

The situation of the Palestinian Labor Market (1st quarter of 2022)

PCBS's labor force survey for the first quarter of 2022 indicated a 1% increase in the number of employed people (*from about 1.092 million in the 4th quarter of 2021 to about 1.108 million in the 1st quarter of 2022*). Most noticeably, the number of Palestinian workers working in Israel and Israeli settlements increased. At the same time, there was a decrease in the number of employed persons in the local market from 939 thousand to 904 thousand during the same period. PCBS indicated that 7 out of 10 persons (75%) are wage employees, while 21% are employers & self-employed, and 4% are unpaid family members.

Workers in the Gaza Strip, youth and women continued to be most affected by unemployment, and in need for urgent interventions and long-term political and/or structural changes to address the situation. In the context of the continued blockade of the Gaza Strip, the unemployment rate among labour force participants (aged 15 years and above) reached 47%, while it was 14% in the West Bank and 25% overall.

There was no improvement in relation to women's employment, as 41% of women were unemployed compared to 21% of men. The unemployment rate among youth aged (19-29 years), who hold associate diploma certificate or higher, reached 48% (27 in the WB & 75% in the GS).

When it comes to fundamental rights; 64% of wage workers in the private sector do not have a work contract, 77% are deprived from their right to receive retirement/end-of-service indemnities, and 46% of women obtained a paid maternity leave.

As for wages, 43% of wage workers in the private sector obtained less than the minimum wage according to the new minimum wage of (1,880 NIS). In the West Bank, 22% of workers were deprived from their right to a minimum wage compared to 88% of workers in Gaza. The average wage of workers paid less than the minimum wage in Gaza was 676 NIS, compared to 1,382 NIS in the West Bank.

Tour & walk in the Northern Jordan Valley on the occasion of Women's Month



DWRC, PWUSD, EducAid & COSPE, organized a tour and walk in the Northern Jordan Valley on the occasion of women's month on 29/03/2022, as part of their annual awareness campaign, and under the moto "achieving equality in the world of work is a right for all women". This event, held through an EU-funded project, aimed at highlighting opportunities and challenges that women face in the Northern Jordan Valley in accessing job opportunities without discrimination and exercising the profession of their own choice. Likewise, the tour's organizers aimed at highlighting the important role of duty bearers, both official institutions and civil society, in empowering women to get decent jobs that guarantee them a decent life. The event included interventions about women's experiences and the challenges they faced in getting jobs, in addition to introducing participants to the Northern Jordan Valley area and Bardala, its economic activities, and the nature of women's economic role there. During the tour, a discussion session took place about the status of women in the Jordan Valley villages and the challenges they face, and best strategies to overcome them. *To read more about this activity, please [click here](#).*

Cabinet decision reinforces women's rights in the governmental sector

On 02/03/2022, the Palestinian Cabinet adopted a decision to increase the maternity leave for public sector employees from 10 to 14 weeks, introduce a 3 day paternity leave, and count time-off for child care for retirement benefits, noting that only female employees can take an unpaid leave of absence for child care. This decision constitutes an improvement for workers with family responsibilities, and a step towards promoting gender equality in the governmental sector, and reinforcing women's rights. In addition, the Cabinet decided to take measures for reinforcing monitoring of wage equality (equal wages for work of equal value for men and women).

Strikes/labor disputes of Palestinian public sector employees

The **Palestinian Nursing & Midwifery Association in the West Bank** announced a general strike on 12/04/2022, with several demands from the government. One of the association's main demands was to increase the professional allowance for nurses (which is between 40%-60%), since it is very low compared to other medical professions (which may reach between 120%-200%). Eventually after many negotiation attempts, the association signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health on 21/04/2022.

Public sector teachers in the West Bank have engaged in one of the longest stop work and strike movement for years, as several negotiation attempts failed between the **General Federation of Teachers** and the Ministry of Education. The main demands of the federation include: increasing the professional allowance from 50% to 80%, the provision of the unpaid cost of living allowance since 2013, and other demands from the years 2016 & 2019. The federation stated that teachers have the right to obtain their full salaries and that there should not be any deductions from their salaries due to any financial crises faced by the government.

Collapse of a building in Tulkarem leads to the tragic death of two workers and the injury of another

Two workers were reported dead and additional worker suffered from injuries after a building of four floors in Tulkarem collapsed on them on 27/03/2022. Through the investigations of the Civil Defense, it turned out that the building lacks a license. According to the initial information, the Engineers Association stated that the building did not comply with engineering standards, some floors have no licenses, and there was no engineering supervision during the building process.

DWRC interventions in occupational safety and health

Gaza, 31/03/2022 – The Democracy and Workers' Rights Center organized a training course between 29-31/03/2022 in Gaza attended by 30 labor inspectors of the Civil Defense, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Health and municipalities in the Gaza Strip, in cooperation with the Civil Defense and the Ministry of Labor.



The course forms part of a series of trainings aiming to strengthen the skills and capacities of inspectors in monitoring and ensuring the enforcement of occupational safety and health legislation in factories and other workplaces. The course addressed international standards and conventions on occupational safety, hazards in the work environment, the role of inspectors, hazardous materials, analyzing the work environment, signs and boards regarding hazards and their classification.

The **Democracy and Workers' Rights Center submitted legal comments on safety requirements & a safe work environment in bakeries**, during a workshop organized on 28/03/2022 with the Civil Defense in Gaza. These comments were about the draft regulation for licensing of bakeries & occupational safety and health requirements in bakeries. The workshop was attended by representatives of the Ministries of Labor, Health, Local Government and Economy, as well as representatives of bakery owners.