



SPECIAL REPORT

The impact of the latest Israeli military operation (May 2021) on the economy and the labor force in the Gaza Strip

During the fourth Israeli military operation on the Gaza Strip in May 2021, which lasted for 11 days, the Israeli occupying Power's military committed serious violations of the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, through widespread and repeated targeting of civilians and their homes, buildings, economic establishments and essential infrastructure that provides water, electricity, and sanitation services. As a result of Israel's military operation, many workers lost their job opportunities in the Gaza Strip. With their breadwinners out of work, families fell into poverty, and are no longer able to fulfill their basic needs and live in dignity. The Israeli occupying Power focused on targeting factories within the industrial zones located in the east and north of the Gaza Strip, which should be considered as protected areas under international law. DWRC monitored and documented the impact of the latest Israeli military operation on the economic and commercial situation in Gaza, and issued a special report about findings and recommendations. DWRC's field research team implemented field visits in Gaza's governorates to many of the economic establishments that had incurred damages, in the industrial, commercial, and agricultural sectors, in addition to services & tourism activities.

DWRC's field documentation process included approximately 60% of affected economic activities and establishments, as it covered 143 establishments located in Gaza's five governorates.

The following table provides a summary of total damages to economic establishments and effects on the labor force (according to testimonies of the establishments' owners collected by DWRC);

Type of economic activity	No. of establishments	Value of the damages in US\$, according to owners' assessment	No. of affected workers	Total number of family members of affected workers
Commercial	47	24,818,785\$	298	1300
Agriculture	36	654,100\$	166	687
Industrial	18	16,426,670\$	451	1264
Services	28	1,640,600\$	159	686
Media	5	409,000\$	104	317
Tourism	9	1,223,000\$	134	700
Total	143	45,164,155\$	1312	4954

*If you are interested to learn more about **the impact of the latest Israeli military operation (May, 2021) on the economy and the labor force in the Gaza Strip**, contact us at: info@dwrc.org, for the full report.*

The situation of the Palestinian Labor Market (1st quarter of 2021)

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic continued to affect the labor market. According to PCBS, the participation rate in the labor force increased from 41% in the 4th quarter of 2020 to 43% in the 1st quarter of 2021. Men's participation rate in the labor market increased from 65% to 69% during the same period, while women's participation rates remained the same at 16%. Unemployment rates among labor force participants (15 years and over) increased to 28%. Women's unemployment rates continued to exceed men's unemployment rates, reaching 43%, which also constituted an increase compared to the last quarter of 2020. The unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip remained extremely high, reaching 48% compared to 17% in the West Bank.

Fundamental rights of workers in the private sector *(1st quarter of 2021)*

51% of wage workers in the private sector do not have a work contract, while 32% receive retirement/end-of-service indemnities, and 41% of women workers did not obtain a paid maternity leave. The percentage of wage workers employed in the private sector, who are paid less than the minimum wage of 1450 NIS, increased reaching 29% (7% in the West Bank & 81% in the Gaza Strip).

For the first time in Palestine: street vendors in the Gaza Strip form an establishing committee for founding their own union



22/06/2021, Gaza – DWRC held a conference for street vendors in the Gaza Strip, during which they formed an establishing committee for their union that consists of 7 members.

During the conference, attended by a 100 street vendors, participants agreed on taking further steps towards establishing a trade union that represents this category of workers, and to follow-up with official bodies to obtain the union's recognition. This is the first time in Palestine that street vendors mobilize to form a representative body in order to defend their rights and interests.

Street vendors in the Gaza Strip face many issues that affect their ability to earn a livelihood, including closure of street markets, and preventing them from working since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. They are demanding the immediate reopening of all street markets, as they are among the categories of workers most affected by ongoing closure.

They also highlighted the fact that they need to work in order to support their many family members, and are exposed to legal actions from merchants, who have filed cases against them in courts, and the police, because of the accumulation of debts.

DWRC hosts a meeting with the National Committee for Occupational Safety & Health in Gaza to discuss the situation after Gaza's bombing

On Thursday 27/05/2021, DWRC hosted a meeting with the National Committee of Occupational Safety and Health (NCOSH) in Gaza to discuss the situation after the 11-day bombing of Gaza and how to activate the NCOSH role in the coming period. The meeting's recommendations included: forming a committee to document Israeli violations of international law through its targeting of economic establishments, which rendered thousands of workers unemployed, as well as assessing destroyed/damaged workplaces and effects on the work environment and workers; highlighting the committee's role in the reconstruction process to ensure a safe work environment, and prevent risks related to removing rubble and during Gaza's reconstruction works; connecting the activities of the committee with reconstruction programs, and public safety and occupational safety requirements; raising awareness of workers through social media, posters and stickers about how to deal with suspicious objects that fell on workplaces, and the necessity to take safety precautions, and inform the competent authorities; requesting the provision of personal safety tools and equipment to Civil Defense personnel, and that part of the reconstruction funds are allocated for providing Civil Defense with heavy equipment that they lack, as well demanding the release of equipment that has been seized on the Egyptian side of the border with Gaza for years; ensuring that insurance companies in the Gaza Strip agreed to insure companies working on removing rubble and their employees.



DWRC implemented a two-day training course on gender equality and non-discrimination. The course was attended by 13 members of women's committees in unions,

and unions representatives in various sectors, including secretarial work, food industries, textile, administrative services, public services, construction and kindergartens, from the New Unions Federation and National Unions Federation.