



# THE ANATOMY OF POVERTY

Alternative Poverty Report | 22<sup>nd</sup> Edition | Israel at War 2024



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# The Day After: The Audacity of Hope

**Gilles Darmon, President and Founder of Latet**

The shock of the war and the unprecedented crisis that our society is going through require us to rethink how it is functioning, as well as the values by which we want to reshape it. The existential crisis we are facing leaves no doubt regarding the justification and necessity of such a course of action.

Above all, “the day after” requires us to mourn the old world, the one we knew before October 7, while concurrently inventing the world of tomorrow despite the uncertainty, anger, and pain we feel.

This new society will require, above all, an urgent healing of our wounds:

Rebuilding the infrastructure, public services, and social fabric of the towns and kibbutzim.

Restoring citizens’ trust in the country’s ability to guarantee their security and well-being.

Rehabilitating the minds and bodies of families affected by the war, of soldiers injured in combat or in the towns, and of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of post-trauma victims who currently reside in our country.

Addressing the profound democratic crisis that is driving division and conflict among our citizens.

And finally, addressing the social injustice faced by over two million people living in poverty, whose suffering has worsened by the devastating effects of war and inflation.

The task seems overwhelming, since we have to manage this project at a time when a significant portion of the state’s resources are allocated towards security purposes, and this will continue for many years to come. Concurrently, philanthropy, which took upon itself to deal with a large portion of the shock of October 7 in the first weeks of the war, is reaching the limits of its capabilities, the polarization in Israeli society and the democratic crisis almost eliminating any hope for consensus or even achieving a relative majority on the key issues that are destabilizing our country.

Given the scope of this task, we are faced with a choice: to give up, or to up our sleeves and outline society’s defining features, which will allow us to add another miracle to the long list of miracles that led to the establishment and existence of the State of Israel.

To begin this process of redefining Israeli society, I suggest drawing inspiration from the energy, camaraderie, and hope that characterized the early days of the war, and from how the majority of Israeli society, the “grassroots”, amazed us with their actions - our soldiers and reservists fighting shoulder to shoulder against the enemy, or the home front, with thousands of aid initiatives that sprang up almost immediately throughout the country and undoubtedly saved us from collapse.

The common denominator of this amazing response is the same caring for others that spread throughout our country at the moment of truth, and it allowed us to rise again as a nation and cope - the concern for a fellow soldier or for the hostages’ families, the concern for the wounded or for the displaced citizens, for individuals or for those abandoned by the system.

Bringing these values to life even beyond the war can also be the key to the new model. We should imagine and build a society based on empathy. A society that prioritizes caring for others. A society of camaraderie, based primarily on values of solidarity and responsibility, that’s what Latet stands for. A society that is capable of listening. A society that is capable of understanding a narrative that

differs from its own, a society guided by the aspiration for social justice and mutual assistance. And finally, a model of a society that is capable of providing the Israeli people with the solace they so desperately need.

This principle of solidarity as a moral compass in governing the country can be immediately implemented by redefining of the state budget. In a modern country, the allocation of the national budget clearly reflects the principle of solidarity, as it involves using everyone's economic contribution (our taxes) for the collective benefit of all.

But for too long, the state budget has been generating injustice when it demands, relatively speaking, a greater effort from the less privileged strata than from the more affluent ones. The planned VAT increase, set for 2025, which will impact both the wealthy and the poor equally, is a prime example of this. While the need to reallocate resources to finance the war effort may be non-negotiable, in practice, it disproportionately harms the most vulnerable, creating a deeply difficult situation to accept.

It is possible to stop this injustice. There are topics that are taboo, and it's enough to change some of them to avoid such a situation. This will require our elected officials to demonstrate leadership, make real decisions, and be willing to be unpopular for the sake of the country's survival and to restore some social justice.

Among other things, we can cancel the universality that applies to social benefits and not grant them anymore to affluent families, for whom these benefits are only a marginal resource, while for low-income families they are much more significant. We can abolish the absurd principle of transversal budget cuts, which stem from a blatant social blindness and complete lack of political courage, which manifest in the refusal to take the necessary budgetary steps to promote any form of social justice.

And finally, it is crucial to boost the call for collective solidarity by proposing new taxes, temporary or not, and to trust that the population will understand the gravity of the times. For example, according to studies, a gradual return of inheritance tax will provide the state treasury with an additional income of between 2-5 billion NIS.

At the cost of harming these "sacred cows", our leaders can demonstrate political courage and expedite the empathy revolution we are calling for.

A small note, but one that has a great impact: This model will undoubtedly succeed only if all elements of Israeli society do their part with responsibility and solidarity in this project, and if all those seeking to fan the flames of despair, anger, and division, stop their socially destructive work. I'm sure that in the end, they will only be a small minority.

# The Total Loss

**Eran Weintrob, CEO of Latet**

Israel was dragged into an existential war that already started a few years ago. The spread of polarizing and divisive hate speech began to form cracks, the judicial reform and fundamental conflicts around core values like the Conscription Law, divided us into two camps. And the catastrophe of October 7, which has gone on for over a year, has left us in shock, bleeding and in pain, with a bleak view of the future.

Alongside the military war on several fronts and the internal ethical and ideological conflicts, which symbolize the escalating struggle over the image and identity of Israeli society, we need to remember that there is another difficult war of attrition that has already been waging for thirty years, in between and during the military wars. The war on poverty. This war does not have a conscripted army, or an emergency call-up order, or procurement budget, nor is there a strategy or programs and goals, and there is no cabinet that will discuss courses of action, or policies pertaining to the day after. Nor is there even a real enemy, or victors. But there are losers. Approximately 2.76 million of them. The poor. And although there are no dead casualties, there are a lot of injured ones. Physically and mentally. Mainly children, single parents, families with many children in the geographic and social periphery, Holocaust survivors and “just” elderly in need, whose reality in routine and emergency is a constant struggle for survival.

When a military war breaks out and the economy is sent reeling, there are dramatic economic consequences. The high cost of the military conflict and the requisite lengthy rehabilitation process with inflation in the background, fear of a recession, high interest rates, and a spike in the prices of food and consumers goods, brings us to the brink of an economic crisis. This is reflected in the alternative poverty line, which is 5,355 NIS per capita and 13,617 NIS per family, far from the National Insurance Institute's poverty line. For the lower deciles and the disadvantaged populations, this has destructive implications. The situation of those in need is worsening, poverty is deepening, and the strain is pushing many families to the brink. Almost surprisingly, the scope of poverty and nutritional insecurity are still immense, but have remained stable this year. This can be attributed to civil society, which launched a campaign to mitigate the damage, securing over a billion NIS in aid that reached those in need. Additionally, government stipends for displaced citizens, reservists, and businesses also provided some support to disadvantaged communities. It could have been much worse, and it probably still will be, as soon as the government and civilian interventions get back to their routine scope and possibly even lower than that.

Concurrently, new prisoners are being taken in this war. For some, the crisis will be temporary, until they manage to get back on their feet. Others will be buried in a pit of debt and hardship that will be almost impossible to escape, and slip into poverty. Tens of thousands in the lower middle class are at risk of this, since they cannot afford the cost of living, and their quality of life is being severely eroded. While the possibility of meeting the basic needs required to get by is reflected in the minimal cost of living, the normative cost of living of 8,665 NIS per capita and 22,181 NIS per household, which expresses the ability to purchase services and products like extracurricular activities for children or supplemental health insurance, demonstrates the vulnerability of the Israeli middle class. The fact that only the upper deciles can afford it, reflects the large disparities among us, and highlights the challenge in living a decent life, which most of the population is grappling with.

Israeli governments have shown little concern for the poor, a reality made clear by the national budget, which reveals that distributive justice is not a priority. The largest portion of the budget will be allocated to the security system, even in times when there is no conflict, while coalition funds, political considerations, and minimal investment in social issues remains persistent. Not only did the government not allocate designated funding for essential needs through the aid organizations during the war, but rather approved an anti social budget that includes harsh cuts that will harm the disadvantaged, predominantly the anticipated increase in VAT by at least 1%, freezing benefits for children, increasing the National Insurance Institute payments, and probably a sharp cut in all the government services. The Ministry of Finance's narrative that "everyone will shoulder the cuts" matches the reality to the same degree as "everyone will shoulder the burden". The current situation harms the disadvantaged and the employed on one hand, and those serving in the military on the other hand. Total victory may not be achievable on the military front, but some sort of victory is necessary, simply because we have no other choice. This is an existential war. Internal resilience and core values like solidarity and mutual responsibility are essential for sustaining the Zionist enterprise. The fight against poverty is not just a social issue - it is a matter of survival for the hundreds of thousands of families struggling with it. On this battlefield, to date, we seem to be experiencing a total loss.



## About the Report and its Aims

This is the 22nd edition of The Alternative Poverty Report, which reflects the current trends pertaining to poverty and nutritional insecurity in Israel 2024 in the shadow of war. The report is an alternative and comprehensive tool for understanding the various and complex aspects of poverty.

The snapshot presented in the report relies on five supplemental studies and their integration:

- The aid recipients study - documenting the day-to-day reality of individuals and families receiving aid from Latet's partner food NGOs
- Aid trends among the food NGOs - reflecting reality through the perspective of the social organizations that provide aid
- Publics perceptions survey - an examination of the general public's perceptions about poverty and social inequalities in Israel, and the responsibility for dealing with these issues, including during times of crisis
- The Multidimensional Poverty Index - a tool for measuring the scope of poverty in Israeli society by examining scarcity in five main dimensions of life
- Cost of living estimate - an in-depth examination of the minimal cost required for basic living, and of the cost of normative living in Israel

The report is published by Latet in order to give Israeli society an in-depth and authentic look at what it means to live in poverty. While public awareness of poverty is mainly shaped through the media or through cultural paradigms and common perceptions, the report offers an up-close look at the complex reality of living in hardship, methodologically describes the impact and significance of living in poverty, and details the causes and barriers that make it difficult to escape from.

Alongside exposing the complex reality of a life in poverty, the report is meant to be a tool to exert pressure on decision makers, so that they fulfill their responsibility to the welfare of the country's citizens and act systematically and staunchly to minimize poverty and social inequalities. The planned economic steps in the 2025 budget - raising VAT, increasing National Insurance payments, freezing the tax brackets and children's benefits, raising water, electricity, and municipal tax (Arnona) prices - make it difficult for everyone, but are expected to exacerbate the hardship, especially among disadvantaged populations.

During this national crisis, when security and economic challenges intensify, the report is a critical reminder that we must not forget about the poor. It calls upon the Israeli government, alongside coping with the current challenges, to allocate appropriate resources, formulate a comprehensive plan of action, and establish a designated national body to fight poverty. These are vital steps in this challenging time, when the concern for vulnerable and disadvantaged populations of society needs to be a cornerstone in the State of Israel's resilience.

# Key Data

## The Multidimensional Poverty Index



Households living in poverty

**678,200**

**22.3%**



Individuals living in poverty

**2,756,000**

**28.7%**



Children living in poverty

**1,240,000**

**39.6%**

## The Cost of Living in Israel



Per  
capita

Minimal cost of living

2024

**5,355 NIS**

2023

**5,028 NIS**

Normative cost of living

**8,665 NIS**

**8,597 NIS**



Per  
household\*

Minimal cost of living

2024

**13,617 NIS**

2023

**12,735 NIS**

Normative cost of living

**22,181 NIS**

**22,009 NIS**

The minimal cost of living grew by 6.5% per capita and 6.9% per household compared to 2023

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Additional annual expense of around 4,000 NIS per capita and around 10,500 NIS per household

\* Two parents and two children

## Living Conditions

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### Cost of Living

#### 10,367 NIS

The average aid recipient household has a monthly expenditure of 10,367 NIS, which is 1.7 times greater than its average net income of 6,092 NIS

#### 78.8%

78.8% of the aid recipient households have some form of debt, compared to 26.9% of the general population

#### 65%

The financial situation of 65% of the aid recipients has worsened this past year

#### 23.2%

Only 23.2% of the aid recipients estimate that in ten years their situation will improve, and they will no longer experience economic hardship

### Housing

#### 69.5%

69.5% of aid recipients had to forgo essential home repairs due to financial reasons

#### 61.3%

61.3% of the aid recipients state that they or their children were embarrassed to invite guests over because of their housing conditions and economic hardship (12.4% in the general population)

### Energy Poverty

#### 84.8%

According to the energy scarcity estimate, 84.8% of the aid recipients experience energy scarcity, and 33.7% experience severe energy scarcity

#### 22.1%

22.1% of the aid recipients were cut off from electricity in the past year because they couldn't pay their bills

## Nutritional Insecurity

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#### 680,500

680,500 (21.1%) families in Israel live in nutritional insecurity, 325,700 (10.1%) in severe nutritional insecurity. More than one third (34.1%) of children in Israel live in nutritional insecurity

#### 80%

80% of aid recipients reported that the food they purchased was insufficient, and they lacked the financial means to buy more

## 50.5%

Around half (50.5%) of the aid recipient parents were forced to forgo infant formula or to give less than the recommended amount due to their financial situation, compared to 12% of the general population

## 2,348 NIS

The average expenditure on food among aid recipients is 2,348 NIS and comprises 38.5% of their income

## Education

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### 46.7%

46.7% of aid recipients reported that their children's mental health was severely impacted by the war- a rate 3.2 times higher than that of the general population (14.5%)

### 22.8%

Around one fifth of the aid recipients report that at least one of their children dropped out of school (22.8%) or was forced to transfer to a boarding school due to their economic hardship (18.9%)

### 44.6%

The academic achievements of 44.6% of the aid recipients' children were adversely affected as a result of the war to a large or very large degree, compared to 14.1% of children in the general population

### 84.7%

84.7% had to forgo enrichment activities at school, trips and participation in youth movements and organizations for their children because they couldn't afford to pay for them, compared to 30.9% of the general population

## Health and Resilience

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### 49.1%

49.1% of aid recipients reported a decline or significant decline in their health since the war, compared to 17.6% of the general population

### 70.8%

70.8% of the aid recipients were forced to forgo buying medication or necessary medical care in the past year

### 68.6%

68.6% of the aid recipients feel that their mental health is not so good or poor, 2.5 times the general population (27.7%)

### 79.5%

79.5% of the aid recipients are coping with chronic diseases and with various health conditions, compared to 45.5% of the general population

### 86.4%

86.4% of the aid recipients who reported that they required psychological assistance were forced to forgo it

### 63.7%

63.7% of aid recipients exhibit low levels of personal resilience, more than double the rate of the general population (28.3%)

## Social and Occupational Security

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**79.8%**

79.8% of the aid recipient households (of employment age) have at least one wage earner

**83%**

83% of the working aid recipients are employed at an hourly or daily wage, and 38.8% don't work a set number of hours or days

**51.2%**

51.2% of the aid recipients state that a health condition prevents them, to a large or very large degree, from working or improving their employment status

**66%**

Two thirds (66%) of all aid recipients feel they are highly dependent on the financial assistance of external bodies

## The Elderly

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**81.7%**

According to Latet's poverty estimate, 81.7% of elderly aid recipients live in poverty, with 52.6% classified as living in severe poverty

**60.4%**

60.4% of the elderly aid recipients had to forgo buying medication or medical care because they couldn't afford it

**34.8%**

More than one third (34.8%) of the elderly aid recipients suffer from severe nutritional insecurity

**57.9%**

57.9% of the elderly aid recipients have debt, 26.2% of whom owe more than 50,000 NIS

## The Responsibility of Fighting Poverty

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**83%**

83% of the public estimate that the number of poor people will increase as a result of the war

**70.9%**

70.9% of the NGOs reported a decrease in donations

**94.2%**

94.2% of the NGO directors state that they did not receive assistance from the government for needs that emerged as a result of the war

**3.2%**

Only 3.2% of the NGOs' annual turnover comes from government support

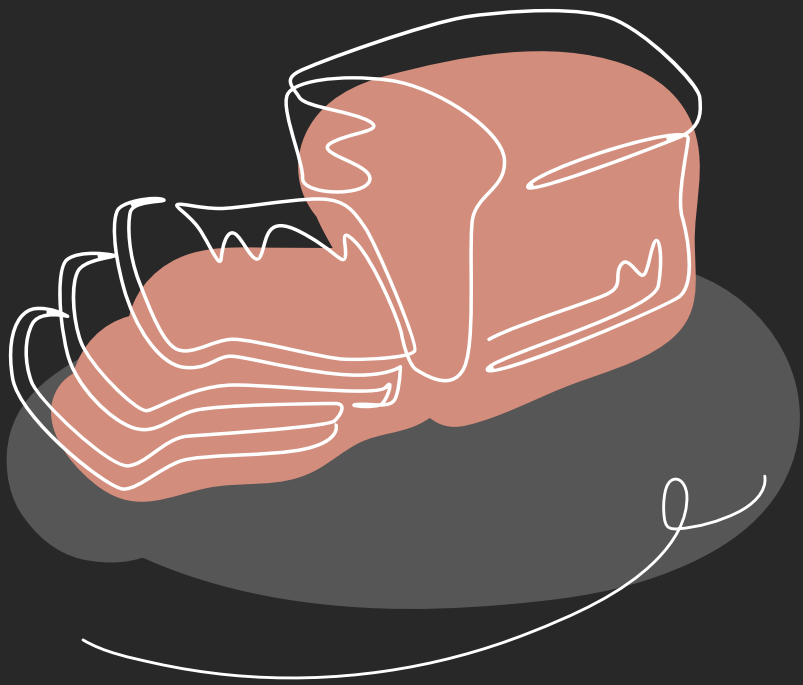
**58.9%**

58.9% of the public participated in at least one civilian activity since the war started

**76.4%**

76.4% of the public think that the government is responsible for fighting poverty, but only 8.4% think that it is actually doing something about it

# Nutritional Insecurity



## Nutritional Insecurity

**680,500**

680,500 (21.1%) families in Israel live in nutritional insecurity, of which 325,700 (10.1%) are in severe nutritional insecurity

**1,075,500**

1,075,500 (34.1%) children in Israel live in nutritional insecurity, with 627,600 (19.9%) living in severe nutritional insecurity

**50.5%**

Around half (50.5%) of the aid recipient parents were forced to forgo infant formula or to give less than the recommended amount due to their financial situation, compared to 12% of the general population

**80%**

80% of aid recipients reported that the food they purchased was insufficient, and they lacked the financial means to buy more

**2,348 NIS**

The average expenditure on food among aid recipients is 2,348 NIS, comprising 38.5% of their average net monthly income (6,092 NIS)

**79.4%**

79.4% of aid recipients report an increase in the monthly expenditure on food during the past year

**62.4%**

62.4% of aid recipients cut back or skipped meals due to not having enough money, compared to 16% of the general population

## Nutritional Insecurity in Israel 2024

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), nutritional insecurity is defined as a lack of regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. In Israel this phenomenon poses a significant challenge, with high rates compared to other developed countries. According to FAO data analyzed by the Taub Center (2024), Israel was ranked second among developed welfare states in nutritional insecurity between 2018-2022, with an average rate of 14.2%. The average among OECD countries is 7.5%, which highlights the severity of the problem in Israel.

Measuring nutritional security is based on a metric developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The metric is standard in developed countries, and the National Insurance Institute also uses it in Israel. The tool is a validated questionnaire that makes it possible to classify households into three categories:

### 1. Nutritional security = a lack of scarcity

Households characterized by accessibility to a variety of quality food at the required amount. The USDA tends to divide this category into two levels: A. High nutritional security; B. Marginal / reasonable nutritional security. Households in the second level sometimes had problems or anxiety around access to suitable food, but the quality, variety, and quantity of food were not significantly reduced. This report included these two categories in the Nutritional Security category.

### 2. Moderate nutritional insecurity = scarcity

Households that have been forced to make accommodations with regards to the desired quality and variety, but the quantity of food consumed and eating patterns have not been significantly jeopardized (the USDA calls this category Low Nutritional Security).

### 3. Severe nutritional insecurity = severe scarcity

Households in which the eating patterns of at least one household member has been disrupted, and the quantity of food has been reduced due to a lack of money and resources (the USDA calls this category Very Low Nutritional Security).

A household's position on the nutritional security spectrum is determined based on responses to a series of questions assessing behaviors and experiences related to meeting nutritional needs.

**680,500 (21.1%) families live in nutritional insecurity, more than one fifth of the families in Israel. Of these, 325,700 (10.1%) families live in severe nutritional insecurity. Moreover, 1,075,500 children<sup>1</sup> (34.1%) live in nutritional insecurity, with 627,600 (19.9%) experiencing severe nutritional insecurity. In total, around a quarter of the population (24.9%; 2,176,800 individuals) live in nutritional insecurity, as of 2024<sup>2</sup>.** Compared to the most recent examination that was conducted at Latet in August 2023, prior to the outbreak of the war, it is evident that the nutritional insecurity stats remains high and significantly unchanged (within the sampling error range).

The problem of nutritional insecurity has been extensive and severe for years, and expresses the severe hardship of families mired in

1. The survey's unit of measurement is families.




2. The number of families, individuals, and children was calculated according to the population size (rounded off from nutritional insecurity data) published by the National Insurance Institute as part of the 2021 Nutritional Security Survey: The Survey and Main Findings, January 2023.

poverty. The war exacerbated the situation for many, since numerous families have been forced to cope with a loss of income, being evacuated from their homes, an ongoing trend of rising food and consumer goods prices, and coping with unexpected expenses. The mutual responsibility and unprecedented commitment of the Israeli public, the corporate sector, philanthropy, and food NGOs when the war broke out and throughout the past year, which resulted in civilian aid for basic needs estimated at more than a billion NIS, halted the deterioration and seemingly prevented a significant exacerbation of the situation. Concurrently, the financial compensation that the government gave to displaced citizens and to businesses seems to have partially trickled down to families in the lower deciles as well.

Rising costs in the past two years, combined with the economic effects of the war, continue to affect predominantly these families.

They are now forced to make even greater sacrifices than before when it comes to meeting their own basic needs and those of their children. The government budget, which includes cuts to the social budgets, a VAT increase, increased National Insurance payments, and freezing the tax brackets, will be another burden to those with an already very limited purchasing power, and it may exacerbate the nutritional insecurity and the ability to meet the most basic needs required for minimal living.

### Nutritional Insecurity in Israel 2024

	 <b>Families</b>	 <b>Individuals</b>	 <b>Children</b>
Severe scarcity	<b>10.1%</b> 325,700	<b>13.5%</b> 1,180,200	<b>19.9%</b> 627,600
Scarcity	<b>11%</b> 354,800	<b>11.4%</b> 996,600	<b>14.2%</b> 447,900
<b>Total nutritional insecurity</b>	<b>21.1%</b> <b>680,500</b>	<b>24.9%</b> <b>2,176,800</b>	<b>34.1%</b> <b>1,075,500</b>

From the 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Index; According to the short form 6-item USDA scale

## Nutritional Insecurity in the Shadow of the War

In recent years we have learned about the importance of food availability, supply, and accessibility, especially in light of the climate crisis, the Covid pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the current war in Israel. Being in nutritional insecurity over time may lead to detrimental outcomes and to real damage to physical and mental health, social functioning, and to a person's cognitive capabilities, and influence almost every aspect of life (Borras & Mohamed, 2020). Moreover, war and violent conflicts heighten the risk of damage to one or more components of the food supply chain, disrupt food imports, raise food costs, reduce disposable income, and create financial barriers, all of which can jeopardize households' access to and availability of food, threatening their nutritional security (Bruck, et al., 2018). It seems that the first to suffer from the additional negative effect of the war on nutritional security are those populations grappling with nutritional insecurity even during routine.

Nutritional insecurity in developed countries

manifests mainly in the difficulty that low-income families have in purchasing an adequate amount of food and at a decent quality. In Israel, this is getting worse due to the relatively high food prices. According to a State Comptroller Report (2024), the prices in Israel (in terms of purchasing power) is 27% higher than the average in OECD countries, and in the food industry the gap is even as high as 37%.

The impact of the cost of living on aid recipient families is substantial: 79.4% reported an increase in their monthly food expenditures in the past year, and around half (48.4%) mentioned a significant increase.

More than half (56%) of the aid recipients report a lack of food at home; 18.1% state that they often don't have enough food, and an additional 37.9% state that they sometimes don't have enough food. Around one third (32.3%) of the aid recipients report that they have enough food at home, but not always of the type they want. Only 5.3%, less than one in every twenty aid recipients, state that they have enough food at home of the types they want to eat. 6.4% refused to answer this question.

### What is most accurate regarding your/your family's monthly expenditure on food during the past year?



**48.4%**

Significantly  
higher



**31%**

Somewhat  
higher



**13%**

Hasn't  
changed



**5.4%**

Somewhat  
lower



**2.2%**

Significantly  
lower

Meeting the basic need for food is not a guarantee, especially for populations facing hardship and struggling to provide for themselves and their families. **In the past year, 80% of the aid recipients often or sometimes experienced that the food they bought wasn't enough, and they couldn't afford to buy more food; a rate that is 4.6 times higher than among the general population (17.5%).**

A similar percentage (79.3%) of aid recipients stated that they often or sometimes did not have enough money to buy balanced meals. In 2024 there was a 19.9% increase among the aid recipients for whom such a situation often applied (35% in 2024 compared to 29.2% in 2023). In the general population, around one fifth (20.1%) stated that they often or sometimes did not have enough money.

### The State of Food Security in Aid Recipient Households

***"The food we bought is not enough, and we couldn't afford to buy more."***

	The general population 2024	Aid recipients 2024	Aid recipients 2023
Often true	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>28.9%</b>
Sometimes true	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>49.8%</b>
Not true at all	<b>80.8%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
Refuse to answer	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>

***"We couldn't afford to buy balanced meals"***

	The general population 2024	Aid recipients 2024	Aid recipients 2023
Often true	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>29.2%</b>
Sometimes true	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>44.3%</b>	<b>50.4%</b>
Not true at all	<b>78.2%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>10.8%</b>
Refuse to answer	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>

*From the 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Index; 2024 Aid Recipients Study; 2023 Aid Recipients Study*

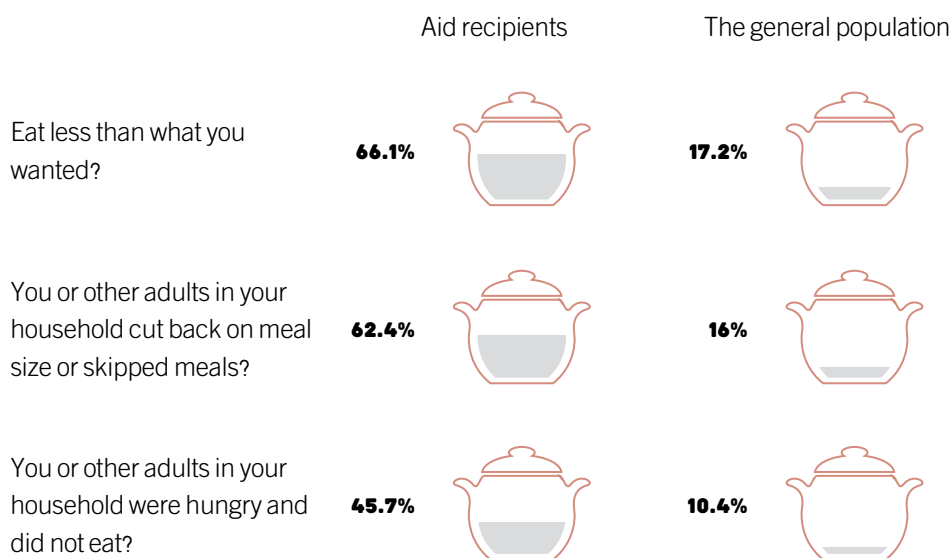
In almost two thirds of aid recipient households, adult members ate less than what they wanted (66.1%). A similar percentage cut back on meal size or skipped meals due to a lack of money (62.4%). Among the general population the scope is much smaller and applies to every sixth household (17.2% and 16%, respectively). Around two fifths (43.2%) of the aid recipients who reported cutting back on food

stated that they were forced to do this almost every month during the past year, and 51.2% did it occasionally during some months.

45.7% of the aid recipients stated that they or someone in their family went hungry due to lack of money during the past year, compared to around one tenth (10.4%) of the general population.

### During the past year, due to a shortage of money to buy food, did you:

(% responding "yes")



From the 2024 Aid Recipients Study; 2024 Multidimensional Poverty Index

\*Respondents who refused to answer the question were not included in the calculation

Aid recipient households, with an average of 4.2 individuals, spend an average of 2,348 NIS per month on food, while the minimal required cost for a household of four is 3,774 NIS<sup>3</sup>. Food aid partially decreases the monthly gap by 1,426 NIS, but it does not close it completely, leaving the aid recipient families in a state of nutritional insecurity.

3. More on the minimal cost of food can be found in the "Cost of Living in Israel" chapter.

## Children and Nutritional Insecurity

Children and adolescents are among the populations at higher risk of nutritional insecurity (Walker et al., 2020). Food consumption at the quantity and quality that do not meet the normative nutritional recommendations for children and adolescents may adversely affect their physical and mental health and damage their growth and development, including adversely affecting their studies and social ties (Brookdale, 2024).

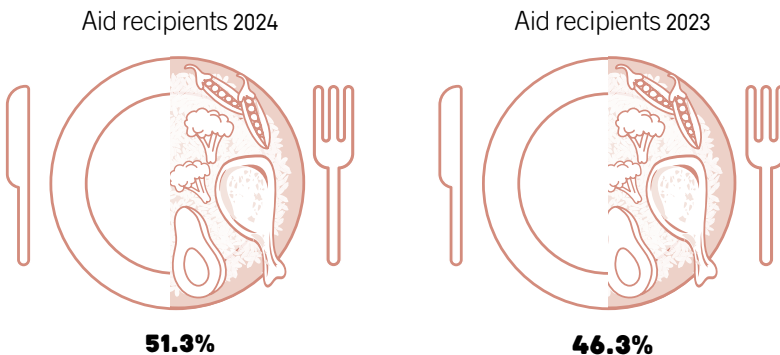
Around half of the aid recipient children (51.3%) cut back on meal size or skipped meals because their parents couldn't afford to buy food. This is higher than last year's percentage (46.3%).

Preschool children are extra vulnerable to the consequences nutritional insecurity has on many of the developmental processes occurring during this critical phase of life, including physiological, cognitive, emotional, development, etc. (Drennen et al., 2019). This damage may affect a wide variety of future variables, including social mobility, which may predict the child's success (or lack thereof) in breaking the cycle of poverty.

More than half (50.5%) of the aid recipient parents took this risk when they were forced to forgo infant formula or to give less than the recommended amount (diluting with water or skipping feedings) due to their financial situation, 4.2 times higher compared to the general population (12%).

### Over the past year, have the children in your household cut back on meal size or skipped meals because there was not enough money to buy food?

(% responding "yes")

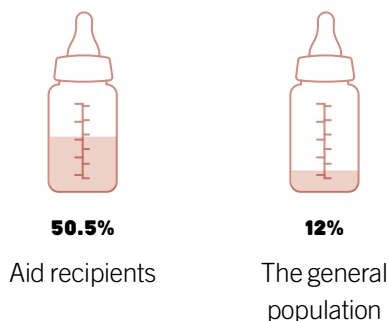


From the 2024 Aid Recipients Study; 2023 Aid Recipients Study

\*Respondents who refused to answer the question were not included in the calculation

## Have you had to forgo infant formula for your children or give less than the recommended amount because of your financial situation?

(% responding “yes”)



*From the 2024 Aid Recipients Study; 2024 Public Perceptions Survey*

Designated programs to provide subsidized meals for children are usually run extensively in developed countries through school meals. These programs aim to improve the welfare, behavior, and learning ability of pupils from families who may not have the financial means to provide their children with a healthy, nutritious meal at school every day. Half (49.9%) of the aid recipient children receive a hot meal at kindergarten or elementary school as part of the official meal program. In this context, it is important to note that in Israel, there are no designated meal programs for junior high and high school pupils, despite the presence of nutritional insecurity among children at these educational levels as well.

### Food Aid

Guaranteeing nutritional security is a central component of social security. In order to minimize the phenomenon, the scope of poverty must be minimized through an appropriate government plan that includes macro solutions aimed at increasing the disposable income of families in need. While the problem reaches far and wide across the country and is found in all

sectors of Israeli society, nutritional insecurity can be reduced by providing direct aid and increasing access to food. The need for food aid can manifest as a momentary and specific phenomenon, as well as a chronic phenomenon characterized by ongoing feelings of uncertainty and anxiety due to not being able to buy food. More than half (53.2%) of the aid recipients have needed food aid for more than five years, compared to 59% last year. One quarter (24.9%) of the aid recipients have needed food aid for two to five years, approximately one fifth (21.9%) have fallen into need over the past two years, with 6.9% joining in the past year alone. The food box provided by Latet helps 71.1% of all aid recipients free up money to buy more food, and thus fulfills its purpose as a tool to reduce nutritional insecurity by increasing food accessibility. However, nutritional insecurity may indicate more extensive aspects of economic hardship in the household. When there are limited funds to buy food, it's difficult to afford other basic expenditures, like housing and healthcare. Therefore, food aid can help not only by reducing nutritional insecurity, but also by addressing other household challenges, as it

alleviates the financial burden of food expenses and increases the budget available for other needs. Receiving a food box benefits aid recipients in various ways beyond purchasing additional food, including allowing them to allocate funds for medication and medical care (37.9%), rent, bills, debt repayment (37.5%), and for purchasing clothing, furniture, or household items (17.1%).

Even though the right to food is recognized in international law, in Israel there is still no formal recognition of this right and of the state's responsibility to guarantee nutritional security for its citizens. Although the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services is meant to lead this issue, there is a decentralization of authority among various government ministries. For example, the issue of nutritional insecurity among pupils falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, and in recent years the significant budget that was allocated for food vouchers actually came from the Ministry of Interior, which prior to the Covid pandemic was not involved in this at all.

While 100% of aid recipients get help from NGOs, only 33.7% report receiving government food

aid in the past year. 18.1% received a prepaid card to buy food from the Ministry of Interior (given once per year), and 17.1% received aid from the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services' national initiative for nutritional security (more than one response could be marked). Concurrently, the total government funding for support of food NGOs in 2024 was a paltry 43.7 million NIS (after a 5% budget cut). To compare, the total aid of Latet is expected to reach approx. 250 million NIS (of which less than 5 million NIS comes from government support). The amount required to solve the problem is estimated at around 4-5 billion NIS.

A comprehensive and long-term government approach that combines pooling of resources and a macro perspective is required, both for routine and emergencies. Without a fundamental change in the government's approach, the situation will continue to depend mainly on the goodwill of NGOs and organizations, volunteers, private entities, corporate entities, and local authorities. There is an urgent need to formulate a comprehensive national strategy, led by the government and in partnership with all the relevant entities.

### In which way does the food box you get from the NGO help you?



**71.1%**

Buying more food



**37.9%**

Paying for medication and medical treatments



**37.5%**

Paying rent, bills, or debt repayment



**17.1%**

Buying clothing, furniture, or household items



**2.2%**

Other

*From the 2024 Aid Recipients Study*

\* The amount is greater than 100% since it was possible to choose more than one answer

# The Elderly



## The Elderly

**81.7%**

According to poverty estimates, **81.7%** of elderly aid recipients live in poverty, with **52.6%** classified as very poor

**34.8%**

More than one third (**34.8%**) of the elderly aid recipients suffer from severe nutritional insecurity

**60.4%**

**60.4%** of the elderly aid recipients had to forgo buying medication or medical care, sometimes or regularly, because they couldn't afford to pay for it

**57.9%**

**57.9%** of the elderly aid recipients have debt, **26.2%** of whom owe more than 50,000 NIS

**56.2%**

**56.2%** of the elderly aid recipients state that their mental health deteriorated or deteriorated greatly as a result of the war

**65.4%**

**65.4%** of the elderly aid recipients report that during the past year they often or sometimes experienced a feeling of loneliness

# The Elderly in the Shadow of War

At the end of 2023, the population of 65+ year olds in Israel totaled around 1.3 million individuals, comprising 12.9% of the population. The relative percentage of the elderly in the population has been gradually increasing over the years, coupled with the increased life expectancy, and according to the forecasts, in 2045 there are expected to be around 2.1 million 65+ year olds in Israel (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024).

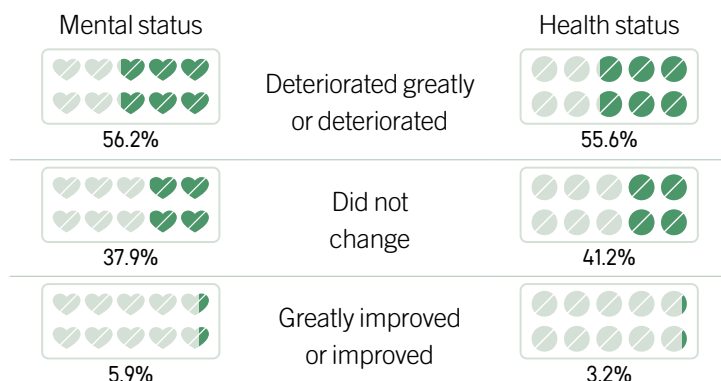
The war has created unique challenges for the elderly population, including the closure of social frameworks and day care centers, which have led to a decline in a sense of belonging. Moreover, numerous elderly are experiencing a deterioration of their mental health, including elevated feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and irrelevance. These are coupled with accessibility difficulties, mobility difficulties, lack of available family members, and a lack of designated services, which together create a significant challenge for the senior citizens during wartime (Kislev, 2024). The elderly are subject to the same dangers that threaten us all during wartime, but they may

be more challenging for them. For example, the elderly cannot always reach a safe space during a siren due to accessibility and mobility difficulties, especially when it's necessary to walk down stairs to a public or communal bomb shelter, especially in areas close to the borders where the alert times are very short. This makes them vulnerable to physical injuries, and creates additional stress from the awareness that they are not in a safe space.

In this chapter we will address the elderly aid recipients, and it will include those who are legally defined as senior citizens - women aged 62+ and men aged 67+.

The ongoing war is exacerbating the existing hardships in the lives of the elderly aid recipients, and adversely affects their physical and mental wellbeing. Around three quarters (73.9%) of the elderly aid recipients state that their mental status these days is not good at all or is not so good. More than half (56.2%) reported a deterioration in their mental status compared to before the war. A similar percentage (55.6%) was also observed for a deterioration in overall health status.

## Compared to before the war, how would you describe your current status?



Loneliness is a negative subjective experience, which exists at all ages, however it is much more prevalent among the elderly. For them it is also a risk factor for health problems, such as dementia. In addition to old age, a poor financial situation is correlated with increased feelings of loneliness (Brookdale, 2020). These findings place the elderly aid recipients at a high probability for experiencing loneliness. Around two thirds (65.4%) of the elderly aid recipients report that they often (36.2%) or occasionally (29.2%) experienced a feeling of loneliness in the past year, 13.8% rarely, and around one fifth (20.8%) did not experience any loneliness.

Given all this, almost two thirds (63.4%) of the elderly aid recipients state that they are not

happy with their lives to some degree or another, compared to 52.1% last year, before the war broke out (a 21.7% increase).

Volunteering is a central factor in improving the wellbeing of the elderly. It reflects social and civilian involvement, and strengthens self confidence and quality of life. 23.6% of the elderly aid recipients volunteered in the past year. For them, volunteering is a way to protect their health, connect to the community, spend their free time, and have a convenient environment to meet new people. Moreover, the elderly see volunteering as an opportunity to create significant social change and leave a mark (Hansen & Slagsvold, 2020).

### In general, are you happy with your life?

■ 2024 Elderly Aid Recipients Study ■ 2023 Elderly Aid Recipients Study



From the 2024 Elderly Aid Recipients Study; 2023 Elderly Aid Recipients Study

**65.4% of the elderly aid recipients often or occasionally experienced feelings of loneliness**

## Poverty Estimate Among the Elderly Aid Recipients

This is the third consecutive year that Latet has conducted a poverty estimate among the elderly aid recipients. The estimate was developed subsequent to an increase in the old age allowance with added income supplement, which placed the allowance above the National Insurance Institute's official poverty line.

We wanted to examine whether the social security net, particularly the old age allowance with added income supplement, does indeed enable the elderly to meet their basic needs and get out of poverty. The allowance is currently 4,132 NIS per individual and 6,529 NIS per couple (up to age 70). Although these amounts are higher than the official poverty line, which as of 2022 was 3,845 NIS per individual and 6,151 NIS per couple, the question is whether it's actually enough to meet all of the elderly's basic needs.

The estimate is based on a comprehensive examination of five dimensions of the elderly aid recipients' living conditions: cost of living, nutritional security, health, housing, and aid. Twenty poverty indicators were identified, and they were divided into two groups: Hard (8; marked with **!** for convenience purposes), indicating a severe lack of basic needs, and Soft (12), indicating less extreme concessions that were nonetheless significant.

The analysis classified the elderly aid recipients into three categories: severe poverty (two or more hard indicators), poverty (one hard or at least six soft indicators), and absence of poverty (less than six soft indicators).

The results are concerning: **81.7% of the elderly aid recipients are in a state of poverty, and more**

**than half of the elderly aid recipients (52.6%) live in severe poverty.**

This finding resembles last year's findings (81.6% and 50.5%, respectively) and indicates an ongoing trend of a life in scarcity. The findings are also reflected in public opinion: 73.3% of the general public thinks that old age allowance with added income supplement is not enough for the elderly to meet all of their needs. Furthermore, 93.8% of the elderly aid recipients state that the allowance does not enable them to live in dignity.

Here is a breakdown of the findings in each of the five dimensions that were examined, and it provides a comprehensive picture of the economic and social challenges that the elderly aid recipients grapple with in their day-to-day lives.

### Cost of Living

71% of the elderly aid recipients rely on the old age allowance with added income supplement as they either have no pension or receive only a small one.

56.6% of the elderly aid recipients reported that their financial situation is worse than it was last year. The most common reason for this decline was an increase in the cost of living (72.4%) followed by a change in their or one of their family member's health status (physical / mental) (38.4%).

57.9% of the elderly aid recipients have some form of debt. Of those with debt, 47.1% are in overdraft in their bank account, 38.1% have a loan from the bank, 23.8% owe money to family or friends, 16.1% to the Israel Electric Corporation or the water corporation, and 15.2% to the municipality (it was possible to select more than one answer). More than one quarter (26.2%) of

the elderly aid recipients with debt, have debt exceeding 50,000 NIS. Around one fifth of the elderly aid recipients (20.9%) have had their bank account frozen and/or foreclosed due to debt, writ of execution, lawsuits, etc. in the past year.







It is therefore unsurprising that the elderly aid recipients do not have the financial resilience to cope with unexpected expenses. 81.3% estimate that they will not be able to handle any unexpected expense, or at most could afford a few tens of shekels. Only 5.5% will be able to handle an unexpected expense of more than 1,000 NIS, compared to 9.4% last year.

16.1% of the elderly aid recipients were cut off from electricity in the past year because they

could not pay their electricity bill, and although 20% were not cut off, they received a warning letter from the Israel Electric Corporation. In other words, more than one third (36.1%) of the elderly aid recipients had difficulty paying their electricity bill. Moreover, 12.8% of all elderly aid recipients stated that they had an electricity prepayment meter installed in their home, and there were times when they didn't have enough money to top it up.

46.4% of elderly aid recipients reported that they do not heat or cool their homes, either because they cannot afford a heater or air conditioner (17.3%), or they have one but cannot afford to use it regularly (29.1%).

### Poverty Indicators Pertaining to Cost of Living

	Aid recipients The elderly 2024	Aid recipients The elderly 2023
 <b>!</b> Their electricity was cut off	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
 <b>!</b> Have an electricity prepayment meter installed in their home, and there were times when they didn't have enough money to top it up	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>
 <b>!</b> Don't have any heating or cooling appliances, or they can't afford to use them	<b>46.4%</b>	<b>41.8%</b>
 <b>!</b> Had their bank account frozen or foreclosed	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>
 Have some form of debt	<b>57.9%</b>	<b>60.2%</b>
 Can't afford to pay for an unexpected expense, or at most can afford a few tens of shekels	<b>81.3%</b>	<b>74.7%</b>






## Nutritional Security

87.6% of the elderly aid recipients stated that the food they bought was not enough and that they often (38.2%) or sometimes (49.4%) did not have enough money to buy more. 51.9% stated that they or other adults at home cut back on meal size or skipped meals due to lack of money.

Moreover, 58.6% of the elderly aid recipients ate

less than what they wanted because they could not afford to buy more food, and 34.5% also stated that they or other adults at home went hungry. The nutritional security calculation found that 34.8% of the elderly aid recipients were in severe nutritional insecurity, which was defined in the poverty estimate as a Hard Indicator.

## Poverty Indicators Pertaining to Nutritional Security

	Aid recipients The elderly 2024	Aid recipients The elderly 2023
 The food they bought was not enough and they could not afford to buy more (often or sometimes)	87.6%	80.3%
 There was not enough money to eat balanced meals (often or sometimes)	87.5%	83.3%
 Cut back on meal size or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money	51.9%	54.8%
 Ate less than what they wanted because they couldn't afford to buy more food	58.6%	59.5%
 Went hungry and didn't eat because they couldn't afford to buy food	34.5%	41.5%

From the 2024 Elderly Aid Recipients Study; 2023 Elderly Aid Recipients Study

• Since there was a significant difference between both years in the rate of respondents who refused to answer, they were not included in the calculation

**! 34.8% of the elderly aid recipients live in severe nutritional insecurity**

## Health

Almost all the elderly aid recipients (96.1%) report that they have a chronic disease; the most common being high blood pressure (54.3%), followed by high cholesterol (42.6%) and diabetes (39.2%). From a psychological perspective, 17.1% suffer from depression, while 11.9% experience mental impairment.



Despite the high rate of health problems among the elderly aid recipients, 41% feel that they cannot stay healthy because of their economic hardship; this is a significant improvement compared to last year (59.7%). Half (48.3%) of the elderly aid recipients have only basic public healthcare insurance.

60.4% of elderly aid recipients had to forgo purchasing medication or medical care due to

financial constraints - 51.3% occasionally and 9.1% regularly. This marks a slight decrease from last year's 64%, where 49.8% occasionally and 14.2% regularly went without essential medical care. Around two thirds (65.9%) reported forgoing medical care due to a lack of transportation.

Despite the importance of psychological assistance, especially during wartime, close to half (46.2%) of the elderly aid recipients were forced to forgo psychological assistance for different reasons: they couldn't afford the private payment (24.9%), the insurance deductible required by the HMO (10.4%), or because of a long wait time (10.9%). Only 9.5% received the psychological assistance they required, while 44.3% reported that they didn't need psychological assistance.

## Poverty Indicators Pertaining to Health

		Aid recipients The elderly 2024	Aid recipients The elderly 2023
	⚠ Regularly forwent buying medication or necessary medical care because they couldn't afford it	9.1%	14.2%
	Sometimes or regularly forwent or compromised on medical care because they could not get there	65.9%	63.8%
	Forwent psychological assistance*	46.2%	46.4%
	Couldn't stay healthy due to economic hardship	41%	59.7%

From the 2024 Elderly Aid Recipients Study; 2023 Elderly Aid Recipients Study

\* Either due to the cost of insurance deductibles/private payments or long waiting times for care

## Housing






Around two thirds (62.4%) of the elderly aid recipients live in an apartment registered in their name; 23.4% as renters and 39% in an apartment they own (or one of their family members own). Around one tenth (9.1%) of elderly aid recipients lack permanent housing, meaning they live with family or friends (6%), reside in temporary housing or shelters (1%), or are homeless (2.1%). The rest live in public housing (23.6%) or other arrangement (nursing homes, assisted living facilities, or key money housing; 4.9%).

9.2% of the elderly aid recipients stated that there is a high or very high chance that they will be forced to evacuate their place of residence because they can't afford to pay the rent or mortgage.

Close to two thirds (62.5%) of the elderly aid recipients stated that they refrained from making serious repairs in their home, such as electrical system malfunctions, a leaky roof, broken windows, burst or leaking water/sewage pipe, for financial reasons.

More than one third (37.3%) of the elderly aid recipients do not have an elevator in their place of residence, even though they need it due to their advanced age and health status. Moreover, 44.6% report that their home requires renovations, adaptations, or repairs to accommodate their health needs. Around one quarter (24.1%) state that they do not consider their home to be dignified housing.

## Poverty Indicators Pertaining to Housing

		Aid recipients The elderly 2024	Aid recipients The elderly 2023
	❗ Refrained from repairing serious defects in their home because of financial reasons*	62.5%	68.6%
	❗ No permanent residence (in a shelter / homeless)	3.1%	3.1%
	There is no elevator at their place of residence despite the need for one	37.3%	36.8%
	Their place of residence is not considered dignified housing	24.1%	25.1%
	There is a high or very high chance that they will be forced to evacuate their place of residence**	9.2%	8.3%

From the 2024 Elderly Aid Recipients Study; 2023 Elderly Aid Recipients Study

\* Calculated without the response “There were faults, but they were dealt with by the landlord / maintenance company”

\*\* Because they couldn’t afford to pay the rent or mortgage

## Aid

Due to their economic hardship, many of the elderly aid recipients feel dependent on external aid (NGOs, welfare, family, or friends). More than two thirds (68.2%) feel highly dependent: 42.1% to a very high degree and 26.1% to a high degree. 18.6% feel moderately dependent, and 13.2% feel slightly dependent or not dependent at all.





18% of elderly aid recipients began needing food aid in the past two years, 21.3% have relied on aid for two to five years, and 60.7% have required aid for five years or more.

38.3% of the elderly aid recipients stated that they need assistance with daily activities such as shopping, cooking, cleaning, laundering, and bathing, but they can't afford it. Around

one quarter (24.8%) of the elderly aid recipients report that the long-term care hours they receive from the National Insurance do not meet their needs, and an additional 14.6% state that they need long-term care hours and don't get them. 93.3% of the elderly aid recipients state that they can't afford to pay for the long-term care services they need.

The food aid from the NGOs enables 63.9% of elderly aid recipients to buy additional food that they and their families need. Food aid also provides vital support by allowing recipients to allocate funds toward other essential needs, such as medication and medical care (48.7%), rent, bills, and debt repayment (28.3%) and purchasing clothing, furniture, or household items (15.7%).

## Poverty Indicators Pertaining to Aid

		Aid recipients The elderly 2024	Aid recipients The elderly 2023
	Old age allowance with added income supplement is not enough for their basic needs*	<b>93.8%</b>	91.1%
	Can't afford payments for long-term care	<b>93.3%</b>	93.9%
	Dependent on aid from organizations or other people (to a large or very large degree)	<b>68.2%</b>	71%
	Require assistance with daily activities but can't afford it	<b>38.3%</b>	40.3%

From the 2024 Elderly Aid Recipients Study; 2023 Elderly Aid Recipients Study

\* Doesn't enable or only partially enables them to meet the basic needs required to live in dignity

# The Multidimensional Poverty Index



## Calculating The Multidimensional Poverty Index

For years, measuring poverty in Israel, similar to numerous other countries, was based on a unidimensional index according to income alone - the National Insurance Institute's official poverty line. This index defines a household as poor when its income per capita is lower than 50% of the median income in the market. While this approach offers clear advantages - such as simplicity and the ability to make comparisons between countries and over time - it fails to capture the true complexity of life in poverty and overlooks the fundamental aspects of the daily reality faced by those living it.

Poverty goes far beyond a lack of financial resources. It manifests in a complex web of scarcity in central dimensions of life, and in the financial inability to meet basic needs at a given time and place. The cost and the basic needs required change according to the period and the society - what is considered a basic need in Israel in 2024 differs to what was true a decade ago or to what is true in other countries. The index examines the ability to provide for minimal needs, and the definition of scarcity or lack thereof is influenced by the cost of living, and the cost of goods and services at the current point in time. For an in-depth breakdown of the costs required to meet these basic needs, see "The Cost of Living in Israel" chapter. The index makes it possible to estimate the percentage of individuals and families experiencing scarcity or severe scarcity, meaning poverty, since they do not have the means required to pay for essential needs.

The Multidimensional Poverty Index was developed a decade ago by ERI for Latet, out of this perception. The index defines poverty as a state of significant scarcity relative to needs and to the life conditions essential for basic living, with a

transition from perceiving poverty purely as a lack of money to understanding it as a widespread social phenomenon, requiring a comprehensive system-wide solution.

The index provides a matrix analysis based on five central life dimensions: housing, education, health, nutritional security, and coping with the cost of living.

Three fundamental questions are at the basis of the index:

1. What basic needs do adults and children require in order to live in dignity in Israel?
2. How does one measure the extent of the household members' scarcity relative to these needs?
3. From what degree of scarcity in the various life dimensions should a household (with all of its family members) be defined as living in poverty?

### How is multidimensional poverty measured?

The Multidimensional Poverty Index presents two types of data:

- 1. The scarcity rates in each of the five dimensions:** The index gives each household a point that represents the household members' degree of scarcity relative to that dimension. The scarcity score ranges on a scale from 1 to 5, based on the following classification:  
1 = Very severe scarcity; 2 = Severe scarcity;  
3 = Scarcity; 4 = Mild scarcity; 5 = Lack of scarcity.

For the sake of simplifying the display of data, we joined the "very severe scarcity" and "severe scarcity", the two categories expressing a state of absolute scarcity, under the title "severe scarcity"; and "mild scarcity" and "lack of scarcity" under the title "lack of scarcity".

The findings include the percentage of households and individuals experiencing scarcity

in each of the dimensions, and constitute an estimate of the true percentage in the population. In most dimensions, higher overall scarcity rates were found at the individual level more than at the household level, indicating higher scarcity rates among large households.

## 2. Poverty rates and the number of those in poverty:

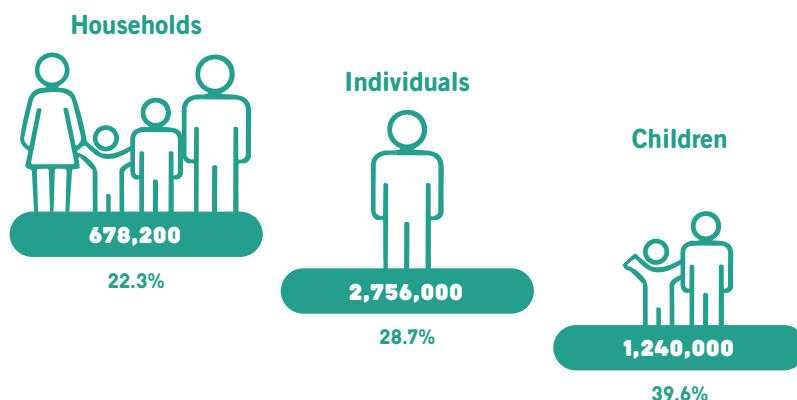
The index gives each household a combined score that determines whether they are living in severe poverty, poverty, or no poverty, based on the degree of scarcity they experience in each of the five dimensions (more information about the methodology can be found on Latet's website). The statistics are presented for households, individuals, and children, both in numbers and percentages, providing an estimate of the actual poverty rates within the population.

According to the index's findings, 678,200 households in Israel, comprising 22.3% of all households, experience significant scarcity in several life dimensions, which defines them as living in poverty. The situation is especially

dire among children: 1,240,000 children, who are 39.6% of the children in Israel, live in families who are grappling with scarcity in the various dimensions. In total, around 2,756,000 individuals, comprising 28.7% of the population in Israel, are coping with significant scarcity in several dimensions of life. The 2024 poverty rates were calculated by adapting the results of the poverty rates that emerged from the sample to the most current data of Israeli demographics<sup>1</sup>.

This year, the index was analyzed by Rotem AR No statistically significant differences were found between the 2024 multidimensional poverty rates and those of 2022 (23.3% of households, 27.8% of individuals, and 38.6% of children).

## The Multidimensional Poverty Rates In Israel 2024



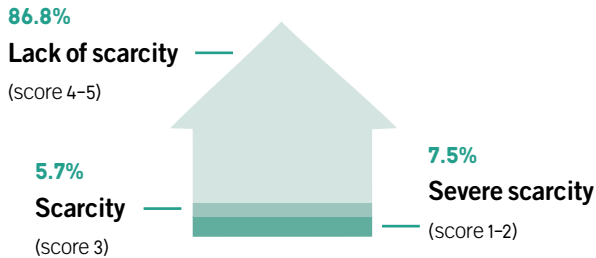
1. A. Number of children- Assorted data relating to the 2023 International Children's Day, Israel Central Bureau of Statistics.  
 B. The number of households - average from: Population - 2023 Year of Statistics for Israel, Israel Central Bureau of Statistics;  
 2021 Nutritional Security Survey: The Survey and the Main Findings, National Insurance Institute, 2023.  
 C. Number of individuals - census estimate 2022, 2023, Central Bureau of Statistics.

## Housing

The housing score is calculated based on five main indicators:

1. have a permanent residence?
2. Crowding: The average number of individuals per room in the home and the existence of separate rooms for parents and children (over the age of 3).
3. Quality: The existence of serious defects in the house that are not repaired due to financial reasons.
4. Accessibility: The financial inability to make the house accessible for a household member who requires it (such as lack of wheelchair access, lack of adapted shower stall, etc.).
5. Vulnerability: The degree to which household members are at risk of losing their place of residence for financial reasons.

### The degrees of the households' scarcity in the housing dimension



**Percentage of households experiencing scarcity - 13.2%**

**Percentage of individuals experiencing scarcity - 21.7%**

## Education

The education component is based on weighing two components:

1. The **adult education** component includes two indicators (weighted according to the adult with the lowest level of education in the household):
  - The level of formal high school education among adults (over the age of 18) in the household and the extent to which they are currently forgoing completing their education due to financial reasons.
  - The extent to which young adults in the household (ages 18-44) are forgoing higher education due to financial reasons.
2. The **children's education** component includes two main indicators:
  - Children's absence from school due to the financial situation.
  - Forgoing essential educational needs according to the children's age, such as extracurricular activities, trips, private tutoring lessons, basic school supplies, due to financial reasons.

## The levels of the households' scarcity in the education dimension



**Percentage of households experiencing scarcity - 17%**

**Percentage of individuals experiencing scarcity - 23.9%**

## Health

The health component is based on four indicators:

1. The financial ability to purchase supplemental or private health insurance for household members who need it.
2. The financial ability to cover the medical services needed for household members to maintain their wellbeing and daily functioning.
3. How frequently do household members forgo medical services necessary for them to function due to a lack of access to the treatment (long wait times / remote location).
4. The ability of household members to function is compromised due to an inability to afford long-term care or essential medical equipment.

## The levels of the households' scarcity in the health dimension



**Percentage of households experiencing scarcity - 16%**

**Percentage of individuals experiencing scarcity - 18.4%**

## Nutritional Security

The scarcity rates in this dimension are determined according to a questionnaire developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture<sup>2</sup>. The degree of households' nutritional security is examined using a short 6-item questionnaire (an abbreviated and validated version of a longer 18-item questionnaire). The questionnaire examines accessibility to a suitable quantity and quality of food. The questionnaire starts with questions pertaining to less severe situations of nutritional insecurity, and according to the answers it proceeds to increasingly more severe situations. For every response indicating scarcity, the

household gets a point, up to a maximal score of six points indicating complete nutritional insecurity. The final score a household receives is divided into three ranges, which indicate three categories of nutritional security: nutritional security (0-1 positive answers), low nutritional security (2-4 positive answers), very low nutritional security (5-6 positive answers).

The nutritional security categories were translated into the terms used by the Multidimensional Poverty Index, as follows: Nutritional security = Lack of scarcity, Low nutritional security = Scarcity, Very low nutritional security = Severe scarcity.

### The levels of the households' scarcity in the nutritional security dimension



**Percentage of households experiencing scarcity - 21.1%**

**Percentage of individuals experiencing scarcity - 24.9%**

## Cost of Living

To assess scarcity in relation to this component, we have used two types of indicators based on the extent to which the ability to afford the cost of living and basic living conditions is compromised.

### Hard indicators:

- Financial inability to warm the house
- Late payment of bills
- Cut off from electricity or water due to not paying bills

- Late payments of debts
- Eviction from home, foreclosures, or legal procedures due to arrears
- Shortage of clothes and shoes in the right size and in decent condition

### Soft indicators:

- Financial inability to cool the house with an air conditioner
- Financial inability to go out for entertainment (like going to see a movie) at least once every three months

## The levels of the households' scarcity in the cost of living dimension



**Percentage of households experiencing scarcity - 22.3%**

**Percentage of individuals experiencing scarcity - 27.9%**

## Financial Snapshot: Between Poverty and the Absence of Poverty

The following analysis demonstrates the significant disparities in financial management and in the perception of the financial situation among the three degrees of poverty that were defined in the multidimensional index: severe poverty, poverty, and absence of poverty. Unlike previous chapters that focused on the differences between aid recipients and the general public, here we compare between three groups that were identified in the multidimensional index, regardless of receiving food aid. The analysis relies on key financial management indicators, including the ability to save, use of overdraft,

reliance on external aid, and self-assessment of the financial situation. This comparison makes it possible to see how the various degrees of poverty affect how the households cope with financial challenges on a day-to-day basis and on how they perceive their financial situation.

The need for external aid highlights the scope of the disparities among the households. While the majority (86.4%) of non-poor households (according to the index) do not require any aid, almost all the households in severe poverty (92.3%) need it or receive it in practice - around one quarter of which on a regular basis. The households in poverty are on a spectrum, and around two thirds of them need aid to some degree.

**Did you need or receive aid from an external entity in the past year?** (such as welfare departments, aid NGOs, etc.)

	No, and it wasn't necessary	No, but it was necessary	Yes, once or a few times	Yes, on a regular basis
<b>Severe poverty</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>26.4%</b>
<b>Poverty</b>	<b>32.9%</b>	<b>43.4%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
<b>Absence of poverty</b>	<b>86.4%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

**Over the past year, was one of the household's bank accounts in overdraft?**

	Yes, the bank account is usually in overdraft	Yes, sometimes	Yes, rarely	No
<b>Severe poverty</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>7.7%</b>
<b>Poverty</b>	<b>29.5%</b>	<b>29.5%</b>	<b>16.1%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>
<b>Absence of poverty</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>55.1%</b>

\* The data in the table do not include the respondents who did not know or who didn't want to respond to the question (2%, 6.1%, and 5.3% respectively)

**Patterns of overdraft use** demonstrate the difficulty in day-to-day financial management: Two thirds of households in severe poverty are constantly in overdraft, compared to only one tenth of the non-poor households. Moreover, while more than half of the non-poor households are not in overdraft at all, only 7.7% of the households in severe poverty are in a similar situation.

**The ability to save** reflects the depth of the household's scarcity: While almost half of the non-poor households manage to set aside savings, only one tenth of the households in severe poverty are capable of doing it. The

status of the households in poverty is slightly better, but still only 16.4% of them manage to save.

**An assessment of the financial situation** shows significant disparities among the different categories. While more than half (54.1%) of the non-poor households report a good or very good situation, only 4.1% of severely poor households state a similar situation. The disparity also manifests in comparison to households in poverty (not severe), where only 10.6% of them report a good or very good situation.

### In the past year, did the household set aside any savings? (excluding pension savings)

	Yes	No
<b>Severe poverty</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>82.4%</b>
<b>Poverty</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>75.4%</b>
<b>Absence of poverty</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>43.4%</b>

\* The data in the table do not include the respondents who did not know or who didn't want to respond to the question (7.7%, 8.2%, and 7.6% respectively)

### What best describes your household's financial situation in the past year?

	Very good financial situation	Good financial situation	Reasonable financial situation	Mild economic hardship	Severe economic hardship
<b>Severe poverty</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>18.8%</b>	<b>56.9%</b>
<b>Poverty</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>42.6%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>
<b>Absence of poverty</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>37.4%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

A picture of the multidimensional poverty in Israel 2024 reflects a complex and harsh reality: Around 2.76 million individuals, comprising 28.7% of the population, live in a state of significant scarcity in the various dimensions of life. The relative stability in the poverty rates compared to 2022 stems, among other things, from the government support given to the displaced citizens and to businesses, from civil society activities and philanthropy, from continued National Insurance payments, and from the fact that it takes time until households slip into poverty. The process usually starts with draining savings, continues with taking loans, and only at the end manifests in the official poverty statistics. Unfortunately, the future forecast indicates an expected exacerbation, mainly due to the nature of the new economic cuts.

While some of the steps are progressive (like increasing a surtax and freezing tax brackets), most of the cuts - including increasing VAT to 18% or perhaps even to 19%, raising the National Insurance Institute payments, and increasing public transportation costs by more than 30% - are regressive, and may not only exacerbate the situation of those in economic hardship, but also cause additional families to face significant scarcity. The ongoing high cost of living, coupled with the expenses of the war and rebuilding efforts, demands the development of a more balanced socioeconomic policy. This policy should focus on preventing additional families from falling into poverty and strengthening the safety net for the most vulnerable households.

# The Responsibility of Fighting Poverty



# The Responsibility of Fighting Poverty

**83%**

83% of the public estimate that the number of poor people will increase as a result of the war

**76.4%**

76.4% of the public think that the government is responsible for fighting poverty, but only 8.4% think that it is actually doing something about it

**44.7%**

44.7% of the public agree that there is a high degree of solidarity in Israeli society compared to 22.8% among the aid recipients

**58.9%**

58.9% of the public participated in at least one civilian activity since the war started

**70.9%**

70.9% of the NGOs reported a decrease in donations

**3.2%**

Only 3.2% of the NGOs' annual turnover comes from government support

**94.2%**

94.2% of NGO directors stated that they did not receive assistance from the government for the needs that emerged as a result of the war

## The Public's Perceptions During Wartime

Poverty is an extensive and multidimensional phenomenon that affects families, children, and the elderly in all sectors. Despite Israel's technological and scientific advancements, there are still deep and significant socioeconomic inequalities. The war has posed additional challenges to Israeli society, while clarifying the urgent need for a comprehensive and thorough handling of the problem of poverty. Not only has the war exposed existing inequalities, it also deepened them, and created a difficult financial reality for many people.

It seems that the war raises serious questions pertaining to the social and governmental responsibility for dealing with disadvantaged populations, during times of emergency and routine. The issue of responsibility for fighting poverty, which was complex and multifaceted even before, is currently being revalidated and is more urgent due to the economic and social challenges posed by the war. The current situation emphasizes the need to formulate an inclusive and multi-system policy to deal with poverty, while addressing the various aspects of the phenomenon - economic, social, health, educational, and cultural.

This part examines the public's perceptions regarding the responsibility for fighting poverty, and the changes in these perceptions as a result of the war. The findings provide important insights about how the Israeli public perceives the issue of poverty, the responsibility for fighting it, and the effects of the war on the socioeconomic situation

in the country. An analysis of the findings makes it possible to better understand public expectations and the challenges faced by policymakers when fighting poverty in the post-war era. For the Israeli public, the events of October 7 changed priorities. The country's security and rebuilding the South and the North<sup>1</sup> are perceived as the most urgent issues the government needs to deal with, and 48.9% of the public ranked them in first place.

The cost of living, which was ranked in first place by 41.8% of the public before the war (August 2023), dropped to second place in November 2023 with 15.1%, a trend that is still ongoing with 19.4%. The polarization, violence, and racism in Israeli society dropped from second place (21.3%) in August 2023 to third place (11.5%) in November 2023, and remained in this spot for the current survey as well.

Fighting poverty and social inequalities dropped to sixth place (2.8%), while before the war and around a month after it started, it was in fifth place (6.5% and 4.2%, respectively). This drop correlates to the redirection of resources and attention from dealing with socioeconomic problems to immediately dealing with the new challenges brought about by the war. The government's 2025 budget plans include significant financial cuts, particularly to the social sphere, along with at least a 1% increase in VAT, which will primarily impact disadvantaged groups. The budget distances even further the government's responsibility for dealing with poverty, and in practice results in a pinnacle of a years-long avoidance of allocating resources, setting goals, and formulating a plan to minimize the dimensions of poverty and social inequalities. The changes in the public's priorities

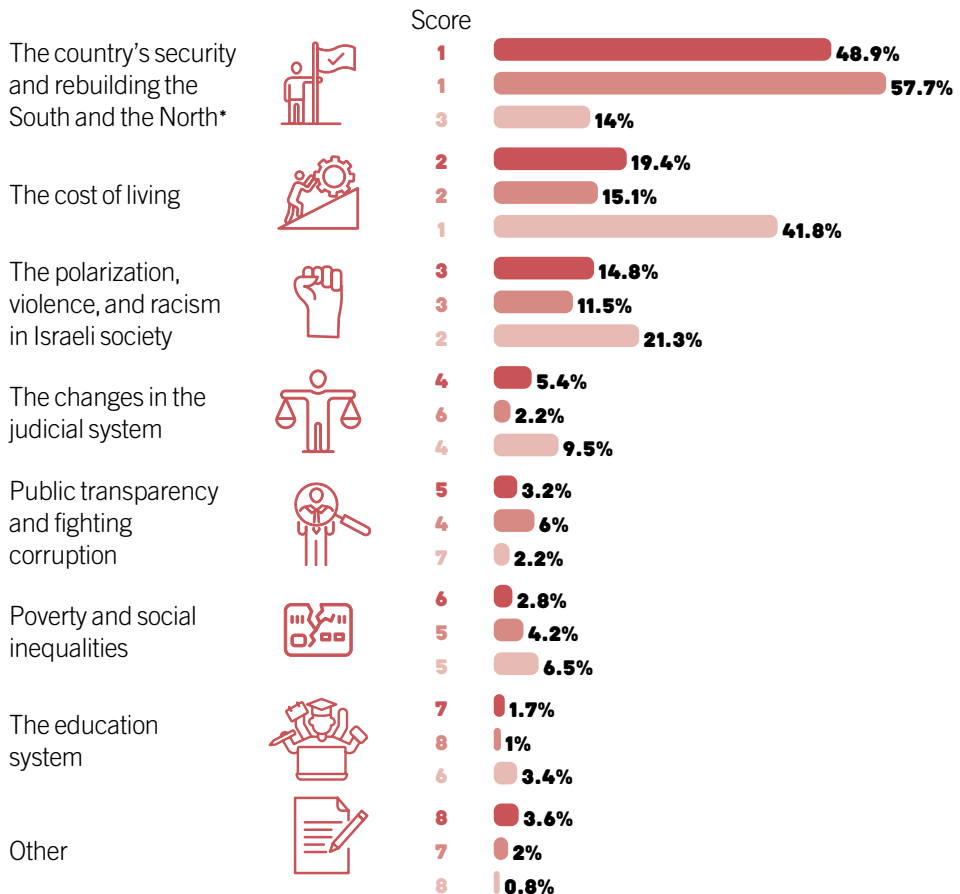
1. For the purpose of comparison between the 2023 and 2024 surveys, the categories "national security" (33.5%) and "rehabilitation of the North and the South" (15.4%) were merged in the 2024 survey. Both categories combined totaled 48.9% of all the responses in the 2024 survey, and they can be compared to "the country's security and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" category from the 2023 survey. The "rebuilding the North and the South" category is a new addition to this year's survey.

indicate the need for a balanced approach by policymakers, one that deals with the immediate security challenges, but also devotes attention and resources to dealing with acute

socioeconomic problems, such as poverty and social inequalities. This challenge emphasizes the need for long-term strategic planning that combines security and socioeconomic aspects.

## The Most Urgent Issue the Government Needs to Deal With

■ August 2024 ■ November 2023 ■ August 2023

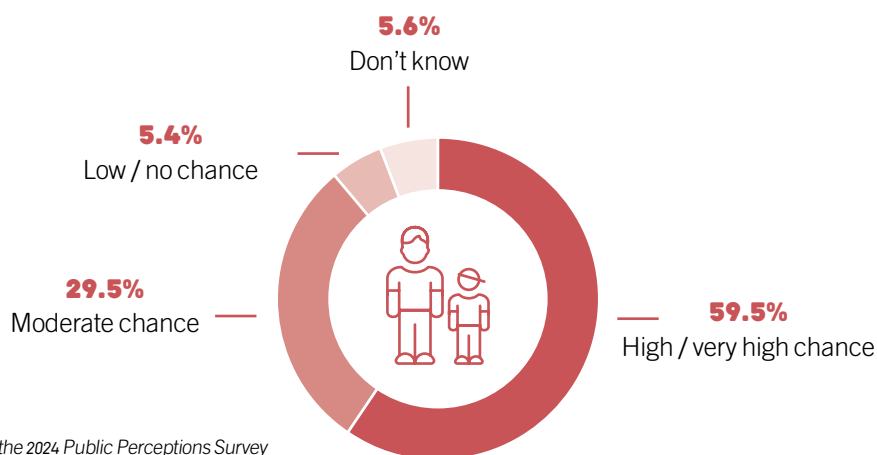


From the 2024 Public Perceptions Survey; 2023 Swords of Iron Survey; 2023 Public Perceptions Survey

\* The wording in 2023 was "national security and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict"; In 2024 the "rehabilitation of the North and the South" category was added, which was merged with "national security" for the purpose of comparing it to 2023

\*\* Between half a percentage and two tenths of a percentage of respondents refused to answer during all measurement dates

## In your opinion, how likely is a child from a low-income family to remain in poverty as an adult?



From the 2024 Public Perceptions Survey

76.4% of the public believe that caring for poor populations is predominantly the government's responsibility, however only 8.4% believe that the government is the main body that is actually caring for them. In fact, the majority of the public (82%) believes that NGOs and private individuals are the ones actually caring for poor

populations - more than all the other entities. Moreover, 75% of the public believes that fighting poverty is either not a national priority or a low priority for the Israeli government - a sentiment shared by 70.8% of aid NGO directors.

### Who do you think is the entity responsible for caring for the impoverished populations in Israel?

The government	<b>76.4%</b>
The person living in poverty	<b>8.4%</b>
The local authorities	<b>8.6%</b>
Aid NGOs	<b>2.4%</b>
Other	<b>4.2%</b>

### Who do you think is the entity that is actually caring the most for impoverished populations in Israel?

Third sector organizations and civil society	<b>52.3%</b>
Private individuals through donations	<b>29.7%</b>
The government	<b>8.4%</b>
The local authorities	<b>7%</b>
Other	<b>2.6%</b>

From the 2024 Public Perceptions Survey

## Perceptions About National Resilience

**The term national resilience** refers to aspects of the society's sustainability and robustness in various spheres, and is comprised of four social factors: trust in the government, social cohesion, patriotism, and trust in state institutions (Kimhi et al., 2023). In assessing the perception of national resilience, we relied on four statements from the abbreviated National Resilience Index<sup>1</sup>, presenting the percentages of respondents who expressed a high or very high level of agreement. The statements were presented to the general public, aid recipients, and directors of partner NGOs, revealing differences in perspectives that underscore the complex social, economic, and psychological factors at play - especially in times of crisis, such as war.

High social solidarity - The general population experienced a high degree of social solidarity (44.7%), compared to the NGO directors (27.5%) and the aid recipients (22.8%). This may be because the general population is less exposed to the day-to-day hardships that the NGO directors and the aid recipients grapple with. The NGO directors and the aid recipients witness firsthand the social inequalities and the difficulties in getting help, which may explain their lower assessment.

Israeli society got stronger from the war - It is interesting to see that the percentage of aid recipients who express optimism regarding society getting stronger from the war (33.7%), is higher than the percentage in the general population (29.9%) and among the NGO directors (25.8%). It may be that the aid recipients, who experience daily hardships, see the war as an opportunity for change and getting socially stronger. The NGO

directors agree to a relatively low degree, perhaps because of the fact that they see the day-to-day hardships and challenges of the aid recipients and other communities.

Optimism about the country's future - In general, all the findings indicate a relatively low degree of optimism among all respondents. The level of optimism among respondents from the general public was relatively high (26.7%) compared to the 21.7% among NGO directors and 19.4% among aid recipients. This may reflect the concerns of those who work with disadvantaged populations or who experience economic hardships themselves, regarding the long-term consequences of the war and the socioeconomic situation.

Trust in the government's ability to cope with the consequences of the war - A significant disparity between the groups was evident here. The aid recipients express the highest degree of trust (29.7%), much higher than that of the general public (12.7%) and the NGO directors (7.5%). This disparity is particularly surprising, and it may stem from several factors: A higher dependence of aid recipients on government services, which may lead to a higher trust in its ability to provide solutions; lower expectations among the aid recipients, which may lead to a higher assessment of the government's actions; lack of trust of the NGO directors, which stems from a more in-depth acquaintance with the limitations of the governmental system.

A country's resilience and ability to cope with crises, depends, among other things, on the degree of social cohesion among its individuals, and on the degree of cooperation between them, since cohesion and cooperation are required for the sake of survival and prosperity (Kuttner and Avrahami-Marom, 2022).

An immense need was created as a result of the

1. From the 13 items included in the original index, we selected four main statements that were specifically adapted to the war context, and we also used a 5-point scale compared to the original six (NR-13; Kimhi & Eshel, 2019).

war to help extensive populations, including the displaced families, soldiers, families living in the conflict zones, and of course -the families who lived in poverty even before the war and whose situation has gotten worse. This need has led to an impressive mobilization of civil society. **Around four out of every five adults (58.9%) participated in at least one civilian activity since the war started, and many have participated in two or more activities.** The collaborative public response encompassed a wide variety of activities, and we will name some of them. 18% of respondents were engaged in raising or donating funds or resources, 13.8% participated in public activities, such as support rallies and demonstrations. 13.2% contributed logistically, including providing rides and transporting goods and food. Social media played a significant role, with 12% of respondents actively engaged in public diplomacy and advocacy through these platforms. 11% helped with

agricultural activities, such as harvesting. 9.4% of respondents focused on providing aid to special populations, such as the elderly and children, and 9% supported businesses and local economy in the conflict zones. 8.8% served in reserve duty, 7.4% helped the families of enlisted individuals. 6.6% hosted displaced people or supported them in other ways, and 4.6% gave emotional support and helped the victims of the war (including at hospitals). 37.3% of the public express a large or very large degree of trust in the ability of social organizations and NGOs to help cope with the consequences of the war. This statistic, compared to the relatively low trust in the government in this context, indicates a concerning anomaly. While the government has a mandate and resources to deal with the consequences of the war and with socioeconomic issues, the public tends to place more trust in the civil society organizations.

## The Perception of National Resilience

(Percentage of agreement with the statement to a large / very large degree)

■ The general population ■ NGO directors ■ Aid recipients

There is a high degree of social solidarity in Israeli society (mutual assistance and concern for others)



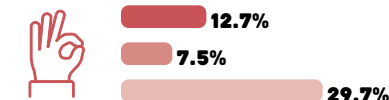
Israeli society will come out stronger from the war



I am optimistic about the State of Israel's future



I have full confidence in the Israeli government's ability to take care of all the relevant aspects and to overcome the consequences of the war



From the 2024 Public Perceptions Survey; 2024 Aid Trends Among the Food NGOs; 2024 Aid Recipients Study

This situation highlights the need to redefine the roles of the government and civil society in coping with the current challenges. A new social treaty is required that will clarify the government's initial responsibility in coping with the consequences of the war and issues like poverty and social inequalities, while defining the supplemental role of civil society organizations. It's important to stress that these organizations need to assume a supportive and complementary role, and not to replace the central responsibility of the government.

The complex challenges facing Israeli society require close cooperation between all sectors - government, civilian, and corporate - while maintaining a clear and effective division of roles. The consequences of the war and the deep socioeconomic issues that have been exacerbated in its wake can only be dealt with using this combined approach.

## The Food NGOs' Activities

**Latet, which has been operating for 28 years, serves as a national food bank and umbrella organization for around 210 partner NGOs, spread in 135 localities throughout Israel representing all sectors of Israeli society. As part of the organization's ongoing work, it distributes food on a regular basis to 100,000 families living in nutritional insecurity, with the help of Latet's network of partner NGOs.** This work is vital to meeting the most basic need - the right for food - and helps to reduce poverty and social inequality in Israel.

Coupled with what it does during routine, Latet also operates during emergencies. Since the war broke out, the organization immediately mobilized to help families in need, displaced citizens, soldiers, the elderly, and anyone who

was economically affected by the war. The aid not only includes food distribution, but also provides hygiene products, designated emergency equipment, winter gear, school supplies, and other essentials. Additionally, the organization has prepared emergency kits specifically designed for bomb shelters, containing ready-to-eat food, hygiene products, chargers, radios, water, and first aid supplies. These kits ensure readiness for escalation scenarios and all-out war, enabling a swift, real-time response to those in need.

Distribution of the food and provision of aid is conducted according to the strict ethical code of Latet and the partner food NGOs, while ensuring the dignity of the aid recipients and a concern for their nutritional security. This manifests in various ways. For example: the frequency and manner of distribution of the food and aid, which is adapted to the families' needs and life circumstances; ensuring balanced and quality nutrition and a variety of foods, including fresh protein (poultry, fish, and dairy products), fresh fruits and vegetables, and basic dry goods; protecting the privacy of the aid recipients and confidentiality of their personal information.

Latet's operating concept is based on food rescue, combined with bulk purchasing, where high volume offers an advantage. This is an efficient and effective economic model that maximally leverages the financial investment and resources, and enables a balanced nutritional mix. For every shekel invested in infrastructures, operations, and logistics in Latet's food rescue initiative, ten shekels worth of food is distributed. This model includes food rescue of dry, fresh, refrigerated, and frozen food, dairy products, fruits and vegetables from a variety of sources - manufacturers, suppliers, importers, retailers and retail chains. Using rescued food is not only optimal utilization of existing resources, it also

helps to minimize food waste and protect the environment.

This model enables Latet to increase the scope of aid to families in need and to provide a more comprehensive and extensive solution to the problem of nutritional insecurity in Israel, during routine and emergency, while getting the most out of the resources.

The overwhelming majority (99.2%) of the NGOs provide aid in the form of dry food, some of which also provide cooked food (40%) and food vouchers (35%). The majority of NGOs distribute the food directly to recipients' homes (75%) or at the NGO (72.5%). Less common distribution means are distribution points (15.8%) and a social supermarket model (10%).

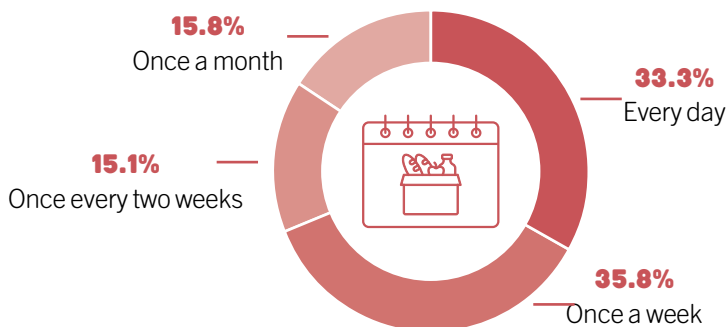
One third of the NGOs distribute food on a daily basis, 35.8% once a week, and the rest (30.9%) distribute once or twice a month.

More than two fifths (45.8%) of the NGOs give the aid recipient families a choice (complete or partial) of the products they receive from the NGOs. Moreover, 82.5% of the NGOs distribute

animal protein to the aid recipients: 26.7% of the NGOs distribute it once a week, 17.5% twice a month, and 38.3% once a month.

The NGOs help a wide variety of disadvantaged populations in Israeli society. Approximately two-fifths (40.6%) of those seeking aid are families with many children, making them the largest group. Around one quarter of those in need of aid are the elderly and Holocaust survivors (26.6%) and single-parent families (24.9%). About one-fifth of those seeking aid are individuals with disabilities, illnesses, or impairments (21%) and new immigrants (19.3%). Notably, about one-eighth (12.8%) of those seeking aid were previously part of the middle class but have fallen into hardship over the past year.

### How frequently does the NGO provide food aid to those in need?

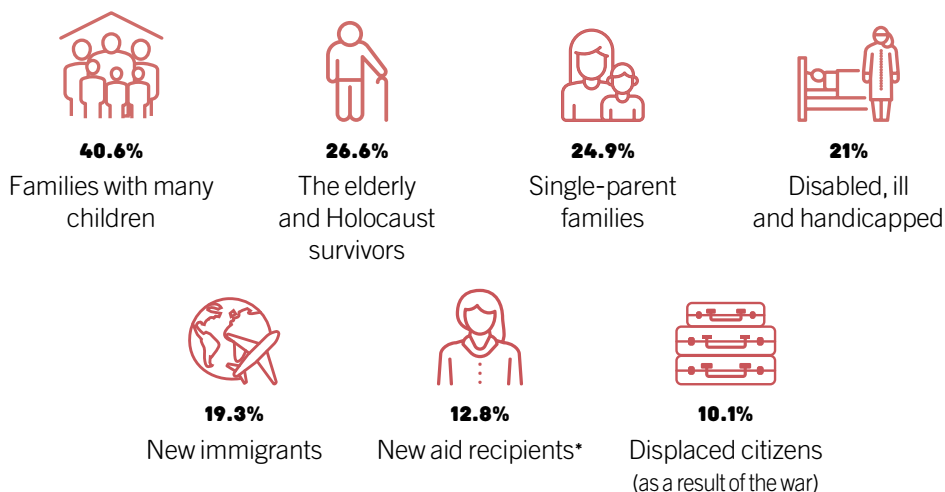


*From the 2024 Aid Trends Among the Food NGOs Survey*

The war resulted in the addition of a new disadvantaged population - displaced citizens - which are around a tenth (10.1%) of those in need of aid. These statistics reflect the diversity and

complexity of the populations currently in need in Israel, the erosion of the middle class, and the vulnerability and risk of slipping into poverty during an economic crisis or war.

## Demographic Breakdown of Aid Recipients



From the 2024 Aid Trends Among the Food NGOs Survey

\* Aid recipients who were formerly middle class but fell into hardship over the past year

\*\* The total exceeds 100% since aid recipients can fit into more than one group

**Outsiders don't understand and don't believe that their neighbor may very well suffer from nutritional insecurity. That his refrigerator is completely empty, and he doesn't know how he will pay for and buy basic items for the family. This is something we encounter on a daily basis, and it's important to raise the public's awareness of it.**

**L., NGO Director**

The NGOs use a variety of methods to check the eligibility of those asking for aid, which can be divided into two main groups:

1. Referrals and recommendations from external entities: The most common way to check eligibility is by referral from a social worker from the town's welfare department, and almost all NGOs rely on this (97.5%). More than half (56.7%) of the NGOs rely on referrals from entities in the community, such as a local council, school, or neighbors. One quarter of the NGOs get referrals from other third sector aid organizations, and around one fifth (19.2%) rely on referrals from new immigrant centers.

2. Verifications and References: Simultaneously, the NGOs carry out their own assessments. 45% of the NGOs base their decision on a personal assessment or internal form. 44.2% require official documentation from the National Insurance or medical authorization records. More than one third (35.8%) of the NGOs examine bank statements and salary or allowance authorization documents (34.2%), 29.2% conduct home visits, and 23.3% ask for confirmation that the applicant is a Holocaust survivor.

The NGOs implement a comprehensive approach when assessing eligibility for aid using several methods for each applicant. This combination of external sources of information (such as referrals from social workers and community entities) with internal checks (checking financial documents and conducting home visits) enables an in-depth and accurate assessment. This approach guarantees that the aid reaches those who truly need it, while protecting the dignity of the applicants and maintaining efficient distribution of the limited resources.

## The War's Effects on the Aid NGOs

In the shadow of war and its implications on the financial situation in the country, there has been a significant rise in the need for aid. **The majority of NGO directors (89.2%) report an increase in the demand for food aid in the past year, with an average increase of 25.7%.** 64.2% stated an increase in the number of aid recipients the NGOs assist, 14.2% of whom reported a significant increase and 50% reported some increase. 71.7% of the NGO directors think that the economic hardship of aid recipients has gotten worse to a large or very large degree. This deterioration stems, among other things, from a combination of continuous price increases and the immediate economic implications of the war.

Since the beginning of the war, the aid NGOs have worked to expand their activities. **Around one-third (30.8%) of NGOs are now providing aid in towns where they had not previously operated. 44.5% of the directors state that in the past half year they supported families who were affected by the war on a regular basis.**

Since the war broke out, there has been a significant change in the scope and nature of aid. 84.9% of the NGOs reported that they currently provide new products or services, which weren't a part of their regular offerings before the war. These include: hygiene products and cleaning supplies (64.7%), clothing (60.5%), blankets and winter supplies (58.8%), and books and school supplies (54.6%). Around one third of the NGOs expanded their activities to include the distribution of furniture and home supplies (34.5%), electrical appliances (31.9%), and baby products (30.3%). Especially prominent due to

the war context are aid in the form of military equipment (21.8%) and psychological support (21%), which emphasize the unique needs that emerged as a result of the war. Furthermore, some of the NGOs started offering services like assistance with exhausting rights, recreational activities for adults, help with family events, and assistance with medical treatments. This expansion of services emphasizes the NGOs' vital role in providing a comprehensive solution that is compatible with the needs of the population during emergency, beyond basic food aid.

Despite the increase in the number of aid recipients and the demand for more aid **70.9% of the NGOs reported a reduction in donations** (34.2% reported a significant reduction, and 36.7% some reduction). Concurrently, **almost all the NGO directors (94.2%) state that they did not receive assistance from the government for the needs that emerged as a result of the war.** This is a relatively mild improvement compared to the findings of the November 2023 survey, where 100% of the directors stated a lack of government aid.

**Around seven out of ten directors (68.3%) believe that the government is barely or not at all addressing the needs emerging during the war.** At the local level, 51.7% of the directors report that no special aid was received from the local authority subsequent to the needs that emerged during the war.

**Only 3.2% of the NGOs' annual turnover comes from government support, and 78.6% of the NGOs do not receive any financial support from the government.** The NGOs that receive government support suffice with an average support of 15.1% of their annual turnover. At the municipal level, **34.2% of the NGOs do not receive ongoing aid from the local authority.** Approximately one-third (35.8%) receive a municipal tax (Arnona) discount, slightly less than a third (30%) receive financial support, and over a quarter (28.3%) receive assistance with building-related expenses. Some may receive support in multiple areas. There are almost no NGOs that receive aid in the form of food from the local authority (1.7%).

Most of the NGO directors (80.9%) believe that the 2024 budget cuts for food NGOs and reductions in the value of food vouchers will increase nutritional insecurity to a large or very large degree. This perspective reflects the NGO directors' deep concern regarding the implications of the budget cuts on the populations in need.

Furthermore, the consensus among the NGO directors is also evident in an assessment of the future. 80% of the NGO directors estimate that there is little to no chance that the government will take full responsibility for dealing with nutritional insecurity in the next 5-10 years. Only 2.5% believe that there is a high or very high chance of this happening.

These statistics indicate the significant gap between the high need for aid and the low expectations for comprehensive government involvement. They emphasize the ongoing importance of the NGOs' activities and the need for more extensive support from the government and the local authorities in dealing with the problem of nutritional insecurity.

# Latet

## Our Mission

Latet was established in order to reduce poverty, for a better and just Israeli society, by providing assistance to populations in need, mobilizing Israeli civil society towards mutual responsibility and leading a change in national priorities.

## Our Work

With over 28 years of experience, Latet has been Israel's first and leading national food bank, serving as an umbrella organization and receiving strong support from Israel's civil society. The organization initiates and operates various programs:



**Nutritional security** - Collaboration with a network of around 210 aid NGOs and partners (including soup kitchens and welfare departments in the local authorities) spread over 135 towns throughout Israel and all sectors of Israeli society. This extensive layout makes it possible to support around 100,000 families suffering from nutritional insecurity and to provide continuous and steady support.

**Food rescue** - Rescuing quality surplus food from manufacturers and retailers. The food is rescued using a cost-effective socially and environmentally-friendly model that makes it possible to leverage the financial investment so that for every shekel invested in operations and logistics, around ten shekels worth of food can be rescued, thus maximizing existing resources and supporting more families that live in nutritional insecurity.

**Latet Youth** - Latet's youth organization educates youth in Israel to volunteer as a way of life, develops leadership, and encourages social entrepreneurship.

**Aid for Life** - A holistic program that provides physical and social support to Holocaust survivors in need.

**Awareness and Advocacy** - Raising social awareness and leading a change in national priorities by promoting legislation, advocacy, initiating campaigns and public presentations, and publishing the Alternative Poverty Report for the past 22 years.

**Latet's Emergency Operation** - Specializing in providing aid during routine and emergency. The organization operated in numerous emergencies throughout the world, including natural disasters and civil wars. Over the years, the organization has helped with a variety of emergencies in Israel, including the Second Lebanon War, Operation Protective Edge, and the Covid pandemic, and is continuing with its extensive aid activities during the current ongoing war.

## Acknowledgements

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**And above all, thank you to the brave people, elderly, and families, who despite the difficulty, agreed to expose their way of life and complicated living conditions in order to show the face of poverty in Israel 2024, in the shadow of the events of October 7 and the ongoing war, and thus to be partners in the civilian effort to influence and change the social reality in Israel.**



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## **The Anatomy of Minimizing Poverty Policy Outline for Building a More Just Society**

Setting a national goal to minimize poverty and social inequalities | Establishing a national authority to fight poverty | Implementing the recommendations of the Israel Committee for the War Against Poverty | Dealing with nutritional insecurity on a national basis | Reinforcing the housing layout | Encouraging food rescue as a national strategy | Expanding the social security network | Developing social innovation | Preparing for emergencies and crises

**WE MUST BEAT POVERTY**



**LATET נתח**