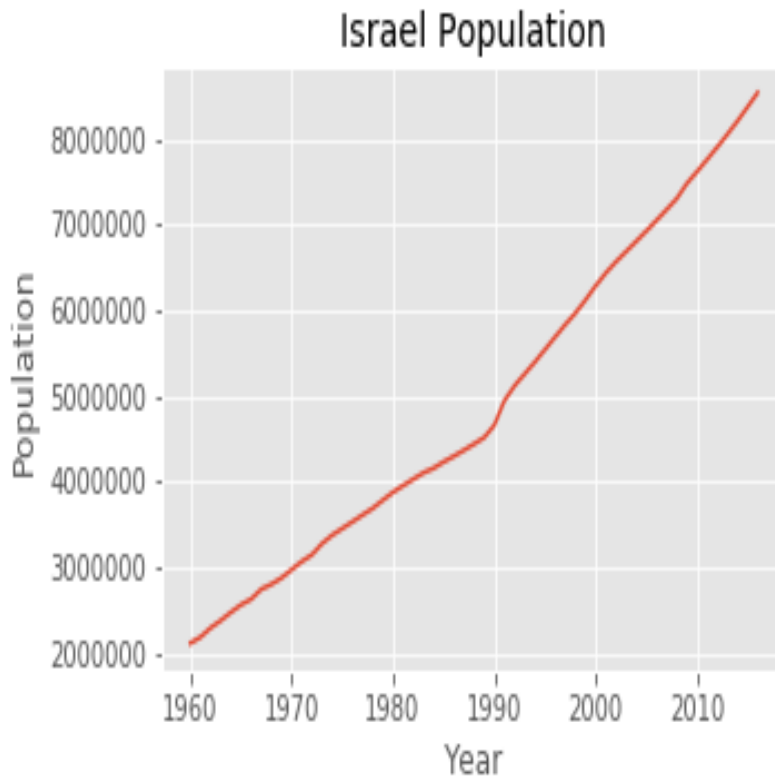


Israel



Coordinates: 31°N 35°E﻿ / ﻿31°N 35°E﻿ / 31; 35Israel (/ˈɪzrəˈɪl/, -reˈɪl/; Hebrew: מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל; Arabic: دَوْلَة إِسْرَائِيل), officially the State of Israel, is a country in the Middle East, on the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and the northern shore of the Red Sea. It has land borders with Lebanon to the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan on the east, the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the east and west, respectively, and Egypt to the southwest. The country contains geographically diverse features within its relatively small area. Israel's economy and technology center is Tel Aviv, while its seat of government and proclaimed capital is Jerusalem, although the state's sovereignty over Jerusalem is not recognised internationally.^[fn 2]The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah emerged during the Iron Age. The Neo-Assyrian Empire destroyed Israel around 720 BCE. Judah was later conquered by the Babylonian, Persian and Hellenistic empires and had existed as Jewish autonomous provinces. The successful Maccabean Revolt led to an independent Jewish kingdom in 110 BCE, which came to an end in 63 BCE when the Hasmonean kingdom became a client state of the Roman Republic that subsequently installed the Herodian dynasty in 37 BCE, and in 6 CE created the Roman province of Judea. Judea lasted as a Roman province until the failed Jewish revolts resulted in widespread destruction, expulsion of Jewish population and the renaming of the region from Iudaea to Syria Palaestina. Jewish presence in the region has persisted to a certain extent over the centuries. In the 7th century the Levant was taken from the Byzantine Empire by the Arabs and remained in Muslim control until the First Crusade of 1099, followed by the Ayyubid conquest of 1187. The Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt extended its control over the Levant in the 13th century until its defeat by the Ottoman Empire in 1517. During the 19th century, national awakening among Jews led to the establishment of the Zionist movement in the diaspora followed by waves of immigration to Ottoman and later British Palestine.