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Palestine, Factors 13 & 14

Conflicts between two religions/culture cause one to suffering it all.

Palestine to some is nonexistent but to others, like me, it is their home country. However, Palestinians that live in Palestinian occupied areas are suffering tremendously. The Israelis have taken over and control mostly everything including land and water access which is the cause of hunger to the Palestinians. Israel has created so many checkpoints and roadblocks that Palestinians are given a hard time traveling in their own country. (Informed Comment). “Food insecurity in the occupied Palestinian territory is driven primarily by poverty linked to the occupation of the West Bank and the blockade of the Gaza Strip, not the lack of food, which makes sufficient, nutritious food out of reach for many” (World Food Programme Fighting Hunger Worldwide). Children, parents and the sick have trouble going to where they need to be whether it is school, work, or even the hospital. Most of the Palestinians live in refugee camps. The alleyways are narrow, there are no sidewalks and roads, and they live in one and two room houses. (Life in A Palestinian Refugee Camp). A daily life of one living there will include waking up in a cramped room with lots of kids beside you, washing up with the very little tap water you have, praying, going to work for continuous long hours and collecting the fruits and vegetables that are hopefully grown from the dying trees.

Palestine is located in the Middle East at the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It is South of Lebanon and to the west of Jordan. “The coastal plains of Palestine are divided by Saruunah plain, Mount Carmel plain and the Acre plain. In the category of the geography of Palestine the location of Jordan Valley is below the sea level and Ghawr. It results in the quality of the soil to be of very high standard but the resource of water is very limited” (Palestine Location). The rocky terraces, hills, and mountains that Palestine has allow many trees to grow. Some main crops are olive trees, barley, wheat and lentils. Fruit trees take up around 63% of the cultivated area of the Palestinian Territory. On the other hand vegetables and field crops take 10% and 27%. Livestock found in Palestine include; cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens (Mammals in Palestine).

Although a natural disaster isn't the main cause for the hunger issues in Palestine, there is one disaster that is causing this to happen. The main problem is the ongoing fights between the Israelis and Palestinians. Ever since the Israelis came into the country and the war between the Palestinians and them has caused the tension between the two different people to grow. The Palestinians are the ones getting the unfair treatment here. “Restrictions by Israeli authorities on freedom of movement, access to natural resources, the right to pursue gainful employment, and on international trade and investment has left 27 percent of households, or 1.3 million Palestinians, unable to meet their basic food and households expenses, with a further 14 percent of households at risk of food insecurity” (World Food Programme Fighting Hunger Worldwide). There have even been 2,000 Palestinian prisoners that have gone on hunger strikes to gain freedom and rights. Besides this the weather in Palestine is mostly hot and dry in the summer and very cool and rainy in the winter. The summers tend to be long which can result to crops becoming dry and even dying.

In Palestine it is very traditional. Men make most of the money, while the woman are mainly homemakers or work at local cottage industries. Men usually have some type of job related to agriculture or commute to Israeli territories for work. (Countries and Their Cultures). Also lots of children go to school. Most get a free public education. Around 22% of children under the age of five have been suffering from malnutrition. Nearly 16% are suffering from anemia. There have been 129 Israeli children and 1,519

Palestinian children killed since September 29, 2000, showing the huge difference between the two people living in the same country (Hunger in Palestine).

Education is very important in Palestine. Most children go to school. The youth literacy rate is 98% and the national literacy is 91%. There are all boys, all girls and co-ed schools. The basic education includes grades 1 through 10. These are divided into stages. First, grades 1 through 4 and then grades 5 through 10. Then there is also secondary education which includes grades 11 and 12. In the tertiary education there are 11 universities, and 19 community colleges offered. 75% of the total schools in Palestine were under the supervision of the government and females composed 50% of all school students in the year of 2009. This shows that most Palestinians are well educated meaning that education is not a contributing factor to hunger in this country (Education in Palestine).

The Constitution of Palestine was established in 1968. Dr. Nabeel Ali Shaath is the Chairman of the Committee of the Palestine Constitution. The Palestinian Legislative Council has 132 members. The Palestine government is split into two separate administrations, Fatah-dominated, which rules the West Bank and Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip. (Palestine Government and Politics). “According to the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian National Authority is designated to have control over both security-related and civilian issues in Palestinian urban areas, and only civilian control over Palestinian rural areas. The remainder of the territories (including illegal Israeli settlements, the Jordan Valley region, and illegal bypass roads constructed by Israel to link settlements) are to remain under exclusive Israeli control. In practical terms, Israel also retains control over the Territories' external security, air space, sea lanes and electromagnetic sphere” (<http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=9055&Category>).

Right now in Palestine there are basically two different governments in the same country. One that deals with Israel, which are basically the Jewish people. The other that deals with Palestine, for example the Gaza Strip and West Bank. These parts are predominately Muslim. The Muslims are the ones suffering hunger related issues and the government isn't really helping to solve these problems and in government I mean both Israeli and Palestinian. The Palestinian government doesn't really have a say because the Israeli government is overpowering them. However, the Palestinian government should think of a way to solve issues between them to help save their citizens because the Israeli government can care less about the Palestinians and this is the problem. Both governments and their people need to find a way somehow to get along or if not get along at least have equal or fair treatment between the two. The Palestinians are hungry and the Israelis aren't.

“The authority over the Palestinian health care system was transferred to the Palestinians in 1994. Earlier a division of the Israeli Ministry of Defense administered the public clinics and hospitals. Since the changeover, fundamental changes in the system have taken place; the most discernible of these have been in the governmental health services. Reforms included expanding and enhancing health care provision capacity, improving the management, developing of human resources, and adjusting of public financing and health insurance scheme. The aim of these reform initiatives was to reconstruct the system and to assure the provision of appropriate services for the entire Palestinian population,” states Motasem Hamdan, in his notes from his PowerPoint on the health care policies in Palestine. The private health sector has been able to grow because of the weakness of the public capacity to provide health care. Also policies of the private sector has impacted the services available in a positive light but not so much in the accessibility between the different socio-economic groups (Hamdan).

Le Figaro reports that a Palestinian's average income has been reduced by 50% since September 2000 according from a survey the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics released. The average monthly income went down from \$500 to \$280 in the West Bank, and from \$400 to \$240 in Gaza. Also around 63% of Palestinians today live under the poverty line. (UNDPI.org). Not only has their income fallen they also spend most of it on food related items. Only 1.5% is spent on recreation and 3% on personal care (Report: Income on Basic Necessities).

Al-Haq, a Palestinian rights group, reports that 313,000 Palestinians across 113 communities in the West Bank are not connected to a water network. According to Al-Monitor, Musa who currently lives in a village in West Bank states, “We use water just for the bare minimum, drinking, cooking and washing. Everything else is out of the question.” It has gotten so bad that they can’t even grow crops anymore because they must save the water to drink. Israel basically controls most of the water and keeps strict restrictions on it. They have 89% access to water while the Palestinians have 11%. Also because of this and little rain, crops and fruit trees are dried out (Israel Denies Palestinians Equal Water Access).

There have been talks and negotiations for peace between Palestine and Israel but none were successful. Palestine tried to become independent and create its own state but again it was unsuccessful, which did not solve any hunger-related problems either. However, there are organizations out there that have helped Palestine and still are. The Action Against Hunger is one of them. They helped improve access to clean fresh water for families in the West Bank. “They also constructed and rehabilitated pipelines and water points; built and rehabilitated cisterns for people to collect rainwater; increased water access for pastoralists and their animals to help protect livelihoods; conducted educational sessions for women and students on efficient water usage and safe hygiene practices; provided training for engineers and technicians from six municipalities on water management, maintenance, and system design” (West Bank, Gaza). Another organization called the Palestine Children’s Fund Relief has helped arrange free quality medical care for sick and injured children and helped families cope with their chronic medical conditions (<http://www.pcrf.net/>).

As already mentioned, Palestine does have access to education. There are many organizations as well that provide Palestine with education as well as health benefits. Two organizations for example are Project Hope and Palestine Emergency Aid. However, Palestine can use some more education relating to health issues. This can maybe help with the citizens learning how to sanitize the very little water they do have.

The World Bank is an organization that helps fight poverty around the world. This organization has done a couple things to help Palestine out. One thing they did was grant fifty million dollars for Palestinian development. This money was used to improve municipal services, energy, water and sanitation. It also supported social protection and education (News). Another project they did was the Gaza emergency water project. The purpose of this was to improve the quality and access to water and wastewater in Gaza. The results from this project led to improved wells and disinfection rates of 99.8%. Overall the World Bank worked on 18 projects in the West Bank and Gaza which racked up 154 million dollars (Results).

“On average, West Bank Palestinians have access to about 70 liters a day per person, although in some areas availability is as low as 15 liters, depending on the season. In contrast, Israeli citizens inside the Green Line or in West Bank communities utilize around 280-300 liters per person a day year-round” (The Politics of Water). “Some 180,000-200,000 Palestinians living in rural communities have no access to running water and the Israeli army often prevents them from even collecting rainwater” (Israel Ration Palestinians to Trickle of Water). Like stated in the paragraph before the World Bank has done some projects to help resolve this issue as well as many other organizations as well. This problem is slowly improving but is still an issue today.

As we can see here, water access and sanitation is a big issue after seeing it repeated a lot in this paper. It is probably the most important food security problem in Palestine. Although improvements have been made and assistance from organizations and other countries are there, there is really only one way to completely solve this problem. It is again to solve the issues between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The main cause for the Palestinians suffering is the Israeli government and without an agreement between the two, the problem will never be solved.

Overall, Palestine is currently a stateless nation with no equal rights or say in anything. This is the main issue that Palestine is facing which is causing food security problems. Since Palestine is over powered by

Israel, Palestinians have been facing hunger issues and without a doubt the main one is water access and sanitation. In order for this issue to be solved they must both work things out like already stated. Another way to solve this issue is to just let Palestine become its own country. Without one of these options happening nothing will change and Palestinians will just continue to suffer, which is a shame because they, just like any other humans, deserve to prosper and live better lives.

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