

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): More Than 830,000 Children Return to School in the West Bank, Including East Jerusalem, Amid Insecurity and Access Challenges

13 September 2026 - UNICEF

- More than 830,000 children are returning to school across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, this week, marking the beginning of a new school year amid escalating threats to their rights to safety and access to education.
- Violence, displacement, movement restrictions, and incidents affecting schools and surrounding communities are disrupting the ability of thousands of children to access and continue their education safely.
- During the first half of 2026, the Education Cluster documented a total of 224 education-related incidents across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. These include incidents that occurred inside or near schools, as well as incidents affecting students on their way to or from school.

These incidents directly affected:

152 schools
20,450 students
859 education personnel

across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

Edouard Beigbeder, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa:

"Far too many children face uncertainty about whether they will be able to reach their classrooms safely, whether their schools will remain open, or whether displacement will force them out of education altogether. The start of a new school year should bring children excitement and opportunity, but for some children, there will be no return to school."

- Ten Palestinian children were killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, during the summer break, from June through the first week of September 2026.
- Since the beginning of the year, more than 1,700 Palestinian children have been displaced as a result of settler violence, access and movement restrictions, and administrative demolitions.
- Displacement not only uproots children from their homes but can also separate them from their schools, teachers, friends, and the support networks essential to their education and well-being.
- Even temporary disruptions to education can have long-term consequences, particularly for children already living under prolonged and continuous stress.

- UNICEF and its partners are working across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, to provide remedial and catch-up education programmes, psychosocial support, transportation services, and protection measures.
- UNICEF also provides support through education-linked cash assistance, legal assistance, school rehabilitation, and efforts to restore safe learning environments.
- UNICEF stressed the need to protect children's right to education, emphasizing that schools must remain safe and accessible, and that children and teachers must be able to reach them without fear, violence, or obstruction.
- UNICEF called for the protection of all Palestinian children, including ensuring their access to education.
- It further emphasized the need to respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and to protect every child's right to education and to a safe future.
- The data concerning education-related incidents in the West Bank are based on the West Bank Education-Related Incidents Report for the First Half of 2026 (January-June 2026).

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