

Palestinians in the Diaspora

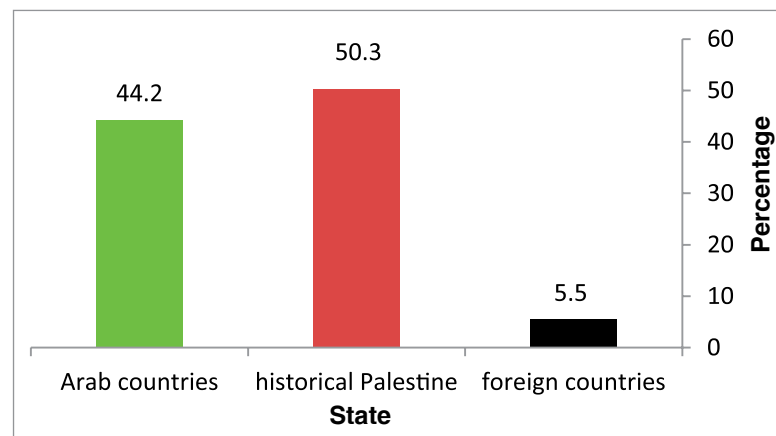
Courtesy of Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

In the wake of the Nakba, more than 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes. Thinking that their exile was temporary, these refugees initially paid little attention to their living conditions in the host countries, their hearts tied to their homes in Palestine. Years passed, however, and popular movements and organizations sprung up to advocate for the political rights of Palestinians. However, there was no political entity to represent Palestinians until the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, the political body that represented all Palestinians worldwide, while less than 20% of what remained of Palestine stayed under Arab administration, Jordan ruling the West Bank and Egypt the Gaza Strip. Many of the refugees, meanwhile, spread over the entire globe.

The collection of data about persons with Palestinian heritage who live in the diaspora is confronted with professional, financial, and political obstacles. In many host countries it is difficult to conduct field surveys and studies, and statistical samples for field surveys and studies do not tend to give accurate results. Successful integration of Palestinians in their adopted places of residence may furthermore make it difficult to census them, not to mention the high cost and political impediments that prevent the conducting of field studies and surveys in other countries, as the carrying out of surveys contradicts with the principle of the sovereignty of a state.

To overcome such problems, the PCBS tailors its activities to the requirements of the situation in order to produce the best professional estimates possible, using available data from different sources. By the end of 2015, PCBS estimated that there were 12.37 million Palestinians living in the world. If we compare this number to the 1.454 million Palestinians cited by statistical data as living in Palestine at the end of the British Mandate, just prior to 1948, we find that the Palestinian world population has increased more than eightfold. The distribution is as follows: 4.75 million live in the State of Palestine (38.4% of the total world population), 1.47 million in the Palestinian areas occupied by Israel in 1948 (11.9%), Palestinians in Arab countries amount to 5.46 million (44.2% of world population), while Palestinians in foreign countries amount to 685,000 (5.5% of Palestinian world population). This means that half of the Palestinians in the world live outside historical Palestine.

Percentage Distribution of Palestinians according to their Place of Residency, 2015



UNRWA records report 5.6 million refugees (45% of the Palestinian world population), most of whom live in the State of Palestine and Jordan.

Number of Palestinian Refugees Registered by Palestinian State, January 2015

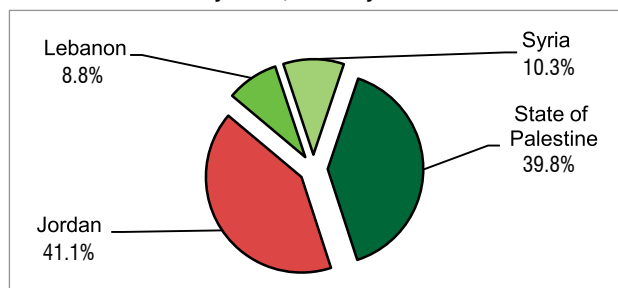
State	Total	Registered refugees	Others*
Total	5,589,488	5,149,742	439,746
Jordan	2,212,917	2,117,361	95,556
Lebanon	493,134	452,669	40,465
Syria	591,780	528,616	63,164
Palestine			
West Bank	942,184	774,167	168,017
Gaza Strip	1,349,473	1,276,929	72,544

* Other registered persons eligible to receive services.

Artwork by Irena Naji.



Percentage Distribution of Registered Palestinian Refugees by State, January 2015



Data shows that 54% of Palestinians residing outside Palestine are refugees. The following is an overview of the status of Palestinians in their places of residency in the diaspora (Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) as per latest available data.

• Palestinians in Jordan

A study carried out by the Norwegian FAFO Research Foundation, looking into the living conditions in Palestinian camps in Jordan in 2011, showed that 39.9% of camp inhabitants are below 15 years old, while 4.3% of individuals are

for children aged below five years was 25.7 deaths per 1000 live births in 2010.

• Palestinians in Syria

Data available for 2009 regarding Palestinians living in Syria indicate that 33.1% of the total population was aged



Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Syria.

1000 live births, while among children aged five years and less the mortality rate amounted to 31.4 deaths per 1000 live births for the same year.

The percentage of Palestinians in Syria in 2006 aged 15 years and above who have never been married was 48.3% for males and 40.8% for females; the highest percentage was found in the age group of 15-19 years with 100% of males and 92.7% of females not married previously. It is noteworthy that Palestinian widows in Syria represent a higher percentage compared to male widowers with 4.2% female widows and 0.5% male widowers.

• Palestinians in Lebanon

Data available for 2011 about Palestinians living in Lebanon indicate that the population below 15 years represented 31.1%, while those aged 65 years and above constituted 6.1%. The gender ratio was 98.2 males per every 100 females. Palestinian unmarried females in Lebanon (12 years and above) reached 43.7%, while

married female Palestinians represented 52.2%, divorced 2.3%, widows 1.7%, and separated 0.1%. Data also showed that the average Palestinian household had 4.4 members, the fertility rate was 2.8 children per woman, infant mortality rate 15.0 deaths per 1000 births, and the mortality rate of children under five amounted to 17.0 per 1000 live births.

Conclusion: Palestinians are a young society, both in the diaspora and inside Palestine. The fertility rate of Palestinian women in the diaspora is noticeably lower than that of Palestinian women inside Palestine, which explains why the natural annual population growth rate with 2% among Palestinians in the diaspora is lower than that among Palestinians residing in Palestine, which attained a 2.9% increase in population per year.

PCBS relies with many of its data on numbers provided by UNRWA.

ⁱ Age A. Tiltne and Huafeng Zhang, *The socio-economic conditions of Jordan's Palestinian camp refugees: summary of findings from two surveys, 2011, FAFO Report 2014.*



Wihdat Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan.

aged 65 years and above. The average household size in refugee camps was 5.1 members per household, while the average size of Palestinian families outside camps reached 4.8 members. Annual demographic growth reached 2.2%, and the overall fertility rate of Palestinian women in Jordan was 3.3 children per woman. Infant mortality rate in these camps reached 22.6 deaths per 1000 births, while the mortality rate

15 years and below, while those aged 65 years and above represented 4.4%. Data also revealed that the average Palestinian household size was 4.1 members per household in 2010, while the annual population growth reached 1.6% in the same year. The total fertility rate of Palestinians in Syria in 2010 reached 2.5 births per woman. The crude birth rate was 29.2 births per 1000 population. Infant mortality reached 28.2 deaths per

Shatila Palestinian refugee camp on the outskirts of Beirut.

