



MAS

PALESTINE ECONOMIC POLICY
RESEARCH INSTITUTE - MAS

Gaza War Economy Brief

Number 9 - January 04, 2024

**Palestinian Economy and
Community in Jerusalem
Facing Israeli Occupation
Mounting Violations**

Palestinian Economy and Community in Jerusalem Facing Israeli Occupation Mounting Violations

Prepared by : The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)

This Brief is one in a series of Economic Briefs prepared by MAS with funding from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development



As part of its scheme to Israelize and depopulate the occupied city of Jerusalem of its indigenous inhabitants, the Israeli government has stepped up attacks and restrictions on Palestinian Jerusalemites, concurrently with the aggression launched against the Gaza Strip since the 7th of October. While the world is busy following the news and watching the scenes of massacres and genocide perpetrated by its war machine against the Gaza Strip, the occupation government has been speeding up the execution of schemes intended to break the Jerusalemites' resilience and render them complacent politically and economically. This Brief addresses the most outstanding restrictions and adverse repercussions on economic activity in the city of Jerusalem, as well as on the health and education sectors since the aggression on the Gaza Strip.

1. Key Findings

The restrictions monitored in various sectors below are only the tip of the iceberg of the attempts of this replacement colonialism to depopulate the city of its indigenous inhabitants and displace them, utilizing in its war against them various intellectual, knowledge-based, economic, or financial tools. This is based on military force and the Israeli judicial system's legal bias against Palestinians. Thus, various national actors concerned with Jerusalem are required to pursue concerted plans and efforts in order to support the steadfastness of Jerusalem along with its inhabitants and preserve the Arab character of the city along with its national, historical, and religious holy sites and status. Following are the most important, urgent challenges to the steadfastness of Jerusalem in the economic, health, and education sectors to be addressed by policy-makers during the coming period:

1. Given the scarcity of labor in some sectors in the Israeli economy, particularly in the building and construction sector, many owners of commercial enterprises in Jerusalem as well as employees who lost their jobs have been compelled to seek employment in the Israeli labor market. This, in turn, will increase the reliance on the Israeli economy in the future, perhaps making it the sole option for approximately 311,000 Jerusalemites living within the wall (J1).
2. Given the Zionist onslaught on the Palestinian people's components and resources as a whole and the accompanying state of uncertainty, it is expected that the adverse economic impacts on the Jerusalemite economy will further reduce its ability to provide local alternatives that would ensure a degree of "self-reliance".
3. The industrial and craft sector in the city has been adversely affected following the failure to transport raw materials from the West Bank as a result of Israeli barriers and checkpoints. Given its almost complete reliance on Palestinian labor from outside the city, the construction and renovation sector in the city has also been adversely affected by the Israeli restrictions on the flow of Palestinian labor from the West Bank.
4. Israeli restrictions on and the decline in the flow of outbound tourism movement as a result of the aggression on Gaza have contributed to a significant drop in the percentages of room occupancy in the hotels of the city. They have also contributed to the cancellation of a large number of bookings by tourists in the hotels in East Jerusalem, with such hotel bookings only made by journalists. This entails huge losses for the hotel sector and layoffs of hotel employees. The further deterioration of the situation in the future might push some hotels to shut down.

5. The PNA's budget is currently gripped by a fiscal crisis, impacting the ability of the Jerusalem schools along with their teachers to access their workplaces and, thus, raising the number of school disruption days. This has also resulted in the accumulation of debts on the Palestinian Health Ministry for the East Jerusalem hospitals, restricting their ability to remain steadfast and continue to provide services and pay the salaries of their employees.
6. Denying medical and nursing staff access to hospitals in Jerusalem will create a gap in the ability of these hospitals to provide services to the patients seeking treatment in them.
7. The inability of patients with cancerous tumors and others who receive treatment in Jerusalem hospitals, such as the Augusta Victoria Hospital (al-Mutala'), to access hospitals has largely exacerbated their suffering. This is particularly true given the direct and intensified targeting by the occupation army of the hospitals in the Gaza Strip, which precludes any chance to alleviate the suffering of such patients.
8. Control and security restrictions, such as school raids and inspections, against teachers and students have reached their peak. This also applies to tightened censorship of the school curriculum.
9. Students in detention are prevented from pursuing their education in the Israeli Municipality and Education Ministry-run schools in Jerusalem.
10. Scarce fiscal budgets will further undermine Arab education in Jerusalem and lead to higher school dropout rates among students, who will enroll in the Israeli Education Ministry and Jerusalem Municipality-run schools or join the Israeli labor market. This entails suffering a greater loss in the battle of awareness in the city of Jerusalem.

2. Economic Activity in East Jerusalem

Before delving in detail into the expected effects of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip on economic activity in East Jerusalem, it is useful to recall the most significant figures relating to the economic conditions of the city. The latest statistics issued by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) indicate that the value of the gross domestic product (GDP) in Jerusalem Governorate (J1 district) amounted to around USD \$1.3 billion in 2021 (PCBS, 2023 A).¹ In spite of the noticeable recovery experienced by the Jerusalemite economy in that year compared to 2020 (a growth of 10%), it has not returned to its pre-pandemic levels nor exceeded USD \$1.3 billion (see Table 1). This, in turn, indicates that the Jerusalemite economy has not recovered fully from the effects of the pandemic, and that the growth it has registered is remarkable compared to the low levels it achieved during the pandemic.

The contribution of Jerusalem to the Palestinian economy declined considerably during the past three decades. The contribution of Jerusalem to the GDP declined from 15% in 1990 to 7% in 2021 (PCBS, 2023 B), and that to domestic labor declined from 18% in 1990 (UNCTAD, 2023) to 3% in 2021. This decline is mainly ascribed to the physical and economic separation of Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian economy. Such division has been dramatically accelerating since the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000 and the erection of the Separation Wall.

With regard to the labor market, the distribution of employees in the Jerusalem Governorate has been mainly concentrated in service-oriented activities, reflecting the predominance of the sector in the economy of the Governorate. Employees in the services sector accounted

¹ J1 District: It comprises those parts that Israel has annexed following the occupation of the West Bank in 1967.

J2 District: It comprises the rest of the areas in the Jerusalem Governorate, outside the Separation Wall.

for 30.6% of the total number of employees, whereas the employees of the trade, restaurant, and hotel sector accounted for 26.5% of the total number of employees, while 21.1% of the total number of employees work in the building and construction sector. Paid employees account for the largest percentage of the total number of employees (88.9%), employers account for 4.7%, self-employed workers for 5.9% and 0.5% of the total number of employees work as unpaid family members (PCBS, 2023 A).

Table 1: The added value of the most important economic activities in the Jerusalem Governorate (J1 district) for the years 2016- 2021 in current prices

Economic activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Agriculture and fishing	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Manufacturing industry, water and electricity	233.8	235.0	231.2	234.7	202.0	228.5
Construction	35.5	35.6	33.9	35.3	16.0	12.9
Wholesale and retail trade	347.8	365.2	370.2	380.6	293.5	333.9
Transport and storage	3.4	4.2	5.8	5.0	2.4	2.6
Information and communications	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.0	1.1
Services	670.4	671.3	675.7	687.9	659.9	716.3
Public administration and defense	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.6
Total of the added value	1,295.7	1,316.2	1,321.6	1,348.4	1,178.1	1,298.5

Source: The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Jerusalem Statistical Yearbook, 2023. Number "25".

During the period 2016- 2021, the distribution of economic activities within the Jerusalemite economy did not experience any fundamental change. The services sector continued to contribute the most to the GDP of the Jerusalem Governorate (at a percentage of 55%), followed by trade (at a percentage of 26%) (See Table 2). This highlights that services form the economic backbone of the city of Jerusalem, as is the case of the condition of the economy, in general (PCBS, 2023 A).

Tourism and associated services continue to constitute the core of the economy of the city of Jerusalem. They are estimated to account for around 40% of the total income of the city (UNCTAD, 2013), in spite of the fluctuations exhibited by the tourism sector in the city as a result of the harsh political and economic conditions that the city still faces. Hotels make up the cornerstone of the tourism sector in the city of Jerusalem. In the same context, figures issued by the PCBS indicate that the number of hotels in the Jerusalem Governorate was 17 by the end of 2021, comprising 822 rooms and 1,954 beds. The average number of hotel employees was 562, including 424 males and 138 females (PCBS, 2023 A). Table 3 shows the main indicators of the hotel sector activities in East Jerusalem during the period 2017-2021, as such indicators are characterized by fluctuation, particularly the number of hotels and the number of hotel guests.

Table 2: The relative distribution of the total added value in the Jerusalem Governorate (J1) district according to economic activity, 2016- 2021

Economic activity	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Agriculture and fishing	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing industry, water and electricity	18.0	17.9	17.5	17.4	17.2	17.6
Construction	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6	1.4	1.0
Wholesale and retail trade	26.8	27.7	28.0	28.2	24.8	25.6
Transport and storage	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2
Information and communications	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Services	51.7	51.0	51.1	51.0	56.0	55.2
Public administration and defense	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Jerusalem Statistical Yearbook, 2023. Number "25".

Table 3: The main indicators of hotel activity in the Jerusalem Governorate, 2017- 2021

Indicator	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of hotels	20	21	19	17	17
Number of rooms	1,480	1,464	987	822	763
Number of beds	3,242	3,144	2,199	1,954	1761
Average room occupancy	560.8	587.6	642.1	96.9	96.9
Percentage of room occupancy %	37.9	41.2	54.1	9.5	9.5
Average bed occupancy	934.4	980.4	1,006.00	143.3	143.3
Percentage of bed occupancy %	28.8	31.1	37.8	5.7	5.7
Number of guests	113,911	121,326	126,378	89717 ,	9857
Number of hotel nights	341,065	357,852	367,184	912,52	28471

Source: The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Jerusalem Statistical Yearbook, 2023. Number "25". Ramallah- Palestine.

The sharp drop in hotel activity indicators during the period (March- December 2020) is ascribed to the coronavirus pandemic, which resulted in the suspension of the movement of international travelers and restricted mobility among the Palestinian governorates.

3. The Repercussions of the Aggression on Economic Activities in East Jerusalem

Since the construction of the Separation Wall and the tightening of the settlement ring around and within Arab Jerusalem, as part of Israelization policies intended to strip it of its Palestinian

identity, the city has started to gradually lose its political and economic centrality. Prospects for maintaining its territorial contiguity with its surroundings and the rest of the occupied territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have dwindled. Over time, this has created a trade-off between preserving the historical status of the city as the center of Palestine and guaranteeing livelihoods through integrating into the Israeli economy, leaving it in a “development limbo” (UNCTAD, 2013). This is clearly manifested in the Jerusalemites’ quest for decent employment opportunities in the Israeli labor market, the consumption of Israeli goods and services, obtaining credit and funding from Israeli bank and the state budget, as well as in dealing with the Israeli municipality as well as with the planning and interior authorities (Murar et al., 2021).

Against the backdrop of the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip and as a result of the practices of the Israeli occupation on the ground in terms of entrenching the isolation of the city from its Palestinian surroundings, the imminent risk of the city losing its historical and political status looms large. Since the aggression on the Gaza Strip, Israel has imposed a complete siege on the city, denying holders of West Bank Palestinian identity cards access, restricting the movement of individuals within it, and limiting Jerusalemites’ access to the Al-Aqsa Mosque for prayer. It has also stepped up raids on economic and commercial enterprises in the city, along with the accompanying imposition of mostly unjustified taxes and fines, as confirmed by the interviews with the relevant actors in the city.

Preliminary data also indicates that there has been an alarming fall in the volume of trade exchange and purchasing movement within the city as a result of these procedures. This has inflicted heavy losses on the Palestinian economic enterprises in the city, particularly the commercial and tourism-oriented enterprises as well as the transportation sector, which depend on inbound tourism. This has caused the vast majority (estimated by MAS at up to 80%) of economic enterprises in the Old City to completely or semi-completely cease to operate, except for retail enterprises that only serve the old city inhabitants. Following the separation of Jerusalem from the neighboring city of Ramallah along with inaccessibility to its various services, Beit Hanina neighborhood has become the preferred shopping destination for Jerusalemites and Palestinians inside the Green Line, rather than the Old City in Jerusalem or the West Bank cities, especially since the War.

Previous evidence indicates that the tourism sector, particularly hotels, is affected the most by political and economic fluctuations. The number of hotels in the city of East Jerusalem dropped from 43 in 2000 to 17 by 2021, at a time when the percentage of room occupancy did not exceed 60%, except in rare occasions. This situation reflects the takeover by Israeli hotels of the bulk of inbound tourism (Murar et al., 2021). In this context, Israeli restrictions and the decline in the flow of outbound tourism movement as a result of the aggression on Gaza have contributed to a significant drop in the rates of room occupancy in the hotels of the city. They have also contributed to the cancellation by tourists of a large number of bookings in the hotels in East Jerusalem, with hotels now only occupied by journalists. This entails huge losses to the hotel sector and layoffs of hotel employees. The further deterioration of the situation might push some hotels to shut down.

On the other hand, stakeholder interviews indicate that the industrial sector in the city has been adversely affected following the failure to transport raw materials from the West Bank as a result

of Israeli barriers and checkpoints. Given its almost complete reliance on Palestinian labor from outside the city, the construction and renovation sector in the city has been also adversely affected by the Israeli restrictions on the flow of Palestinian labor from the West Bank.

With regard to employment and unemployment among Jerusalemites, the shutdown of a part of the economic enterprises in the city has compelled employers to lay off employees, and such layoffs are expected to raise the rate of unemployment and poverty among the Jerusalemites, (noting that there are not yet any official statistics on this). In contrast, given the scarcity of labor in some sectors of the Israeli economy, particularly in the building and construction sector, many owners of commercial enterprises in Jerusalem as well as employees who lost their jobs have been compelled to seek employment in the Israeli labor market. This, in turn, will increase the reliance on the Israeli economy in the future, perhaps making it the sole option for approximately 311,000 Jerusalemites living within the wall (J1). Given the Israeli onslaught on the Palestinian people's components and resources as a whole and the accompanying state of uncertainty, it is also expected that the adverse economic impacts on the Jerusalemite economy will further reduce its ability to provide local alternatives that would ensure a degree of "self-reliance".

Moreover, as indicated in the previous brief (Brief 8), as a result of the obstruction of their movement towards the West Bank cities, it is expected that the volume of the purchases made by the Jerusalemites from such cities will decline. Assuming that the movement of shoppers from the city of Jerusalem to the West Bank will decline by at least 50% due to the occupation restrictions and the security situation, this will inflict losses estimated at approximately ILS 72 million (ILS 863 on an annual basis) for the Palestinian economy in terms of the consumption of durable and non-durable goods.

The only glimmer of hope is to expand the campaign to boycott Israeli goods among Jerusalemites, which corresponds to an increase in the demand for goods originating in Palestine. This will provide an economic lever that could connect besieged East Jerusalem to the rest of the occupied West Bank, which could be built upon.

4. The health sector in East Jerusalem

The health sector in East Jerusalem comprises several components, most notably the Augusta Victoria Hospital (al-Mutala'), al-Makassed Islamic Charitable Society Hospital, St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital, The French Hospital (al-Faransawi), the Palestine Red Crescent Hospital and Society, and the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre. The system also includes specialized clinics, laboratories, and maternity hospitals, which totaled 51 in 2022 (PCBS, 2023). The East Jerusalem hospitals constitute an important element of the Palestinian health sector, as more than half of the burden on them results from the patients referred by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Such patients need to receive health services and operations that are not provided by hospitals in the West Bank or in the Gaza Strip.

Thus, the East Jerusalem hospitals are considered major specialized medical care centers in the Palestinian health system.² According to the statistics issued by the Palestinian Health Ministry, the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network (EJHN) accounts for 24% of the total beds

² The East Jerusalem Hospitals Network. <https://www.ejhn.org/>

available in the Palestinian Health Ministry-run hospitals, which numbered 718 beds in 2021 (PCBS, 2023). The Palestinian Health Ministry referred approximately 40,000 patients for treatment to the East Jerusalem hospitals at a cost estimated at approximately 36% of the total cost of procurement of services outsourced from outside the Palestinian Health Ministry, corresponding to ILS 380 million in 2022.³ This demonstrates the importance of continuing such referrals to support the steadfastness of the East Jerusalem hospitals, and thus to maintain a fundamental part of the Palestinian health sector.

The East Jerusalem hospitals are confronted with major geopolitical and financial challenges with regard to their presence in Jerusalem and the Israeli occupation policies intended to shut them down by the imposition of financial and political restrictions. Basically, the occupation has imposed compulsory Israeli health insurance on Palestinians residing in Jerusalem, obliging them to seek medical treatment at the occupation-run health centers and creating financial problems to the East Jerusalem hospitals and centers.

As a result of not being granted entry permits by the Israeli occupation, Palestinian citizens from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip generally lack access to treatment in hospitals in the city of Jerusalem, which inflicted big losses for such hospitals. For example, the approval rate of exit permits from Gaza for medical treatment via the Erez crossing did not exceed 65% of the total exit permit applications in most months prior to the war (Palestinian Health Ministry, 2021). Such a percentage reached a peak of 85% in February 2023, marking an unprecedented level since 2014.⁴

Following the lack of accessibility of a sufficient number of patients for treatment in the East Jerusalem hospitals, they are operating below a full capacity utilization level, creating major financial and operational problems for them. This is not to mention the debts accumulating on the Palestinian Health Ministry for the East Jerusalem hospitals, amounting to approximately ILS 410 million up until December 2023.

5. The Repercussions of the Aggression on the Health Sector in Jerusalem

During the current aggression on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the number of patients referred from the West Bank to East Jerusalem hospitals has declined sharply, at a time when the population of Gaza is completely denied exit from Gaza to East Jerusalem hospitals for treatment, except for those who have made it there and could not return to the Gaza Strip. All patient companions were expelled to the Gaza Strip. This exacerbates the grave health condition of the patients coming from the Gaza Strip, particularly given the ongoing and direct targeting of hospitals and health centers in the Strip.

There are a number of patients who managed to exit the Gaza Strip for treatment overseas, such as in hospitals in Türkiye or the United Arab Emirates (UAE), thanks to concerted international efforts in this regard. On the one hand, this is basically considered the only glimmer of hope for saving the lives of cancer and cardiac patients as well as for patients suffering from other serious diseases. However, this translates into a decline in the income of the East Jerusalem hospitals, which are well-equipped to receive and treat the casualties of the aggression on Gaza.

3 This was calculated through the Health Annual Report Palestine 2022. The Palestinian Health Ministry. Ramallah – Palestine.

4 <https://www.ochaopt.org/ar/content/movement-and-out-gaza-update-covering-february-2023>

According to the data provided by al-Makassed Islamic Charitable Society Hospital, the hospital's monthly bill declined from ILS 9 million in September (in the pre-aggression period) to approximately ILS 4 million in November. This might have a larger impact on the other hospitals, such as the Augusta Victoria Hospital (al-Mutala'), as it receives a larger number of patients from the Gaza Strip. In the same context, the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre, which receives people with disability, indicated that the rate of its visitors has declined to approximately 50% due to the occupation restrictions, entailing a considerable deterioration in the health condition of people with disabilities as well as a longer period and higher costs of treatment.

With regard to the emergency services in East Jerusalem, they are provided through the Magen David Adom (MDA) ("Red Star of David"), (which does not serve all districts under security pretexts), as well as through the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), which has been operating in emergencies since 2006. The PRCS has only 12 ambulance vehicles and 27 emergency case specialists in the city (Jerusalem Unit, 2018). The number of PRCS ambulance vehicles was not sufficient to transport all patients in the pre-aggression months, and PRCS ambulances came under great pressure to accommodate all the cases that required first aid and emergency services. However, now following the cessation of the flow of patients from the Gaza Strip to East Jerusalem hospitals for treatment, PRCS ambulances almost stopped operation, particularly that a large part of their work involved transporting patients from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Recently, there have been new restrictions and conditions on the entry of physicians and nurses to Jerusalem, in general, and to the Augusta Victoria Hospital (al-Mutala'), in particular. If this situation persists, it will create a gap in the provision of the necessary services for patients seeking treatment in East Jerusalem hospitals.

The long-term impact of such a situation remains unclear as long as the aggression on the Gaza Strip continues and what kind of procedures the occupation government will follow following the end of the aggression with regards to the mobility of patients, physicians, and medical staff.

6. The education sector in East Jerusalem

Given its role in preserving the Palestinian resistance narrative and identity which the occupation has been relentlessly attempting to obliterate and transform into a Zionist (Jewish nationalist) narrative, the education sector in Jerusalem suffers as a result of being a direct target of Israeli occupation practices. Schools with all of their teachers and students are the target of relentless pursuits by the occupation army. Such pursuits are intended to prevent them from teaching the Palestinian curriculum and proceed with the attempts to replace it with the Israeli curriculum, which offers a contradictory and bogus narrative that erases the real history of the city. This would facilitate the control of the upbringing and culture of Palestinians in Jerusalem.

Successive Israeli governments have taken accumulative and sustained procedures intended to thwart and dismantle the Arab education sector in Jerusalem. These procedures have taken different forms and policies, whether through the prevention of the service development processes

in Arab schools (leading to a decline in their role and capacity to perform such development), the creation of functional profit-driven schools run by the occupation municipality and the intelligence services in Jerusalem, or through ongoing security pursuit of Palestinian teachers.

Four authorities supervise the education sector in Jerusalem, namely the PA Education Ministry, the Private School system, the Israeli municipality and Education Ministry, and UNRWA. As a result of the multiplicity of the bodies supervising schools and poor coordination among them, the Palestinian education sector in Jerusalem suffers from major problems, limiting the ability to develop comprehensive development policies for this sector.

Jerusalemite students during the 2022/2023 scholastic year totaled about 76,152 male and female students, who received education in 262 schools in the Jerusalem Governorate (including 104 schools in the (J1) district). The majority of the schools, corresponding to 127 schools, are run by the Palestinian Education Ministry. These are followed by private schools that are run by civil society organizations or religious profit-driven and non-profit organizations, numbering 120, as well as by a small number -not exceeding 15- of UNRWA-run schools. The number of Palestinian students enrolled in the Israeli municipality and the Education Ministry-run schools in East Jerusalem was around 40,175 male and female students, (accounting for 35% of the total number of Jerusalemite students) during the 2020/2021 scholastic year (PCBS, 2023).

In contrast to the high support and fiscal budgets available to the Israeli municipality and Education Ministry-run schools, the Arab education sector in Jerusalem suffers a funding crisis. The lack of sufficient and constant funding sources and budgets for the education sector is considered one of the basic problems confronted by education in occupied Jerusalem. This has adversely impacted schools in terms of their number, limited their capacity to accommodate the growing numbers of students, and led to failure to carry out renovation work for or expand the existing schools. This has resulted in renting unsuitable buildings, mobile rooms, shelters, warehouses, and lanes intended to function as instruction spaces, which lack the minimum health and design conditions as well as proper educational facilities, such as yards and laboratory fixtures and fittings. Such instruction spaces also lack services and programs tailored to meet the needs of people with special needs as well as venues for extracurricular activities, such as libraries, halls and gyms. This has contributed to students' enrolment in other occupation municipality-run schools, which are equipped with the necessary infrastructure and services. Such schools offer bus services for their students, which constitutes a weakness when it comes to the schools that are run by the other supervisory actors.

The lack of funding coupled with the drop in the wages of Jerusalemite teachers have resulted in a large number of teachers abandoning Arab schools in Jerusalem and being attracted to work in the Israeli Municipality and Education Ministry-run schools, particularly since the salaries of teachers, the end-of-service benefits and pension in the latter schools are higher than those offered to teachers in private or the Palestinian Education Ministry-run schools. The table below shows the difference between the teachers' salaries in the Palestinian Education Ministry-run schools and those of the teachers in the Israeli Municipality-run schools.

Table 4: The difference between the teachers' salaries in the Palestinian Education Ministry-run schools and those of the teachers in the Israeli Municipality-run schools

Years of service	A teacher's salary in a Palestinian Education Ministry-run school	A teacher's salary in an Israeli Municipality-run school
1	3089	5802
5	3264	6756
10	3520	8368
15	3803	10164
20	4081	11484
25	4454	14087

Source: The State of Palestine's National Development Plan: Resilience, Disengagement, and Cluster Development towards Independence – The Capital Cluster (2021-2023)

7. The Repercussions of the Aggression on the Arab Education Sector in Jerusalem

Since the onset of the current aggression, the Arab education sector has been subject to additional restrictions. The Israeli occupation has denied 70 employees holding Palestinian identity cards and staff of the PNA-run schools in Jerusalem, males and females alike, access to their schools, as a result of the revocation of all entry permits and banning access to Jerusalem. Such employees include 50 male and female teachers and 20 male and female administrative officers who work in 29 schools in Jerusalem or in what is known as the (J1) district. This has required such schools to look for alternatives, including substituting such employees with volunteers or turning to digital education.

In addition to denying teachers and students, males and females alike, by the occupation access to schools in Jerusalem, and as a result of withholding the clearance revenues by the right-wing occupation government, the PNA has been going through a fiscal crisis, making it unable to pay the salaries of public employees. Among such employees are male and females teachers in the Palestinian Education Ministry-run schools in Jerusalem. This constitutes another reason that prevents such teachers from accessing their workplaces in the city schools, leading to the disruption of the education process and causing Jerusalemite students to lose more school days. This creates further challenges for the struggle for Arab education in Jerusalem.

Male and female teachers attempt to make up for time lost due to unforeseen inaccessibility to schools through electronic education, which despite being flexible in times of emergencies, has proven unreliable as a permanent alternative to direct interaction in classrooms. Electronic education requires students and parents to exert more effort, not to mention that access to the Internet and smart devices is not necessarily available to all students, particularly if the same family has more than a school-age student.

Moreover, security pursuits have reached their peak in the municipality-run schools during the time of the aggression on the Gaza Strip. Many schools were the target of occupation army

raids, where teachers and students, males and females alike, were subject to interrogation, and their mobile phones were inspected. Besides, there has been tightened censorship of the school curriculum in the municipality-run schools as well as of any mention of Palestinian content, largely limiting teaching materials characterized with patriotism which could previously be taught, albeit clandestinely away from the occupation authorities.

New risks have unfolded during this period, including the enrollment of a significant number of male students in the municipality-run schools and granting them pass grades although they do not attend school. This is because the school administrations are under pressure not to enroll students who could expose the school staff to security censorship or to any other restrictions, particularly during the current aggression. For example, it has been discovered that 100 students are enrolled in at-Tur School, considered a large school, but they do not attend school at all.

As a result of this phenomenon, it is likely that large numbers of students drop out from education and become unskilled workers or unemployed. This is not to mention the considerable social risks they are exposed to, such as drug addiction and other forms of addiction prevalent among youth. This is especially true given that the Palestinian Education Ministry-run schools or the private sector-run schools are unable to accommodate such students and offer an education environment attractive to them.

Israeli reprisal restrictions on children and youth have been further tightened. Any Jerusalemite child who is arrested is prevented from pursuing his/her education as well as from returning to the classroom, creating fear and concern among students and parents. The adverse effects of these accidental phenomena remain unmonitored in an accurate manner, particularly with regard to the number of students dropping out of schools.

References:

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2023). National Accounts Statistics, 2000-2022. Ramallah, Palestine

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Jerusalem Statistical Yearbook, 2023. Number "25". Ramallah – Palestine.

Morar, et al. (2021). Requirements for Establishing Jerusalem Development Cluster: Policy Priorities, Interventions, Programs. Ramallah: Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS).

The Jerusalem Unit- The Office of the President. The Strategic Sectorial Development Plan for Jerusalem (2018- 2022). Jerusalem

The Palestinian Health Ministry. (2021). The National Health Strategy 2021–2023. Ramallah - Palestine.

UNCTAD (2013): The Palestinian Economy in East Jerusalem: Enduring annexation, isolation and disintegration. <http://unctad.org/en/pages/PublicationWebflyer.aspx?publicationid=537>