

# ENVIRONMENT

## Overview

Palestine lies within the Mediterranean climatic zone that is characterized by a hot, arid, and water-scarce region that has experienced an increase in temperatures over the past fifty years. It is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change despite its negligible contribution to global emissions.

Palestine is facing substantial environmental challenges due to its delicate environmental resources, lack of sovereignty and its limited financial assets. These challenges are aggravated by many factors such as the scarcity of available water, deterioration of the water resources, land, and soil contamination, as well as desertification and unsustainable management of land, and air pollution. The inability to access, manage the natural resources sustainably and to enforce laws and instructions, as a result of the Israeli occupation, are aggravating the threats of climate change especially with the high population rate, poverty level, and food insecurity.

Palestine is also prone to natural disasters and hazards including earthquakes, floods, droughts, and landslides. Since 2015, Palestine has been implementing a national disaster risk reduction strategy in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Data sources:

United Nations Common Country Assessment for Palestine, 2022

Atlas of Sustainable Development, 2020, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2022

## 39.5%

households have access to safely managed water in Palestine:  
66.2% in the West Bank and 4% in Gaza

## 90,000

Palestinian households suffer from an acute lack of solid waste collection services

## 25%

of child morbidity cases in Gaza are caused by water-borne diseases



UNITED NATIONS  
Palestine





## CLIMATE

Palestine's priority is climate adaptation rather than mitigation. It is highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change but responsible for less than 0.01 percent of global emissions. Palestine's per capita emissions were 0.8 tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2011, less than the global average of 6.73 tCO<sub>2</sub>e per capita at that time. Palestine aims at increasing adaptive capacities and enhancing the climate resilience of the national development process and local communities.



## WATER

Palestinians face political constraints and economic barriers to access water resources, severely impacting various aspects of life including health and the economy. Access to safely-managed water varies dramatically between the West Bank and Gaza, and between urban, rural, and refugee communities. The average daily water consumption of Palestinians connected to a water network is 81.9 liters per capita per day, which is less than the recommended 100l per day.



## POLLUTION

Palestine suffers from high levels of pollution from wastewater discharged into the Mediterranean Sea, especially in Gaza, where the level of wastewater pollution depends largely on the political decisions of Israel and the de facto Gaza authorities on the availability of electricity. In terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, about 71% come from the energy sector, mainly due to the relatively low utilization of renewable energy sources.



## SOLID-WASTE

Solid-waste management in Palestine is a crucial issue. Challenges include the lack of adequate comprehensive legislation, an efficient data collection and management system, equipment, and modern infrastructure, as well as restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation on access to land and resources.



## HOW DID THE UNITED NATIONS ACT IN 2021?

- FAO supported the installation of an electromagnetic water desalination system in Jericho to enable the desalination and reuse of around 800 m<sup>3</sup> of high salinity groundwater daily to irrigate agricultural land.
- In Gaza, UNDP supported the transition to renewable energy systems in Khan Younis, and in schools benefiting over 3,451 girls. In the West Bank, the transboundary wastewater management initiative contributed to the protection of the northwest mountain aquifer from wastewater contamination benefiting around 14,500 people.
- UN-Habitat supported solid waste management efforts in the Bethlehem governorate to ensure continuity of services amidst the pandemic reaching over 60,000 Palestinians.
- UNICEF supports the construction of the second phase of the Desalination Plant in Gaza to provide additional access to safely managed water for 175,000 people.
- WFP supported 6,000 vulnerable people in Palestine with a range of 650 climate resilient agricultural assets to improve their immediate food security and nutritional needs.