



الاتحاد الفلسطيني للهيئات المحلية
Association of Palestinian Local Authorities

World Cities Day 2024

Palestinian LGUs: Challenges of Aggression and Sustainability

Key Milestones: Local Governance in Palestine

01

Establishment of Palestinian Municipalities (Ottoman period)



02

The British Mandate Period (1917 – 1948)



03

The Nakba - 1948



06

Israeli aggression against Palestine since 7 October 2023



05

After The Establishment of The Palestinian National Authority



04

The Full Israeli Occupation of Palestine (1967)



Establishment of Palestinian Municipalities (Ottoman period)

Jerusalem Municipality

Established in 1863 - Jerusalem Municipality is considered the first official municipal council in Palestine

Haifa Municipality

(before 1873)

Nazareth Municipality

(1875)

Nablus Municipality

(1868)

Hebron

(1890)

Gaza Municipality

(1893)



21

**Municipal
councils**

Akko Safed
Haifa Tiberias
Hebron Beisan
Nazareth
Jenin
Shefa-Amr
Tulkarem Beit Jala
Nablus
Ramallah
Asqalan Lod
Khan Yunis Ramle
Gaza Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Bir as-Sabe'

The 1877 "Municipal Law" is considered the regulatory basis for the formation of municipal councils and municipalities in the Ottoman Period.

After the Ottomans left Palestine post World War I, a total of 21 municipal councils remained in Palestine: (Akko, Haifa, Shefa-Amr, Safed, Nazareth, Tiberias, Beisan, Tulkarem, Nablus, Jenin, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Lod, Ramle, Hebron, Beit Jala, Bethlehem, Bir as-Sabe', Asqalan, Khan Yunis, and Gaza).



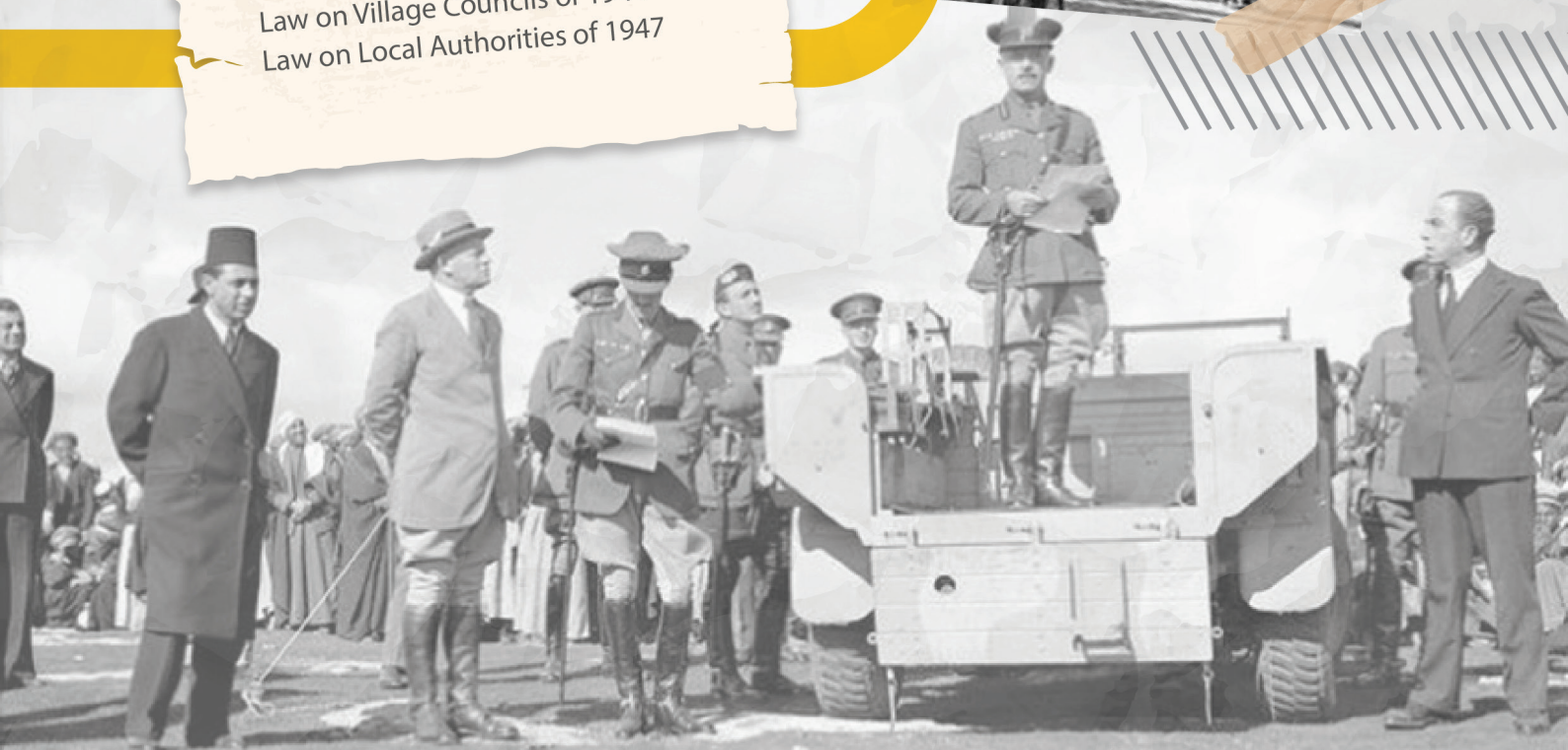
**The British Mandate Period
(1948 – 1917):**

102
LGUs

As of December 1946,
the population of Palestine
1,845,560

The British Mandate authorities
passed several laws to regulate
the local government sector in
Palestine, most notably:

Municipal Law of 1926
Law on Village Councils of 1944
Law on Local Authorities of 1947





The Nakba - 1948

77%

Of the total area of historic Palestine was occupied

531

Palestinian cities and villages were completely destroyed

After 1948

Administered by the Egyptian authority

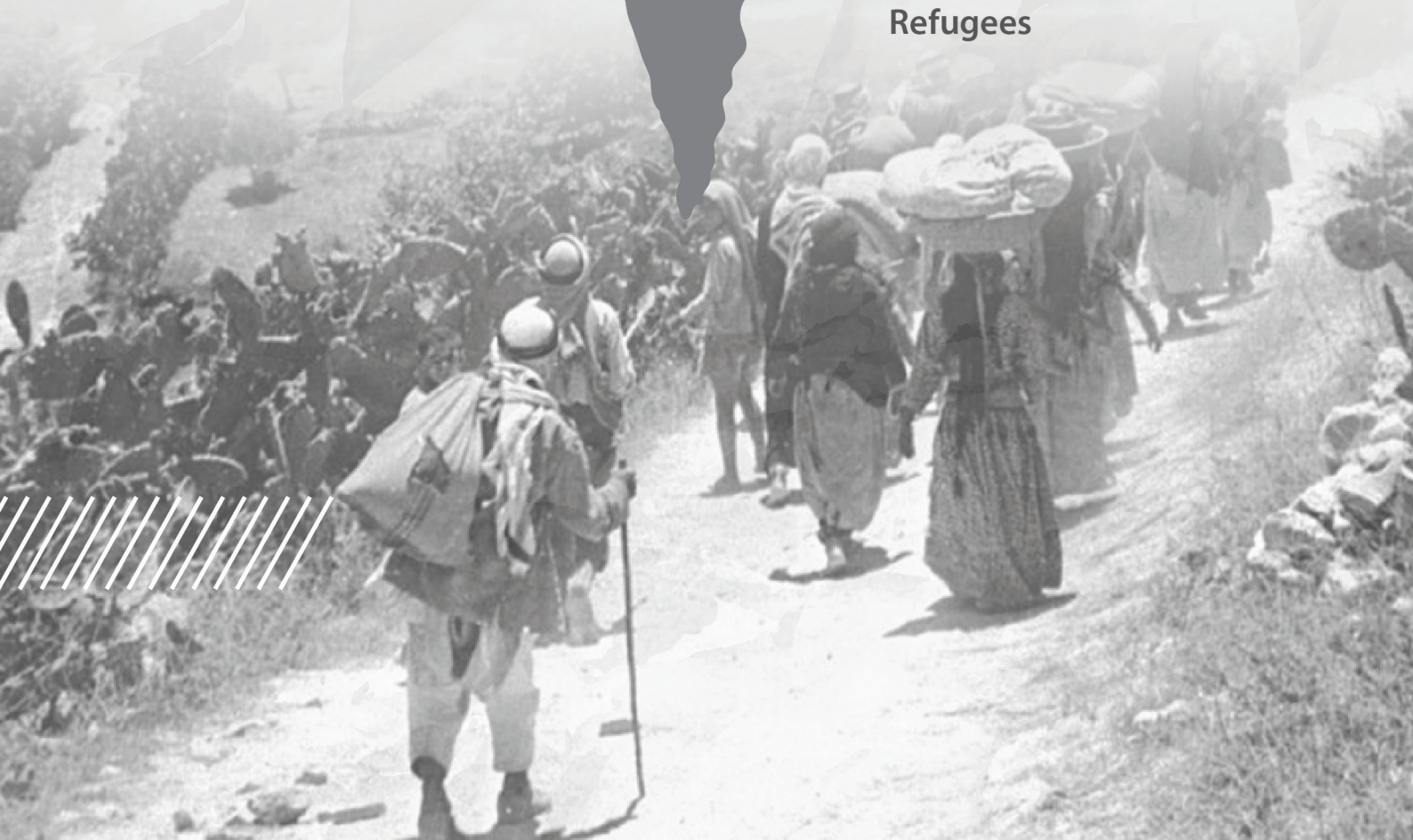


After 1948

Under Jordanian rule

805,067

Refugees





The Full Israeli Occupation of Palestine (1967)



25

LGUs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip



11

Villages were displaced and 2 refugee camps were evacuated namely: the Aqabat Jaber and Ein Sultan refugee camps



300

Palestinians were displaced from the West Bank and Gaza

To ensure Palestinian dependency, Israeli occupation has relied on 5 pillars

Reduce Palestinian control over natural resources

Obstruct Palestinian economic activity

Increase Palestinian dependence on external sources

Control the path to infrastructure and service development.

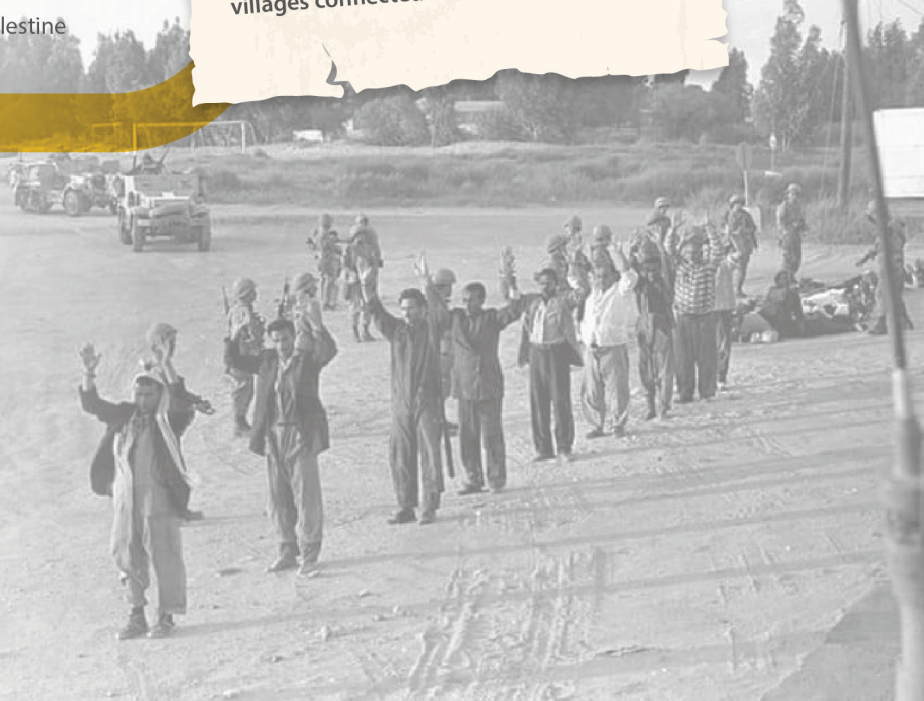
Restrict administrative and regulatory powers of institutions, including municipalities, by military orders

The so-called Village Leagues

- Israeli laws and policy regulations served to maintain power and security, rather than fulfil the needs of local communities.
- LGUs and village councils played a pivotal role in undermining the Village League scheme by promoting national unity and coordinating between cities and villages under the leadership of the National Guidance Committee.
- The 1976 elections marked a turning point in this context, imposing a struggle-based national programme against the occupation. The programme set the ground for the first institutional and membership-based representation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

LGUs played a role in the battle to retain Palestinian control over electricity supplies. For example, when he refused to reconnect water and electricity networks to Israel in 1979, Bassam al-Shak'ah, Nablus Mayor, was jailed and threatened to be deported. As a result, a broad popular movement involved a collective resignation of municipal staff as well as a general strike. Ultimately, electricity generators were preserved and villages connected to the electricity grid.

- These efforts did not go unheeded by the Israeli occupying forces (IOF), which repeatedly attempted to obstruct them, e.g., by dismantling generators in villages. However, village councils and grassroots organizations continued to challenge Israel's policies and challenge attempts to impose the Village Leagues as an alternative of national government.





After The Establishment of The Palestinian National Authority

The West Bank was divided into three main areas under the Oslo Accord:

■ Area (A):

Under full Palestinian control (government, administration and security).
It is comprised of 21% of the West Bank area.

■ Area (B)

Under Palestinian administrative control, together with Israeli security control.
Constitutes some 18.4% of the West Bank area.

■ Area (C):

Under full Israeli control (government and security).
Represents over 61% of the total West Bank area.

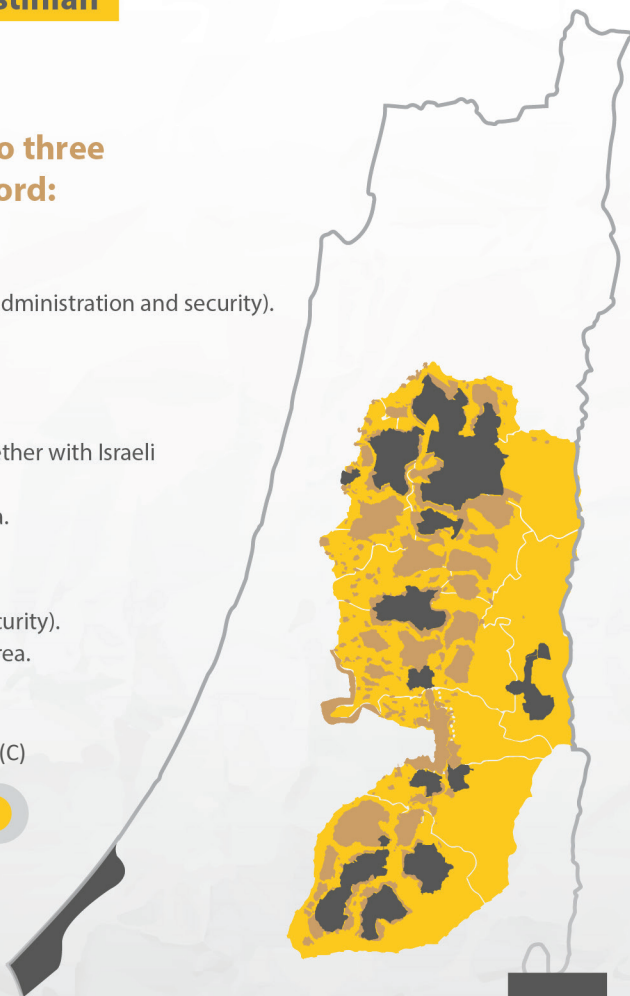
90% of Palestinians live in Areas (A) and (B), and 10% in Area (C)

90%

Area (A) & (B)

10%

Area (C)



**In the so-called "C" areas,
the occupation allows a single
settler to:**

- » Seize and control 12,000 dunams of the Palestinian lands.
- » While providing all the necessities of life for this settler, such as water and electricity

**Palestinian cities and villages in
Area C face multiple challenges:**

- » Building and planning restrictions
- » Threat of demolition or displacement
- » Limited access to natural resources
- » Insecurity
- » Constrained economic development.

Northern Jordan Valley as an example

- » Since 7 October 2023, 18 Palestinian communities have been displaced.
- » Since 7 October 2023, Israel has established 5 settlement outposts, controlling 85% of land in the area.
- » It is estimated that some 85,000 dunums are grabbed under the pretext of "nature reserves"

Although the Palestinian National Authority has been established, the occupation persists in seizing lands and expanding settlements. Recent statistics reveal:



Settlements and Military Bases

199	Number of settlement sites: 199, covering 545 km ² .
18	Settlements in occupied East Jerusalem: 18.
260	Number of settlement outposts: 260.
954,000	Number of settlers in the West Bank: More than 954,000.



Land Confiscation

210	The number of military bases of the occupation army
1,016	Area of land confiscated for military bases and training sites: 1,016 km ² (18%) of the West Bank.
771	Area of land isolated behind the separation wall: 771 km ² (12.5%) of the West Bank.
705	Area of land confiscated under the pretext of natural reserves: 705 km ² (12.4%) of the West Bank.





The Separation Wall in The West Bank

Construction of the wall began on

June 23, 2002

By the end of 2022,

65%
of the 713-kilometer wall had been completed

Approximately

85%
of the wall is built within the West Bank territory

The wall surrounds

28
communities from three sides

Around
49,000

Palestinians were isolated in the seam zone, restricted from accessing the West Bank without security permits

Israeli policies forced Palestinians in the seam zone to abandon their homes and lands, reducing their population

49,000 → **11,000**
by 2022

Agricultural losses:
Cultivated land dropped

72% → **8%**

and **5,500** agricultural and industrial facilities were destroyed

Farmers can only access their land through

69

gates controlled by Israeli authorities

Checkpoints in West Bank

793

Among these, 89 are permanent military checkpoints

Population Density in Gaza

6102

individuals per square kilometer.
Around 2.2 million people live within an area of only 365 km²



LGUs and Local Governance Laws

Local Governance Laws

- Law No. (1) of 1997 Concerning Palestinian Local Authorities and its Amendments
- Local Councils Elections Law No. (10) of 2005 and its Amendments
- The Cities, Villages, and Buildings Planning Law No. (79) of 1966 and its Amendments

444

Number of LGUs in Palestine



283

village councils

161

municipalities



Israeli aggression against Palestine since 7 October 2023

Impact of the war on the population in Gaza



41,534

Killed



96,092

Injured

As of September 2024

Internally displaced people

1.9 = 90%

Million people

Of the Gaza population

96%

Gazans suffer from
food insecurity

495,000

facing catastrophic levels
of food insecurity

Soaring poverty rate: It is expected that poverty reach

74.3%

across Palestine in 2024

Affecting 4.1 million people. These included 2.61 newly
poor persons

Damage of infrastructure in Gaza



» Towards Q3 2024, 15,265 structures were destroyed in Gaza, including buildings (60%) and agricultural land (57%), posing a grave threat to the food system and basic service provision in Gaza.



» As of January 2024, damage caused to vital infrastructure was estimated at US\$ 18.5 billion, equivalent to 97% of the 2022 GDP of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.



Public structures and facilities

In Gaza...



34

Hospitals are
out of service



25

Hospitals damaged
by bombardment



200

Government
premises destroyed



610

Mosques destroyed



3

Churches destroyed



122

School and universities
totally destroyed



334

School and universities
partially destroyed

Road networks and infrastructure

68%

Road network damaged

70%

Water wasted due to
grid destruction

0%

Electricity supplies
a day





Environmental impact – Gaza Strip



Solid waste management

By April 2024, 270,000 tonnes of uncollected solid waste accumulated because waste management systems ceased operating.



Debris of war

The war has left 42 million tonnes of debris, putting at high risk human health and environment, including soil and water. Resulting from munitions, chemicals and heavy metals contaminate water, posing a long-term threat to public health.



Water contamination

Because wastewater treatment plants were closed down, beaches and groundwater have been contaminated, threatening public health and biodiversity. Soil contamination also constitutes a continuous threat.

Declining green spaces in the Gaza Strip

IOF destroyed

70% - 60%

or more than 100 square kilometres, of green spaces

IOF destroyed

20

public parks in the Rafah city alone

IOF destroyed

8

public parks and 55,000 trees in the Gaza city

Destruction of cultural heritage in Gaza

During the first six months of the current war on Gaza, IOF deliberately destroyed:

- » 60% of cultural heritage sites and archaeological monuments
- » Tal al-Sakan, dating back to the early Bronze he (3300-2300 BC) and the most ancient fortified administrative centre in Palestine
- » Saint Hilarion Monastery, established 1,700 years ago
- » Al-Basha Palace, constructed in the 13th century

Israel's aggression against Gaza has resulted in:

- » Destroying 200 archaeological sites of cultural and historical significance (Source)
- » Damaging 69 sites by Israeli strikes (Source)

[10 religious sites - 7 archaeological sites - 43 buildings of historic and/or religious significance - 6 memorials - 2 cultural warehouses - 1 museum]

- » Gaza has lost part of its cultural identity following Israel's aggression.



Israeli Raids on West Bank

Ever since the 7th of October, the IOF conducted near-daily raids on cities and villages in the occupied West Bank, these raids are estimated to be 3x the number of raids prior to the war on Gaza



4,515

Citizens displaced
(as of October 20, 2024)



1,810

Structures destroyed



531,697

People affected by the
incursions and aggression

In the West Bank



376

Agricultural facilities
totally destroyed



258

Commercial premises
totally destroyed



New UN report: Impacts of war have set back development in Gaza by as much as 69 years (a level estimated for 1955)

- » For the State of Palestine, the Human Development Index (HDI) is expected to fall to 0.643—a level estimated for 2000, setting development back by 24 years.
- » For Gaza HDI is projected to drop to 0.408—a level estimated for 1955, erasing over 69 years of progress.
- » HDI for the West Bank is expected to decline to 0.676, reflecting a loss of 16 year, which is likely to further worsen if military incursions into the West Bank expand.

Economic impact

- » For the State of Palestine, GDP is expected to contract by 35.1%, including by 35.05% in Gaza, in 2024
- » Compared to 25.7% in 2022, unemployment will potentially rise to 49.9 per cent in 2024