



Migration Profile of the HOLY LAND

A. Executive Summary

The Holy Land is the location of a more than seven-decade-long situation which has witnessed numerous armed confrontations and political, economic and social pressures that lead to land occupation, exodus, human rights violations and continued instability throughout the region. These circumstances have had an impact on the migration and displacement of millions of people and have led to the construction of a dividing wall at the beginning of the 21st Century. The Holy Land has witnessed sizable waves of Jewish immigration and of Palestinian displacement and emigration. The governance of this part of the Holy Land is complex, involving the state of Israel and Palestinian territories under the shared rule of the Palestinian Authority, Hamas and Israeli administration and military oversight. There are high levels of unemployment, severe restrictions on movement, various coercive conditions and unfavourable legal frameworks. These all contribute to making the lives of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the Holy Land extremely precarious. There is a correlation between the levels of vulnerability among these populations and their ethno-religious origins. Jewish immigrants in Israel benefit from Israeli citizenship, under the “law of return”, and from social and economic integration support. Although Israel is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, no national legislation has been adopted yet in favour of non-Jewish asylum seekers who are still covered by the 1954 Anti-Infiltration Law. The political and administrative situation makes it impossible for Palestinian authorities to develop a sound migration policy. Blockades on Gaza and restrictions on movement in the West Bank have contributed to atrophy in their economies and have created considerable humanitarian needs. These territories and the refugees and IDPs that they host must rely extensively on foreign assistance. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the Israeli economy very hard and especially the fragile economies of the Palestinian territories. The damaging impact of this pandemic is likely to continue.

B. Country Profile

I. Basic Information

Formerly part of the Ottoman empire, this part of the Holy Land under British mandate until 1948, comprises the UN-recognized member state (since 1949) of Israel as well as the UN-recognized non-member observer state (since 2012) of Palestine. Located between Egypt,

Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, its western border is the Mediterranean Sea. The borders have changed several times throughout the years. A 1979 peace agreement settled Israel's border with Egypt and a 1994 agreement defined the border with Jordan. Israel's borders with Syria have been the object of many armed conflicts; they remain disputed (Golan Heights). In the last century, the Holy Land underwent large-scale Jewish immigration from Europe and the Middle East under the British mandate after the Second World War, and several waves of Palestinian forced displacement and emigration, and also return. Following the 1993 Oslo Accords and the mutual recognition of the Government of Israel and of the Palestine Liberation Organization, a Palestinian Authority was elected, and an administration was created in those areas under Palestinian self-rule. Increasingly, a two-state solution was at the core of these negotiations.

The state of Israel is a parliamentary democratic system. The current President is Reuben Rivlin and the current Prime Minister is Binyamin Netanyahu. Israel is described as having a technologically advanced free market economy. The poverty rate is 17% (2018) and the rate of unemployment (2019) was 5.7%.

Under high humanitarian stress and heavily relying on foreign aid as regards their economies, much of the landlocked Palestinian areas is under the complexly organized rule of both the Palestinian Authority, the Hamas government in Gaza, and Israeli authorities. In these Palestinian areas, the unemployment rates are high: about 27.4% in the West Bank in 2019, and almost double that in Gaza (45.1%). Low household income in a context of the high cost of living (especially food) and the erosion of livelihoods have resulted in high levels of food insecurity. About 14% of the population in the West Bank lives below the poverty line (March 2020). In fact, 6% of them were in a state of deep poverty, unable to meet their minimum requirements of food, clothing and housing. The situation in Gaza is especially dire: more than half of the population is poor, and one third are in deep poverty.

The ongoing crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic is a huge challenge for the inhabitants of the Holy Land. It greatly increases many pre-existing inequalities, especially for those in the refugee camps where isolation is almost impossible. In Israel (as of September 13 2020), there had been 142,213 reported cases and 1,068 deaths from COVID-19. At the start of the pandemic, the Israeli government took rapid action, including the imposition of lockdown. In Israel, the migrant community has suffered especially, since many are undocumented, working as day labourers without the benefit of any social safety net or health insurance. Often, they were the first to be let go from work. The situation has greatly affected the 32,000 asylum seekers from Eritrea and Sudan who remain in a social and legal limbo. In the Palestinian areas (as of the same date), there had been 38,516 cases and 238 deaths from the coronavirus. In addition to these high levels of precarity in the territories, there are insufficient health infrastructures in Gaza.

II. International and Internal Migrants

In 2019, UNDESA reported the presence of 1,956,300 international migrants in **Israel**. These migrants comprise 23% of the population (2019), which in 2018 was estimated to be 8.88 million people. The median age of these migrants was 55.9 years and just over half of them (54.6%)

were women. The main countries of birth of these international migrants were the countries of the former USSR (48%), Morocco (8%) and the United States (5%). About 55,300 were from Jordan, 44,600 from Algeria, 23,000 from Tunisia, 16,800 from Libya (2017 figures). Close to third of them came from the same SDG region (Middle East & North Africa, less Iran). In 2019, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics estimated that 33,247 immigrants arrived in Israel (48.2% arriving from Russia, the rest coming mainly from France and the US).

These figures require analysis, however, because of a legal distinction made in Israeli policies between Jewish immigrants and other immigrants. Under Israel's 1951 "law of return" or *Aliyah*, all Jews and their children and grandchildren are entitled to immigration to Israel and to full integration as citizens. This entitles them to housing programs and generous social integration assistance. According to Israeli officials, COVID-19 is likely to result in more Jewish immigration in the next two years, with an estimated 90,000 expected in 2021. In May 2020, the Jewish Agency's offices in France opened 700 immigration files, compared to the 130 they opened in May 2019. Applications from North America in June 2020 increased 7-fold compared to June 2019.

The situation is completely different for non-Jewish immigrants. Since the early 1990s, Israel had created a migration management scheme for low-skilled foreign workers. This was originally designed to replace Palestinian cross-border workers from the Palestinian areas in secondary labour markets. Temporary and seasonal labour migrants arrived in increasing numbers in 2017 when 57,000 permits were given to employers, a 9% increase over the previous year. By the end of 2018, there were approximately 100,000 legal foreign workers in Israel, mainly from South and Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, but excluding cross-border Palestinian and Jordanian workers. More than half (55,000) were in the caregiving sector and most were women. About 22,000 were in agriculture and some 14,000 in construction. Due to an extensive immigration enforcement campaign and stepped-up deportations after a policy shift (including the "Closed Skies" policy started in 2010, which sought to replace foreign workers with Israeli low-skilled workers), the numbers of irregular migrants decreased from 95,000 in 2011 to 56,000 in 2019. Including Palestinian workers, the US Department of State Trafficking in Persons (DOS TIP) Report estimates the number of irregular migrant workers at 135,000, and legal migrant workers at 215,000.

Labour migration in Israel is temporary in nature and based on contractual labour, with no path to permanent settlement or citizenship. No migrant worker can legally remain longer than 63 months in Israel. The right to family reunification for migrant workers is not recognized by the state, which also forbids residence without a work permit and has a stringent policy for the arrest and expulsion of irregular migrants at any time by administrative decree. In 2019, the heads of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land called for an ease of these policies, starting with Filipino mothers and their children, as many were to be deported after having their status and residence permits denied because they had given birth. In September 2019, the Supreme Court rejected a petition to freeze the expulsion of Israel-born children of migrant workers residing in Israel without legal status. For those countries of origin without bilateral agreements with Israel,

recruitment of foreign workers has been managed through recruiting agencies at both origin and destination, enabling profit-seeking private agents to dominate this field. Many abuses occurred because of the precariousness of the status of migrant workers, including exorbitant recruitment fees, longer work-days, no or few days off, low wages, poor working conditions, and no health insurance though theoretically required by the law. Israel's government has attempted to limit these abuses through the development of bilateral agreements, which supposedly forbid recruitment from the country in question. Although recruiters benefited from their fees, the employment conditions or access to social rights remained unchanged for the workers. The most successful sector and country agreements include agriculture with Thailand in 2010, and construction with Bulgaria in 2011, Romania in 2014, Ukraine in 2016 and China in 2017. The cost of migration from these countries has dramatically reduced. It is not the same for the category of caregiving. Although bilateral agreements were signed with Nepal in 2015 and Sri Lanka in 2016, only 130 migrants have arrived through these accords. Most recruitment still involves recruiting agencies. Even though a maximum has been set by the government, workers in this sector continue to pay unlawful and exorbitant fees in order to migrate, often forcing them to remain in debt for a long time.

In 2019, a reported 253,700 international migrants were living in Palestinian areas, representing 5.1% of the area's 5,101,000 population. The median age of these migrants was 32.3 years and slightly more than half of them were women (55.7%). Most originated from the same SDG region (96.6%). In 2017, some 55,300 were from Jordan, 21,600 were from Saudi Arabia, 18,300 were from Egypt, 17,000 were from Kuwait, 10,000 were from Qatar, 9,300 were from Oman and 8,500 were from Bahrain. More than half were of working age. More precisely, most of these international migrants are Palestinian refugees born in other countries who came back to the Palestinian territories after exile. The Palestinian authorities are simply not able to develop policies for managing the mobility in and out of the areas under their control. For example, Palestinians are not allowed to access Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv, Jordan carefully controls the transit of Palestinians through its territory and Egypt highly restricts its borders with the Gaza Strip. Any movement within the Palestinian territories is extremely difficult.

III. Emigration and Skilled Migration

Israeli emigration from Israel exists, but remains relatively low. In 2019, emigration of Israelis to OECD countries decreased by 4.3% and involved 11,000 persons. Approximately 34.3% of this group emigrated to the United States, 18.8% to Germany and 16.8% to Canada. Refugees under UNHCR mandate are also reported to have fled Israel: 463 refugees and 714 asylum seekers in 2019.

As for **Palestinian populations**, 77.3% of them live abroad. In total, 5.4 million Palestine refugees are registered under the UNRWA mandate. Of these, about 3,803,900 migrants and refugees from Palestine are living in other Arab countries. Palestine is the second country of origin of migrants and refugees in the Arab region after India and ahead of Syria, Pakistan and Bangladesh. By mid-2018, there were 2,046,600 in Jordan (UNRWA reported 2.2 million in 2019),

630,490 in Syria (UNRWA reported 550,000 in 2019), 507,000 in Lebanon (470,000 in 2019), 292,500 in Libya, 127,200 in Egypt, 31,500 in Algeria and 12,300 in Iraq. During the same period, most migrants and refugees in the Maghreb were from Palestine (324,600). Also, 101,125 refugees and asylum seekers who had been registered by mid-2018 with the UNHCR (to the exclusion of UNRWA-registered refugees), had migrated from Palestine, moving beyond the Arab regions. By 2019, there were 107,870 who had done so. In 2007, the Palestinian Authority created a Department for Palestinian Expatriates, even though exit visas and all borders are controlled by Israeli authorities. In 2018, approximately 14.8% of the GDP of the Palestine territories (around US\$2.143 million) came from Palestinian remittances.

IV. Forced Migrants (internally displaced, asylum seekers and refugees)

In 2019 in **Israel**, the UNDESA estimated the number refugees and asylum seekers at 55,400 (2.8% of all international migrants present in the country including Israeli immigrant citizens). In 2019, under the UNHCR mandate (Israel is a member), there were 1,789 refugees, 14,332 people in refugee-like situations, and 38,490 asylum seekers. By 31 December 2019, UNHCR estimated its specific populations of concern in Israel to be 23,576 Eritreans, 7,709 Sudanese, 5,932 Russians, 5,060 Ukrainians, 1,733 Georgians, and 10,601 of other origins. Among them were 8,500 children. Although Israel is a State Party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, it has yet to adopt national refugee legislation. Over the last 15 years, some 80,000 persons have sought asylum in Israel, but according to the UNHCR, less than 1% were granted refugee status or other forms of protection. A policy of encouraging the return of detainees and other migrants or asylum seekers to their home country has been systematically put in place and asylum seekers tend to be still defined by the Israeli state as “infiltrators”. Indeed, the legal basis upon which the Israeli state determines its refugee policy, especially towards sub-Saharan asylum seekers, is the 1954 Anti-Infiltration Law, which was originally designed to stop the entry of Palestinians and other Arab nationals in the wake of the 1948 war. The measure was intended to prevent the re-entry of Palestinian refugees. With the intention of securing Israel’s right to protect itself, the law authorized severe measures against individuals from enemy states who entered Israel unlawfully. Indeed, in 2019, Israel had fewer than 20,000 nationals in situations of forced displacement (IDPs) and no IDPs were reported of concern to the UNHCR. Throughout the year, there were 1,200 displacements due to disaster. Perhaps due to the possibility of their return, the total number of IDPs (as of December 31, 2019) in Israel was 200, and in 2018 and 2019, the number stateless people reported to be in Israel was 42 people.

In January 2019, Israeli authorities announced a plan to forcibly move 36,000 Palestinian Bedouins living in “unrecognized” villages in the Negev/Naqab desert to government-planned townships. In December 2019, Israeli authorities demolished the Palestinian Bedouin village of al-Araqib for the 169th time. Throughout the Holy Land, 70% of the Bedouins and herder populations are refugees and live under threat of forced displacement and violence due to their location. Since 90% of them make their living by herding, which requires moving over large areas, any restriction of movement in the territories represents a threat to their livelihood.

In 2019 in the **Palestinian territories**, UNDESA estimated that there were about 2,214,800 refugees (about 39% of the total population of these areas) and the Norwegian Refugee Council estimated the number of IDPs to be 243,000. In December 2018, UNOCHA estimated that 1.4 million refugees and 23,500 IDPs were in need of humanitarian assistance. The rate of unemployment is high (13% unemployment among refugees in the West Bank, and 50% in the refugee camps of the Gaza Strip). Confinement to the camps cuts the refugees from integration into the wider society. They tend to live with up to ten people or more in small spaces designed for one person. At the end of 2018, UNOCHA estimated that 1.1 million refugees and 10,160 IDPs were facing WASH-related issues (water, sanitation and hygiene) throughout the Palestinian territories. Food insecurity rates are high among the refugees, estimated as 45% of refugee households, compared to 25% for non-refugee households, although many do receive assistance from international organizations or Palestinian governmental bodies.

In 2019, in the **West Bank**, there were 828,000 UNRWA-registered refugees. Among these refugees, about 261,600 lived in 19 camps in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. UNOCHA estimated 255,000 refugees in the West Bank. It estimated that 20,000 refugees were in need of humanitarian assistance in East Jerusalem. A coercive environment affecting Palestinian in the West Bank, particularly in Area C (comprising 62% of all refugees in the West Bank), and in East Jerusalem (especially in refugee camps, and Shuafat camp in particular) generates displacement and the risk of forcible transfer. The Israel administration makes it almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain construction permits in Area C (West Bank) under its exclusive control and in East Jerusalem. This impossibility led many Palestinians to avoid the problem by building houses without permits and resulted in housing demolitions. In 2018, more than 13,000 demolition orders were given in Area C and more demolitions took place in East Jerusalem in 2019 than in any of the previous fifteen years. Forced evictions, the confiscation of property and acts of violence have forced people to flee their homes in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Displacement and property damage are said to have an especially detrimental impact on women, girls and persons with disabilities. There were 540 security force operations that took place in West Bank refugee camps in 2019. Many involved the use of live ammunition and the deployment of tear gas, often resulting in injuries, property damage and psychosocial consequences.

Due to instability and to the blockade, **Gaza** has become an enclave of accumulating humanitarian problems (lack of energy, housing, WASH facilities and health care systems, education structures, protection concerns, food insecurity, etc.). In 2019, most of Gaza's population (80%) depended on some form of humanitarian aid. There were 1.4 million UNRWA-registered refugees in Gaza in 2019, representing 70% of the total population of Gaza. Among them, 1.1 million were in need of humanitarian assistance in December 2018, according to the UNOCHA. In 2018, most of the refugees lived in the towns and cities of the Strip, but more than 500,000 of them were still living in eight overcrowded and impoverished refugee camps. The blockade situation and the socio-political and economic instability in the Strip have created extreme levels of vulnerability especially for refugees and IDPs. In the second quarter of 2018, there were 1,011,500 refugees who were identified as being in need of food assistance.

Public health structures are insufficient and non-public health centres are also overwhelmed. By July 2019, there were still 8,500 IDPs in Gaza, including 8,200 originally from the 2014 hostilities and still living in precarious situations as almost half of them are renting, with most relying on cash assistance. Of these, 12% live with extended or host families and 9% live in partially damaged homes.

Although the Holy Land is subject to desertification and regular droughts, no displacements have been reported due to climate-related issues.

V. Victims of Human Trafficking

In **Israel**, many migrant workers are facing forced labour and labour rights abuse due to their precarious situation with their employer. Many of those who migrated to Israel through the Sinai (among them Eritreans, Ethiopians and Sudanese) had to face trafficking in persons. Many had initially made contracts with an agent, only to discover they had fallen into a trap. Travelling conditions were terrible and once in the Sinai, their plight worsened. Their contracts were broken, and they were sold “again and again.” They would be tortured until their ransom was paid and be sexually abused. Trafficking of migrants’ organs also developed in the Sinai. According to the Trafficking in Persons Report (2020), Israeli children (in 2018, 3,000 Israeli child sex trafficking victims were reported in Israel), Israeli Bedouin and Palestinian women and girls, and foreign women are vulnerable to sex trafficking, including by means of social media platforms.

Foreign workers, especially irregular migrant workers, are very vulnerable to labour rights abuses and violations, labour trafficking and forced labour. In 2019, employers retained the identity documents of about 19,000 Palestinian workers, *de facto* restricting their movements. Traffickers subjected some Thai men and women in the agricultural sector to abusive conditions such as long working hours, no breaks or rest days, withheld passports, and difficulty changing employers due to limitations on work permits. Recruited through study programs, some students from developing countries are also vulnerable to trafficking in the agriculture sector. Isolation of the caregivers in private residences and the lack of protection under labour law makes them highly vulnerable to the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP).

In the **Palestinian territories**, high adult unemployment rates as well as an overall decline in real wages have created pressures on children to work in support of their families. The weaknesses of the education system and the lack of an effective, reliable and comprehensive social security system increases the risk of families resorting to child labour. In Gaza, Hamas and its military wing, the *Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam* Brigades, reportedly recruited children, including for hard labour, and training as combatants.

VI. National Legal Framework

Israel has ratified several relevant international instruments on migrants, refugees and TIP victims:

- the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 and its 2014 Protocol
- the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention of 1957
- the Minimum Age Convention of 1973
- the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999
- the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols (on children in armed conflict and sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography)
- the Maintenance of Migration's Pension Rights Convention of 1935 (part V, VI and X)
- and the Migration for Employment Convention of 1949.

As of September 2020, it had still not ratified the UN International Convention on the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their families; the International Labour Organization Migrant Workers Convention; the Migrant Protocol to the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime. National laws prohibit discrimination of any kind and set out rules specific to migrant workers and labour legislation in an attempt to protect them, but many provisions are still not implemented. This is the case for the 1991 Foreign Workers Law (on Prohibition of Unlawful Employment and assurance of fair conditions) and its Statutory Instruments. According to statutes and Israeli case law, migrant workers are entitled to all the protective labour law rights, such as minimum wages, hours of work, severance pay and vacations. But they have difficulty achieving these rights in the courts, especially as they will not have union or legal representation and often have language difficulties. In 2012, Israel's Parliament passed the Prevention of Infiltration Law which mandates the detention of anyone, including asylum seekers, who enters Israel without permission. Since December 2014, following the adoption of Amendment No.5 of the Anti-Infiltration Law, newly arriving individuals including asylum seekers - with the exception (since 2016) of Darfuris - are detained for a 3-month period. Exceptions are made on health grounds, special humanitarian reasons or if the person is an unaccompanied minor. Amendment No. 6 implied that single Eritrean and Sudanese men under the age of 60 were to be automatically transferred to Holot, a semi-closed detention facility that has since been shut down, for a mandatory residence of up to 12 months. Recent improvements in legislation and policies have reduced the number of detained asylum seekers by 42% (to 1,397 by the end of 2017), and also of migrants.

As a result of the impossibility to create a proper migration policy due to their constrained capacities, **Palestine authorities** have few means to address migration in the territories. Entry, stay and exit from the Palestinian territories depend on Israeli authorities but are also subject, in Area A, to Palestinian authorities' regulations. The Palestinian authorities cannot deliver visas and do not have the control over the external borders of the territories. Palestinians require Israeli authorization to go from the West Bank to Gaza and vice versa. Every person who enters West Bank territories without a permit is considered an "infiltrator" and can be punished with a seven-year imprisonment (Israeli Military Order No. 1650 of 2009).

The Palestinian Authority has adopted no laws on nationality. The Palestinian Charters and the Declaration of Principles recognize the right of all Palestinians to citizenship, therefore entitling them to return, which poses a problem to Israel because it does not recognize that right to Palestinians. The rights of Palestinian refugees in the Palestinian territories are the same as those of other Palestinians and their refugee status is transmitted to their descendants. Those who are not considered residents since 1967, or after the Oslo Agreements (on the basis of a negotiated returnees list), can only become residents through family reunification, which is *de facto* under Israeli approval even though, theoretically, this falls under Palestinian authorities' jurisdiction.

In relation to the situation in Palestinian territories, no policy developments took place between April 2017 and March 2019 as regards nationality and statelessness, labour migration, irregular migration, human trafficking and human smuggling, forced displacement and refugee protection, or admission, visas and residency permits. The Palestinian Authority is a signatory to the UN Palermo Convention on Transnational Organized Crimes and its protocols.

VII. Main Actors

Numerous entities act in favour of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and trafficking victims throughout the Holy Land.

International Organizations

International organizations play a key role on behalf of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and TIP victims. **Israel** is a member of the ILO, IOM and UNHCR. These institutions are present and act throughout the country, promoting better policies in favour of these populations. UNHCR partners mainly with the Israeli government, but also with CSOs and NGOs, to ensure support to refugees and asylum seekers, including education, health, child protection, psychosocial counselling and support, community outreach, vocational training, working condition improvements, and legal assistance and representation. In the **Palestinian territories**, UNRWA is the main actor as regards Palestinian refugees, but has been severely underfunded in recent years primarily due to the main donor, the United States, withdrawing its assistance to Palestinian refugees. UNRWA has had its mandate renewed until 2023. It ensures the most basic human needs from housing to education, health care and social services, and provides jobs for over 13,000 personnel in Gaza alone. During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNRWA has taken measures to continue providing essential services while enhancing the protection of refugees. All health centres remained open, with some exceptions in the West Bank. The agency created a hotline that in three months (March to May, 2020) received 26,707 calls, and in Gaza it organized medicine delivery for non-COVID patients (18,348 deliveries) and increased its cash and food distribution programs. Between March and June 2020, some 1,046,974 refugees received food assistance through home deliveries in Gaza and 32,364 in the West Bank. This was to mitigate the additional socio-economic hardships caused by the pandemic. UNRWA also launched its Education in Emergency program, and 8 refugee camps in Gaza and 19 refugee camps in the West Bank benefitted from regular solid waste and/or water supply management services

which either continued or increased.

Among other significant international efforts, the ILO has implemented a project named “Enhanced Knowledge and Capacity of Tripartite Partners to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the occupied Palestinian territory” to support the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour in the Palestinian territories through awareness raising and capacity building initiatives that target all entities. The Israeli **Jerusalem** African Community Center provides legal, medical and psychosocial, education and employment assistance to African migrants. Support is also provided to single mothers and women survivors of sexual violence and torture who have suffered along the route before arriving in Israel. The Center also works in collaboration with the Foundation *Pro Terra Sancta*. The International Committee of the Red Cross assists all displaced persons (with health care, cash assistance, family visits, general assistance, COVID-19 hotline and ambulance dispatch call centre, etc.) throughout the **Holy Land**. In 2019, several households who had seen their houses demolished were assisted by the ICRC. The Near East Foundation, supported by donors such as the UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, USAID, MEPI and the Government of Sharjah, works with projects in education, agriculture, environment and youth development, mainly in the **West Bank**. Many other international institutions are present in the Holy Land, among them Islamic Relief Worldwide, UN Women, Oxfam, ACTED, *Action Contre la Faim*, IECD, and many others.

The Catholic Church

Religious organizations and institutions also play an important role on behalf of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and TIP victims. In addition to financially supporting international organizations such as UNRWA, the Catholic Church and related organizations are also engaged on the ground throughout the **Holy Land**. The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (LPJ) focuses specifically on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers with its Vicariate for Migrants and Asylum Seekers (VMAS) to coordinate all actions of the LPJ in support of these populations, most of whom are Christian. In total, more than 300,000 Christians live in Israel, including Arab citizens of Israel, Hebrew-speaking Christian citizens of Israel and long-term residents, labour migrants and asylum seekers. The many-faceted goal is:

- to raise awareness about the concerns of migrants
- to inform the Catholic Bishops
- to circulate updated information and advice
- to coordinate with NGOs and CSOs
- to represent the concerns of migrants in the media
- to coordinate with the local embassies of the migrants’ countries and their dioceses of origin
- and to raise funds from donors for various projects.

The LPJ has also created a personal parish for migrants and refugees in **Jerusalem** to care for migrants and refugees in all pastoral, sacramental and formative aspects. Since October 2019, chaplaincies for several migrant origins have been established, including Filipino, Indian, Sri Lankan, Ethiopian and Eritrean (Ge'ez rite). There are also individual chaplains or specific priests for Rumanian, Polish, Latin American, English-speaking and French-speaking African, Korean and other communities. Several activities are led by the parish, including infant care, after school programs, youth programs and catechism. As part of this ministry, several Pastoral centres were also established: the Our Lady Woman of Valor Pastoral Center (Tel-Aviv), the Saint Joseph Center (Tel-Aviv) and the Saint Rachel Center (Jerusalem) run by the Saint James Vicariate, which also serves Russian-speaking and Hebrew-speaking Catholic migrants in Israel through education, childcare and promotion of migrant integration. During these COVID times, local generosity towards migrants, refugees and asylum seekers has been greatly encouraged by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem throughout the Holy Land and is said to have never been so evident. Wealthier parishes have been supporting those in need. In **Jaffa**, with a history of supporting migrants and refugees, the Franciscan parish of St. Anthony has been providing all forms of assistance (food, material, medicine, clothes, etc.) and pastoral support. The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land offers accommodation, including 72 houses in **Bethlehem** (West Bank) and 582 places of accommodation in **Jerusalem** to several thousand Christians at risk of being forced to flee because of persecution, the coercive environment and high levels of precarity. The Society of St. Yves hosts a Catholic Center for Human Rights and provides free legal aid and advocacy for migrants and asylum seekers of all origins. The Missionaries of Charity also work on behalf of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, especially in **Jerusalem, Gaza, Bethlehem and Nablus**.

Caritas Jerusalem was founded in 1967, after the Six-Day War, to respond to the overwhelming needs of refugees in the **West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem**. It claims to serve about 30,000 beneficiaries in the Palestinian areas, providing social services (family emergency support, job creation, academic and medical assistance), health care (3 health centres and one mobile clinic), livelihood and food security-related actions (projects in agriculture, infrastructure and development to generate livelihood means), micro-credit and youth education. As a member of the Caritas Internationalis network, Caritas Jerusalem works with other Caritas organizations around the world, including CRS (Catholic Relief Services). Through an extensive network of CSOs and in coordination with the local Church, CRS declares that it serves about 1,310,374 people in the Holy Land through its programs, addressing food security, civil society strengthening, peacebuilding and the provision of humanitarian assistance. The Catholic Near East Welfare Association is also present in the Holy Land, leading pastoral initiatives for refugees, displaced peoples and migrants, including through health care, education and emergency relief. The Order of Malta's Hospital of the Holy Family provides mobile clinics and one van mainly serving the Raishayda refugee camp. In the Holy Land, the project Yanabieh El-Amal, promoted by Talitha Kum network, brings Christian and Muslim women together to build and strengthen networks in order to promote women's collaboration and leadership for anti-TIP activities and support on behalf of TIP victims. The Coordination Catholic Aid

Organizations (CCAO) works with many Catholic institutions, including the LPJ, to enhance their coordination, support and communication. The Middle East Council of Churches acts on behalf of refugees in the Holy Land through its Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), with training centres and health clinics, most of which have remained open during the coronavirus pandemic.

VIII. Other Important Issues

Israel voted against the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. It did vote for the Global Compact on Refugee but against several of the 20 resolutions which required a specific vote, beginning with Resolution I on the “right of the Palestinian people to self-determination” of the report “Right of peoples to self-determination”. It was also against draft resolution III: “United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas” of the report “Human Rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.” A Palestinian Authority observer delegation was present at the vote for both Global Compacts and underlined their importance to defending the rights of Palestinians.

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