

# MODERN APPROACH

Work begins on introducing postal codes for every household in Palestine

**The Palestinian Authority (PA)** has begun work on implementing a postal code system throughout Palestine in a bid to improve postal services in the country, especially in light of increased e-commerce due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Imad Temeiza, head of international relations at Palestine Post, said, "It's our right to have our own postal codes like many countries around the world. As a result of the increase in inbound mail volumes and logistics companies serving in this field, postal codes have become an essential need for Palestinian digital infrastructure during Covid-19 in particular. And the absence of a related postal system will cause a shortage in serving our inhabitants, so we insisted on the need to implement this system to be able to handle as much e-commerce as we can for Palestinian customers."

The process of introducing postal codes in the country actually began in 2010, but progress was stopped several times due to technical issues and lack of information. The rollout of postal codes began in earnest in January 2021. Half a million buildings in the West Bank have already been given postcodes, official PA news agency Wafa reported, and the rollout has been extended to the Gaza Strip.

**Challenges ahead** According to Temeiza, the new postal code system will help Palestine Post overcome the delivery delays experienced by Palestinians. Currently,



## “THE NEW POSTAL CODE WILL ENHANCE THE PRESENCE OF PALESTINE

Imad Temeiza, Palestine Post

international mail sent to or from the occupied West Bank has to pass through Jordan or Israel, and that mail must be cleared by Israel, which controls the entry of goods and customs into the occupied territory.

In 2020, Palestine Post recorded more than 7,000 violations of postal items on the Israeli side, whether by opening packages, seizing them or summoning their owners for

investigation, according to a report by news agency Al Jazeera.

"In the last few years," Temeiza said, "we have overcome many challenges in the postal sector, but we still face many obstacles related to the occupation, its dominance on our borders with Jordan and its continuous refusal to allow our acceptance of inbound mail items through Jordan, in spite of many bilateral memoranda and international resolutions."

"The Israeli side is insisting on keeping the delivery of Palestinian inbound mail through Israel, in order to collect all related terminal dues on that mail instead of Palestine. While the border delivery process is accomplished by Israel, the final delivery process is accomplished by Palestine Post. This issue "is considered a huge challenge to Palestine Post. The new postal code will enhance the presence of Palestine for international operators and will create its own entity and sovereignty, because mail items destined for Palestine will be differentiated from those coming to Israel, and so the process of sorting will be easier than before."

## NEW TECHNOLOGIES

**P**alestine Post will be investing in a number of new technologies and processes to ensure the smooth transition to the new postal code system, including the use of social media to deliver postal codes to Palestinian people, and investing in a mobile device application and website to help citizens use the codes.

"We'll also be investing in modern postal sorting machines that use the new postal codes for all Palestinian areas, and will develop an app for postal workers to



ensure delivery speed," Temeiza said. "We are also developing an app to help police, civil defense, emergency and private companies in Palestine quickly locate someone who requires assistance."

**Future hopes** According to Temeiza, the post codes will help Palestine Post provide Palestinians with the best postal services and "with free movement of our inbound and outbound mail without any obstacle, collecting our rights of terminal dues."

He added, "We are looking forward to making all post offices in Palestine a one-stop shop for several services. We have already established a one-stop shop in Bedo village near Jerusalem, and it was one of the successful steps. We are also looking to sign additional agreements with airline companies to expand our choices for Palestinian mail exports through Jordan."