Environmental Cooperative Development Association

Jihad Al-Kafarna, Chairman

General Union of Palestinian Women

Intissar al Wazir, President
Khawla AlAzraq, Member of General Secretary, Coordinator of Economic Committee
Dalal Salameh, Member of General Secretary

Business Women Forum

Shireen Shilleh, Chairwoman

Women's Studies Center

Sama Aweidah, Director

Democracy and Workers' Rights Center

Carine Metz Abu Hmeid, Projects and External Relations Coordinator

Union of Cooperative Associations for Saving and Credit

Randa Abed Rabbo/Zein, Director

Business people

Business people from the West Bank

Ayman El Hirbawi, Business Owner, Hirbawi for International Trade Co.
Abdel Rahaman Abu Fkhedeh, Business Owner, Luxury Auto Company
Basem Abu Allan, Business Owner, Ibn El-Nafees Optical Co.
Mustafa Sayes, Business Owner, Al Nakheel Construction Company

Business people from Jenin

Riyad Thaher, Business Owner, Al Thaher Company for Cosmetics
Firas Shafi, Business Owner, Alsanafer World Group
Basheer Solieman, Business Owner, Al Ajjawi Modern Car Trading Co.
Bilal Jamal, Business Owner, Al Jamal Group
Wael Ebeid, Business Owner, Uni Minder for General Trading Co.

Business people from Gaza

Hamed Haboush, Business owner, Cleaning Materials
Madeen Abu Hameid, Business owner, Food Industry
Moein Abu Elkhair, Business owner, Tourism
Salah Abu Haseira, Business owner, Tourism

Workers [1]

Workers from the West Bank

M. A., Agricultural worker
S. H., Agricultural worker
M. A., Construction worker
A. T., Construction worker
S. H., Construction worker
I. A., Construction worker
K. J., Construction worker
T. S., Domestic worker
S. F., Laundry services worker

Workers from Gaza

M. N., Construction worker
O. K., Plumber
A. K., General services worker
I. K., Fashion design and sewing worker
M. T., Aluminium industry worker

Israeli institutions

Israeli workers' organizations

Histadrut – General Federation of Labour in Israel

Peter Lerner, Director-General of International Relations Division
Avital Shapira-Shabirow, Director of International Relations

[1] The mission was provided with the full names of all women and men with whom it met but chose to include only initials for this group of workers in the list of interlocutors.

MAAN – Workers Association

Assaf Adiv, Executive Director
Roni Ben Efrat, Resource Manager
Adv. Abeer Joubran, Lawyer in Jerusalem Branch
Erez Wagner, Jerusalem Branch Secretary

Israeli civil society organizations and other stakeholders

Kav LaOved

Adv. Ohad Amar Ohad, Executive Director
Samar Baydoun, Director of Development and Evaluation department
Diana Baron, Head of Policy and Research Department
Aelad Cahana, Head of Legal Department

MachsomWatch – Women against the Occupation and for Human Rights

Sylvia Piterman, Volunteer

Gisha

Rebecca Metzer, Director of International Relations

Legal Aid for Palestinians

Kenneth Mann, Co-Founder
Mor Soker, Co-Founder

Other individual meetings

Maayan Niezna, Lecturer, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool

United Nations and international organizations

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Occupied Palestinian Territory

Kimberley Lietz, Deputy Head of Office, a.i.
Rene Nijenhuis, Deputy Head of Gaza Office

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Ben Majekodunmi, Chief of UNRWA Staff, Amman
Roland Friedrich, Director of UNRWA Operations, West Bank
Sam Rose, Senior Deputy Director of UNRWA Affairs, Gaza

United Nations Development Programme, Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People

Ruba Aladham, Programme Analyst, Exploration Lab
Hala Othman, Programme Analyst, Gaza

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Artur Ayvazov, Chief of Social Policy, Gaza
Levy Mandiwanzira, Social Policy Specialist, Gaza
Hasna Abuewida, Programme Officer, Gaza

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Right (OHCHR)

Ajith Sunghay, Head of Office
Anna Maria Cesano, Head of Monitoring Unit
Yu Kanosue, Head of Gaza Sub-Office

United Nations Mine Action Service

Luke David Irving, Chief

World Food Programme

Jane Waite, Head of Programme
Riad Katkhoda, Head of Social Protection

World Bank

Stefan Emblad, Country Director
Jack Randolph, Country Program Coordinator
Sahr Najm, Sr. Social Development Specialist
Michele Zini, Senior Economist

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Tobias Roy, Resident Representative

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Karl Baker, Regional Crisis Coordinator

Occupied Syrian Golan

Al-Marsad Arab Human Rights Center in Golan Heights

Nizar Ayoub, Director
Karama Abu Saleh, Lawyer

Al Maghariq Association

Taiseer Maray, President

Other meetings

Government of the Syrian Arab Republic

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

Ibrahim Ibrahim, Deputy Minister
Houdayfa Al Khattib, Adviser to the Minister
Ali Haji Ali, Public relations official
Omar Mohamed, Director of Communications

Chamber of Industry of Damascus and Rural Damascus

Khaldoun Dadou, General Manager
Ayman Al Madany, Adviser

General Federation of Trade Unions

Fawas Al Ahmad, President

League of Arab States

Said Abu Ali, Assistant Secretary-General
Haider Tareq Al-Joubouri, Minister Plenipotentiary, Director of Palestine Affairs, Sector of Palestine and Occupied Arab Territories
Gehan Khaled Soltan, Director of the Department of Israeli Affairs
Moatassem Al Shawwa, Sector of Palestine and Occupied Arab Territories

Arab Labour Organization

Fayez Al-Mutairi, Director-General
Marwan Rais, Office of the Director-General