

The State of Palestine

MAL FACT SHEET



SUMMARY

The State of Palestine is a country in the southern Levant region of the Middle East, or West Asia. It is comprised of two disconnected territories: The West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The territory between the two territories was once a part of Palestine. After the Balfour Declaration, a portion of the land had been allotted for the Jewish state of Israel, and more territory had subsequently been conquered and controlled by Israel.

President: Mahmoud Abbas (Palestine and the Palestinian National Authority), Khalil al-Hayya (Deputy Chairman of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) in Gaza)

Capital: Jerusalem, Ramallah

Gov Type: Semi-Presidential System Multiparty Republic/Authoritarian Regime

Population: 2.13 million (Gaza), 4.1 million (West Bank)

History: Formerly Ottoman Empire (1516-1918), Captured by Egypt (1831-1840), Formerly British Mandate of Palestine (1922), Establishment of Israel (1948)

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Due to the way that the United States classifies the State of Palestine, information will be listed between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank individually. The Gaza Strip is 360 sq km, which is slightly more than twice the size of Washington, D.C, and the West Bank is 5,860 sq km, which is slightly smaller than the state of Delaware.

The climate of the Gaza strip is temperate with mild winters and dry and warm to hot summers, while the climate in the West Bank is similar with varying temperature and precipitation depending on altitude.

The terrain in the Gaza Strip is flat to rolling, with a sand and dune-covered coastal plain, while the terrain in the West Bank is mostly rugged, dissected upland in the west with flat plains descending to the Jordan River Valley to the east.

The natural resources in the Gaza Strip are arable land and natural gas, with just arable land in the West Bank. Droughts are the main natural hazards the region faces.

Economy and Politics

DEMOGRAPHICS

Noun: Palestinian(s), Gazan(s) (Gaza Strip)

Adjective: Palestinian, Gazan (Gaza Strip)

Ethnic Groups: Palestinian Arab (Gaza Strip and West Bank), Jewish (West Bank), Other (West Bank)

Languages: Arabic (Official), Hebrew, English

Religions: 99% Muslim (Predominantly Sunni, Gaza), 1% Christian (Gaza), 80-85% Muslim (Predominantly Sunni, West Bank), 12-14% Jewish (West Bank), 1-2.5% Christian (Mainly Greek Orthodox)

Literacy: 97.5% (Male 98.8%, Female 96.2%) (Gaza and West Bank)

A majority of the population in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are dependents (children 18 and younger), with both areas having a high youth dependency ratio and the median age of the Gaza Strip at 19.5 years and 21.9 in the West Bank.

ECONOMY AND GDP

Palestine receives substantial financial aid from international donors, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East up until the end of 2023. If not specified, data includes West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Real GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): \$25.23 billion (2026)

Real GDP Growth Rate: -22.9% (2026)

Real GDP Per Capita (PPP): \$4,500 (2026)

GDP (Official Exchange Rate): \$16.02 billion (2026)

Inflation Rate (Consumer Prices): -42.9% (2026)

GDP - Composition: 3% Agriculture (Gaza 2017), 21.1% Industry (Gaza 2017), 75% Services (Gaza 2017), 2.9% Agriculture (WB 2017), 19.5% Industry (WB 2017), 77.6% (WB 2017)

Unemployment Rate: 24.4% (2026)

Youth Unemployment: 40.3% (2026)

MAIN POLITICAL CONTENTIONS

The State of Palestine exists in a unique position on the world stage, where it is recognized by 157 out of 193 sovereign states (not including the United States). After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the allied powers divided the former territories amongst themselves, and the British received the Mandate of Palestine in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, with the stated intention to set up the territories for self-determination. In the Balfour Declaration, the British promised the Zionists in Europe that it would establish a "national home" for the Jewish people in Palestine, despite the fact that Britain had previously promised Arabs independence.

In 1947, despite Arab resistance to the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine and violent revolts, the United Nations created a partition plan entitled Resolution 181, which separated the land once all known as Palestine into Palestine and Israel, allotting fifty-five percent of the land for Israel and the city of Jerusalem – declared a separate internationalized territory.

However, Israel has broken international law by taking over much of the area allotted for Palestine with Jewish settlements, causing numerous conflicts. The conflict reached a boiling point when Israel responded to Hamas' terrorist attack with a full scale invasion of Gaza. Since, the conflict has continued along a volatile trajectory, with Trump's October 2025 ceasefire making very little progress towards long-lasting peace. Beyond just a horrific humanitarian crisis, Palestine continues to try to form a united political front.

Palestine: A Timeline

9 September 1976
The Palestinian Liberation Organization joins the Arab League and its seat is assumed by the State of Palestine following the declaration of independence in 1988

15 November 1988
The Palestinian National Council met in Algeria to adopt a declaration of independence and declared an independence state of Palestine in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip

5 July 2000
The Camp David Summit is called by President Bill Clinton with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to end the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict to no avail

11 November 2004
Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian National Authority dies and Mahmoud Abbas wins the subsequent presidential elections

27 December 2008
The Gaza War begins, a three-week armed conflict between Gazan paramilitary groups and the Israel Defense Forces, ends 18 Jan 2009

7 October 2023
 Hamas militants attack a music festival in Israel and Israel declares war on Gaza

9 December 1987
The First Intifada or Uprising took place, which was a series of protests, acts of civil disobedience and riots by Palestinians in protest of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, ending 13 September 1993

13 September 1993
The Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel sign the Oslo Accords to start a peace process, resulting in the creation of the Palestinian National Authority, which conducted Palestinian self-governance over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank

28 September 2000
The Second Intifada, another major uprising by Palestinians against Israeli occupation triggered by the Camp David Summit and violent suppression of protests by Israeli police

29 January 2006
The Hamas Political Party won the majority of seats in the legislative election in the Palestinian Parliament ahead of the Palestinian National Liberation Party

14 November 2012
Between 2012 and 2021, Israel launched three military assaults in Gaza one in 2012 lasting 8 days, one in 2014 lasting 50 days, and one in 2021 lasting 11 days

19 January 2025
Despite Israel claiming success, Qatar, the United States, and Egypt help broker a ceasefire.

10 October 2025
The Trump administration brokers ceasefire as a part of a broader plan to end the war (deal stipulates releasing Israeli hostages and easing restrictions on humanitarian

27 October 2023
Israel launches full scale invasion on the Gaza Strip, which up until mid-2026 led to up to 75,000 deaths

March 2025
Following a hostage dispute, Israel reignites bombardment and ground offensive of several cities in the Gaza Strip.

June 2026
Despite the ceasefire agreement, death tolls in the Gaza Strip continue to rise as peace becomes increasingly fragile.