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The impact of Gaza War and Closure of Main Crossings on the Clothing and Footwear Stores in Bethlehem Governorate

Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce and Industry is preparing reports that analyze the repercussions of the Gaza War and the closure of main crossings on various economic activities in Bethlehem Governorate. This report, prepared during the period between November 4th to November 8th, 2023, specifically focuses on evaluating the impact on the clothing and footwear stores. The comprehensive non-regular purposive sample included 30 establishments, representing 27% of the study community, comprising 112 establishments from BCCI General Assembly members at various locations in the governorate.

➤ Summary of Results and Recommendations:

1. Total Sales Volume Decrease in October 2023 by 86% Compared to September 2023:

Results indicated that 60% of the clothing and footwear stores **included** in the report experienced a sales decline in October, ranging between 90% and 100% when compared to September 2023. As for 33% of the stores, Sales witnessed a decrease from 70% to 85%, while 7% reported sales reduction of less than 50% for the same comparative period.

2. Average Workforce Reduction by 53%:

Results showed that 53% of the establishments in the sample reduced their workforce to varying extents, while 47% of the establishments maintained the same number of employees, implementing a rotation system among workers and reducing working hours.

➤ Key Challenges Impacting Clothing and Footwear Stores:

1. A complete cessation of customers from Jerusalem and the 1948 territories due to border closures and difficulty accessing Bethlehem.
2. **The** Consideration of clothing and footwear as secondary goods by consumers.
3. Cash liquidity reduction among consumers due to high demand for purchasing food and essential goods.
4. Difficulty in movement and transportation between governorates **impacting the** supply of winter goods to stores.
5. Delay in goods arrival and congestion at the port, particularly notable as, most of products are imported from China, Turkey, and Italy.



تأسست سنة ١٩٥٢

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6. %57 of the establishments in the surveyed report incur monthly rental expense, while 43% **of the stores** are owned by the shop holders.
7. Cancellation of most events, activities, and social occasions.
8. **Frequent strikes**

Note: Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce and Industry retains detailed responses from the sample included in the study.