

Health

The **right to health** is a basic, universal human right upheld in the WHO Constitution (1946), the Declaration of Alma Ata (1978), the World Health Assembly (1998), the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Art. 12), and in General Comment 14 by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Yet, the Palestinian health sector suffers from its **dependency on Israel** in terms of tax transfers, authorization of medical personnel, import of medicines, access and movement restrictions for patients, personnel and ambulances, and construction/rehabilitation of health infrastructure, which have resulted in a **shortage** of medications, equipment, personnel, and funding.

Main Health Indicators, 2021

	WBGS	WB	GS
Hospitals	89	54	35
of which: Government (Min. of Health)	29	16	13
NGO	38	22	16
UNRWA	1	1	0
Military Medical Services	2	0	2
Private	19	15	4
of which: General		31	
Specialized		10	
Rehabilitation	5	3	2
Maternity		10	
Hospital Beds	7,769	4,182	3,587
Hospitals beds per 10,000 pop.	14.9	13.4	16.8
Bed Occupancy Rate (%) (Min. of Health)	82.4	90.3	77.3
Number of Primary Health Centers	765	606	159
of which: Government (Min. of Health)	491	439	52
NGO	192	112	80
UNRWA	65	43	22
Military Medical Services	17	12	5
Population per Primary Health Centers	6,435	4,647	13,250
Number of Physicians (general and specialist)	11,313	8,106	3,207
Physicians (gen./specialist per 10,000 population)	14.9/6.7	19/6.9	8.9/6.3
Number of Dentists	4,354	4,126	228
Dentists per 10,000 population	8.3	13.2	1.1
Number of Pharmacists	8,997	5,510	3,487
Pharmacists per 10,000 population	17.2	17.7	16.5
Number of Nurses / Midwives	14,593/1,528	10,557/937	4,036/591
Nursing/Midwifery per 10,000 pop.	27.9/2.9	33.8/3.0	19.2/2.8
Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 population	27.1	29	26.9
Crude Death Rate per 1,000 population	3.5	3.6	3.4
Infant Mortality Rate (<1 year) per 1,000 live births	9.6	8.8	10.6
Child Mortality Rate (<5 years) per 1,000 live births	11.8	10.6	13.5
Maternal Mortality Rate per 100,000 live births	47.7	39.1	60
Life Expectancy at Birth male - female	74.2 (73.1–75.3)	74.5	73.8
Cancer Incidence Rate per 100,000	108.1	113.7	91

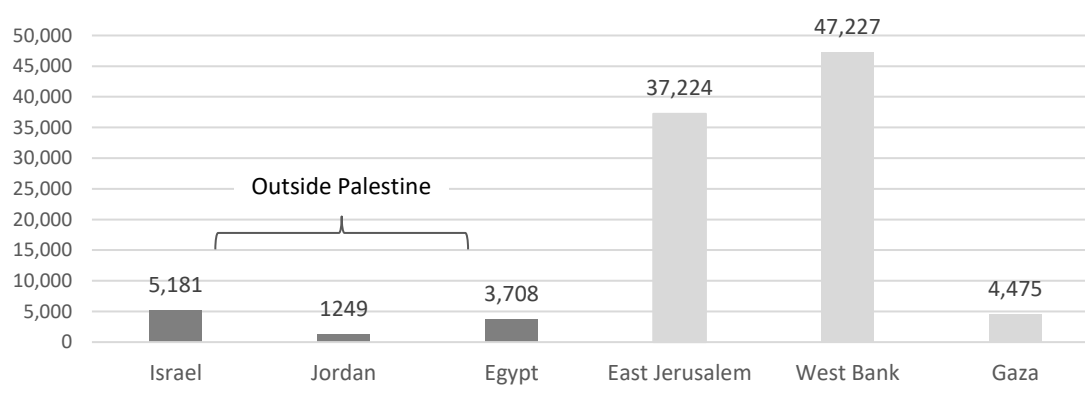
Source: Ministry of Health, *Health Annual Report Palestine 2021*, June 2022.



■ Facts & Figures

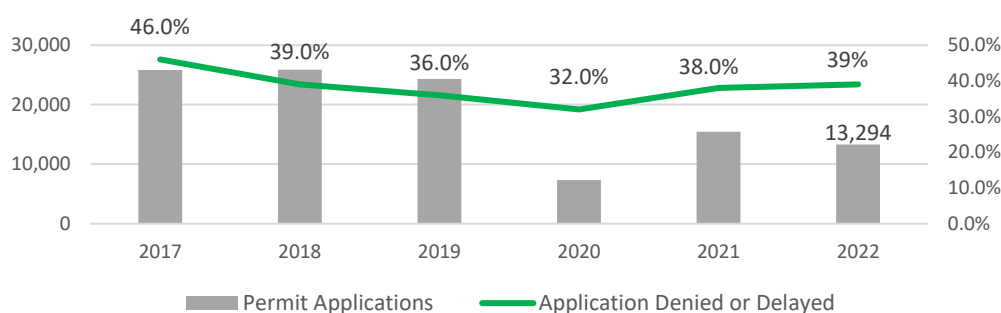
- **Health services** are provided by public (Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior) and private bodies (hospitals, clinics) as well as NGOs, incl. UNRWA. As of June 2022, the health sector **employed 4.6%** of the work force (WB: 4.3%, GS: 5.2%) (PCBS, *Labor Force Survey*, Q2-2022).
- By mid-2022, Health and Social Work contributed **4.5%** to the **GDP** (excl. East Jerusalem) (WB: 3.5%, GS: 8.7%) (PCBS, *Quarterly National Accounts*, Q2-2022).
- In 2020, **health expenditure** totaled NIS 2.32 billion (=14.4% of the total PA budget), of which 38.5% was for salaries and wages, 56.3% for use of goods and services, and only 1.1% for development (Palestinian Ministry of Finance, monthly report for December 2021).
- In 2021, the PA Ministry of Health issued a total of **99,064 referrals** (up from 80,020 in 2020) for **51,057 single patients** to specialist facilities not available in the public system. Of the total referrals, 10.2% were to facilities **outside the WBGS**, mainly to **Israel** (5.2%) and **Egypt** (3.7%), and Jordan (1.3%), while 47.7% were sent to facilities in the **West Bank**, 37.6% to **East Jerusalem**, and 4.5% to the **Gaza Strip** (Ministry of Health, *Health Annual Report Palestine 2021*, June 2022).

Number of Patients Referrals by Place of Referral, 2021



Source: Ministry of Health, *Health Annual Report Palestine 2021*, June 2022.

Gaza Patients Permit Applications



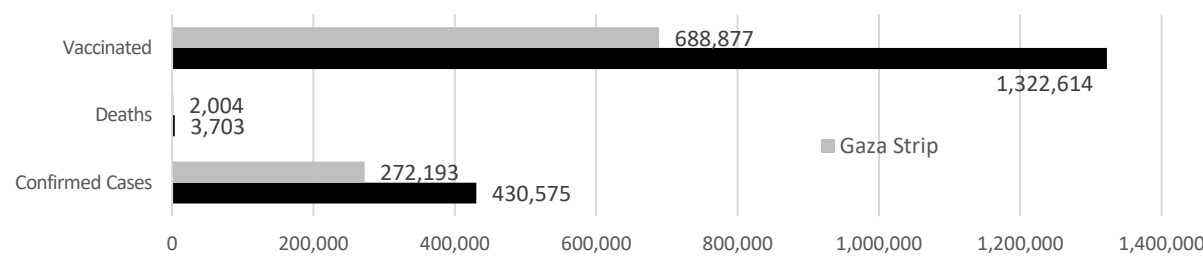
Source: OCHA, *Gaza Critical Humanitarian Indicators*, August 2022 (WHO figures).

- Between 2007-22, 30% of patients who requested to leave the Gaza Strip for healthcare were **rejected or delayed** and 839 patients **died while waiting for a permit** (PHR, *15 Years of Gaza Blockade*, 2022).
- Between 2008-2021, **839 patients died** while waiting for permit responses (WHO, *15 Years of Gaza Blockade & Barriers to Health Access*, Infographic, 2022).



- The number of **Palestinian minors** who Israel **refused** to allow to **leave** Gaza for treatment has doubled from 17% in 2020 (347 out of 2,070 requests) to nearly 32% in **2021** (812 of 2,578). The refusal rate for parents' applications to accompany their children increased from 28% to 35% (*ibid.*).
- In 2020, 79% of the Palestinian population had a **health insurance** (government: 32%, UNRWA: 15%, government & UNRWA: 29%, private: 2%, others: 1.9%) (PCBS, *Press Release on International Population Day*, 11 July 2020).
- In **2021**, there were 169 incidents of **violence against or obstruction of health care** (a 177% increase over 2020), in which, *inter alia*, 61 health workers were injured and 30 facilities damaged or destroyed (*OPT: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2021*, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, 2022). In the first half of **2022**, 88 attacks on health care happened, leaving 71 health workers injured, 4 detained, and 10 vehicles damaged (WHO, *Health Attacks in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 1/1-30/6 2022*).
- Between 5 March 2020 and 15 September 2022, there were 702,768 **confirmed cases of Covid-19** in Palestine, including 82,220 in occupied East Jerusalem, 5,707 people had **died**, and 2,011,491 people got **vaccinated** with at least one jab (<https://www.corona.ps/>).

Coronavirus in Palestine (excluding East Jerusalem), March 2020-September 2022



Source: <https://www.corona.ps/>

- In 2021, the **main leading cause of deaths** in Palestine were cardiovascular disease (WB: 23.7%; GS: 29.3%) and Covid-19 (WB: 25.2%; GS: 24%), followed by cancer (WB: 12.2%; GS: 11.3%) (Ministry of Health, *Health Annual Report Palestine 2021, 2022*).
- 87% of women aged 15-49 years use means of **family planning** and 95% received **prenatal health care** at least four times during pregnancy (PCBS, *Press Release on International Population Day*, 11 July 2022).

Recommended Research Sources:

<http://www.moh.ps> (Ministry of Health)

<http://healthclusteropt.org/>

<http://www.emro.who.int/countries/pse/index.html> (WHO)

<http://pniph.org> (National Institute of Public Health)

<http://www.palestinerics.org> (Red Crescent Society)

Delayed, Denied & Deprived: The Collective Punishment of Palestinian Patients in Gaza in the Context of Israel's 15-Year Blockade, Briefing Paper, Medical Aid for Palestine & Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, June 2022.

Medical Aid for Palestine, *Systematic Discrimination and Fragmentation as Key Barriers to Palestinian Health and Healthcare*, November 2021.

Ministry of Health, *Health Annual Report Palestine 2021, June 2022*.

Ministry of Health & PNIPH, *Health Workforce and Labor Market Dynamics in Palestine*, Sept. 2020.

OPT: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2021, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, 2022.

Physicians for Human Rights, *15 Years of Gaza Blockade*, 2022.

WHO, monthly reports.

WHO, *Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan*, Report by the Director-General to the 73rd World Health Assembly, November 2020.