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: New demographic era sees population growth dip below 1%

New demographic era sees population growth dip below 1%

• By TOBIAS HOLCMAN

Israel's fertility rate is declining in all sectors, with the population growth rate sinking under 1% for the first time since the foundation of the state, a new study by the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel revealed on Wednesday.

The study revealed that the main factors for this decrease were a negative net migration rate, a stagnation in birth rates, and an expected increase in the absolute number of deaths in 2025.

As a result, the population growth rate fell to 0.9%, the lowest since 1.42% in 1981 and 1.35% in 1983.

In terms of fertility rates, the main decline was observed relative to the 2018 figures, while current rates remain higher than those recorded in 2005.

"We are at the beginning of a new era in Israel's demographic development. The peak period of natural increase has passed, alongside a less stable - and even negative - migration balance.

"These two factors represent a clear break from past patterns,"

said Professor Alex Weinreb, research director and chair of the Demography Policy Group at the Taub Center.

The study mentions that there will be a significant decrease in fertility rates by 2030, with secular Jewish women projected to have 1.7 children by then.

Among religious women, including traditional-religious women, fertility is projected to decline to about 2.3 children per woman, and among haredi (ultra-Orthodox) women, it is projected to decline to 4.3 children per woman by the year 2040.

In the Arab-Israeli society, there is an expected parallel trend that projects a decline to 2.7 among religious women and to 2.0 among non-religious women by the next decade.

In terms of migration rates, the study found that net migration (the number of people who immigrated to Israel minus those who left) was negative for the second consecutive year and for the fifth time since 2000.

Projections indicated that 37,000 more left the country than moved to Israel, an increase from the

26,000 reported in 2024.

An increase in total fatalities projected for the upcoming year also affected the growth rate projections, with the absolute number of deaths increasing from about 46,000 in 2018 to about 51,000 in 2024.

This trend is expected to continue over the next few years, even as life expectancy in the country increases, primarily because a large share of Israel's population will enter their 70s and 80s.

In total, the annual number of deaths is expected to increase by about 77% by 2040 (an increase of 71% in the Jewish population and 111% in the Arab population).

Despite these factors, the study predicts that Israel will experience annual population growth rates of 1.4%-1% through 2040, placing it among the fastest-growing populations in developed nations.

"The socioeconomic challenges facing Israel at the end of 2025, after two years of war, are substantial, and the report shines a spotlight on the most critical issues that require attention," said Professor Avi Weiss, editor of the report and president of the Taub Center.