



Women with Disabilities and Families of Persons with Disabilities in the Northern Governorates of the West Bank: Displacement and Ongoing Violations!

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The Reality of the West Bank in Light of the Genocidal War:

Concurrent with the genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, ongoing since October 7th, 2023, the Israeli Occupation has escalated its violations in the West Bank, especially in the northern regions of the West Bank. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of martyrs in the West Bank has reached 969, including 194 children¹. At the same time, the northern regions of the West Bank witnessed a massive forced displacement of Palestinian families, particularly from refugee camps. Reports indicate that 40,000 Palestinians were displaced from refugee camps, specifically Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nur Shams refugee camps, with displacement expanding to include the town of Qabatiya². Moreover, infrastructure and residential buildings were systematically destroyed, with approximately 27 buildings demolished in Nur Shams camp and 14 homes in Tulkarm camp³. Due to the ongoing violations, precise figures on the damage are unavailable, and current estimates are likely to increase as the violations continue.

The West Bank has experienced harsh conditions, particularly due to bombings, ongoing invasions, and the continued disruption of access to basic services, including food, drinking water, health services, water, and energy sources. Additionally, the number of checkpoints placed by the Israeli occupation increased from 567 before October 7th—including 77 main checkpoints and 490 others with earthen barriers, cement blocks, and iron gates—to around 700 after that date. This increase in invasions, especially in Nablus and Jenin, has led to a significant decline in economic activity.⁴

The systematic invasions have posed double challenges to marginalized groups in these areas, and the ongoing genocidal war against the Palestinian people places double burdens on women, as thousands of women have lost their husbands and relatives, leaving them vulnerable to major economic and social challenges.⁵ These burdens and challenges are even greater among women with disabilities, children with disabilities, and their families, especially in light of the deteriorating economic conditions and the loss of

¹The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), “Statistics of the Israeli Occupation’s Aggression on Palestine”, last update 06/05/2025. Link: <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps>. Visit date: 07/05/2025.

²Wafa, “The Refugee Camps of the North of the West Bank... Unprecedented aggression and bleak scenarios”. Link: <https://n9.cl/cfw360>. Visit date: 07/05/2025.

³“The West Bank: The large-scale home demolitions implemented by the Israeli forces as part of its ongoing operations have unprecedented effects on Palestinian refugees”. UNRWA (2025). Date of last visit: 13 May 2025. Link: <https://n9.cl/zjvj4>.

⁴The economic losses in buildings and infrastructure in the cities of Nablus and Jenin since the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip and the West Bank” Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute – MAS (25/05/2025). Link: <https://n9.cl/w7elp>.

⁵The eighth of March... Guardians of our fire in the mill of extermination and the heat of the brazier” Jerusalem (2025). Visit date: 13 May 2025. Link: <https://n9.cl/p5sj5b>.

sources of income for many Palestinians. Since October 7th, approximately 160,000 Palestinian workers from the West Bank have lost their sole source of income after the occupation froze their entry permits, while about 20,000 workers from the Gaza Strip had their permits completely cancelled.⁶ Estimates indicate a significant decline in purchasing power in the West Bank, particularly in the northern regions. The head of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce and Industry estimated a 40-70% decline in business activity in Nablus at the start of the genocidal war, and a 70% decline in purchasing power⁷. In Jenin, 8,000 commercial establishments were forced to close due to poor conditions and destroyed roads.⁸



⁶ “160 thousand workers in the West Bank have lost their source of income since October.” The Middle East (2024). Visit date: 14/5/2025. Link: <https://n9.cl/1zt1m>.

⁷ Qassam Simri “Nablus’s economy is suffocating due to the siege and aggression” Palestine Network – Shafa (2023). Visit date: 14/5/2025. Link: <https://n9.cl/9dd5r>.

⁸ The Occupation continues its aggression for the 56th day: The number of displaced persons from Jenin camp has risen to 21,000, and 8,000 commercial establishments have closed.” Wafa (17 March 2025). Visit date: 14/5/2025. Link: <https://n9.cl/wyl98>.

About the conditions of families of persons with disabilities in the northern regions of the West Bank:

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) indicated that 62 hospitals and 22 medical clinics were affected by the Occupation's attacks on the West Bank, and the World Health Organization documented 64 attacks on the health sector.⁹

In a survey targeting the Multidisciplinary Rehabilitation Task Force (MDRTF), 63% of participants indicated that access to health services for people with injuries and persons with disabilities had been significantly impaired. Moreover, 81% of them noted that financial difficulties constitute a major barrier to accessing health services.¹⁰

Repeated invasions have caused extensive damage to water and sanitation infrastructure, disrupting access to water for tens of thousands of people and aggravating concerns relating to public health.¹¹

In a survey that assesses the extent of the Occupation's violations and the vulnerability of persons with disabilities and families in Jenin camp, the following challenges emerged:

- The percentage of families in Jenin camp in which a member was subjected to violence by the Occupation reached 55% of the families included in the survey.
- 94% of the participants in the survey confirmed that they struggle to access their basic needs due to the restrictions imposed by the Occupation on the city of Jenin and its camp.
- 44% considered the inability to access medicines for persons with disabilities to be the most harmful impact of these violations.
- About 76% of families in Jenin camp stated that they do not receive any form of aid.¹²

⁹ oPt Emergency Situation Update 56 (7 Oct 2023 - 14 March 2025). Accessed 13 May 2025. Available at: <https://n9.cl/qpxan>.

¹⁰ Access to Healthcare: The Hidden Crisis in the west Bank (Handicap International Humanity and Inclusion, 2025). Accessed 13 May 2025. Available at: <https://n9.cl/whqgj>.

¹¹ Humanitarian Situation Update #266 West Bank, OCHA (15 February 2025). Accessed 13 May 2025. Available at: <https://n9.cl/sdig3>.

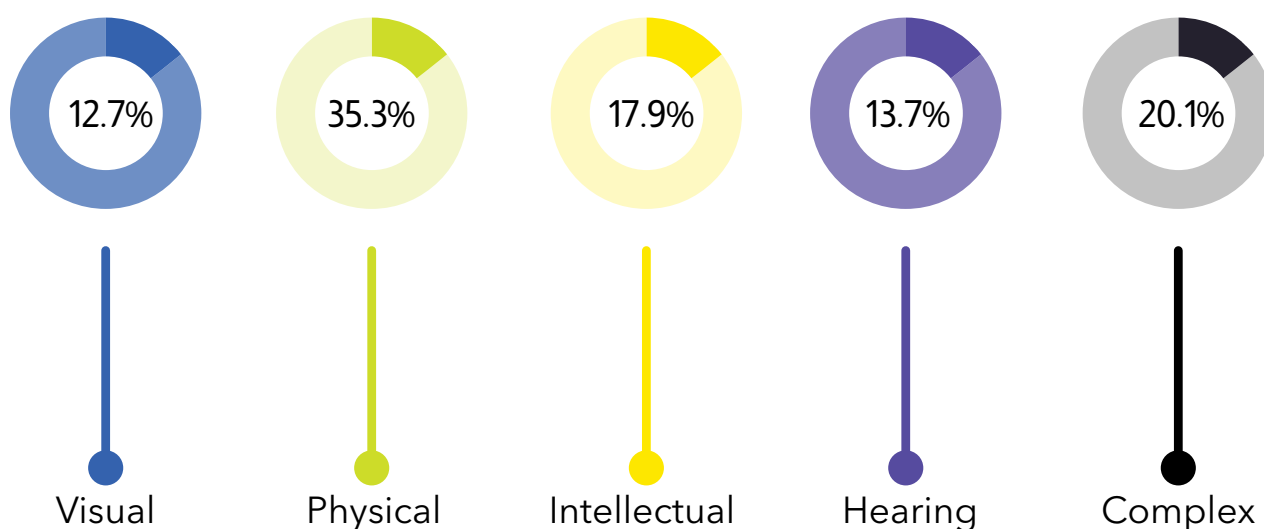
¹² An analytical report: Survey of Monitoring Violations and the Level of Vulnerability of Families in Areas Subjected to Violations by the Occupation Forces 2023 - Jenin Camp (Ramallah: The Stars of Hope Society for the Empowerment of Women with Disabilities and the Social and Economic Policies Monitor (Al-Marsad), 2024). Link: <https://n9.cl/qmk61w>.

Violations against women with disabilities and families of persons with disabilities in the northern governorates of the West Bank

This Fact Sheet is based on the results of a survey that looked into the conditions of women with disabilities in the northern governorates of the West Bank,¹³ and the results of a focus group with displaced persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities and their families. The survey sample included 1,154 women with disabilities from the northern governorates of the West Bank, including the governorates of Jenin, Tulkarm, Qalqilya, and Nablus. The focus group included 11 displaced persons from the northern areas of the West Bank.

The survey results revealed the Occupation's violations against women with disabilities and their families in the northern governorates of the West Bank, including refugee camps. These violations included severe difficulties associated with displacement, evacuation, and movement, in addition to direct violence imposed by the Occupation. The percentage of women with physical disabilities participating in the survey was 35.3%, in addition to 12.7% of women with visual disabilities, 17.9% of women with intellectual disabilities, and 20.1% of women with complex disabilities. **The following figure shows the distribution of participants according to the type of disability within the survey sample:**

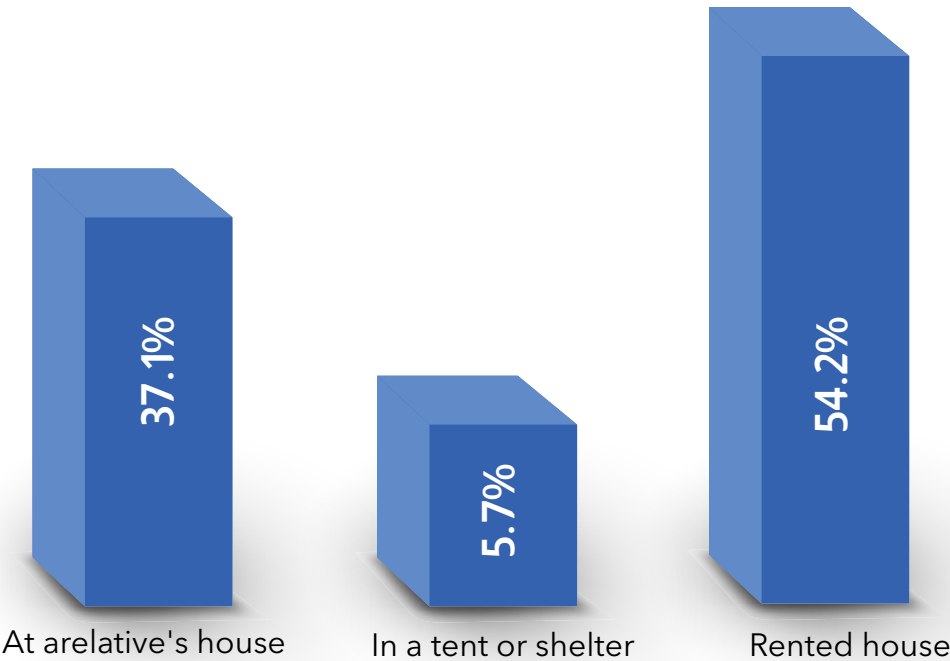
Figure (1): Distribution of participants according to the type of disability



¹³ The preliminary results of the survey responding to the emergency protection and livelihood needs of women affected by the war on Gaza until the end of April 2025 (Ramallah: The Stars of Hope Society for the Empowerment of Women with Disabilities, 2025).

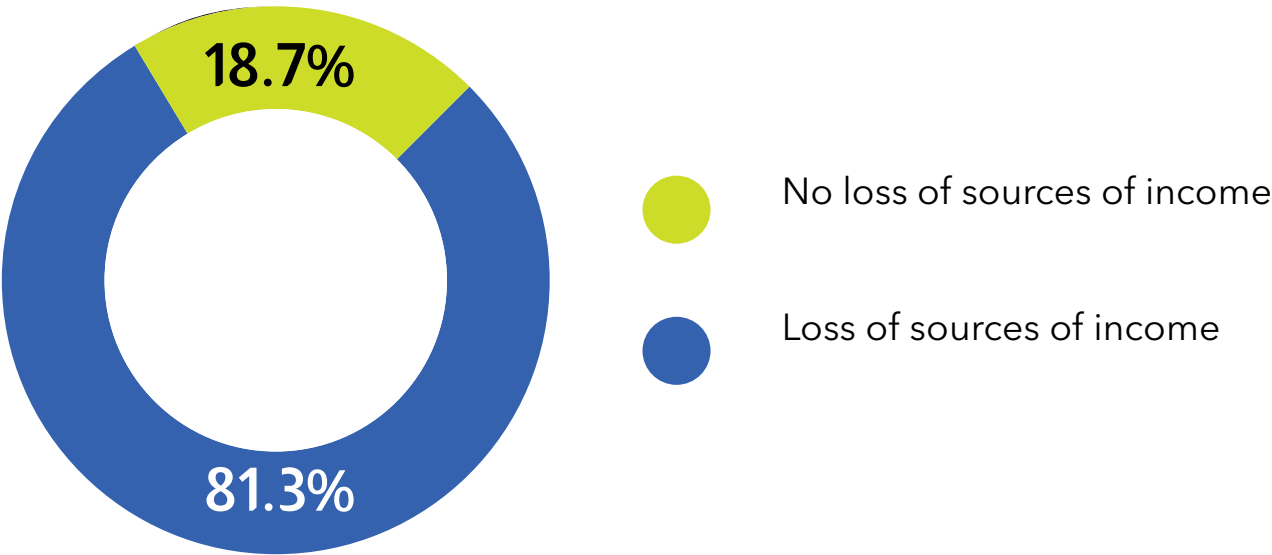
The percentage of displaced women constituted 6% of the total sample, and most participants live in rented houses or with relatives. The following figure explains the place of residence of the displaced women with disability:

Figure (1): Distribution of participants according to the type of disability



According to the survey results, the most prominent violation faced by women with disabilities was the loss of sources of income. 81.3% of the sample confirmed that their families had lost their primary sources of income, 14.1% indicated that their homes had been searched and their property vandalized, and 14% reported being subjected to direct violence by the Occupation forces. The following figure shows the percent- age of women/families who had lost sources of income from the sample:

Figure (3): Distribution of participants according to the status of their sources of income



These financial and material difficulties exacerbate the effects of the Occupation's violations and displacement. Based on the results of the focus group, most respondents indicated that they cannot afford to rent houses. The majority of respondents confirmed that their financial situation is poor, and some of them have lost their jobs. One person indicated that his son is unable to go to school because he is unable to pay the due school fees. Regarding children with intellectual disabilities, parents indicated that their children, who previously had access to specialized centers that would respond to their needs, stopped doing so due to financial difficulties. Due to displacement and relocation, most of these children have become further away from these centers, which increases transportation costs, especially given the lack of accessible transportation means.

Many participants indicated that street excavation was a major obstacle hindering their movement both before and during displacement, preventing some from easily accessing their workplaces, educational facilities, and other services. Some participants also expressed that during this period, they lacked basic necessities, in addition to experiencing interruptions in water and electricity supplies.

Numerous participants mentioned that there are many challenges related to mobility faced by persons with disabilities during the invasions and after them. Two participants told us about how their homes were transformed into military barracks in which they were forced to stay with soldiers while being banned from accessing their basic needs of food and water. One woman, who was left at the entrance of her home in the cold, said: "The soldiers used to sleep in our beds, they ate our food and left us hungry, at night, they slept inside our home and left us outside, feeling cold and hungry".¹⁴



¹⁴ The preliminary results of the survey responding to the emergency protection and livelihood needs of women affected by the war on Gaza until the end of April 2025 (Ramallah: The Stars of Hope Society for the Empowerment of Women with Disabilities, 2025).

One participant, who is the father of a child with an intellectual disability, reported that the child experienced intense terror and fear during the invasions, particularly with the sounds of bombs. He also reported difficulty sleeping, which prompted his father to move to relatives' homes more than once during the invasions to protect him and reduce his fear. Other participants also reported experiencing psychological challenges, particularly during the invasions and threats.

Many participants indicated that the holes in the streets were a major obstacle to their mobility before and during displacement, preventing some from easily accessing their workplaces, educational facilities, and other services. Some participants expressed that during this period, they lacked basic necessities and experienced water and electricity outages, in addition to direct violence.

One of the women participants, who has a physical disability (in the foot) reported that during her daily commute to work in the Refugee Camp before displacement, she encountered difficulties, particularly on rainy and dusty days. She explained that she had fallen more than once, and that she needed support from people on the road to complete the journey on one occasion.

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As for the conditions of displacement and its aftermath, they were a major challenge for them. Women and persons with disabilities faced major challenges during their displacement and movement due to the destruction of the infrastructure and the loss of their support equipment. The percentage of women with disabilities who use supporting equipment is 30.5%, while 8.7% women with disabilities who use supporting equipment said that they do not currently have supporting equipment. Some persons with disabilities faced difficulties in moving with their assistive devices, especially those with physical disabilities, due to the destruction of the infrastructure. A woman with a visual disability was subjected to

intentional destruction of her assistive device while leaving the Refugee Camp, which prevented her from completing her education properly: “I was on my way to university from the Camp when soldiers stopped me and searched my bag. They seized my glasses, phone, and tablet that I use at university because of my visual disability. They broke the devices. This made it difficult for me to continue my education”.¹⁵

Most displaced persons with disabilities were forced to leave their assistive tools at home when they were displaced. “I left my son’s wheelchair at home. We did not have enough time to take it with us; we barely left with the clothes we were wearing”.¹⁶ In other testimonies given by persons with visual disabilities, they indicated that they have left their assistive tools. One woman was unable to take hers, while another woman was willing to go back to bring it after the situation became better, but her whole house was demolished. Most participants emphasized the difficulty of movement during displacement due to the destruction of roads, and that they were unable to use their assistive tools, while some were forced to walk.

Most respondents reported that they now live in homes that are not compatible with their disabilities: “I knew my old home by heart. I have a visual disability, but I could move around comfortably. Today, I cannot. The Occupation destroyed my assistive devices, and I cannot move around in the house. I was injured as I bumped into a wall while walking.” Another testified: “I have a physical disability and have to climb to the fourth floor of my current residence.”¹⁷

Most respondents (especially those with complex physical and intellectual disabilities) faced difficulties during evacuation and movement, especially persons with intellectual disabilities, where parents had to carry them. I left some of them with relatives and returned on another day. I took two of them out with extreme difficulty in a car; there were major invasions, along with gunshots and air strikes.”¹⁸



¹⁵ Previous resource.

¹⁶ The testimony of a grandmother of displaced children with disabilities within the Focus Group. The Focus Group was held on: May 5th, 2025.

¹⁷ The testimony of a displaced woman with visual disability within the Focus Group. The Focus Group was held on: May 5th, 2025.

¹⁸ The testimony of a grandmother of displaced children with disabilities within the Focus Group. The Focus Group was held on: May 5th, 2025.

Some participants stated that they face extreme difficulties in accessing basic needs, especially in their places of displacement, and some of them face great difficulties in finding a decent home. One displaced woman with a physical disability indicated that she lives with her family in a very small, unsuitable house that lacks even the most basic needs: “The house consists of two rooms and is located on the fourth floor of a building. I face immense difficulty reaching it. It lacks basic supplies. Some neighbors offered us assistance and some kitchen equipment, which were also unavailable.”¹⁹ Most participants confirmed that they had not received any contact from official or civil society organizations offering assistance, while UNRWA provided in-kind and financial support only once or two to three times.

Violations that women with disabilities and their families face, from the highest to the lowest percentage of occurrence, according to the survey results:



Loss of sources of income: 81.3%.



Inability to access food: 5%.



Faced home searches and property vandalization: 14.1%.



Inability to access psychological support services: 3.6%.



Being subject to direct violence: 14%.



Arrest of a family member: 3.2%.



Inability to access medicine and medical supplies: 9.7%.



Demolishing of house: 2%.



Major damage to the home as a result of the occupation's aggressions: 8.9%.



Injury of one or more family members: 1.3%.



Being subject to settler attacks: 6.3%.



A family member was disabled as a result of an injury: 0.6%.



Inability to access schools: 5.8%.



Martyrdom of a family member: 0.5%.

¹⁹ One of the displaced women with physical disability.

Urgent needs of displaced women / displaced persons with disabilities: ²⁰

- Financial aid, in cash, or employment.
- Supporting equipment.
- Providing basic needs.
- Adequate and compatible housing, with water and electricity, or provision of home adaptations.
- Recreational and psychosocial support gatherings, especially for children.

Recommendations:

- It is necessary to develop and implement an emergency plan that clarifies the roles of all actors in the field, including official, civil, and international entities, with a clear definition of responsibilities and intervention mechanisms. This plan should consider national priorities and the priorities of persons with disabilities, as mentioned above, and ensure that persons with disabilities are partners in its development. The plan must guarantee comprehensive access for persons with disabilities to basic services during emergencies.
- It is important to provide the basic requirements and needs of persons with disabilities, especially displaced persons, including food, water, and accessible housing, as well as assistive devices and rehabilitation services.
- Efforts should be made to strengthen direct financial support programs for displaced families and to provide economic empowerment, employment, and psychosocial support programs, given the high unemployment rates and the challenging conditions of displacement.

²⁰ These are the most prominent needs according to the results of the Focus Group, arranged in order of most frequent occurrence.