

# The World Factbook



## Middle East :: Gaza Strip

### Introduction :: Gaza Strip

#### Background:

Inhabited since at least the 15th century B.C., Gaza has been dominated by many different peoples and empires throughout its history; it was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in the early 16th century. Gaza fell to British forces during World War I, becoming a part of the British Mandate of Palestine. Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Egypt administered the newly formed Gaza Strip; it was captured by Israel in the Six-Day War with Egypt in 1967, and later transferred to the Palestinian National Authority. Under a series of agreements signed between 1994 and 1999, Israel transferred to the Palestinian Authority (PA) security and civilian responsibility for many Palestinian-populated areas of the Gaza Strip as well as the West Bank. Negotiations to determine the permanent status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip stalled after the outbreak of an intifada in mid- 2000. In early 2003, the "Quartet" of the US, EU, UN, and Russia, presented a roadmap to a final peace settlement by 2005, calling for two states - Israel and a democratic Palestine. Following Palestinian leader Yasir ARAFAT's death in late 2004 and the subsequent

election of Mahmud ABBAS (head of the Fatah political party) as the PA president, Israel and the PA agreed to move the peace process forward. Israel in late 2005 unilaterally withdrew all of its settlers and soldiers and dismantled its military facilities in the Gaza Strip, but continues to control maritime, airspace, and other access. In early 2006, the Islamic Resistance Movement, HAMAS, won the Palestinian Legislative Council election and took control of the PA government. Attempts to form a unity government failed, and violent clashes between Fatah and HAMAS supporters ensued, culminating in HAMAS's violent seizure of all military and governmental institutions in the Gaza Strip. Fatah and HAMAS in early 2011 agreed to reunify the Gaza Strip and West Bank, but the factions have struggled to implement details on governance and security. Brief periods of increased violence between Israel and Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip in 2007-08 and again in 2012, both led to Egyptian-brokered truces. The status quo remains with HAMAS in control of the Gaza Strip and the PA governing the West Bank.

## Geography :: Gaza Strip

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### Location:

Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Israel

### Geographic coordinates:

31 25 N, 34 20 E

### Map references:

Middle East

### Area:

**total:** 360 sq km

**country comparison to the world:** 206

**land:** 360 sq km

**water:** 0 sq km

### Area - comparative:

slightly more than twice the size of Washington, DC

### Land boundaries:

**total:** 62 km

**border countries:** Egypt 11 km, Israel 51 km

### Coastline:

40 km

**Maritime claims:**

see entry for Israel

*note:* effective 3 January 2009 the Gaza maritime area is closed to all maritime traffic and is under blockade imposed by Israeli Navy until further notice

**Climate:**

temperate, mild winters, dry and warm to hot summers

**Terrain:**

flat to rolling, sand- and dune-covered coastal plain

**Elevation extremes:**

**lowest point:** Mediterranean Sea 0 m

**highest point:** Abu 'Awdah (Joz Abu 'Awdah) 105 m

**Natural resources:**

arable land, natural gas

**Land use:**

**arable land:** 7.39%

**permanent crops:** 10.96%

**other:** 81.64% (2011)

**Irrigated land:**

240 sq km; note - includes West Bank (2003)

**Natural hazards:**

droughts

**Environment - current issues:**

desertification; salination of fresh water; sewage treatment; water-borne disease; soil degradation; depletion and contamination of underground water resources

**Geography - note:**

strategic strip of land along Mideast-North African trade routes has experienced an incredibly turbulent history; the town of Gaza itself has been besieged countless times in its history

**People and Society :: Gaza Strip**

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**Nationality:**

**noun:** NA

**adjective:** NA

**Ethnic groups:**

Palestinian Arab

**Languages:**

Arabic, Hebrew (spoken by many Palestinians), English (widely understood)

**Religions:**

Muslim (predominantly Sunni) 99.3%, Christian 0.7%

**Population:**

1,763,387 (July 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 152

**Age structure:**

**0-14 years:** 43.5% (male 394,108/female 372,897)

**15-24 years:** 20.9% (male 188,626/female 179,529)

**25-54 years:** 29.6% (male 268,122/female 254,630)

**55-64 years:** 3.4% (male 29,682/female 29,933)

**65 years and over:** 2.6% (male 18,701/female 27,159) (2013 est.)

**Dependency ratios:**

**total dependency ratio:** 75.6 %

**youth dependency ratio:** 70.4 %

**elderly dependency ratio:** 5.2 %

**potential support ratio:** 19.2

*note:* data represents the Palestinian Territories (2013)

**Median age:**

**total:** 18.1 years

**male:** 17.9 years

**female:** 18.2 years (2013 est.)

**Population growth rate:**

3.01% (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 9

**Birth rate:**

33.27 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 33

**Death rate:**

3.15 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 220**

**Net migration rate:**

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 88**

**Urbanization:**

**urban population: 74.3%** of total population (2011)

**rate of urbanization: 3.1%** annual rate of change (2005-10 est.)

**Sex ratio:**

**at birth: 1.06** male(s)/female

**0-14 years: 1.06** male(s)/female

**15-24 years: 1.05** male(s)/female

**25-54 years: 1.05** male(s)/female

**55-64 years: 0.98** male(s)/female

**65 years and over: 0.68** male(s)/female

**total population: 1.04** male(s)/female (2013 est.)

**Maternal mortality rate:**

64 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

**country comparison to the world: 95**

**Infant mortality rate:**

**total: 16** deaths/1,000 live births

**country comparison to the world: 104**

**male: 17.07** deaths/1,000 live births

**female: 14.86** deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

**Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population: 74.4** years

**country comparison to the world: 111**

**male: 72.69** years

**female: 76.21** years (2013 est.)

**Total fertility rate:**

4.41 children born/woman (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 31**

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

NA

## HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA

## Education expenditures:

NA

## Literacy:

**definition:** age 15 and over can read and write

**total population:** 95.3%

**male:** 97.9%

**female:** 92.6%

*note:* estimates are for the Palestinian Territories (2011 est.)

## School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

**total:** 14 years

**male:** 13 years

**female:** 14 years (2006)

## Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

**total:** 38.8%

**country comparison to the world:** 13

**male:** 36.8%

**female:** 49.6%

*note:* includes West Bank (2010)

## Government :: Gaza Strip

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### Country name:

**conventional long form:** none

**conventional short form:** Gaza Strip

**local long form:** none

**local short form:** Qita' Ghazzah

## Economy :: Gaza Strip

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### Economy - overview:

Israeli security controls imposed since the end of the second intifada have degraded economic conditions in the Gaza Strip, the smaller of the two areas comprising the Palestinian territories. Israeli-imposed border closures, which became more restrictive after HAMAS seized control of the territory in June 2007, have resulted in high unemployment, elevated poverty rates, and a sharp contraction of the private sector that had relied primarily

on export markets. The population depends on government spending - by both the Palestinian Authority and HAMAS's de facto government - and humanitarian assistance. Changes to Israeli restrictions on imports in 2010 resulted in a rebound in some economic activity, but regular exports from Gaza still are not permitted. Standard-of-living measures remain below levels seen in the mid-1990s.

**GDP (purchasing power parity):**

see entry for West Bank

**GDP - real growth rate:**

see entry for West Bank

**GDP - per capita (PPP):**

see entry for West Bank

**GDP - composition, by end use:**

**household consumption:** 92.5%  
**government consumption:** 24.5%  
**investment in fixed capital:** 22.5%  
**investment in inventories:** 0%  
**exports of goods and services:** 19.8%  
**imports of goods and services:** -59.3%  
(2012 est.)

**GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

see entry for West Bank

**Agriculture - products:**

olives, fruit, vegetables, flowers; beef, dairy products

**Industries:**

textiles, food processing, furniture

**Industrial production growth rate:**

see entry for West Bank

**Labor force:**

348,200 (2010)

**country comparison to the world:** 162

**Labor force - by occupation:**

**agriculture:** 5.1%  
**industry:** 15.6%  
**services:** 79.3% (2010 est.)

**Unemployment rate:**

22.6% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 168  
40% (2011 est.)

**Population below poverty line:**

38% (2010 est.)

**Budget:**

see entry for West Bank

**Fiscal year:**

calendar year

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

2.8% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 77  
2.9% (2011 est.)

*note:* includes West Bank

**Commercial bank prime lending rate:**

see entry for West Bank

**Stock of broad money:**

\$6.674 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 117  
\$6.674 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

**Stock of domestic credit:**

\$1.042 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 157  
\$851.1 million (31 December 2011 est.)

**Current account balance:**

see entry for West Bank

**Exports:**

see entry for West Bank

**Exports - commodities:**

strawberries, carnations, vegetables (small and irregular shipments, as permitted to transit the Israeli-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing)

### **Imports:**

see entry for West Bank

### **Imports - commodities:**

food, consumer goods

*note:* Israel permits basic commercial imports through the Kerem Shalom crossing, but many "dual use" goods, such as construction materials and electronics, are smuggled through tunnels beneath Gaza's border with Egypt

### **Debt - external:**

see entry for West Bank

### **Exchange rates:**

new Israeli shekels (ILS) per US dollar -

3.8559 (2012 est.)

3.5781 (2011 est.)

3.739 (2010 est.)

3.9323 (2009)

3.56 (2008)

## **Energy :: Gaza Strip**

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### **Electricity - production:**

51,000 kWh (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 217

### **Electricity - consumption:**

202,000 kWh (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 216

### **Electricity - exports:**

0 kWh (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 205

### **Electricity - imports:**

193,000 kWh (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 106

### **Crude oil - proved reserves:**

0 bbl (1 January 2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 142

## **Communications :: Gaza Strip**

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### **Telephones - main lines in use:**

337,000 (includes West Bank) (2010)

**country comparison to the world:** 112

### **Telephones - mobile cellular:**

2.405 million (includes West Bank) (2010)

**country comparison to the world:** 132

### **Telephone system:**

**general assessment:** Gaza continues to repair the damage to its telecommunications infrastructure caused by fighting in 2009

**domestic:** Israeli company BEZEK and the Palestinian company PALTEL are responsible for fixed-line services; the Palestinian JAWWAL company provides cellular services

**international:** country code - 970 (2009)

### **Broadcast media:**

1 TV station and about 10 radio stations (2008)

### **Internet country code:**

.ps; note - same as West Bank

### **Internet users:**

1.379 million (includes West Bank) (2009)

**country comparison to the world:** 87

## **Transportation :: Gaza Strip**

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### **Airports:**

1 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 218

### **Airports - with paved runways:**

**total:** 1

**over 3,047 m:** 1 (2013)

### **Heliports:**

1 (2013)

## **Roadways:**

**note:** see entry for West Bank

## **Ports and terminals:**

**major seaport(s):** Gaza

## **Military :: Gaza Strip**

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### **Military branches:**

Hamas does not have a conventional military in the Gaza Strip, but maintains security forces in addition to its military wing, the 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades; the military wing reports to the external Hamas Political Bureau leadership, which has been in exile in Cairo and Doha since closing its Damascus headquarters in late 2011 (2013)

### **Manpower available for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 385,961 (2010 est.)

### **Manpower fit for military service:**

**males age 16-49:** 335,820

**females age 16-49:** 319,847 (2010 est.)

### **Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:**

**male:** 18,805

**female:** 17,903 (2010 est.)

### **Military expenditures:**

NA

## **Transnational Issues :: Gaza Strip**

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### **Disputes - international:**

the status of the Gaza Strip is a final status issue to be resolved through negotiations; Israel removed settlers and military personnel from Gaza Strip in August 2005

### **Refugees and internally displaced persons:**

**refugees (country of origin):** 1.167 million (Palestinian refugees (UNRWA)) (2012)

**IDPs:** 160,000 (persons displaced within both the Gaza strip and the West Bank since 1967; as estimated by unofficial sources) (2011)