



HelpAge

International

Country profile:

The rights and wellbeing of older persons in the State of Palestine

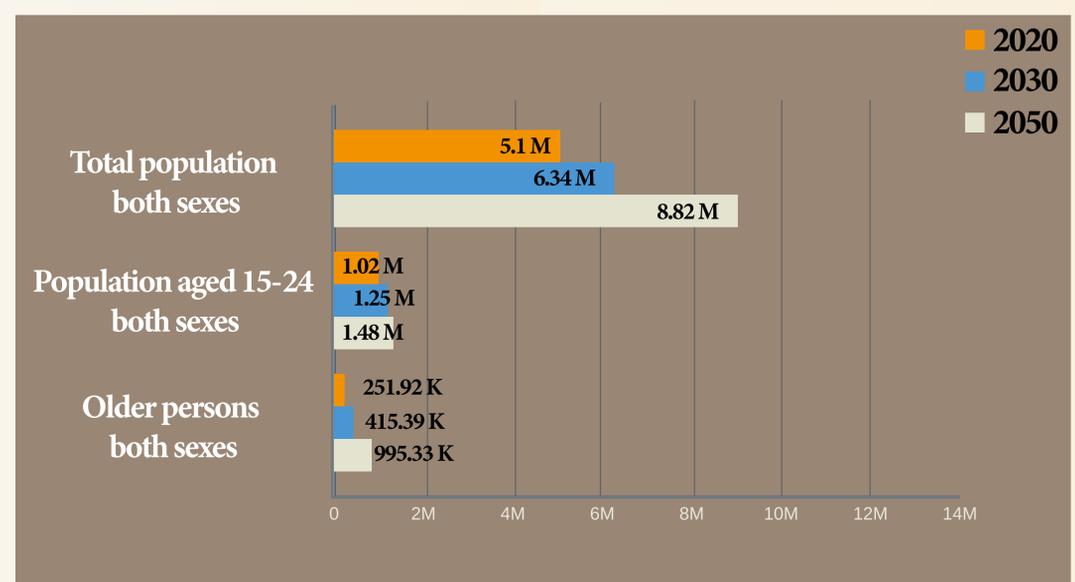
This infographic is part of the set of country profiles on ageing across the Arab region. Drawing on the latest openly available data from 2015 - 2020, it highlights the situation of older women and men¹ in relation to income, health, education, autonomy and safety, and how national systems and national strategies on ageing address their needs and their rights in these areas. These country profiles aim to help examine the progress towards older persons' inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to identify opportunities to strengthen national strategies and data.²



GENERAL CONTEXT

Number and proportion of older and younger persons, 2020 - 2050^{3 i}

Palestine is going through a demographic transition as the number of persons aged 60+ is expected to quadruple between 2020 - 2050 from 251,916 (5% of the total population) to 995,325 (11%). Over the same period, the number of persons aged 15 - 24 will increase 1.5 times.

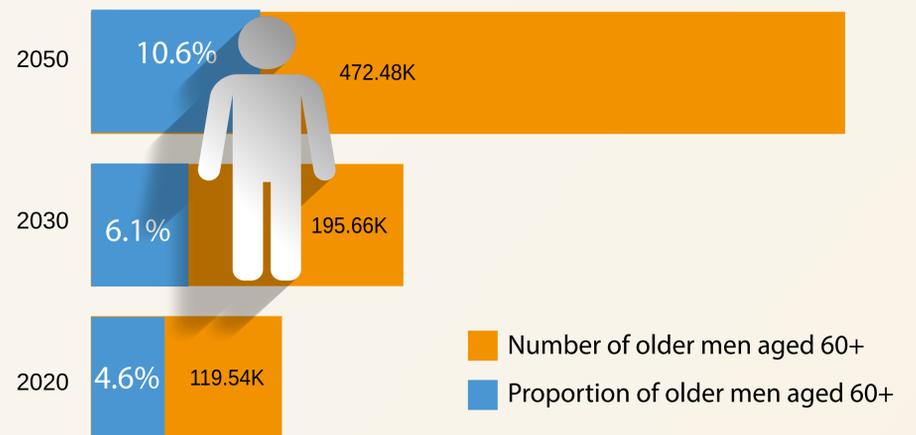
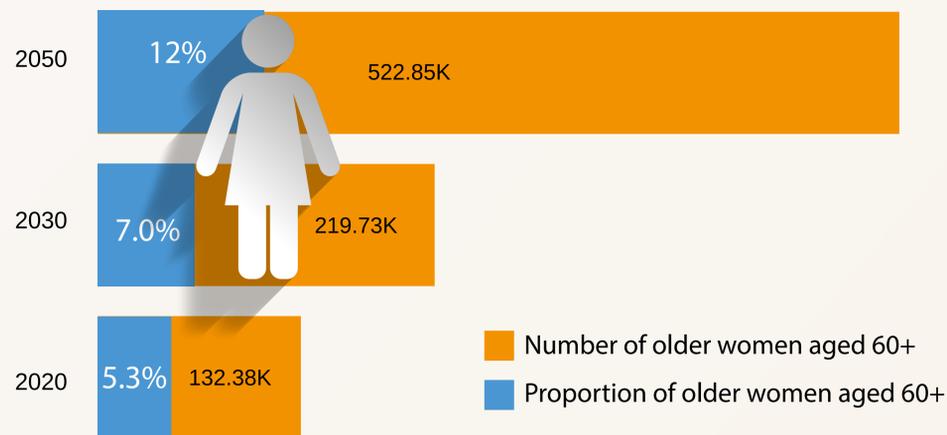
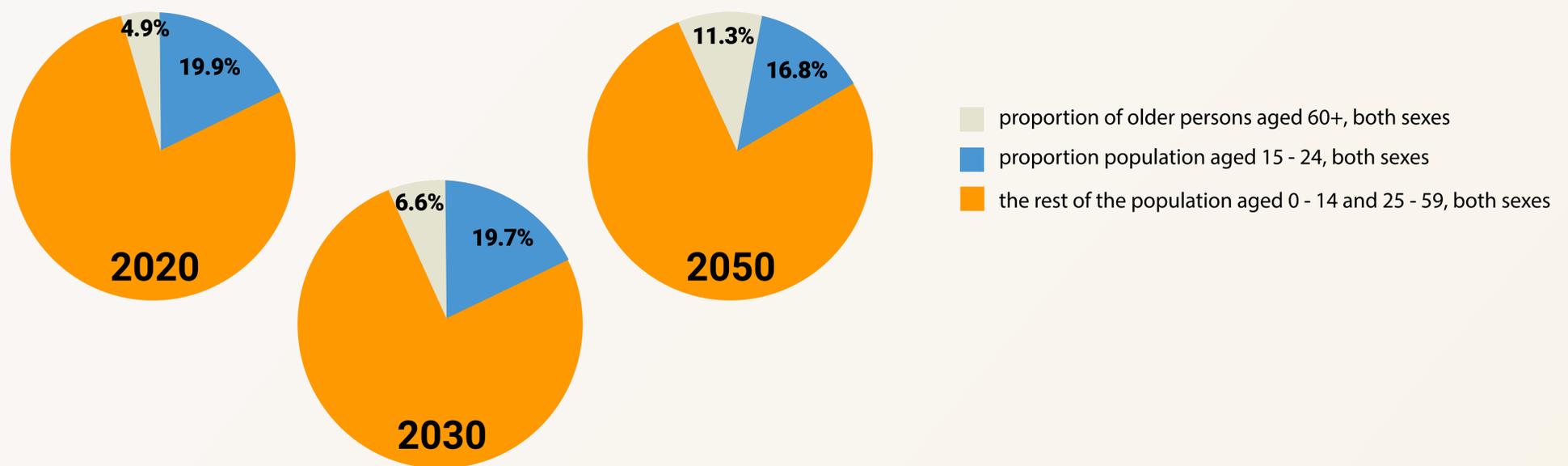


To assess the policy response to ageing, the profile examines the National Strategic Plan for older people sector in Palestine 2021 - 2026.

¹ For statistical purposes, 'older person' is defined as an individual aged 60 and over.

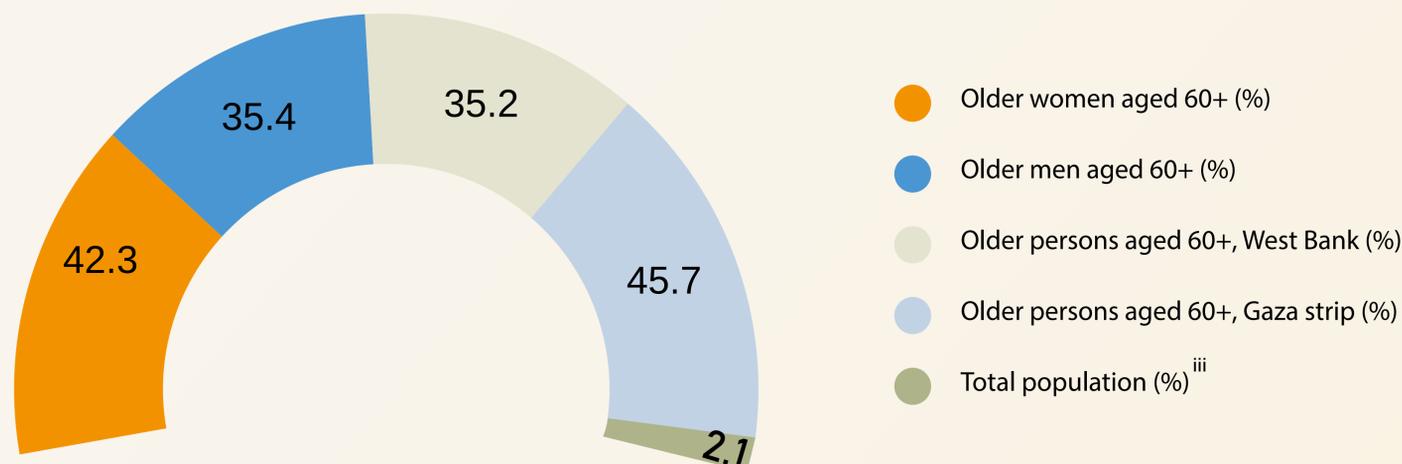
² The profiles were prepared by HelpAge International. The profiles do not reflect the views of UNFPA and any errors are attributed to the researchers.

³ Proportion of older women (men) is defined as the percentage of women (men) aged 60 and over of the women (men) of all ages. Throughout the profile some of the indicators are expressed as 'proportion of older persons/women/men'. Such indicators should be interpreted as a percentage of persons/women/men aged 60 and over of the respected population group, unless expressed otherwise. For example, '9.3% of older men have a disability' means that of all men aged 60 and over 9.3 per cent have a disability.



Proportion of older persons with disabilitiesⁱⁱ

Disability rates increase with age as 42% of women and 35% of men aged 60 and over have limited functional ability compared with 2% of the total population. To ensure every individual is able to lead an independent and dignified life at any age, and communities can benefit from the demographic dividend,⁴ national policies and systems across all sectors must address the wellbeing and rights of individuals across the life course.⁵



Existence of national strategy on ageing^{iv} **YES**

Existence of national legislation and enforcement strategy against age-based discrimination^v **NO**

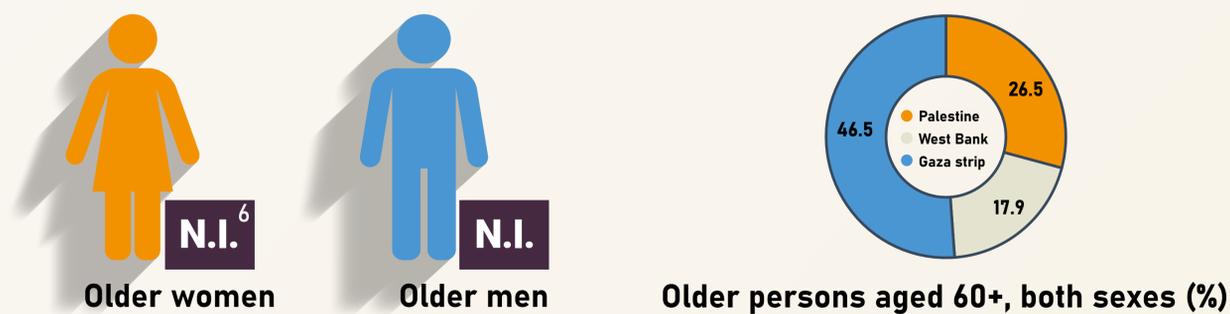
⁴ The demographic dividend is the economic growth resulting from the number of persons in employment exceeding the number of persons outside of the labour market. Demographic dividend, <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/topics/demographic-dividend-6>

⁵ Life course approach to policy recognises that individuals' roles, abilities, and needs are shaped by positive and negative experiences, and as we age these experiences accumulate. To mitigate immediate and long-term impacts of disadvantages, policies must consider how intersecting identities and varying forms of discrimination experienced across the life course can lead to individual 'being left behind'. Life course approach to ageing, <https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/life-course-approach-to-ageing/>

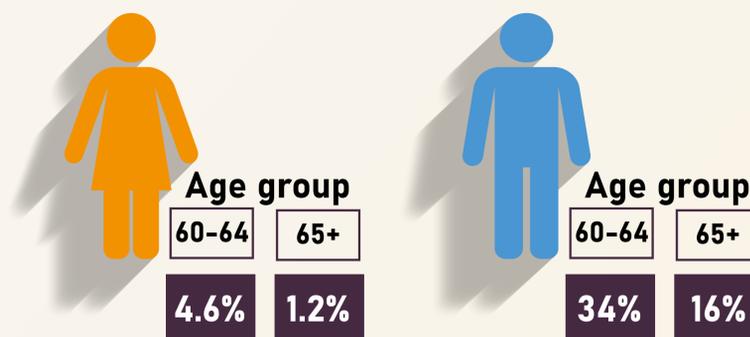
THE RIGHT TO SOCIAL PROTECTION, SOCIAL SECURITY, AND WORK

Nearly 27% of older Palestinians live in poverty, with significantly higher deprivation in the Gaza strip, 47%. Older persons, primarily men, continue to work past the retirement age, as 34% of men aged 60-64 and 16% of men aged 65 and older are in employment. The National Strategy on Ageing recognises an older person's right to social protection and pension so they can lead independent and dignified lives on an equal basis with others. However, only 66% of older adults have a pension, and the strategy does not define an adequate and reliable level of social protection or recognise the right of older persons to work when in receipt of a pension.

How many older persons live in poverty?^{vi}

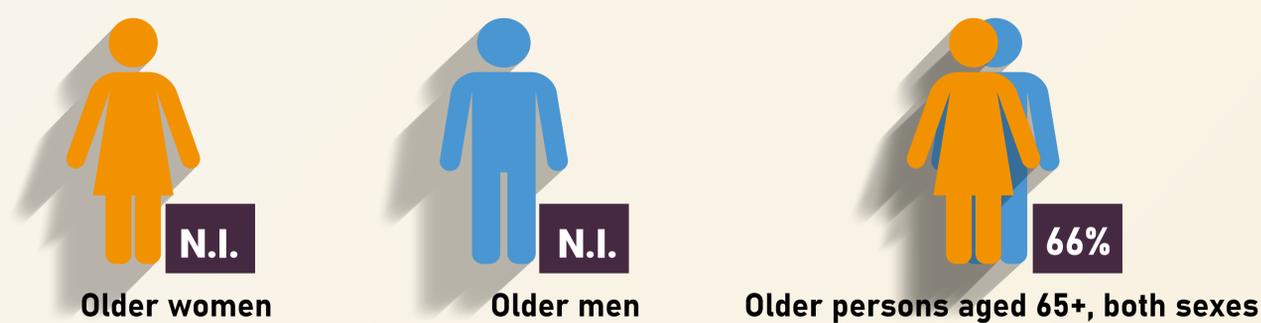


Who works in older age?^{vii}



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

Pension systems provide income security for all older persons^{viii}



⁶ n.i. - data or information is not available

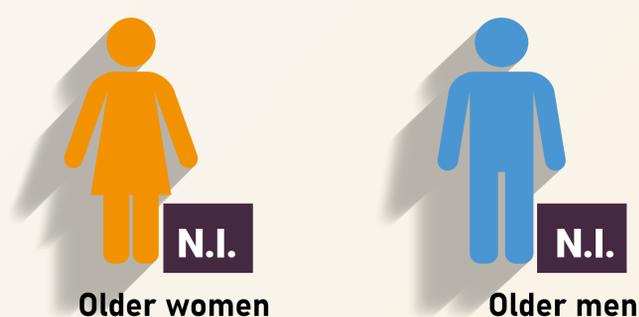
National strategy on ageing addresses:

- Social protection and social security systems which provide universal coverage **YES**
- Social protection and social security measures that are of a high enough value, quantity and quality, and for the full period of life **Partial (does not define adequate and reliable social protection)**
- Freedom from discrimination on the basis of age and other grounds in all matters related to employment **NO**
- Right to work when in receipt of a pension **NO**

THE RIGHT TO AUTONOMY, EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The data on the ability of older women and men to make their own decisions about their finances, health, family life and other aspects of their lives is not available. At the same time, the National Strategy does not acknowledge the right of older women and men to autonomy and legal capacity to make decisions over all aspects of their lives.

How much freedom of choice and control do older persons feel they have over their life?

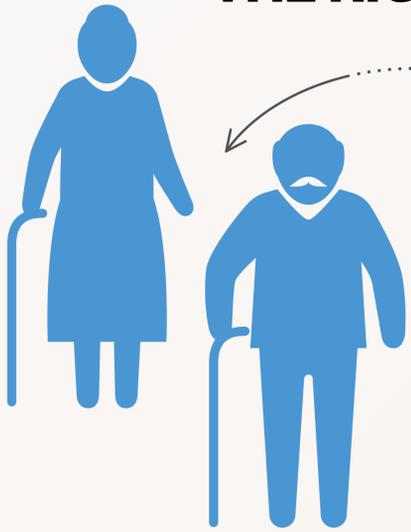


How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

National strategy on ageing addresses:

- Older persons' autonomy and independence over all aspects of their lives **NO**
- Enjoyment of legal capacity to make decisions, to determine life plans and to lead autonomous and independent lives **NO**

THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND NEGLECT

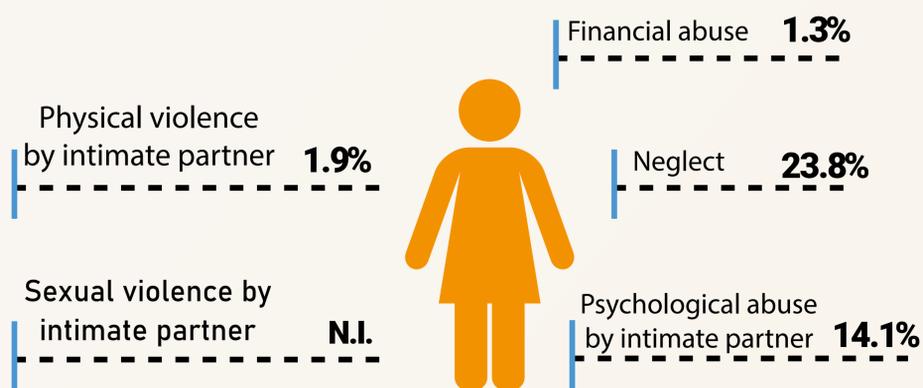


Neglect is the most prevalent type of abuse, registered in 24% of women aged 65 and over and 19% of men of the same age in 2019.

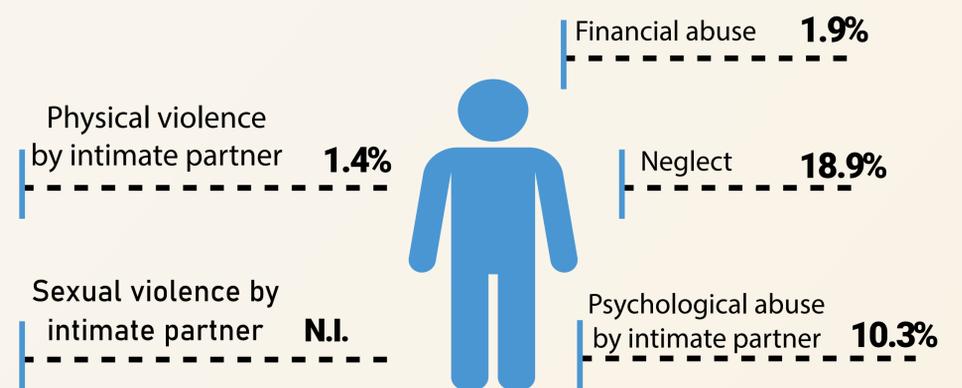
The National Strategy on Ageing commits to establish programs and mechanisms to protect older persons from all forms of violence, abuse, and neglect. However, it does not recognise the need for dissemination of timely and disaggregated statistics on the topic and does not address sexual violence against older women and men.

How many older persons have experienced violence, abuse or neglect?^{ix}

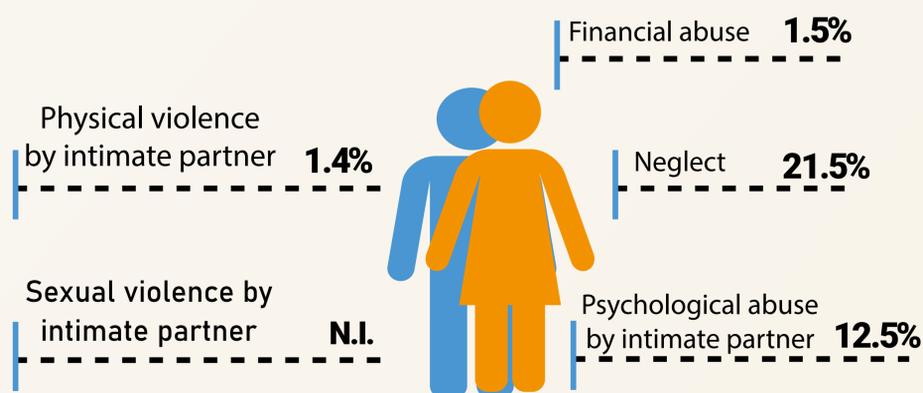
Women aged 65+ (%)



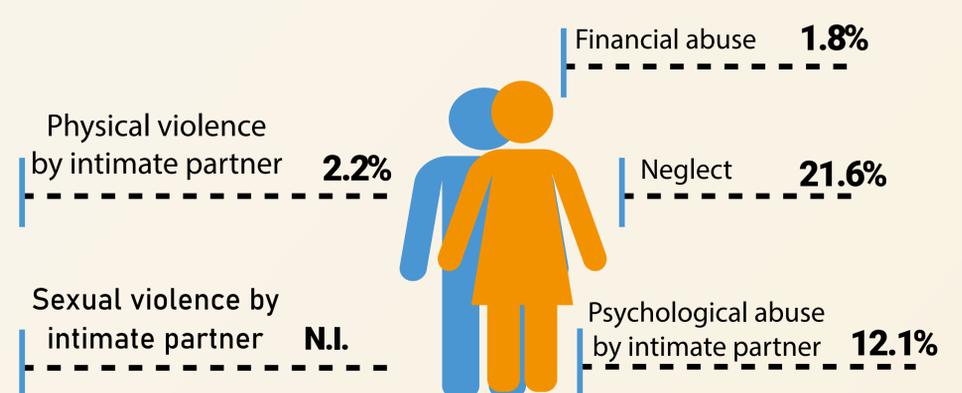
Men aged 65+ (%)



West Bank older persons aged 65+, both sexes (%)



Gaza strip older persons aged 65+, both sexes (%)



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

National strategy on ageing addresses:

- All forms of violence, abuse and neglect in public and private settings

Partial (does not specify public and private setting)

- Regular collection, analysis, utilisation and public dissemination of disaggregated information and statistics on all forms of violence, abuse and neglect

NO

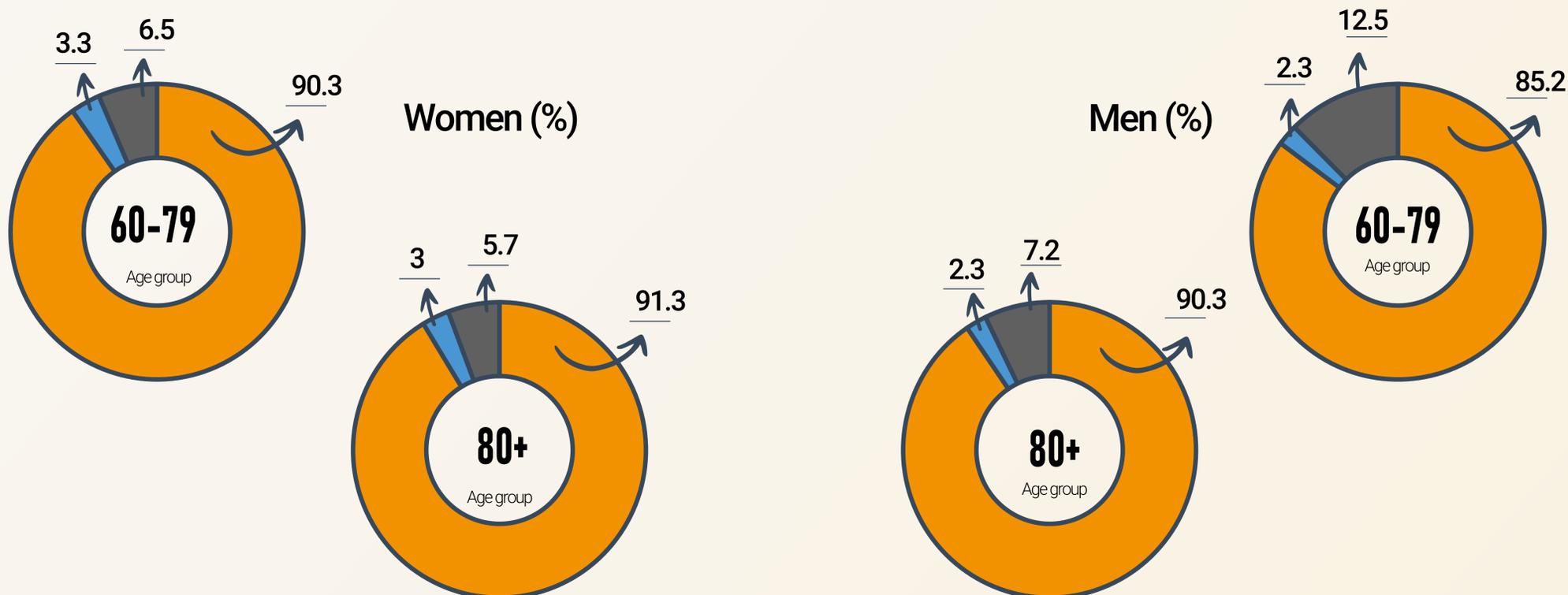
THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

Non-communicable diseases account for more than 85% of years lived with disabilities among older adults. Musculoskeletal disorders, diabetes and kidney diseases, and sense organ disease are leading causes of disability for both older women and men. The prevalence of diabetes among older persons is about 7 times higher than the population average.

The national health system and strategy support older persons' right to affordable and accessible essential care, as around 86% of older women and men have health insurance. However, there are geographic inequalities as 97% of older persons in the Gaza strip are covered by health insurance compared with 79% of older persons in the West Bank. Additionally, the National Strategy does not include provisions for integrated health and social care or palliative care. The Ministry of Health established a dedicated unit to advance healthy ageing.

What are the key causes of disability in older age?^{xii}

● Non-communicable diseases ● Communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases ● Injuries



How many older women and men have diabetes?^{xiii}

Age group	Women (%)	Men (%)
60-79	35.3	42.4
80+	37.0	43.5
All ages	4.8	5.7



How many older women and men have hypertension?^{xiv}

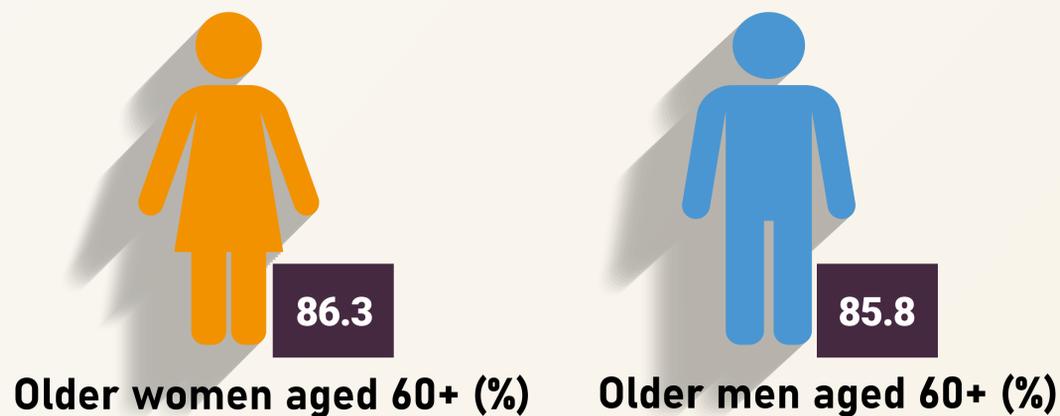
Older women	Older women	Older persons both sexes (%)
N.I.	N.I.	44.8



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

Health protection covers all older persons^{xv}

Proportion of older persons covered by any type of health insurance.



West Bank older persons aged 60+, both sexes (%)

79.4

Gaza strip older persons aged 60+, both sexes (%)

97.3

National strategy on ageing addresses:

- Continuum of quality and appropriate physical, mental and cognitive health services available and accessible to older persons and which deliver primary, secondary and tertiary health care integrated with care and support, wherever they may reside

Partial (doesn't include integration of health and social care)

- Holistic palliative care, including access to essential drugs and controlled medicines

NO

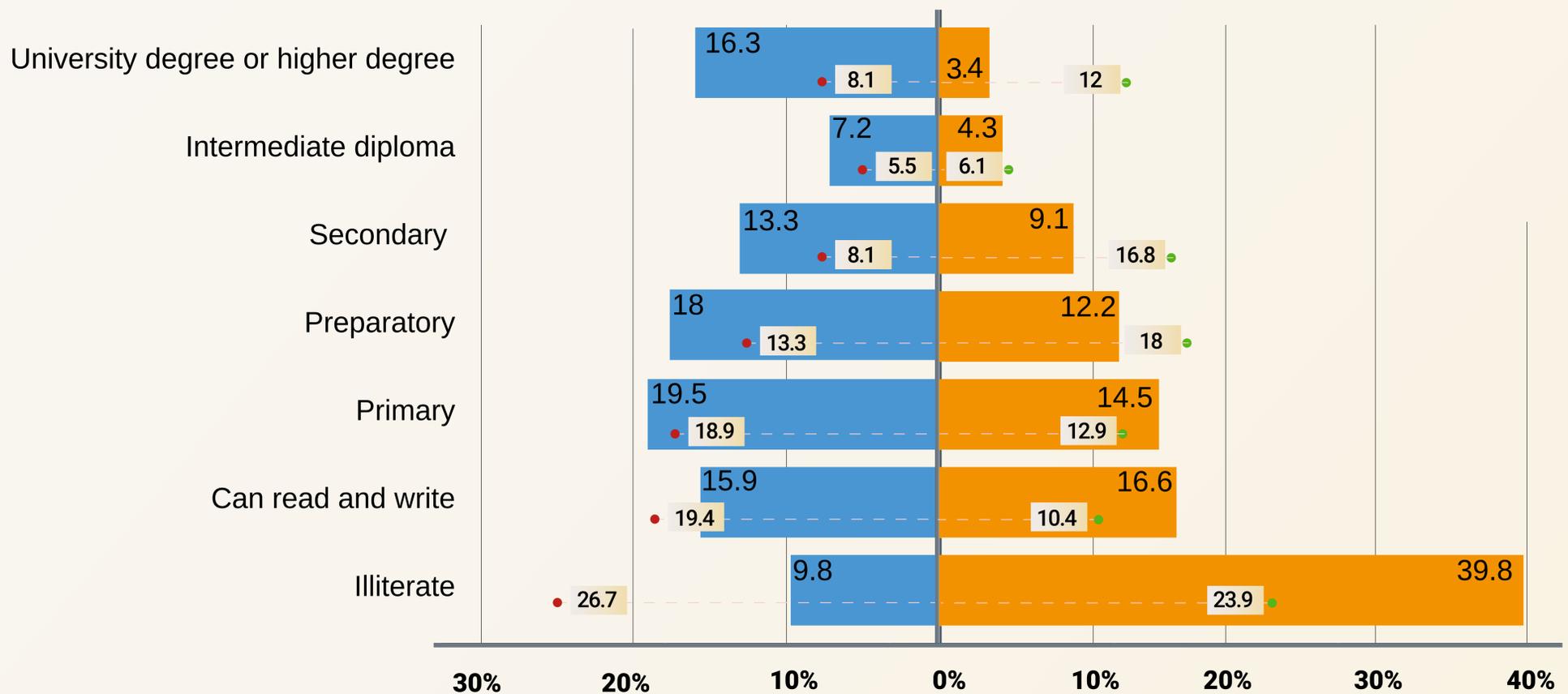
THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Nearly 40% of older women are illiterate, compared with 10% of older men. The gender gap exists across all levels of education. While the National Strategy identifies the need to develop literacy and professional training, it offers limited considerations for other types of education and lifelong learning opportunities, e.g., self, informal recreational and community-based education, as well as their affordability and accessibility.

How many older persons have an education?^{xvi}

Educational attainment of older persons by the highest level of education completed

- Older women aged 60+ (%)
- West Bank older persons aged 60+, both sexes (%)
- Older men aged 60+ (%)
- Gaza strip older persons aged 60+, both sexes (%)



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

National strategy on ageing addresses:

- All forms of lifelong learning, education and skill building^{xvii}
Partial (focus on literacy and professional training)
- Learning opportunities adapted to the specific needs of older persons
Partial (focus on adapting professional training to experiences, skills, and health status of older persons)
- Lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities that are affordable and financially accessible
NO

The review of statistics published during 2015 - 2019 by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and UN agencies shows that data on older women and men is collected across various socio-economic indicators. However, a number of barriers to better data on ageing limit our understanding of the diverse needs of older women and men, and hinders our ability to monitor progress on their rights:

- when data is collected it is not always fully analysed or disaggregated. For example, data on poverty and pension coverage are reported for a single population cohort aged 60 and over, and is not further disaggregated in terms of age, sex, and disability.
- there are data gaps on sexual violence against older women and men, older persons' enjoyment of the right to autonomy and independence, and the wellbeing of older persons with disabilities.

In addition to concerted efforts to close data gaps and provide consistent analysis and reporting of data by age, sex, and disability, there is a need for a specialised survey to build more in-depth and comprehensive evidence on ageing and the situation of older persons.

NOTES

- i United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019). World Population Prospects 2019, Online Edition. Rev. 1. Excel files used: Population by broad age groups – male, population by broad age groups – female, percentage by broad age groups – male, percentage by broad age groups – female. <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/> Accessed 17 May 2021
- ii Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020, Status of the Older people and their care requirements in Palestine, Table 12 Percentage of individuals (60+) who have a disability by type of disability, region and sex, 2017. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2533.pdf>
- iii Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Characteristics of Individuals with Disabilities in Palestine, Table 3 Prevalence of disability in the Palestinian Population according to the disability and difficulty definitions by type and region (%), 2017. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2532.pdf>
- iv The profile covers information from The National Strategic Plan for older people sector in Palestine 2021-2026
- v The Palestinian Basic Law of 2002 protects human rights and prohibits discrimination. Article 9 stipulates that Palestinians shall be equal before the law and the judiciary, without distinction based upon race, sex, colour, religion, political views or disability. Article 10 affirms that human rights and fundamental freedoms are binding and must be respected. However, the Law does not explicitly prohibit age-based discrimination. The information for this indicator might be updated subject to data received from the WHO Maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and ageing data portal.
- vi Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020, Status of the Older people and their care requirements in Palestine, Figure 11 Poverty rate among the elderly by region, 2017. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2533.pdf>
- vii ILOSTAT explorer, Employment-to-population ratio by sex and age (%) – Annual, 2020. <https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer52/> Accessed 1 June 2021
- viii UNDESA, the Global SDG Indicators Database, SDG 1.3.1, Proportion of population above statutory pensionable age receiving a pension, by sex (%), 2020. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/> Accessed 10 May 2021
- ix Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019, Preliminary results of the violence survey in the Palestinian Society. Table: Percentages of the elderly (65+) who experienced a type of abuse by a household member throughout the 12 months preceding the interview by region, sex and type of abuse, violence, 2019, p.32. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2480.pdf>
- x Percentage of individuals who have never been married (18 - 64) and experienced violence by a household member throughout the 12 months preceding the interview, by sex and type of violence.
- xi Neglect in the Palestinian survey is defined as a medical neglect, when an individual is unable to take his/her medicine by himself/herself or household members do not assist him/her to take his/her medicine when needed.
- xii Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 (GBD 2019) Results. Seattle, United States: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), 2020. Years lived with disabilities 2019. Available from <http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool> Accessed 16 May 2021

- xiii **Ibid. Prevalence of diabetes mellitus 2019**
- xiv **Palestinian Ministry of Health, 2018, Chronic conditions report. Figure 5 Distribution of hypertensive patients by age, 2018.**
- xv **Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020, Status of the elderly and their care requirements in Palestine, Table 14 Percentage distribution of individuals (60+) by availability of health insurance, type and region, 2017. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2533.pdf>**
- xvi **Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020, Status of the elderly and their care requirements in Palestine, Table 8 Percentage distribution of individuals (60+) by gender, region, and educational status, 2017. <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2533.pdf>**
- xvii **This includes tertiary education, vocational training, digital and new technology-based education, adult education, self, informal recreational and community-based education, lifelong learning programmes, legal literacy, and skills training in literacy, numeracy and technological competences. HelpAge International and UNFPA (2020)**

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