

## OVERVIEW

For 50 years, Israel has occupied the West Bank. And it continues its restrictions on the movement of the Palestinian population, all while seizing land, building new settlements and demolishing the homes of East Jerusalem Palestinian residents. In Gaza, Palestinians live in abject poverty and fear of another war.

## ECONOMIC IMPACT

The economy of Palestine has been described variously as “dismal,” “crippling” and “declining,” much of it due to strife — especially in Gaza — diminished tourism, corruption and political ineffectiveness. Israel’s separation barrier has cut off the flow of Palestinian labor into Israel, driving down incomes and exacerbating unemployment.

## IMPACT ON CHRISTIANS

Nearly half of all social service institutions in the Palestinian territories are operated by Christian organizations — Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant — theoretically providing a diverse range of employment opportunities. But the demise of peace talks, the evaporation of hope for a political solution and the absence of economic growth compels Christians — who typically have more resources than the average Palestinian — to leave for better opportunities elsewhere. Less than 2 percent of the population is now Christian.

## CNEWA’S PRESENCE

CNEWA works closely with the Catholic ordinaries in the Holy Land, especially the Latin Patriarchate, and the non-Catholic Eastern churches in assessing and prioritizing needs, and in developing methods to implement projects and programs effectively. These initiatives include leadership development of youth and programs that enhance the education, faith and formation of young men and women, as well as job-training opportunities. While Christians make up a tiny fraction of Gaza’s population, the local churches provide general health care, pre- and postnatal care, education and counseling to people of all ages and religions. We are proud to be there, making a difference in the lives of millions living in grinding poverty.



**CNEWA’s work in Palestine stretches back decades, and includes:**

- **Annual subsidies to the Paul VI Ephpheta Institute for hearing-impaired children in Bethlehem and the Near East Council of Churches’ pre- and postnatal clinics in Gaza**
- **Helping to protect church institutions in sensitive areas through renovation projects, such as the Hospice de St. Vincent de Paul in the Old City and the Benedictine Monastery on the Mount of Olives**
- **Providing psychosocial support to those scarred by the war in Gaza, especially young people and the elderly**
- **Programmatic backing for activities of various scouting groups throughout the Palestinian territories, including the De La Salle Group in Bethlehem and the Arab Catholic Scouts in Jerusalem**
- **Tuition assistance and other forms of support to Bethlehem University**