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Am I Not a Human?

*Edited by*  
Dr. Mohsen Saleh  
Rana Sa'adah

*Translated by*  
Mohammed El-Jadili  
Saja El-Shami

# *The Suffering of the* **Palestinian Patient** *under the Israeli Occupation*



*By*  
Fatima H. Itani

*By*

Atef Daghlal



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations



## *Chapter 2: Health Inequality Between Arabs and Jews*

Article 5 of The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) of 1965 states that States Parties undertake to guarantee the right of everyone to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of many rights including “public health, medical care, social security and social services.”<sup>20</sup>

Non-discrimination and equality in gaining health services are stipulated in many laws, including Paragraph 19 of General Comment no. 14 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), which states:

With respect to the right to health, equality of access to health care and health services has to be emphasized. States have a



special obligation to provide those who do not have sufficient means with the necessary health insurance and health-care facilities, and to prevent any discrimination on internationally prohibited grounds in the provision of health care and health services, especially with respect to the core obligations of the right to health.<sup>21</sup>

Since its establishment, Israel has exerted strenuous efforts not only to prevent the development of Palestinian health centers, but also to destroy those in existence. Using policies based on degradation, humiliation and subjugation, Israel has tried to destroy the Palestinian people, alienating them from their homeland.

Since the Israeli occupation of the WB and GS in 1967, health conditions have dramatically deteriorated, with Israel refusing to give permission for the building of new medical centers which could compensate for the shortcomings of the public health sector so badly affected by the Israeli occupation.

After the annexation of East Jerusalem, Israel has undermined health institutions, preventing East Jerusalem citizens from utilizing the health insurance of people in the WB. Israel has also closed a number of hospitals, health centers and laboratories. Some health centers have been turned into military facilities. These actions not only resulted in a decline in the number of hospital beds, but also failed to meet the medical needs of Palestinian citizens.<sup>22</sup> In Ramallah, for example, in 1967, the number of beds was 209 beds per 115 thousand persons, declining to 116 beds for 140 thousand persons by 1987.<sup>23</sup>



Since it took over responsibility of the Health Sector in the GS in 1994, the PA has not been allowed to make any tangible changes to the health centers, including secondary health care. Governmental hospitals in the WB and GS still face difficulties, with deficiencies in medicine,

Article 25/1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 stated:

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

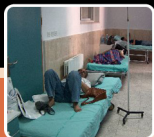
- United Nations, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>



specialist doctors and qualified staff. There is also a shortage of medical supplies and existing medical equipment is outdated. The hospitals are also in desperate need of emergency departments and specialist centers. Low paid workers and unfair geographical distribution of hospitals in the WB and GS are other significant problems facing the Palestinian health sector.







At the end of 2009, Israel had a population of approximately 7.5 million, including 5.664 million Jews. The number of the Palestinians in the 1948 occupied territories was about 1.26 million,<sup>24</sup> while the number of the Palestinians living in the WB, including Jerusalem, was 2.45 million with a further 1.48 million in GS.<sup>25</sup>

In 2009, the crude birth rate (CBR) was about 25.8 per one thousand inhabitants in the WB and about 35.9 in the GS,<sup>26</sup> while in Israel it was 19.77.<sup>27</sup> The crude death rate (CDR) was 2.6 per one thousand inhabitants in the WB and 3.5 in the GS,<sup>28</sup> whereas it was 5.43 in Israel during the same year.<sup>29</sup>

In 2009, life expectancy was estimated to be 72.9 years in the WB and GS, while it was 80.3 years in Israel.<sup>30</sup> In 2009, infant mortality rate (under the age of one) was 19.5 deaths per one thousand live births in the WB, and 20.2 in the GS.<sup>31</sup> In Israel, it was 3.8 in the same year.<sup>32</sup>

In 2009, the under-five mortality rate was 39 deaths per one thousand live births in the WB and GS, while it was 11 in Israel.<sup>33</sup>

**Table 2: Birth Rates, Deaths and Life Expectancy 2009**

	<b>WB &amp; GS</b>	<b>Israel</b>
<b>Population (million)</b>	3.93	7.5
<b>CBR (per 1,000 inhabitants)</b>	30.85	19.77
<b>CDR (per 1,000 inhabitants)</b>	3.05	5.43
<b>Life expectancy</b>	72.9	80.3
<b>Infant mortality rate under the age of one (per 1,000 live births)</b>	19.85	3.8
<b>Under five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)</b>	39	11



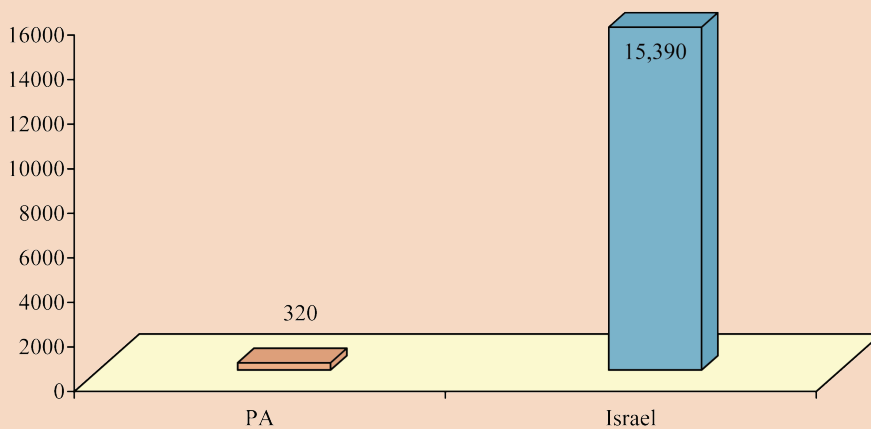
In 2008, the average health expenditure per capita for the WB and GS was \$165.5,<sup>34</sup> while it was \$2,145 in Israel (The symbol \$ used throughout this book is the US\$).<sup>35</sup>

In 2009, the total expenditure on the MOH of the PA was 1.255 billion shekels, i.e., about \$320 million.<sup>36</sup> This is equivalent to 6.2% of its GDP, which was \$5,147.2 million.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, Israel's national expenditure on health was \$15,390 million, i.e., 7.9% of its GDP,<sup>38</sup> which was 766,118 million shekels (\$194,812 million).<sup>39</sup>

**Table 3: Expenditure on Health in Israel and the PA 2009 (\$ million)**

	PA	Israel
<b>Expenditure on health</b>	320	15,390

**Expenditure on Health in Israel and the PA 2009 (\$ million)**

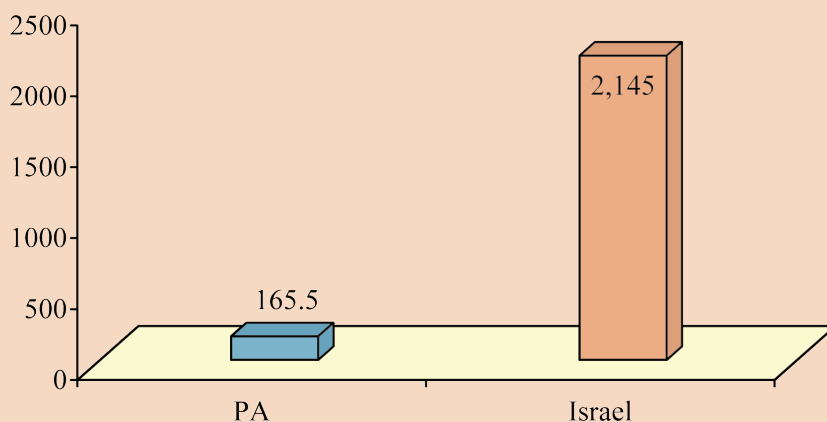




**Table 4: Average Health Expenditure per Capita in Israel and the PA 2008 (\$)**

	PA	Israel
<b>Average health expenditure per capita</b>	165.5	2,145

**Average Health Expenditure per Capita in Israel and the PA 2008 (\$)**



The decline in the average health expenditure per capita for the WB and GS compared to that of the Israel, the rising infant and child mortality rates in the WB and GS compared to those of Israel as well as the decline in life expectancy compared with increasing life expectancy among the Israelis are indicative of severe shortages and discrimination in health care provision for the Palestinians.





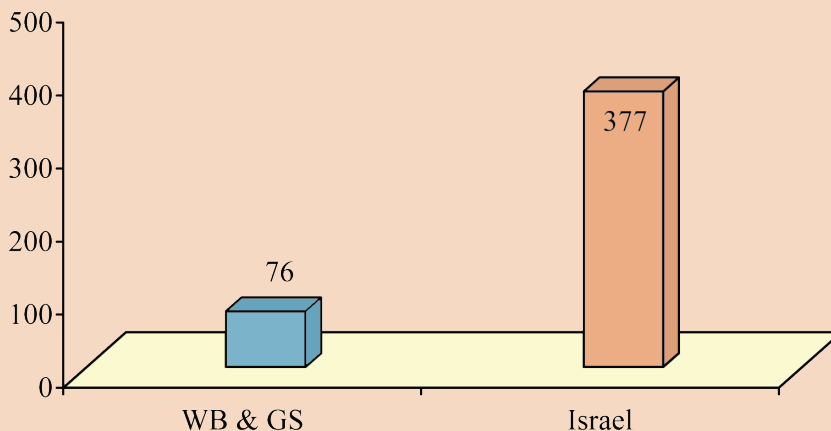
This discrepancy can also be seen when the number of hospitals in the WB and GS is compared with that of Israel. For example, in 2009, there were 76 hospitals in the WB and GS<sup>40</sup> including 5,058 beds<sup>41</sup> (roughly 1.3 beds per thousand people). In Israel the number was 377 hospitals<sup>42</sup> including 42,119 beds<sup>43</sup> (roughly 5.6 beds per thousand people).

In addition, the number of physicians in the WB and GS has decreased; accounting for 1.74 physicians per thousand persons, while in Israel the number is approximately 25,542, accounting for 3.4 physicians per thousand persons.<sup>44</sup>

**Table 5: Number of Hospitals, Beds and Average Number of Doctors in 2009**

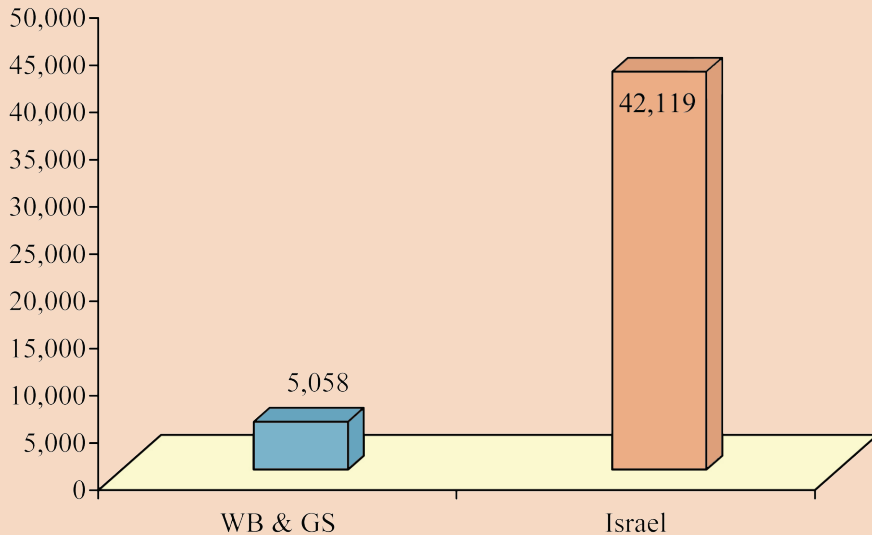
	WB & GS	Israel
Number of hospitals	76	377
Number of beds	5,058	42,119
Number of physicians per thousand people	1.74	3.4

**Number of Hospitals 2009**





### Number of Beds 2009



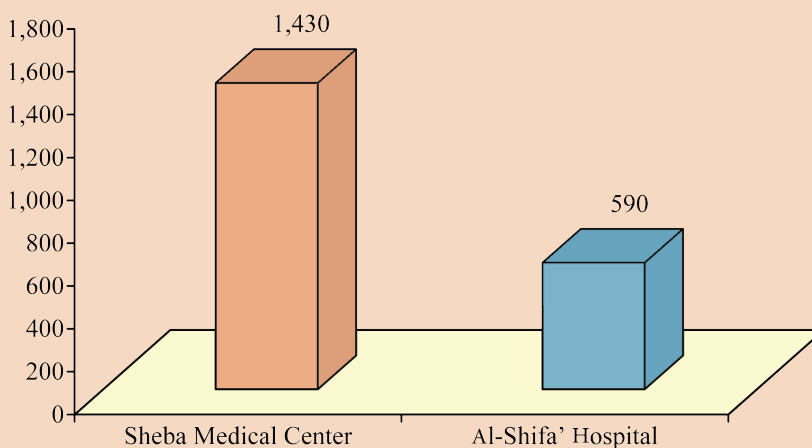
A huge difference in health care provision can also be seen when an Israeli hospital is compared with a Palestinian one. For example, the Hadassah hospital in Israel has 850 physicians, 1,000 beds, 31 operating rooms and 9 specialist intensive care units.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, al-Shifa' Hospital, the largest Palestinian hospital in GS has 590 beds, four operating rooms, one intensive care unit, one pharmacy and one medical laboratory.<sup>46</sup> In the WB city of Salfit, the main government hospital has 49 beds, accounting for 0.8 beds per thousand persons.<sup>47</sup> The hospital serves around 65 thousand people.<sup>48</sup>



**Table 6: Number of Beds in the Largest Israeli and Palestinian Hospitals**

Hospitals	Number of beds
Sheba Medical Center <sup>49</sup> Tel Hashomer	1,430
Al-Shifa' Hospital	590

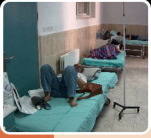
**Number of Beds in the Largest Israeli and Palestinian Hospitals**



The Israeli budget allocated to hospitals in the WB and GS does not exceed one-tenth of the total budget of an Israeli hospital and the salary of an Arab physician is roughly one third of that of an Israeli physician.<sup>50</sup> Israeli doctors make between \$5,000 and \$6,000 per month,<sup>51</sup> while a Palestinian general practitioner receives \$500 and a specialist \$2,000 a month.<sup>52</sup>

There is a strong correlation between an individual's health status and his socioeconomic status. Poverty, low level of education, overcrowded living conditions and unemployment result in the spread of disease and increase mortality rates.





A severe shortage of beds and medical services at Ramallah hospital.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), in the first quarter of 2009, 41.5% of the working-age population of GS was unemployed. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) household survey conducted in May 2008 indicated that over 70% of the surveyed families were living on an income of less than one dollar a day per person.<sup>53</sup> In Israel, in 2009, 20.5% of families were living below the poverty line. Statistics indicate that Arab families are among the most impoverished, with 53% living below the poverty line.<sup>54</sup>

The discrepancies in health services between Israelis and the Palestinians are enormous. In addition to the gaps mentioned before it is important to note gaps caused by the establishment of health centers and emergency departments in remote areas as well as the barriers, such as the wall and checkpoints, set up in the WB and GS, all contributing to the misery of Palestinian patients trying to get access to health centers.





## *The Suffering of the Palestinian Patient under the Israeli Occupation*

معاناة المريض الفلسطيني  
تحت الاحتلال الإسرائيلي

### *This Book*

The Suffering of the Palestinian Patient exposes the brutality of the Israeli occupation. Its measures make, almost, no difference whether the patient is a man, a woman, a child or an elderly person. Even critical cases were not spared from such sufferance. The various Israeli actions against Palestinian patients constitute unequivocal breaches of basic patient rights under occupation.

This book is the eleventh in the Am I Not a Human? series, in which al-Zaytouna endeavors to present to its readers the full and complete picture of the suffering of Palestinians, under Israeli occupation. It tries its best to address the hearts and minds with the most accurate, concrete and documented information. The authors tried to convey the different aspects of the suffering of the Palestinian patient under Israeli occupation.



Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies & Consultations

مركز الزيتونة للدراسات والاستشارات

P.O.Box: 14-5034 Beirut - Lebanon

Tel: +961 1 803 644 | Tel-fax: +961 1 803643

info@alzaytouna.net | www.alzaytouna.net

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