



Socio-Economic & Food Security Survey 2020

State of Palestine



PALESTINE
FOOD SECURITY SECTOR
Strengthening Humanitarian Response



Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Socio-Economic & Food Security Survey

2020

State of Palestine

The Food Security Sector is part of the humanitarian system coordination architecture and facilitates coordinated data collection, analysis and response, among a wide range of stakeholders, including line ministries and international and Palestinian NGOs.

This report has been prepared by:
The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS).



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Food Security Status 2020 – Executive Summary

This report shows that less than half of the households in Palestine were food secure in 2020. However, this figure obscures the considerable regional divergence in food security conditions between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Over 60 percent of households in the West Bank are food secure whereas over 60 percent of households in the Gaza Strip are moderately or severely food insecure.

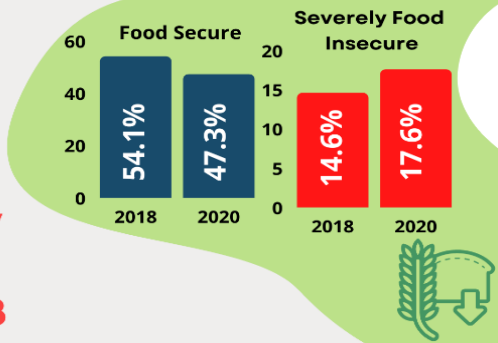
The food security status of both regions deteriorated between 2018 and 2020. A full 1.78 million persons were moderately or severely food insecure across Palestine in 2020. In the West Bank, households that were previously food secure became marginally food secure while moderate and severe food insecurity expanded in the Gaza Strip. The breakdown in food security conditions over the period did not occur uniformly, and the sub-regions of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were impacted differentially. The south sub-region of the West Bank fell further behind the north and center, as the share of food secure households in the south declined to less than half the corresponding shares in the north and center sub-regions in 2020, and the percentage share of moderately and severely food insecure households increased to twice as high as the percentage shares in the north and center sub-regions in that same year. Having said that, the share of severely food insecure households in the south and center sub-regions declined between 2018 and 2020 while increasing in the north sub-region. In that same period, the share of moderately food insecure households increased in the south and center sub-regions and decreased in the north sub-region. This divergence may be understood in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic's significant impact on the tourism sector, the local economy in the southern West Bank and the erratic relocation of citizens across cities depending on the lockdown statuses in the West Bank.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that food security conditions remained consistently worse in the West Bank's Area C than Areas A and B in 2018 and 2020. In the Gaza Strip, the center and south sub-regions saw the share of severely food insecure households grow to almost double the share of food secure households in 2020. The greatest food security losses in the Gaza Strip occurred in the center and south sub-regions. Rural households experienced higher levels of food security than urban areas or refugee camps and were the only group to encounter *improved* food security conditions between 2018 and 2020.

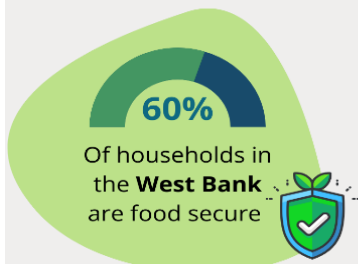
Food Security in Palestine 2018 vs 2020

Rise in severe food insecurity

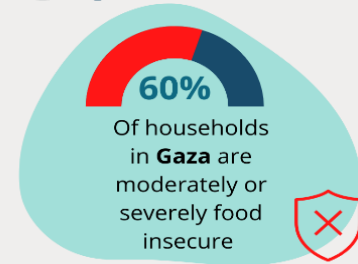
Food security deteriorated between 2018 and 2020



West Bank vs. Gaza



Households that were previously food secure in 2018 became marginally food secure in 2020

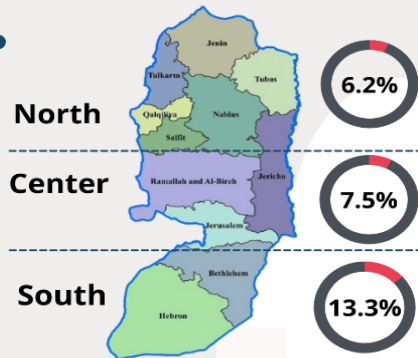


Moderate to severe food insecurity expanded between 2018 and 2020

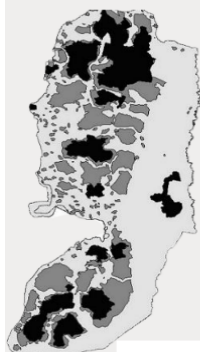
West Bank Sub-regions

The South sub-region of the West Bank fell further behind the North and Center

The share of moderately and severely food insecure households in the south sub-region is about twice the share in the North and Center sub-regions in 2020



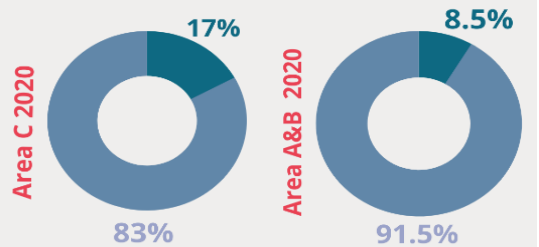
■ % Moderately and severely food insecure HH



Area A
Area B
Area C

Area A, B, & C of the West Bank

Food security conditions remained consistently worse in Area "C" than Areas "A" and "B" in 2018 and 2020



■ % Moderately and severely food insecure HH
■ % Food secure and Marginally Food secure HH

1. Introduction

This report is part of the Socio-Economic and Food Security (SEFSec) Report series that has been published since 2009. This SEFSec report presents an assessment of the food security status of Palestinian households during the year 2020 with the aim to provide a thorough review of food security conditions and analyze changes to the food security status in Palestine using the two most recent iterations of the SEFSec survey (2018 and 2020). The comprehensive nature of the SEFSec surveys allows the current report to explore the multiple facets and underlying determinants of the food security landscape in Palestine, including changes to food security conditions between 2018 and 2020 related to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated global economic recession. The data published in this report and the corresponding SEFSec surveys were collected by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in coordination with Food Security Sector (FSS) partners.

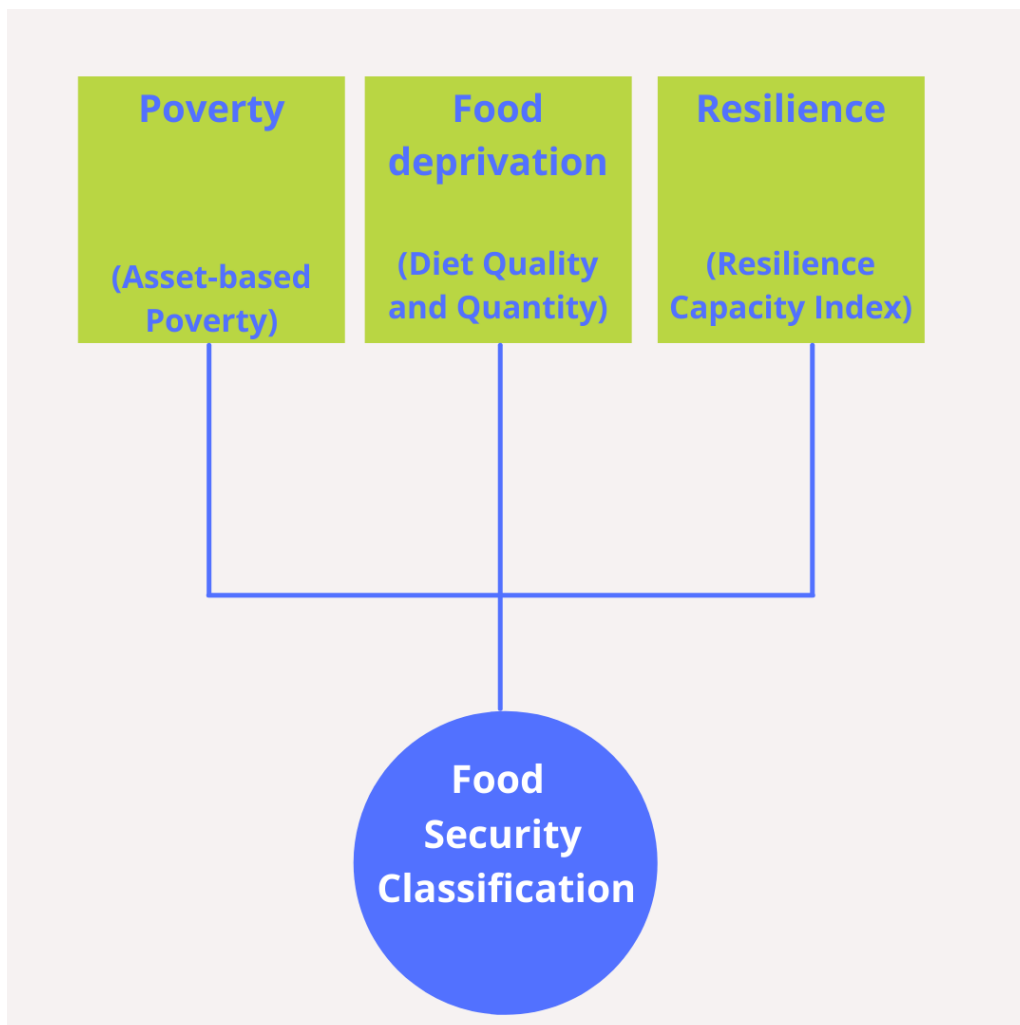
The analysis presented in the report is conducted using the revised SEFSec methodology of 2013, a methodology that aims to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of food insecurity employing a three-pillar framework: asset-based poverty, diet quality and quantity, and resilience to food insecurity as a mechanism to cope with shocks and stressors. This approach intends to comprehensively cover the determinants of food insecurity.

The report aims at presenting an updated overview of food security (or food insecurity) in Palestine by presenting data on the level of food security for households in Palestine according to the following food security categories: food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure or severely food insecure. A household classified as food secure is able to achieve adequate food consumption levels, in terms of quantity and quality, and meet essential nonfood needs without resorting to coping mechanisms. Marginally food-secure households are considered at risk of not being able to maintain adequate food consumption levels in a stable manner. In particular, these households have not adopted a nutritionally sufficient diet, although they have adequate financial means. Moderately food-insecure households face challenges in maintaining adequate food consumption due to limited financial means or an inability to avoid negative coping mechanisms. Severely food insecure households experience a significant consumption gap that they cannot counter through economic means or coping mechanisms (SEFSec, 2018).

In addition to producing estimates of the levels of food security for households in Palestine, this report presents the changes to household food security status emerging between 2018 and 2020. This report also analyzes food security at both the national level and at different levels of spatial disaggregation, including by main region (West Bank/Gaza Strip), sub-region, locality type (urban, rural and refugee camps), and administrative area (Area A/B and C). The report then explores changes in the determinants of food security status with a focus on poverty incidence, resilience and the extent of food deprivation. Finally, the report aims to provide clear conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis of the SEFSec surveys to provide evidence to potentially inform policymaking targeting food insecurity.

2. Methodology

Methodology Approach to Measure Food Security



The SEFSec methodology uses a three-pillar approach to produce household food security classifications (food secure, marginally food secure, moderately food insecure, severely food insecure). They are:

1) Poverty:

To estimate household poverty classifications, the SEFSec utilizes asset-based poverty measures. These measures were assessed on their ability to correlate with current expenditure and to reproduce changes in welfare over time. They are then used to classify households into three poverty groups in accordance with the absolute poverty lines estimated annually by the PCBS.

2) Food deprivation:

The SEFSec uses the World Food Program's Food Consumption Score (FCS) to capture dietary quality and the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) to capture food consumption quantity. The quantity and quality indicators are combined to produce food deprivation levels.

3) Resilience:

The SEFSec adopts the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ Resilience Capacity Index (RCI) measured using Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA) model to capture a household’s capacity to cope with shocks and stressors. Using the RIMA model, the RCI is estimated using a number of resilience pillars including assets, adaptive capacity, access to basic services and social safety nets. For the purposes of measuring food insecurity, the RCI is classified into terciles (low, medium, high), and each household is assigned to one tercile.

These three components in the table below are combined in the decision matrix below to determine a household’s food security level.

Table 1: Food Security Components

Food deprivation	Resilience	Poverty			
		Deep Poor	Poor	Non poor	
Severely food deprived	Low				<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: red; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Severely food insecure </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: yellow; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Moderately food insecure </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: lightgreen; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Marginally food secure </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: green; margin-right: 5px;"></div> Food secure </div> </div>
	Medium				
	High				
Moderately food deprived	Low				
	Medium				
	High				
Not food deprived	Low				
	Medium				
	High				

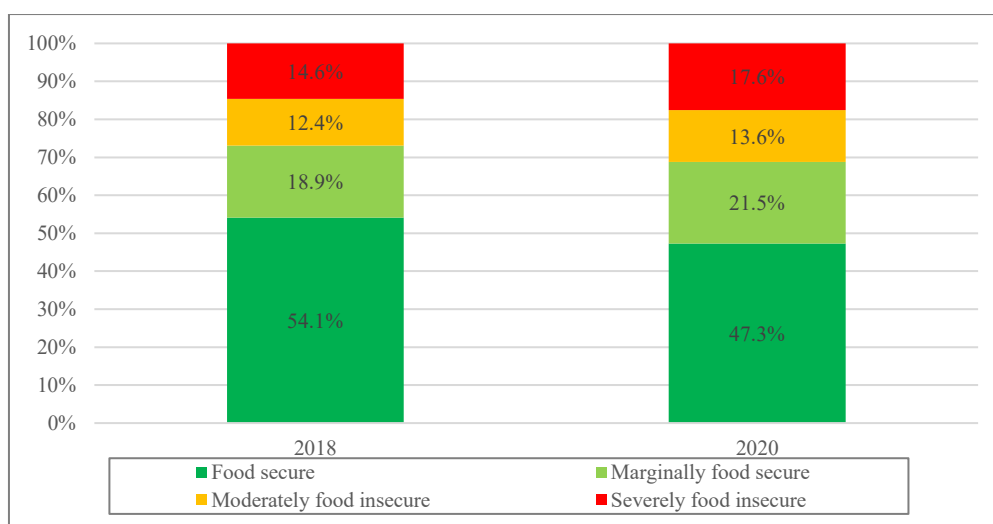
This year, the data was analyzed as a cross-section data set, not using the panel data approach employed in the previous years. Thus, the comparison of these results remains valid with previous cross-sectional estimates of food insecurity presented in Annex E of the previous report and not with those results presented in the report itself.

The 2020 data sample includes 3,122 households, of which 1,869 are in the West Bank and 1,253 in the Gaza Strip. In 2018, the sample set included 9,908 households (5,888 in the West Bank and 4,020 in Gaza).

3. Food Security Levels in Palestine

In 2020, 68.8 percent of households in Palestine were food secure (food secure and marginally food secure), equivalent to 722 329 households. Of those, 47.3 percent were food secure and 21.5 percent were marginally food secure. Meanwhile, 31.2 percent of households (or 327 839 households) were categorized as either moderately (13.6 percent) or severely (17.6 percent) food insecure. The prevalence of food insecurity has increased among Palestinian households since 2018: the total share of severely food insecure and moderately food insecure households increased by 4.2 percentage points between 2018 and 2020. Meanwhile, the share of food secure households declined significantly from 54.1 percent in 2018 to 47.3 percent. This decline is not fully accounted for by the increase of 2.6 percentage points in the share of the marginally food secure category from 2018 to 2020, thus indicating an overall shift in share from the food secure categories to the food insecure categories.

Figure 3.1: Household Food Security Levels in Palestine, 2018 and 2020



At the individual level, a total of 2 287 350 individuals were food secure (1 877 549 in the West Bank and 409 801 in the Gaza Strip) and 1 034 119 were marginally food secure (840 567 in the West Bank and 193 553 in the Gaza Strip) in 2020. In terms of food insecurity, 680 647 individuals were moderately food insecure (250 352 in the West Bank and 430 295 in Gaza Strip) and a total of 1 099 036 individuals were severely food insecure (84 715 in the West Bank and 1 014 321 in Gaza Strip) in that same year.

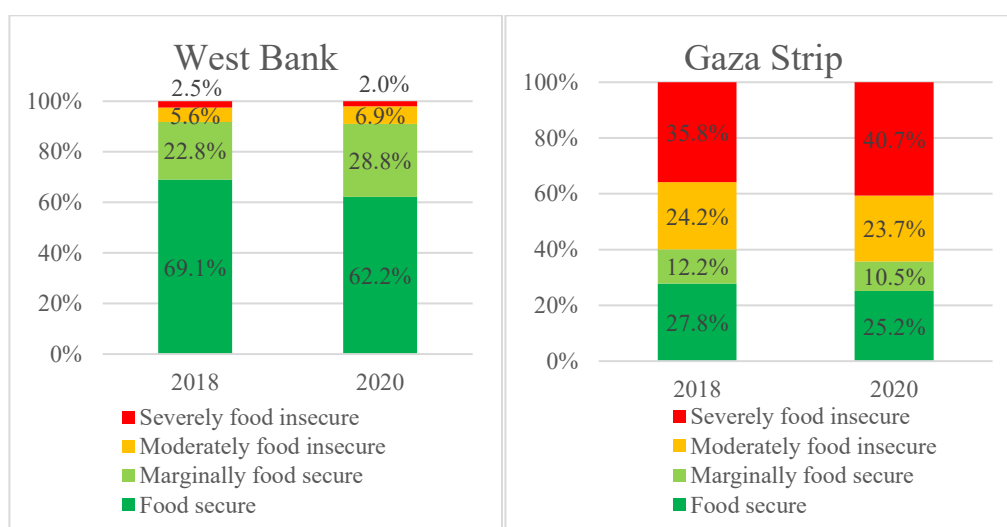
4. Food Security Levels by Main Region

Disaggregating the data at the regional level indicates that food security conditions have deteriorated since 2018 in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. While the share of the moderately and severely food insecure categories has remained relatively constant between 2018 and 2020 in the West Bank, the share of the food secure category has declined considerably to 62.2 percent (390 822 households). However, this loss in the share of the food secure category manifests as a corresponding gain between 2018 and 2020 in the share of the marginally food secure category. As a result, the shares of the food secure and marginally food secure categories continue to represent about 91.0 percent of households in the West Bank. At the same time, the share of households in the West Bank considered severely food insecure decreased slightly in 2020 to just 2.0 percent or 12 943 households.

Meanwhile, the status of food security in the Gaza Strip worsened in 2020, with the share of severely food insecure households reaching 40.7 percent (171 445 households), up 4.9 percentage points from 2018.

This brings the total share of households experiencing severe or moderate food insecurity in the Gaza Strip up to a staggering 64.4 percent. These circumstances diverge dramatically from the West Bank, considering that the share of severely food insecure households in the Gaza Strip is more than 20 times higher than in the West Bank. Furthermore, while the share of food secure households in the Gaza Strip declined by just 2.6 percentage points since 2018 to 25.2 percent (106 181 households or 409 801 individuals), this percentage is less than half the corresponding share in the West Bank. The findings indicate that 2020 presented further difficulties for households already food insecure in the Gaza Strip in meeting consumption needs and pushed some food secure households into marginal food security in the West Bank.

Figure 4.1: Household Food Security Levels in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 2018 and 2020

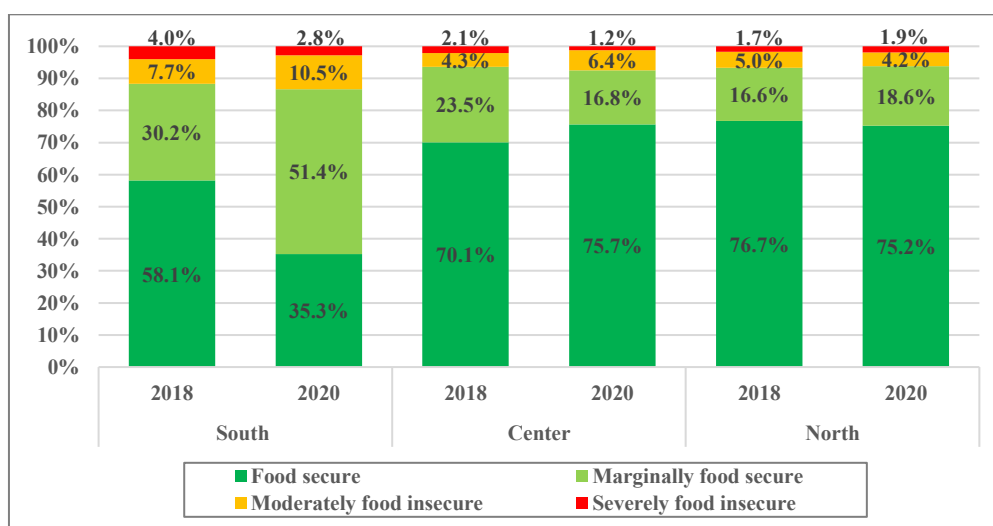


5. Food Security Levels by Sub-region

The analysis in this section further disaggregates the data at the sub-regional level in order to evaluate the spatial distribution of food security. As such, the West Bank and Gaza Strip are each divided into three sub-regions, each including multiple governorates. Specifically, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are divided into three sub-regions according to PCBS specifications: north center and south. The West Bank’s sub-regions include Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarem, Tubas, Qalqiliya, and Salfit (north); Ramallah, Jericho and Jerusalem (center); and Bethlehem and Hebron (south). Those of the Gaza Strip include North Gaza and Gaza (north), Dier Al-Balah (center) and Khan Yunis and Rafah (south).

With respect to the sub-regions of the West Bank, few changes have occurred in the food security landscape in the north and center sub-regions, while the south has seen the greatest deterioration of food security between 2018 and 2020. In both the north and center sub-regions of the West Bank, the share of food secure and marginally food secure households reached around 93.0 percent from 2018 to 2020, with the share of food secure households persistently staying above 70.0 percent. While food security conditions remained stable between 2018 and 2020 in the north, the share of food secure households in the center did exhibit small gains during the period. Yet, concomitant losses in the share of marginally food secure households left the total share of food secure and marginally food secure households unchanged, indicating that households in the food insecure categories did not move up during that period.

Figure 5.1: Household Food Security Levels by Sub-regions of the West Bank, 2018 and 2020

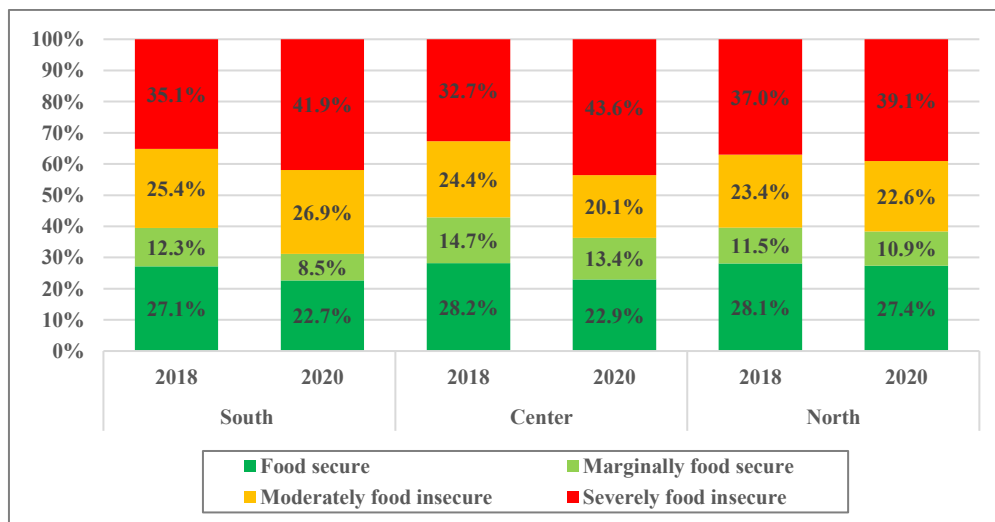


The West Bank’s south sub-region’s food security status deteriorated between 2018 and 2020, leaving the share of food secure households at just 35.3 percent in 2020 – almost 23 percentage points lower than in 2018. This decrease in the food secure category is almost entirely accounted for by an increase in the share of marginally food secure households. However, this considerable shift in 2020 widens the gap between the south’s food security status and that of the north and center sub-regions. Specifically, the share of food secure households in the south in 2020 is less than half of the corresponding shares in the north and center sub-regions just as the share of moderately and severely food insecure households is about twice as high as in the north and center sub-regions.

The growing divergence in food security conditions between the south sub-region and the north and center sub-regions may be attributed to the differential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across the West Bank. The south sub-region relies heavily on the tourism sector and annually hosts more than 60 percent of hotel guests and visitors to the West Bank.¹ The tourism sector in this sub-region experienced the greatest contraction nationwide during 2020 due to the pandemic, with the total number of hotel guests accommodated in the Bethlehem Governorate falling from over 230 000 in the first half of 2019 to 0 in the second half of 2020.

The rate of unemployment in the south of West Bank also increased to 20.3 percent in 2020, the highest recorded in the West Bank yet. These pandemic-related shocks likely contributed to the West Bank’s south sub-region’s divergence from the rest of the West Bank, evidencing how much food insecurity is driven by a lack of economic access to food.

Figure 5.2: Household Food Security Levels by Sub-Regions of the Gaza Strip, 2018 and 2020



In the Gaza Strip, all three sub-regions experienced a reduction in food security conditions. In all three sub-regions, the share of the food secure and marginally food secure category decreased alongside increases in the share of the severely food insecure category between 2018 and 2020. The greatest food security losses occurred in the center and south sub-regions. In both sub-regions, food insecurity plagued around 65.0 percent of households in 2020 and a startling share of households fell into severe food insecurity. In the center and south sub-regions, the share of the severely food insecure category increased by 10.9 percentage points and 6.8 percentage points, respectively. By 2020, the share of the severely food insecure category was almost double the share of the food secure category in both sub-regions. These findings illuminate the dangerous downward trend in food security conditions in the Gaza Strip, particularly in the center and the south.

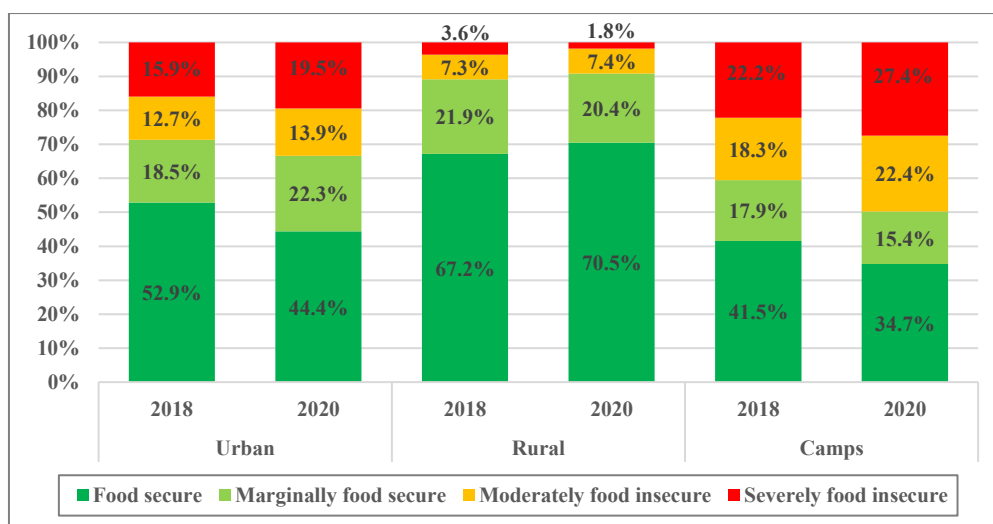
¹ <https://pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2577.pdf>

6. Food Security Levels by Type of Locality (place of residence)

This section extends the spatial analysis of food security by considering the place of residence (urban, rural, refugee camps). According to PCBS's 2017 census,² the majority of the West Bank population (70.8 percent) reside in urban areas while 24.3 percent reside in rural areas and 4.9 percent in refugee camps. In the Gaza Strip, 86.6 percent reside in urban areas compared to 13.4 percent in refugee camps, while only a marginal share of the population resides in rural areas (rural areas in the Gaza Strip are virtually nonexistent, due to the density and distribution of the population on the territory). As such, the rural population in the Gaza Strip is grouped with the urban population for the analysis.

At the national level, the highest levels of food security prevail in rural areas and the lowest levels appear in refugee camps. Rural areas experienced by far the lowest levels of moderate and severe food insecurity while in refugee camps the share of the moderately and severely food insecure categories reached about 50 percent in 2020. These differences grew more pronounced between 2018 and 2020. Food security expanded in rural areas during the period, with the share of food secure and marginally food secure households increasing to just over 90 percent, as the corresponding share in urban areas and refugee camps declined considerably. As for urban areas, food security levels remained higher than in refugee camps, although the share of food secure households declined by 8.5 percentage points to 44.4 percent in 2020, and the share of moderately and severely food insecure households expanded to 33.4 percent.

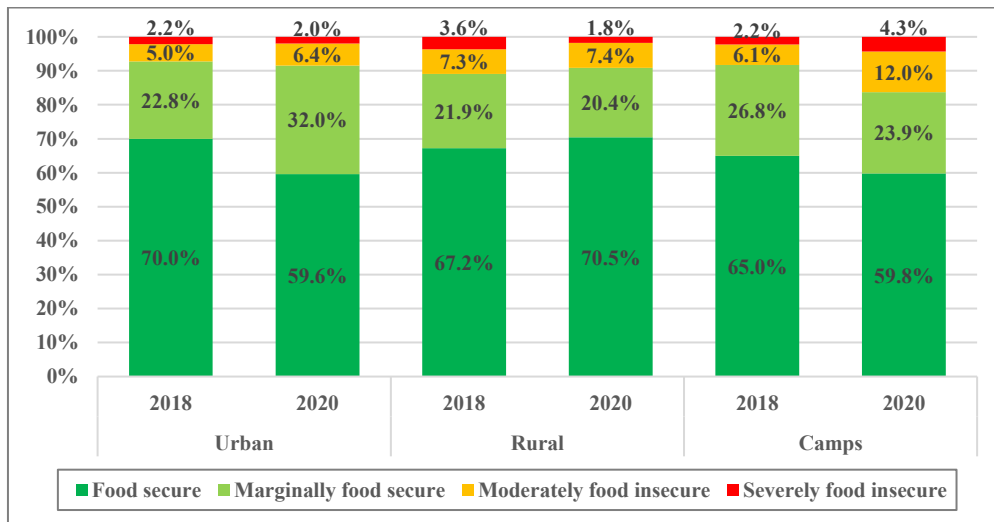
Figure 6.1: Food Security Levels by Locality Type in Palestine, 2018 and 2020



These patterns persist when the analysis is narrowed to the West Bank region. As the West Bank comprises the rural locality category, observations regarding the category in the West Bank are identical to Palestine at the national level. Urban areas and refugee camps in the West Bank witnessed a contraction in the share of food-secure households (to approximately 60 percent in both localities) as well as a contraction in the total share of the food secure and marginally food secure categories between 2018 and 2020. The refugee camps, however, were the only locality to experience a significant expansion of food insecurity during the period, such that the share of the moderately and severely food insecure categories doubled.

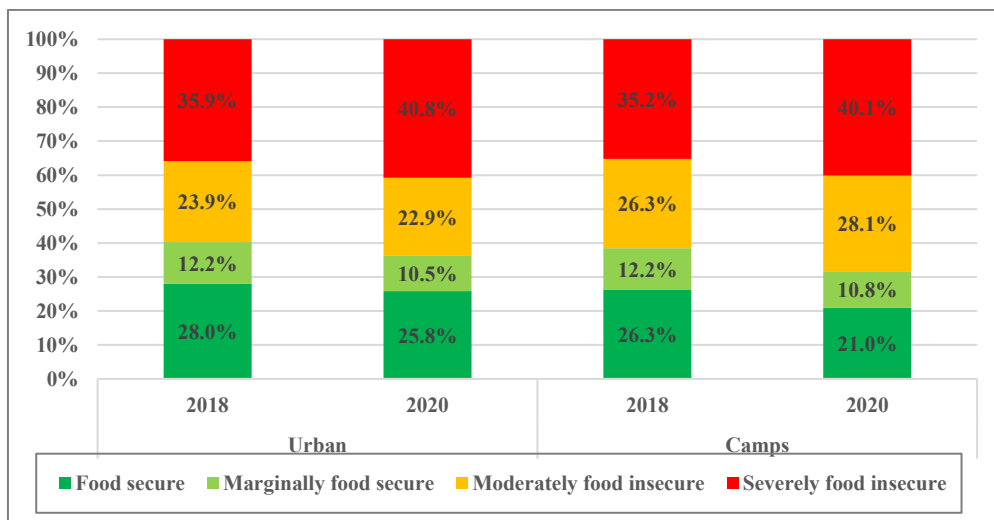
² <https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2425.pdf>

Figure 6.2: Food Security Levels by Locality Type in the West Bank, 2018 and 2020



In the Gaza Strip, the food security situation is practically indistinguishable between the urban areas and the refugee camps. In both localities, the minority of households were food secure or marginally food secure in 2018 and 2020 and, overall, food security conditions worsened over the period.

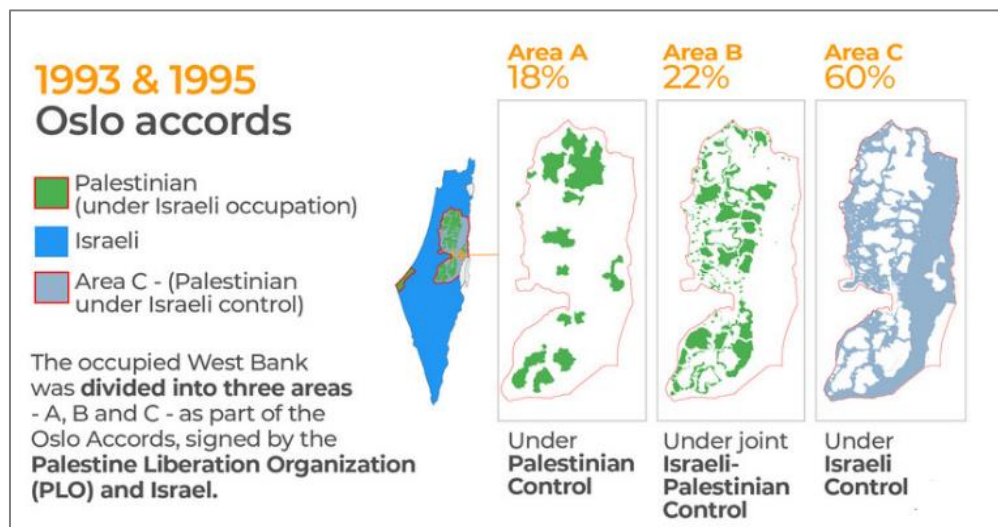
Figure 6.3: Food Security Levels by Locality Type in the Gaza Strip, 2018 and 2020



7. Food Security Levels in Area C in the West Bank

The analysis in this section reflects food security levels in the West Bank within the three geographic areas designated by the Oslo Accords: A, B and C. The Oslo accords and subsequent agreements assigned different levels of civil jurisdiction and security control to the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority for each of these areas.

Image 1: West Bank Areas A, B and C (*Al Jazeera, 2020*)³



Palestinians in Area C experience economic and development restrictions under Israel's authority. Specifically, about 30 percent of the area requires permission from Israel for natural resource exploitation or any infrastructure or construction project which is nearly impossible⁴ to obtain. In 2020, a total of 668 structures were demolished in Area C. In addition, the Israeli authorities approved only five of over 100 blueprints submitted by Palestinians in Area C. In the first half of 2021,⁵ 40 percent was designated as "state land" by Israel and the remaining 30 percent as military zones or nature reserves.⁶ As a consequence of these limitations on economic development and access to resources, Palestinian households face low standards of living.

In Area C, food insecurity levels (sum of moderately and severely food insecure) reached 17 percent. Relative to Areas A and B, food security conditions are consistently worse in Area C. In 2020, the share of severely and moderately food insecure households in Area C grew to double the corresponding share in Areas A and B. While the share of food secure households declined between 2018 and 2020 in all areas, this share remained at least ten percentage points higher in Areas A and B in the reported years.

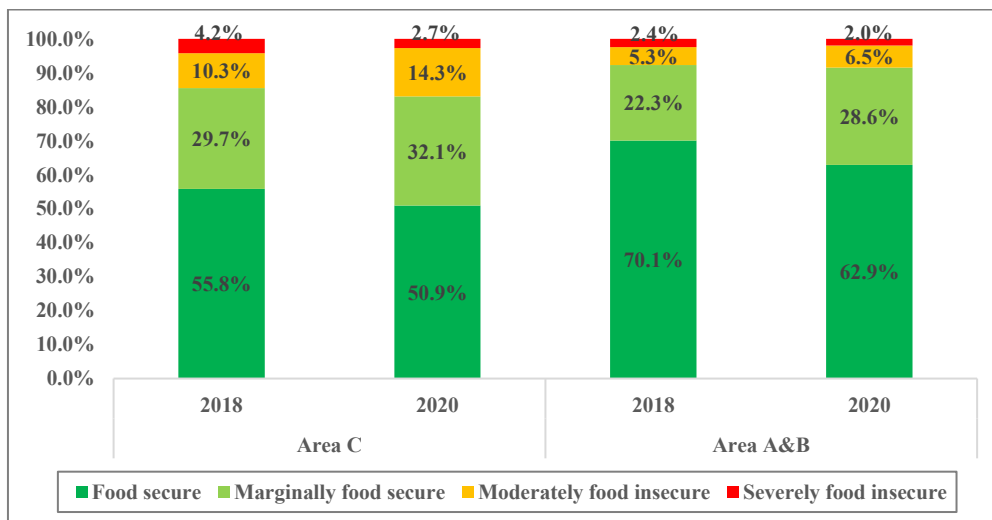
³ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/6/26/palestine-and-israel-mapping-an-annexation>

⁴ [Between 2009 and 2018 only two percent of Palestinian building permit requests in Area C were approved. See United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\), January/May 2021. The Humanitarian Bulletin.](https://www.ochaopt.org/content/most-palestinian-plans-build-area-c-not-approved)

⁵ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/most-palestinian-plans-build-area-c-not-approved>

⁶ https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/WFPREV_140218.pdf

Figure 7.1: Food Security Levels by Administrative Areas (A, B and C) in the West Bank, 2018 and 2020

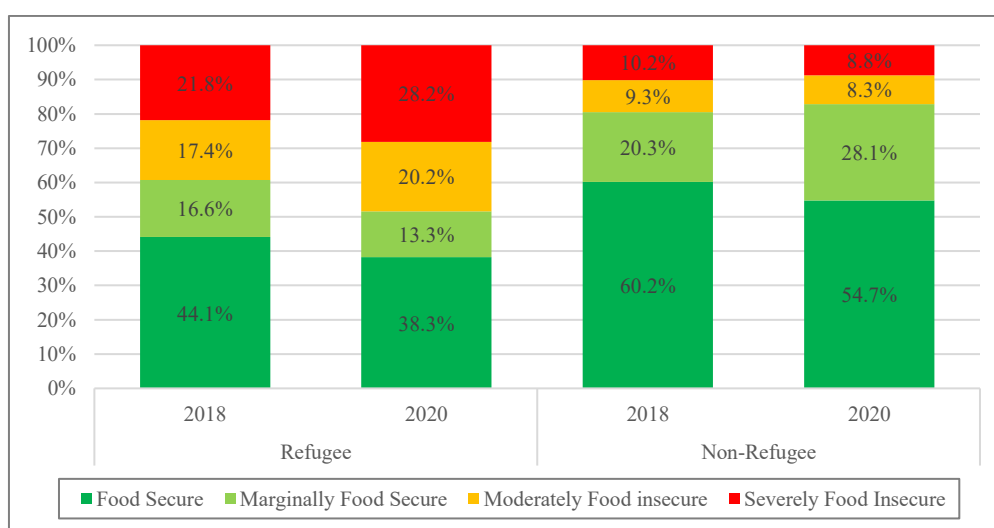


8. Food Security Levels by Refugee Status

Disaggregating the data, the refugee status of the head of the household indicates that food security levels vary depending on the refugee status. While 54.8 percent of households headed by a non-refugee were food secure, only 38.3 percent of refugee headed households were food secure. Additionally, the percentage of marginally food secure refugee-headed households was less than half that of non-refugee. In terms of food insecurity, 20.2 percent of refugee-headed households are moderately food insecure and 28.2 percent are severely food insecure. For households headed by a non-refugee, 8.3 percent are moderately food insecure and 8.8 percent are severely food insecure. While 82.9 percent of non-refugee-headed households are secure or marginally food secure, 48.4 percent of households with a refugee status are moderately or severely food insecure.

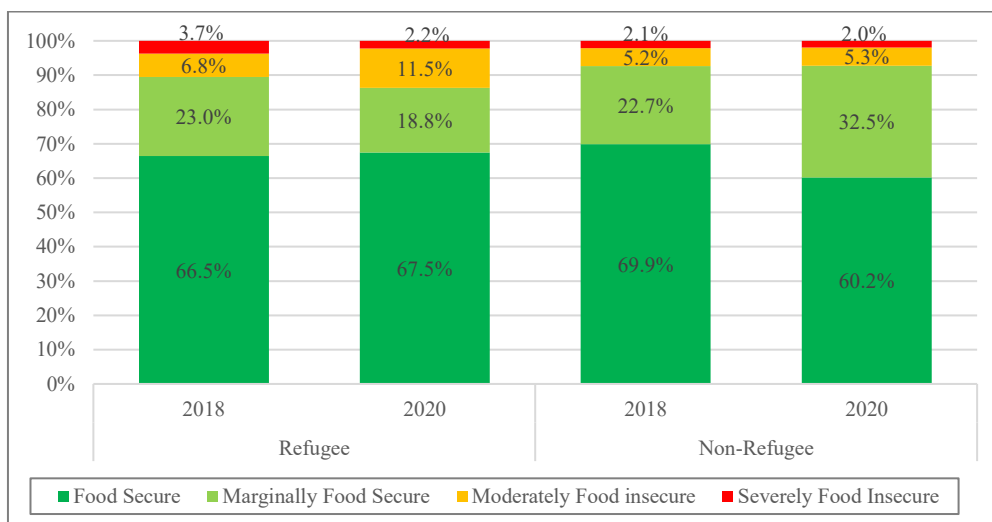
As shown in figure 8.1, food security levels decreased for both refugee and non-refugee groups in Palestine between 2018 and 2020, from 41.1 to 38.3 percent and from 60.2 to 54.7 percent respectively. While severe food insecurity levels increased for refugees from 21.8 percent in 2018 to 28.2 in 2020, severe food insecurity decreased for the non-refugee group from 10.2 percent in 2018 to 8.8 in 2020.

Figure 8.1: Food Security Levels by Refugee Status of Household Head in Palestine, 2018 and 2020



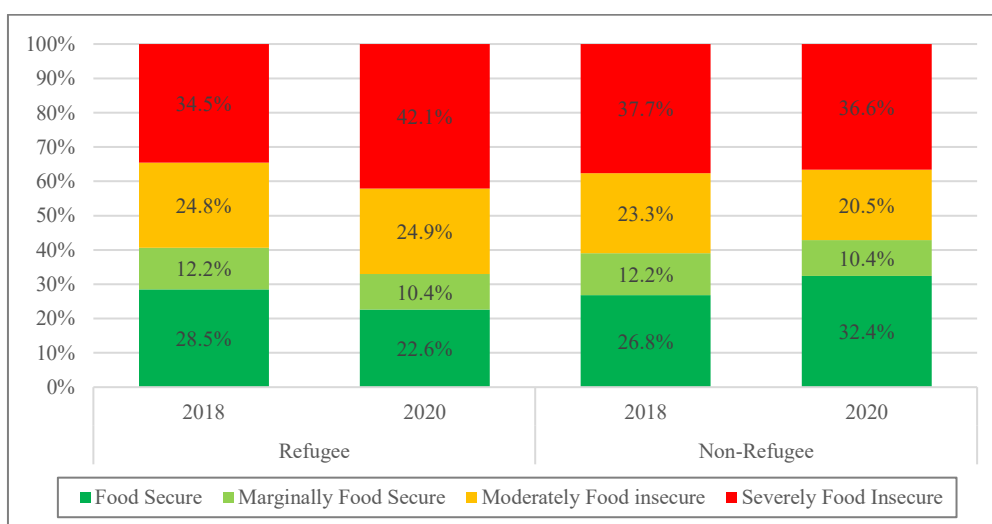
Further disaggregation of data of refugee status by region shows that food security levels for households headed by a refugee in the West Bank slightly increased from 66.5 percent to 67.5 between 2018 and 2020, and decreased for non-refugee-headed households from 69.9 percent in 2018 to 60.2 in 2020. Nonetheless, as shown in figure 8.2, there is a significant increase in moderately food insecure refugee households from 6.8 percent in 2018 to 11.5 in 2020. Severe food insecurity levels in the West Bank decreased for refugee-headed households between 2018 and 2020 and remained relatively the same for non-refugee groups in the West Bank.

Figure 8.2: Food Security Levels by Refugee Status of Household Head in the West Bank, 2018 and 2020



In the Gaza Strip, food security levels decreased for refugee-headed households from 28.5 percent in 2018 to 22.6 in 2020. For non-refugees, food security levels increased from 26.8 percent in 2018 to 32.4 in 2020. Food insecurity levels significantly increased for Gazan households headed by a refugee from 34.5 percent in 2018 to 42.1 in 2020. For non-refugee households, severe food insecurity levels slightly decreased, as shown in figure 8.3.

Figure 8.3: Food Security Levels by Refugee Status of Household Head in the Gaza Strip, 2018 and 2020



9. Determinants of Food Security in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

This section presents an analysis of the factors underlying food security at the regional level. Specifically, this analysis considers the components used to construct food security measures: the extent of food deprivation,⁷ resilience⁸ and poverty incidence.⁹

Figure 9.1 presents the food deprivation related indicators in 2018 and 2020 in Palestine, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Food deprivation in Palestine increased in the reported years. More households that were not food deprived in 2018 were moderately food-deprived in 2020, while the share of severely food-deprived households decreased. This trend holds for both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In both regions, moderate food deprivation grew as the share of households meeting consumption needs have declined, while severe food deprivation declined slightly.

Figure 9.1 Food Deprivation in 2018 and 2020 in Palestine

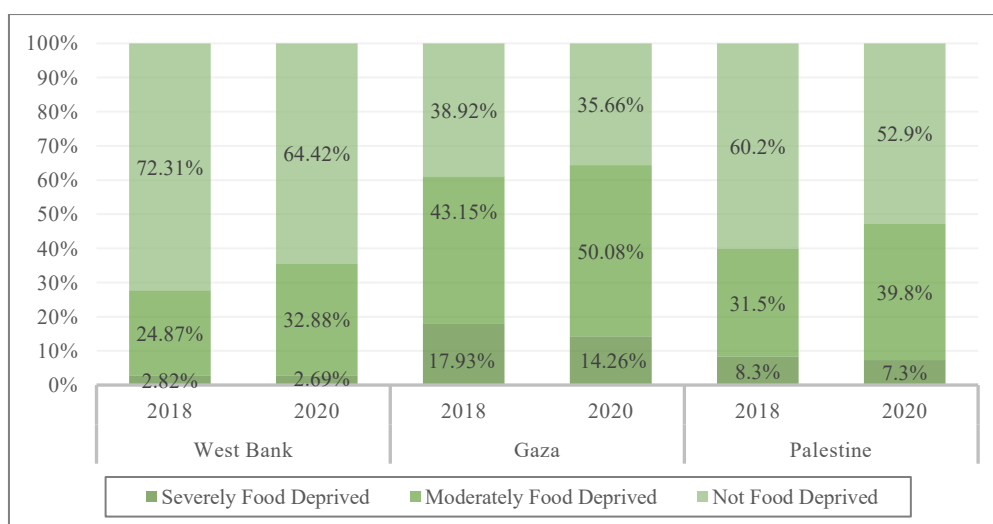


Figure 9.2 shows the resilience¹⁰ (low, medium, high) of households in 2018 and 2020 in Palestine, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Resilience in Palestine declined over the period, as the share of households with low resilience grew and the shares of medium and high resilience households declined. This same temporal trend towards lower household resilience materializes in both main regions. However, resilience is considerably higher in the West Bank than Gaza Strip. In the Gaza Strip, in 2020, the share of high resilience households was just 3.6 percent compared to the West Bank's corresponding 51 percent.

⁷ See Section 2.

⁸ Idem.

⁹ Households are classified as deep poor (below the deep poverty line estimated by PCBS), poor (below the National Poverty line but above the deep poverty line estimated by PCBS) or non-poor (above the National Poverty line). Poverty component was calculated based on estimation regression that used PCBS 2011. The model will be updated using the 2017 PCBS data next year and also the resilience model will be reviewed.

Figure 9.2: Resilience of Palestinian Households, 2018 and 2020

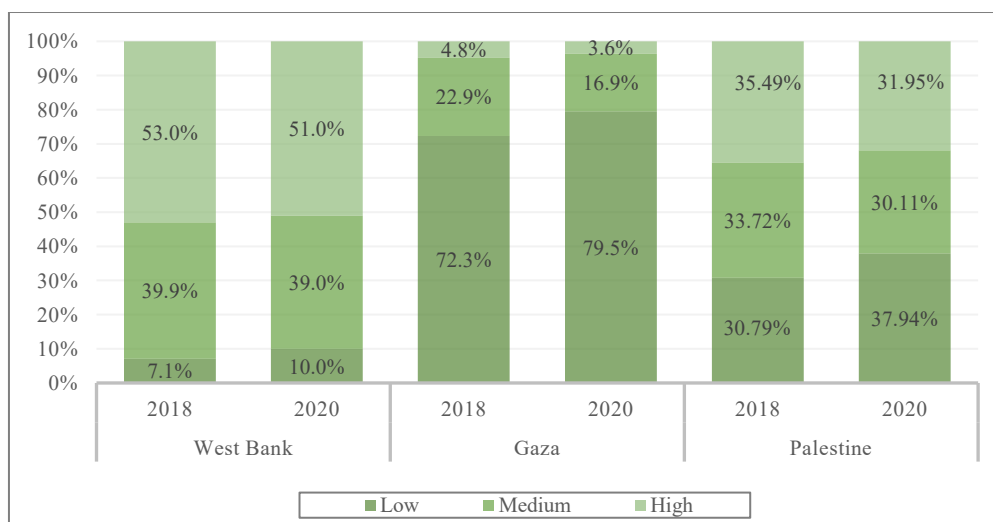


Table 2 documents the absolute changes in poverty incidence in the West Bank and Gaza between 2018 and 2020. There is an increase in deep poverty and poverty in the Gaza Strip and a decrease in the same groups in the West Bank between 2019 and 2020. For the non-poor group, there was an increase in absolute change between 2018 and 2020 in the West Bank and a decrease of 4.92 in Gaza for the same period.

Table 2: Absolute Changes in Poverty Incidence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 2018-2020

Poverty Group	Absolute change 2018-2020	
	West Bank	Gaza Strip
Deep poor	-1.02%	2.29%
Poor (but not deep poor)	-1.69%	2.63%
Non-poor	2.71%	-4.92%

10. Conclusion

To summarize, this analysis examines the temporal changes in the components of food security in Palestine and its two main regions. At the national level, poverty incidence remained stable over the reporting period, resilience declined, and the extent of moderate food deprivation increased. The decrease in the share of food secure households can be explained by the growth of moderate food deprivation, while the increase in moderate and severe food security can be attributed to the decrease in resilience over the period. The COVID-19 pandemic may influence these outcomes through numerous channels, namely the higher cost of foodstuffs, lower food availability due to supply chain disruption, lower access to basic services like water and electricity and loss of income due to lockdowns.¹¹

In the West Bank, the change in food security status between 2018 and 2020 can be attributed primarily to the change in food deprivation: the increase in moderate food deprivation corresponds with the shift in share from the food secure category to the marginally food secure category. As for the Gaza Strip, all the determinants of food security suggest poor and worsening conditions for households, which is manifested in the widespread and intensifying food insecurity situation. Compared to the West Bank, the COVID-19 pandemic compounded many of the existing vulnerabilities underlying food security conditions in the Gaza Strip, such as the Israeli blockade and resultant humanitarian crisis, and an unemployment rate more than double that of the West Bank.¹² These existing systematic weaknesses may explain the relatively larger deterioration in all the determinants of food security in the Gaza Strip in 2020 compared to the West Bank.

¹¹ [See Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute \(MAS\), 2021. Comprehensive Response to Socio-economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Palestine under Occupation, Pillar 2.](#)

¹² *Idem.*