



**To Enable Decision-Makers and Stakeholders to Take Effective
Action to Strengthen Their Resilience**
**Results of the Field Survey on Bedouin and Pastoral
Communities in the Occupied West Bank**

The results of the Survey of Bedouin and Pastoral Communities in the Occupied West Bank were announced during a special conference organized by the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), in cooperation with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). The conference, held in Al-Bireh on 17 July 2026, witnessed broad participation from representatives of official institutions, relevant ministries, international and United Nations organizations, and civil society institutions, reflecting the growing concern regarding the conditions of Bedouin and pastoral communities, which have become one of the most urgent humanitarian situations in the West Bank.

The conference embodied the shared responsibility of the ICHR and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to shed light on the reality facing Bedouin and pastoral communities, which constitute an integral part of the Palestinian geographical and human landscape. For decades, these communities have preserved a way of life based on pastoralism and traditional agriculture. Today, however, they face escalating challenges that threaten their existence and stability amid systematic policies aimed at uprooting them from their lands.

The survey aims to provide a reliable and updated database that enables decision-makers, human rights organizations, development actors, and media institutions to better understand the conditions of these communities and to guide effective interventions that protect their rights and strengthen their resilience in the face of Israeli colonial policies.

The survey adopted a rigorous scientific methodology. The sampling frame was based on the updated list of Bedouin and pastoral communities issued by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). A two-stage stratified cluster random sample was designed, covering 31 Bedouin and pastoral communities across 11 governorates in the West Bank. The target sample consisted of 465 households, with 15 households selected from each community. A total of 453 households responded, representing a response rate of 97% of the overall sample, while a 100% response rate was achieved for the questionnaires administered to the heads of all 31 communities.

The research instrument consisted of two questionnaires. The first, a household questionnaire, included ten sections covering demographic characteristics, housing conditions, aid, income, freedom of movement, the right to health, protection, threats, and political participation. The second questionnaire targeted community leaders and covered indicators related to education, health, services, infrastructure, protection, internal security, and domestic violence.

Data collection was conducted by PCBS through an integrated technological system utilizing tablets, a dedicated electronic application, real-time automated validation rules, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This enabled the linkage of data to geographical locations while ensuring accuracy and consistency in real time. Before field implementation, a four-day training course was held in Ramallah for 33 researchers and supervisors from all West Bank governorates. Field data collection commenced on 6 January 2026.

The survey faced significant field challenges, most notably the continuous movement of Bedouin families due to Israeli occupation practices, as well as the refusal of Israeli authorities to grant access permits to certain communities, forcing the research team to conduct data collection by telephone.

Key Findings of the Survey

The survey revealed a predominantly young population structure. Children under the age of ten constitute more than 32% of the total population. Meanwhile, 53.7% of residents are classified as refugees, including 51.3% registered with UNRWA, indicating that these communities simultaneously bear the burden of the historical displacement of 1948 and the ongoing threat of forced displacement today.

Bedouin communities live under severe humanitarian vulnerability, reflected in their housing conditions. Nearly half of all households reside in temporary structures, including tents (11.7%), barracks (21.5%), caravans (6.7%), and sheds (10.4%). More than 55% of these dwellings consist of only one room, reflecting severe overcrowding and a lack of privacy.

The crisis extends to infrastructure as a whole. More than 30% of households depend on water tankers for their water supply, while 29.8% rely on the Israeli water network. Furthermore, 68% of communities reported the absence of permanent water sources. Sanitation services are almost entirely lacking; only 3.1% of households are connected to a public sewage network, while 6% resort to open defecation. The waste management situation further compounds these hardships, as 80.5% of households burn their waste due to the absence of organized waste collection services in 81.5% of communities. Additionally, 61.6% of communities lack paved roads.

Education

The educational reality in these communities reveals a multifaceted crisis. Approximately 13.7% of children have never enrolled in school. Economic hardship is the leading cause of school dropout (29.4%), followed by the absence of nearby schools (12.5%). Around 66.8% of students walk to school, while schools serving 29% of communities are located more than three kilometers from residential areas.

Economic Conditions

The economic structure of these households is characterized by fragility and instability. Around 19.5% of workers are unpaid, while 28.2% receive irregular wages. Economic activity is primarily concentrated in agriculture and livestock herding (58.1%). Furthermore, 16.5% of workers are compelled to seek employment in the Israeli labor market or in settlements. During the second half of 2025, 25.3% of households relied on food assistance, highlighting the depth of food insecurity affecting these communities.

Systematic Violations

The survey data reveal a system of systematic and interconnected violations affecting these communities at multiple levels.

Regarding displacement and land confiscation, 67.7% of communities reported experiencing forced displacement during the past two years, while 92% reported confiscation of property and livelihoods. Israeli authorities have closed or seized grazing lands in 91.9% of communities.

Demolition orders were issued to 52.8% of households and were implemented in approximately 79.3% of communities. Moreover, 92.8% of communities suffer from road closures restricting access.

Violations extend beyond material confiscation to affect personal safety and dignity. Approximately 85.6% of households reported harassment by Israeli forces, settlers, or both. Physical assaults involving beatings, humiliation, and verbal abuse were reported in 89.7% of communities. Settler attacks affected 85.6% of communities, while 81.3% of households reported verbal insults, 39.6% reported exposure to live fire, and 33.3% reported the arrest of at least one family member.

Restrictions on Access to Services

Restrictions on movement and Israeli checkpoints account for 92.9% of difficulties in accessing agricultural land. Approximately 62.1% of households face serious obstacles in reaching healthcare facilities, with 90.7% attributing these difficulties to checkpoints and movement restrictions. Similarly, 83.1% of households facing difficulties in accessing schools identify military checkpoints as the primary cause.

This situation is compounded by the fact that 90.6% of households do not feel safe in their communities, while only 2.5% have received any form of official or international protection. Furthermore, official Palestinian follow-up was absent in relation to more than 55% of communities that had been subjected to attacks.

Security and Safety

Data indicate an extremely fragile security environment. Only 7.2% of residents feel safe while moving within their communities, and this percentage drops to just 3.4% when traveling to and from their communities.

This deeply rooted sense of insecurity reflects the absence of effective protection. Security agencies and official institutions conduct regular visits to these communities in only 7.5% of cases, while police intervention during disputes occurs in merely 18% of cases. Moreover, all police stations are located more than three kilometers away from these communities.

The survey also highlights weak trust in official institutions. Only 8.4% of households trust the ability of official authorities to intervene and provide protection in cases of threats or attacks, while only 5.5% consider the role of Palestinian security forces effective in ensuring their protection. Meanwhile, 83.6% of communities expressed an urgent need for closer and more effective protection mechanisms.

Social Cohesion

With regard to social cohesion, 80.5% of community leaders described the overall situation as stable and secure. About 12.7% acknowledged the existence of some problems, while serious tensions were reported in only 6.8% of communities.

Family and tribal disputes represent the most common type of conflict (38.9%), followed by disputes over land and natural resources (30.7%).

Communities rely heavily on traditional mediation mechanisms to resolve disputes. Approximately 98.7% turn to local elders and community leaders, while 49.8% seek assistance from reconciliation committees and respected mediators. By contrast, only 5.4% resort to formal institutions such as the police or judiciary. Around 26.3% of communities reported no disputes during the previous twelve months.

Nevertheless, internal cohesion remains dependent on individual and community efforts in the near absence of institutional support. Local initiatives aimed at promoting social cohesion exist in only

38.3% of communities, while women and youth participate in conflict-resolution efforts in only 26.6% of them.

Domestic Violence

Regarding domestic violence, 80.8% of community leaders do not perceive it as a problem within their communities, while 19.2% consider it a moderate concern.

When domestic violence occurs, it predominantly takes the form of verbal abuse—including insults, humiliation, and threats—accounting for 62.2% of reported cases. Physical violence represents 13.1% of cases.

This reality reflects weaknesses in protection and response systems. Approximately 79.1% of communities lack any local mechanism or institution to address domestic violence cases, while 83% lack awareness programs and educational campaigns on the issue. These challenges are further exacerbated by the geographical and social isolation of these communities.

Political Marginalization

In the context of political marginalization, 91.7% of residents expressed a profound sense of exclusion from political life, while 56.1% of communities lack any representative local body.

Furthermore, 90.8% of households support the establishment of an independent national representative body, reflecting a collective awareness of the extent of the political and rights-based injustice affecting them.

The significance of these findings extends far beyond statistics. They constitute documentation of a systematic colonial policy that employs intimidation, restrictions, demolitions, and forced displacement as tools to empty the West Bank of its indigenous Bedouin communities. These communities stand at the harsh intersection between the legacy of the 1948 displacement and the ongoing threat of uprooting.

This reality reflects a profound imbalance between the scale of violations and the near absence of protection, requiring a fundamental reassessment of both national and international responses. The survey data provide a credible evidence base upon which such interventions should be grounded.

In light of the survey findings, conference organizers called for the adoption of the survey data as an official reference in development and protection plans targeting these communities. They also urged the immediate provision of essential infrastructure services and the establishment of an independent representative body for Bedouin and pastoral communities at the national level, responding to the aspirations expressed by nearly 91% of surveyed households.

The conference further called for the documentation of Israeli violations and their submission to relevant United Nations bodies and international courts, the mobilization of international support to halt demolitions and forced displacement immediately, the strengthening of official Palestinian follow-up mechanisms for affected communities, and accountability for crimes of forced displacement and collective punishment committed against these communities.

For its part, the Independent Commission for Human Rights emphasized the importance of establishing a national task force responsible for developing a national action plan to formulate the necessary interventions to improve conditions in these communities and provide protection against ongoing forced displacement plans.

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