

**Israel**,<sup>[a]</sup> officially the **State of Israel**,<sup>[b]</sup> is a country in the Southern Levant region of West Asia. It is bordered by Lebanon to the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan to the east, the Red Sea to the south, Egypt to the southwest, the Mediterranean Sea to the west, and the Palestinian territories – the West Bank along the east and the Gaza Strip along the southwest.<sup>[21]</sup> Tel Aviv is the financial, economic, and technological center of the country, while its seat of government is in its proclaimed capital of Jerusalem, although Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem is unrecognized internationally.<sup>[22][c]</sup>

Israel is located in a region known historically as Canaan, Palestine and the Holy Land. In antiquity, it was home to several Canaanite, and later, Israelite and Judahite states. The region was successively conquered by the Assyrian, Babylonian, Achaemenid, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine empires, Arab Caliphates, Crusaders, Ayyubids, Mamluks and Ottomans. The late 19th century saw the rise of Zionism in Europe, a movement seeking a Jewish homeland, which garnered British support during World War I. During the war, the Ottomans were defeated and the British Mandate for Palestine was set up in 1920. Jewish immigration to Mandatory Palestine increased considerably, leading to intercommunal conflict between Jews and Arabs.<sup>[24]</sup> The 1947 UN Partition Plan triggered a civil war between the two groups, which saw the expulsion and flight of most of Palestine's predominantly Arab population.

The State of Israel declared its establishment on 14 May 1948, the day the British terminated the Mandate. On 15 May 1948, the armies of neighboring Arab states invaded the area of the former Mandatory Palestine, starting the First Arab–Israeli War. The 1949 Armistice Agreements saw Israel's borders established over most of the former Mandate territory, while the rest, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, were taken by Jordan and Egypt respectively.<sup>[25][26][27]</sup> The 1967 Six-Day War saw Israel occupying the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula and the Syrian Golan Heights. It has since established and continues to expand settlements across the occupied territories, actions which are deemed illegal under international law, and annexed both East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, which are largely unrecognized internationally. Since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Israel has signed peace treaties with Egypt, returning the Sinai Peninsula, and with Jordan, and more recently normalized relations with several Arab countries. However, efforts to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict have not succeeded. Israel's practices in its occupation of the Palestinian territories have drawn sustained

State of Israel

מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל (Hebrew)

دَوْلَة إِسْرَائِيل (Arabic)

Flag

Emblem

Anthem: הַתִּקְוָה (*Hatikvāh*; "The Hope")

0:00 / 0:00

ISRAEL

Amistice Demarcation line

Boundary of former Palestine Mandate

Haifa

Nazareth

Tel Aviv-Yaffo

Ramla

Jerusalem

Beersheba

Gaza

West Bank

Mediterranean Sea

Dead Sea

Lake Tiberias

EGYPT

JORDAN

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

25 km

Israel within internationally recognized borders shown in dark green; Israeli-occupied territories shown in light green

Capital and largest city

Jerusalem (limited recognition)<sup>[fn 1][fn 2]</sup>

31°47′N 35°13′E

Official language

Hebrew<sup>[8]</sup>

international criticism along with accusations that it has committed war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Palestinian people from human rights organizations and United Nations officials.

The country has a parliamentary system elected by proportional representation. The prime minister serves as head of government, and is elected by the Knesset, Israel's unicameral legislature.<sup>[28]</sup> Israel has one of the biggest economies in the Middle East by nominal GDP,<sup>[29]</sup> it is one of the richest countries in the Middle East and Asia,<sup>[30][31][32]</sup> and an OECD member since 2010.<sup>[33]</sup> It has one of the highest standards of living in the Middle East, and has been ranked as one of the most advanced and technological countries,<sup>[34][35][36]</sup> with a population of nearly 10 million people as of 2023.<sup>[37][18]</sup>

## Etymology

Under the British Mandate (1920–1948), the whole region was known as *Palestine*.<sup>[38]</sup> Upon establishment in 1948, the country formally adopted the name *State of Israel* (Hebrew: מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, **Medīnat Yisrā'el** ⓘ [mediˈnat jisʁaˈʔel]; Arabic: دَوْلَة إِسْرَائِيل, *Dawlat Isrāʼīl*, [dawlat ʔisraːˈʔiːl]) after other proposed names including *Land of Israel* (*Eretz Israel*), *Ever* (from ancestor *Eber*), *Zion*, and *Judea*, were considered but rejected,<sup>[39]</sup> while the name *Israel* was suggested by Ben-Gurion and passed by a vote of 6–3.<sup>[40]</sup> In the early weeks after establishment, the government chose the term *Israeli* to denote a citizen of the Israeli state.<sup>[41]</sup>

The names Land of Israel and Children of Israel have historically been used to refer to the biblical Kingdom of Israel and the entire Jewish people respectively.<sup>[42]</sup> The name 'Israel' (Hebrew: *Yisrā'ēl*; Septuagint Greek: Ἰσραήλ, *Israēl*, 'El (God) persists/rules', though after Hosea 12:4 (<https://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Hosea%2012:4&version=nrsv>) often interpreted as 'struggle with God') refers to the patriarch Jacob who, according to the Hebrew Bible, was given the name after he successfully wrestled with the angel of the Lord.<sup>[43]</sup> The earliest known archaeological artefact to mention the word *Israel* as a collective is the Merneptah Stele of ancient Egypt (dated to the late 13th century BCE).<sup>[44]</sup>

## History

Early expansions of hominins out of Africa into the Levant, where Israel is located, dates back at least 1.5 million years based on traces found at the Ubeidiya prehistoric site,<sup>[45]</sup> while the Skhul and Qafzeh hominins, dating back 120,000 years, are some of the earliest traces of anatomically modern humans outside of Africa.<sup>[46]</sup> The Natufian

<b>Recognized language</b>	<span>Arabic</span> <sup><span>[</span>fn<span> </span>3<span>]</span></sup>
<b>Ethnic groups</b> (2023) <sup><span>[</span>12<span>]</span></sup>	<div> <div>73% Jews</div> <div>21% Arabs</div> <div>6% others</div> </div>
<b>Demonym(s)</b>	<span>Israeli</span>
<b>Government</b>	<span>Unitary parliamentary republic</span>
<div> <div><div>• <span>President</span></div></div> <div><div>• <span>Prime Minister</span></div></div> <div><div>• <span>Knesset Speaker</span></div></div> <div><div>• <span>Chief Justice</span></div></div> </div>	<div> <div><span>Isaac Herzog</span></div> <div><span>Benjamin Netanyahu</span></div> <div><span>Amir Ohana</span></div> <div><span>Uzi Vogel<span>man</span></span> (acting)</div> </div>
<b>Legislature</b>	<span>Knesset</span>
<b>Establishment</b>	
<div> <div><div>• <span>Declaration and independence from Mandatory Palestine</span></div></div> <div><div>• <span>Admission to the United Nations</span></div></div> <div><div>• <span>Basic Laws</span></div></div> </div>	<div> <div>14 May 1948</div> <div>11 May 1949</div> <div>1958–2018</div> </div>
<b>Area</b>	
<div> <div><div>• <span>Total</span></div></div> <div><div>• <span>Water<span> </span>(%)</span></div></div> </div>	<div> <div>22,072 or 20,770<sup><span>[</span>13<span>]</span><span>[</span>14<span>]</span></sup> km<sup>2</sup> (8,522 or 8,019 sq mi)<sup><span>[</span>a<span>]</span></sup> (149th)</div> <div>2.71<sup><span>[</span>15<span>]</span></sup></div> </div>
<b>Population</b>	
<div> <div><div>• <span>2024 estimate</span></div></div> <div><div>• <span>2008 census</span></div></div> <div><div>• <span>Density</span></div></div> </div>	<div> <div><span>▲</span> 9,883,520<sup><span>[</span>16<span>]</span><span>[</span>fn<span> </span>4<span>]</span></sup> (93rd)</div> <div>7,412,200<sup><span>[</span>17<span>]</span><span>[</span>fn<span> </span>4<span>]</span></sup></div> <div>448/km<sup>2</sup> (1,160.3/sq mi) (29th)</div> </div>
<b>GDP</b> (PPP)	2024 estimate
<div> <div><div>• <span>Total</span></div></div> <div><div>• <span>Per capita</span></div></div> </div>	<div> <div><span>▲</span> \$552.151 billion<sup><span>[</span>18<span>]</span></sup> (47th)</div> <div><span>▲</span> \$55,533<sup><span>[</span>18<span>]</span></sup> (29th)</div> </div>
<b>GDP</b> (nominal)	2024 estimate
<div> <div><div>• <span>Total</span></div></div> </div>	<div> <div><span>▲</span> \$530.664 billion<sup><span>[</span>18<span>]</span></sup> (29th)</div> </div>

culture emerged in the southern Levant by the 10th millennium BCE,<sup>[47]</sup> followed by the Ghassulian culture by around 4,500 BCE.<sup>[48]</sup>

### Bronze and Iron Ages

Early references to "Canaanites" and "Canaan" appear in Near Eastern and Egyptian texts (c. 2000 BCE); these populations were structured as politically independent, territorially based city-states.<sup>[49][50]</sup> During the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 BCE), large parts of Canaan formed vassal states paying tribute to the New Kingdom of Egypt.<sup>[51]</sup> As a result of the Late Bronze Age collapse, Canaan fell into chaos, and Egyptian control over the region collapsed.<sup>[52][53]</sup>

A people named Israel appear for the first time in the Merneptah Stele, an ancient Egyptian inscription which dates to about 1200 BCE.<sup>[54][55][fn 5][57]</sup> Ancestors of the Israelites are thought to have included ancient Semitic-speaking peoples native to this area.<sup>[58]:78–79</sup> Modern archaeological accounts suggest that the Israelites and their culture branched out of the Canaanite peoples through the development of a distinct monolatristic—and later monotheistic—religion centered on Yahweh.<sup>[59][60][61]</sup> They spoke an archaic form of Hebrew, known as Biblical Hebrew.<sup>[62]</sup> Around the same time, the Philistines settled on the southern coastal plain.<sup>[63][64]</sup>

Modern archaeology has largely discarded the historicity of the narrative in the Torah concerning the patriarchs, The Exodus and the tales of conquest in the Book of Joshua, and instead views the narrative as the Israelites' national myth.<sup>[65]</sup> However, some elements of these traditions do appear to have historical roots.<sup>[66][67][68]</sup>

There is debate about the earliest existence of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah and their extent and power. While it is unclear if there was ever a United Kingdom of Israel,<sup>[69][70]</sup> historians and archaeologists agree that the northern Kingdom of Israel existed by ca. 900 BCE<sup>[71]:169–195[72]</sup> and the Kingdom of Judah by ca. 850 BCE.<sup>[73][74]</sup> The Kingdom of Israel was the more prosperous of the two and soon developed into a regional power;<sup>[75]</sup> during the Omride dynasty, it controlled Samaria, Galilee, the upper Jordan Valley, the Sharon and large parts of the Transjordan.<sup>[76]</sup> Samaria, the capital, was home to one of the largest Iron Age structures in the Levant.<sup>[77][78]</sup>

The Kingdom of Israel was destroyed around 720 BCE, when it was conquered by the Neo-Assyrian Empire.<sup>[79]</sup> The Kingdom of Judah, with its capital in Jerusalem, later became a client state of first the Neo-Assyrian Empire and then the Neo-Babylonian Empire. It is estimated that the region's population was around 400,000 in the Iron Age II.<sup>[80]</sup> In 587/6 BCE, following a revolt in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar II besieged and destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple,<sup>[81][82]</sup> dissolved the kingdom and exiled much of the Judean elite to

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<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>Gini (2018)</div></div>	<div><div><div><div><span></span></div><div>34.8<sup>[fn 4][19]</sup></div></div></div><div>medium</div></div>
<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>HDI (2022)</div></div>	<div><div><div><div><span></span></div><div>0.915<sup>[20]</sup></div></div></div><div>very high (25th)</div></div>
<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>Currency</div></div>	<div><div><div><div><span></span></div><div>New shekel (₪)</div></div></div><div>(ILS)</div></div>
<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>Time zone</div></div>	<div><div><div><div><span></span></div><div>UTC+2:00 (IST)</div></div></div></div>
<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>• Summer (DST)</div></div>	<div><div><div><div><span></span></div><div>UTC+3:00 (IDT)</div></div></div></div>
<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>Date format</div></div>	<div><div><div><div><span></span></div><div>שששש-חח-'' (AM)</div></div></div><div>dd-mm-yyyy (CE)</div></div>
<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>Driving side</div></div>	<div><div><div><div><span></span></div><div>right</div></div></div></div>
<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>Calling code</div></div>	<div><div><div><div><span></span></div><div>+972</div></div></div></div>
<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>ISO 3166 code</div></div>	<div><div><div><div><span></span></div><div>IL</div></div></div></div>
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<div><div><div><div><span></span></div></div></div><div>a. 20,770 km<sup>2</sup> is Israel within the Green Line. 22,072 km<sup>2</sup> includes the occupied Golan Heights (c. 1,200 km<sup>2</sup> (460 sq mi)) and East Jerusalem (c. 64 km<sup>2</sup> (25 sq mi)).</div></div>	



The Merneptah Stele (13th century BCE). The majority of biblical archeologists translate a set of hieroglyphs as *Israel*, the first instance of the name in the record.

Babylon, beginning the Babylonian captivity.<sup>[83]</sup> The defeat was recorded in the Babylonian Chronicles.<sup>[84][85]</sup> After capturing Babylon in 539 BCE, Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenid Empire, issued a proclamation allowing the exiled Judean population to return to Judah.<sup>[86][87]</sup>

## Classical antiquity

The construction of the Second Temple was completed c. 520 BCE.<sup>[86]</sup> The Achaemenids ruled the region as the province of Yehud Medinata,<sup>[88]</sup> which had a population of around 30,000 in the 5th to 4th centuries BCE.<sup>[71]:308</sup>

In 332 BCE, Alexander the Great of Macedon conquered the region as part of his campaign against the Achaemenid Empire. After his death, the area was controlled by the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires as a part of Coele-Syria. Over the ensuing centuries, the Hellenization of the region led to cultural tensions that came to a head during the reign of Antiochus IV, giving rise to the Maccabean Revolt of 167 BCE. The civil unrest weakened Seleucid rule and in the late 2nd century the semi-autonomous Hasmonean Kingdom of Judea arose, eventually attaining full independence and expanding into neighboring regions.<sup>[89][90][91]</sup>

The Roman Republic invaded the region in 63 BCE, first taking control of Syria, and then intervening in the Hasmonean Civil War. The struggle between pro-Roman and pro-Parthian factions in Judea led to the installation of Herod the Great as a dynastic vassal of Rome. In 6 CE, the area was annexed as the Roman province of Judaea; tensions with Roman rule led to a series of Jewish–Roman wars, resulting in widespread destruction. The First Jewish–Roman War (66–73 CE) resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple and a sizable portion of the population being killed or displaced.<sup>[92]</sup>

A second uprising known as the Bar Kokhba revolt took place during 132–136 CE. Initial successes allowed the Jews to form an independent state, but the Romans massed large forces and brutally crushed the rebellion, devastating and depopulating Judea's countryside.<sup>[92][93][94][95][96]</sup> Jerusalem was rebuilt as a Roman colony (Aelia Capitolina), and the province of Judea was renamed Syria Palaestina.<sup>[97][98]</sup> Jews were expelled from the districts surrounding Jerusalem,<sup>[99][95]</sup> and joined communities in the diaspora.<sup>[100]</sup> Nevertheless, there was a continuous small Jewish presence and Galilee became its religious center.<sup>[101][102]</sup> Jewish communities also continued to reside in the southern Hebron Hills and on the coastal plain.<sup>[95]</sup>

## Late antiquity and the medieval period

With the transition to Byzantine rule under Emperor Constantine, Early Christianity displaced the more tolerant Roman Paganism.<sup>[104][105]</sup> With the conversion of Constantine in the 4th century, the situation for the Jewish majority in Palestine "became more difficult".<sup>[100]</sup> A series of laws were passed that discriminated against Jews and Judaism, and Jews were persecuted by both the church and the authorities.<sup>[105]</sup> Many Jews had emigrated to flourishing Diaspora communities,<sup>[106]</sup> while locally there was both Christian immigration and local conversion. By the middle of the 5th century, there was a Christian majority.<sup>[107][108]</sup> Towards the end of the 5th century,



Map of Israel and Judah in the 9th century BCE



Masada fortress, the location of a 1st-century Roman siege



Samaritan revolts erupted, continuing until the late 6th century and resulting in a large decrease in the Samaritan population.<sup>[109]</sup> After the Sasanian conquest of Jerusalem and the short-lived Jewish revolt against Heraclius in 614 CE, the Byzantine Empire reconsolidated control of the area in 628.<sup>[110]</sup>



3rd-century Kfar Bar'am synagogue in the Galilee<sup>[103]</sup>

In 634–641 CE, the Rashidun Caliphate conquered the Levant.<sup>[106][111][112]</sup> Over the next six centuries, control of the region transferred between the Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid caliphates, and subsequently the Seljuks and Ayyubid dynasties.<sup>[113]</sup> The population drastically decreased during the following several centuries, dropping from an estimated 1 million during Roman and Byzantine periods to about 300,000 by the early Ottoman period, and there was a steady process of Arabization and Islamization brought on by non-Muslim emigration, Muslim immigration, and local conversion.<sup>[112][111][114][80]</sup> The end of the 11th century brought the Crusades, papally-sanctioned incursions of Christian crusaders intent on wresting Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslim control and establishing Crusader States.<sup>[115]</sup> The Ayyubids pushed back the crusaders before Muslim rule was fully restored by the Mamluk sultans of Egypt in 1291.<sup>[116]</sup>

## Modern period and the emergence of Zionism

In 1516, the region was conquered by the Ottoman Empire; it was ruled as a part of Ottoman Syria for the next four centuries. In 1660, a Druze revolt led to the destruction of Safed and Tiberias.<sup>[117]</sup> In the late 18th century, local Arab Sheikh Zahir al-Umar created a de facto independent Emirate in the Galilee. Ottoman attempts to subdue the Sheikh failed, but after Zahir's death the Ottomans regained control of the area. In 1799 governor Jazzar Pasha repelled an assault on Acre by troops of Napoleon, prompting the French to abandon the Syrian campaign.<sup>[118]</sup> In 1834, a revolt by Palestinian Arab peasants against Egyptian conscription and taxation policies under Muhammad Ali was suppressed; Muhammad Ali's army retreated and Ottoman rule was restored with British support in 1840.<sup>[119]</sup> Shortly after, the Tanzimat reforms were implemented across the Ottoman Empire.



Jews at the Western Wall in the 1870s

Since the existence of the Jewish diaspora, many Jews have aspired to return to "Zion".<sup>[120]</sup> The Jewish population of Palestine from the outset of Ottoman rule to the beginning of the Zionist movement, known as the Old Yishuv, comprised a minority and fluctuated in size. During the 16th century, Jewish communities struck roots in the Four Holy Cities—Jerusalem, Tiberias, Hebron, and Safed—and in 1697, Rabbi Yehuda Hachasid led a group of 1,500 Jews to Jerusalem.<sup>[121]</sup> In the second half of the 18th century, Eastern European Jews who were opponents of Hasidism, known as the Perushim, settled in Palestine.<sup>[122][123]</sup>

The first wave of modern Jewish migration to Ottoman-ruled Palestine, known as the First Aliyah, began in 1881, as Jews fled pogroms in Eastern Europe.<sup>[124]</sup> The ensuing May Laws of 1882 increased economic discrimination against the Jews, and restricted where they could live.<sup>[125][126]</sup> In response political Zionism began to take form, with some of its activists founding movements such as the Bilu, and Lovers of Zion, while Leon Pinsker published the pamphlet Auto-Emancipation (1882), which urged Jews to seek national independence.<sup>[127][128]</sup> Theodor Herzl is credited with founding political Zionism,<sup>[129]</sup> a movement that sought to establish a Jewish state in the Land of Israel, thus offering a solution to the so-called Jewish question of the European states.<sup>[130]</sup> In 1896, Herzl published *Der Judenstaat* (*The Jewish State*); the following year he presided over the First Zionist Congress.<sup>[131]</sup> The Second Aliyah (1904–1914) began after the Kishinev pogrom; some 40,000 Jews settled in Palestine,

although nearly half left eventually. Both the first and second waves of migrants were mainly Orthodox Jews,<sup>[132]</sup> although the Second Aliyah included Zionist socialist groups who established the kibbutz movement based on the idea of establishing a separate Jewish economy based exclusively on Jewish labor.<sup>[133][134]</sup> Those of the Second Aliyah who would go on to become the leaders of the Yishuv in the coming decades believed that the settler economy should not depend on Arab labor. This "conquest of labor" would be a dominant source of antagonism with the Arab population, with the new Yishuv's nationalist ideology overpowering its socialist one.<sup>[135]</sup> Though the immigrants of the Second Aliyah largely sought to create communal Jewish agricultural settlements, the period saw the establishment of Tel Aviv as the first planned Jewish town in 1909. This period also saw the emergence of Jewish armed militias, the first being Bar-Giora in 1907. Two years later, the larger Hashomer organization was founded as its replacement.



The First Zionist Congress (1897) in Basel, Switzerland

## British Mandate for Palestine

Chaim Weizmann's efforts to garner British support for the Zionist movement would eventually secure the Balfour Declaration in 1917.<sup>[136]</sup> British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour sent the Balfour Declaration to Lord Rothschild, a leader of the British Jewish community, stating Britain's support for the creation of a Jewish "national home" in Palestine.<sup>[137][138]</sup> Weizmann interpretation of the declaration entailed that negotiations on the future of the country were to happen directly between Britain and the Jews, excluding Arab representation. His famous announcement at the Paris peace conference would reflect this interpretation, stating that the goal "[t]o make Palestine as Jewish as England is English." The years that followed would see Jewish-Palestinian relations deteriorate dramatically.<sup>[139]</sup>

In 1918, the Jewish Legion, a group primarily of Zionist volunteers, assisted in the British conquest of Palestine.<sup>[140]</sup> In 1920, the territory was divided between Britain and France under the mandate system, and the British-administered area (including modern Israel) was named Mandatory Palestine.<sup>[116][141][142]</sup> Arab opposition to British rule and Jewish immigration led to the 1920 Palestine riots and the formation of a Jewish militia known as the Haganah ("The Defense" in Hebrew) as an outgrowth of Hashomer, from which the Irgun and Lehi paramilitaries later split.<sup>[143]</sup> In 1922, the League of Nations granted Britain the Mandate for Palestine under terms which included the Balfour Declaration with its promise to the Jews, and with similar provisions regarding the Arab Palestinians.<sup>[144]</sup> The population of the area was predominantly Arab and Muslim, with Jews accounting for about 11%,<sup>[145]</sup> and Arab Christians about 9.5% of the population.<sup>[146]</sup>

The Third (1919–1923) and Fourth Aliyahs (1924–1929) brought an additional 100,000 Jews to Palestine. The rise of Nazism and the increasing persecution of Jews in 1930s Europe led to the Fifth Aliyah, with an influx of a quarter of a million Jews. This was a major cause of the Arab revolt of 1936–39. The revolt, which involved significant intercommunal fighting among the Arabs, was suppressed by British security forces and Zionist militias. Several hundred British security personnel and Jews were killed, while 5,032 Arabs were killed, 14,760 were wounded, and 12,622 were detained.<sup>[147][148][149]</sup> An estimated ten percent of the adult male Palestinian Arab population was killed, wounded, imprisoned or exiled.<sup>[150]</sup>



"Jews and Arabs in Grim Struggle for Holy Land", article from 1938

The British introduced restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine with the White Paper of 1939. With countries around the world turning away Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust, a clandestine movement known as Aliyah Bet, was organized to bring Jews to Palestine. By the end of World War II, 31% of the total population of

Palestine was Jewish.<sup>[151]</sup> The UK found itself facing a Jewish insurgency over immigration restrictions and continued conflict with the Arab community over limit levels. The Haganah joined Irgun and Lehi in an armed struggle against British rule.<sup>[152]</sup> At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Jewish Holocaust survivors sought a new life far from their destroyed communities in Europe. The Haganah attempted to bring tens of thousands of Jewish refugees to Palestine by ship in a programme called Aliyah Bet. Most of the ships were intercepted by the Royal Navy and the refugees placed in detention camps in Atlit and Cyprus.<sup>[153][154]</sup>

On 22 July 1946, Irgun bombed the British administrative headquarters for Palestine, killing 91.<sup>[155][156][157][158][159][160]</sup> The attack initially had the approval of the Haganah. It was conceived as a response to Operation Agatha (a series of raids, including one on the Jewish Agency, by the British) and was the deadliest directed at the British during the Mandate era.<sup>[159][160]</sup> The Jewish insurgency continued throughout 1946 and 1947 despite concerted efforts by the British military and Palestine Police Force to suppress it. British efforts to mediate a negotiated solution with Jewish and Arab representatives also failed as the Jews were unwilling to accept any solution that did not involve a Jewish state and suggested a partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, while the Arabs were adamant that a Jewish state in any part of Palestine was unacceptable and that the only solution was a unified Palestine under Arab rule. In February 1947, the British referred the Palestine issue to the newly formed United Nations. On 15 May 1947, the UN General Assembly resolved that a Special Committee be created "to prepare ... a report on the question of Palestine."<sup>[161]</sup> The Report of the Committee<sup>[162]</sup> proposed a plan to replace the British Mandate with "an independent Arab State, an independent Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem [...] the last to be under an International Trusteeship System."<sup>[163]</sup> Meanwhile, the Jewish insurgency continued and peaked in July 1947, with a series of widespread guerrilla raids culminating in the Sergeants affair, in which the Irgun took two British sergeants hostage as attempted leverage against the planned execution of three Irgun operatives. After the executions were carried out, the Irgun killed the two British soldiers, hanged their bodies from trees, and left a booby trap at the scene which injured a British soldier. The incident caused widespread outrage in the UK.<sup>[164]</sup> In September 1947, the British cabinet decided to evacuate Palestine as the Mandate was no longer tenable.<sup>[164]</sup>



UN Map, "Palestine plan of partition with economic union"

On 29 November 1947, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 (II).<sup>[165]</sup> The plan attached to the resolution was essentially that proposed in the report of 3 September. The Jewish Agency, the recognized representative of the Jewish community, accepted the plan, which assigned 55–56% of Mandatory Palestine to the Jews. At the time, the Jews were about a third of the population and owned around 6–7% of the land. Arabs constituted the majority and owned about 20% of the land, with the remainder held by the Mandate authorities or foreign landowners.<sup>[166][167][168][169][170][171][172]</sup> The Arab League and Arab Higher Committee of Palestine rejected it,<sup>[173]</sup> and indicated that they would reject any other plan of partition.<sup>[174][175]</sup> On 1 December 1947, the Arab Higher Committee proclaimed a three-day strike, and riots broke out in Jerusalem.<sup>[176]</sup> The situation spiralled into a civil war; just two weeks after the UN vote, Colonial Secretary Arthur Creech Jones announced that the British Mandate would end on 15 May 1948, at which point the British would evacuate. As Arab militias and



gangs attacked Jewish areas, they were faced mainly by the Haganah, as well as the smaller Irgun and Lehi. In April 1948, the Haganah moved onto the offensive.<sup>[177][178]</sup> During this period 250,000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled, due to numerous factors.<sup>[179]</sup>

## State of Israel

### Establishment and early years

On 14 May 1948, the day before the expiration of the British Mandate, David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, declared "the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel."<sup>[180]</sup> The only reference in the text of the Declaration to the borders of the new state is the use of the term Eretz-Israel ("Land of Israel"). The following day, the armies of four Arab countries—Egypt, Syria, Transjordan and Iraq—entered into parts of what had been British Mandatory Palestine, launching the 1948 Arab–Israeli War.<sup>[181][182][183]</sup> contingents from Yemen, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Sudan joined the war.<sup>[184][185]</sup> The apparent purpose of the invasion was to prevent the establishment of the Jewish state; some Arab leaders talked about "driving the Jews into the sea".<sup>[171][186][187]</sup> According to Benny Morris, Jews were worried that the invading Arab armies held the intent to slaughter them.<sup>[188]</sup> The Arab league stated the invasion was to restore order and prevent further bloodshed.<sup>[189]</sup>



David Ben-Gurion declaring the establishment of Israel on 14 May 1948

After a year of fighting, a ceasefire was declared and temporary borders, known as the Green Line, were established.<sup>[190]</sup> Jordan annexed what became known as the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip. The UN estimated that more than 700,000 Palestinians were expelled by or fled—what would become known in Arabic as the Nakba ("catastrophe").<sup>[191]</sup> Some 156,000 remained and became Arab citizens of Israel.<sup>[192]</sup>

Israel was admitted as a member of the UN on 11 May 1949.<sup>[193]</sup> An Israeli-Jordanian attempt at negotiating a peace agreement broke down after the British government, fearful of the Egyptian reaction to such a treaty, expressed their opposition to the Jordanian government.<sup>[194]</sup> In the early years of the state, the Labor Zionist movement led by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion dominated Israeli politics.<sup>[195][196]</sup>

Immigration to Israel during the late 1940s and early 1950s was aided by the Israeli Immigration Department and the non-government sponsored Mossad LeAliyah Bet (לִיַּת, "Institute for Immigration B").<sup>[197]</sup> The latter engaged in clandestine operations in countries, particularly in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, where the lives of Jews were believed to be in danger and exit was difficult. Mossad LeAliyah Bet was disbanded in 1953.<sup>[198]</sup> The immigration was in accordance with the One Million Plan. Some immigrants held Zionist beliefs or came for the promise of a better life, while others moved to escape persecution or were expelled.<sup>[199][200]</sup>



Raising of the Ink Flag on 10 March 1949, marking the end of the 1948 war

An influx of Holocaust survivors and Jews from Arab and Muslim countries to Israel during the first three years increased the number of Jews from 700,000 to 1,400,000. By 1958, the population had risen to two million.<sup>[201]</sup> Between 1948 and 1970, approximately 1,150,000 Jewish refugees relocated to Israel.<sup>[202]</sup> Some new immigrants arrived as refugees and were housed in temporary camps known as ma'abarot; by 1952, over 200,000 people were living in these tent cities.<sup>[203]</sup> Jews of European background were often treated more favorably than Jews from Middle Eastern and North African countries—housing units reserved for the



latter were often re-designated for the former, so Jews newly arrived from Arab lands generally ended up staying longer in transit camps.<sup>[204][205]</sup> During this period, food, clothes and furniture had to be rationed in what became known as the austerity period. The need to solve the crisis led Ben-Gurion to sign a reparations agreement with West Germany that triggered mass protests by Jews angered at the idea that Israel could accept monetary compensation for the Holocaust.<sup>[206]</sup>

## Arab–Israeli conflict

During the 1950s, Israel was frequently attacked by Palestinian fedayeen, nearly always against civilians,<sup>[207]</sup> mainly from the Egyptian-occupied Gaza Strip,<sup>[208]</sup> leading to several Israeli reprisal operations. In 1956, the UK and France aimed at regaining control of the Suez Canal, which Egypt had nationalized. The continued blockade of the Suez Canal and Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, together with increasing Fedayeen attacks against Israel's southern population and recent Arab threatening statements, prompted Israel to attack Egypt.<sup>[209][210][211]</sup> Israel joined a secret alliance with the UK and France and overran the Sinai Peninsula in the Suez Crisis, but was pressured to withdraw by the UN in return for guarantees of Israeli shipping rights.<sup>[212][213][214]</sup> The war resulted in significant reduction of Israeli border infiltration.<sup>[215]</sup>

In the early 1960s, Israel captured Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann in Argentina and brought him to Israel for trial.<sup>[216]</sup> Eichmann remains the only person executed in Israel by conviction in an Israeli civilian court.<sup>[217]</sup> During the spring and summer of 1963 Israel was engaged in a diplomatic standoff with the United States due to the Israeli nuclear programme.<sup>[218][219]</sup>



U.S. newsreel on the trial of Adolf Eichmann

Since 1964, Arab countries, concerned over Israeli plans to divert waters of the Jordan River into the coastal plain,<sup>[220]</sup> had been trying to divert the headwaters to deprive Israel of water resources, provoking tensions between Israel on the one hand, and Syria and Lebanon on the other. Arab nationalists led by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser refused to recognize Israel and called for its destruction.<sup>[221][222][223]</sup> By 1966, Israeli-Arab relations had deteriorated to the point of battles taking place between Israeli and Arab forces.<sup>[224]</sup>

In May 1967, Egypt massed its army near the border with Israel, expelled UN peacekeepers, stationed in the Sinai Peninsula since 1957, and blocked Israel's access to the Red Sea.<sup>[225][226][227]</sup> Other Arab states mobilized their forces.<sup>[228]</sup> Israel reiterated that these actions were a *casus belli* and, on 5 June, launched a pre-emptive strike against Egypt. Jordan, Syria and Iraq attacked Israel. In a Six-Day War, Israel captured and occupied the West Bank from Jordan, the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria.<sup>[229]</sup> Jerusalem's boundaries were enlarged, incorporating East Jerusalem, and the 1949 Green Line became the administrative boundary between Israel and the occupied territories.<sup>[230]</sup>

Following the 1967 war and the "Three Nos" resolution of the Arab League, Israel faced attacks from the Egyptians in the Sinai Peninsula during the 1967–1970 War of Attrition, and from Palestinian groups targeting Israelis in the occupied territories, in Israel, and around the world. Most important among the various Palestinian and Arab groups was the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), established in 1964, which initially committed itself to "armed struggle as the only way to liberate the homeland".<sup>[231]</sup> In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Palestinian groups launched attacks<sup>[232][233]</sup> against Israeli and Jewish targets around the world,<sup>[234]</sup> including a massacre of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich. The Israeli government responded with an assassination campaign against the organizers of the massacre, a bombing and a raid on the PLO headquarters in Lebanon.

On 6 October 1973, the Egyptian and Syrian armies launched a surprise attack against Israeli forces in the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights, opening the Yom Kippur War. The war ended on 25 October with Israel repelling Egyptian and Syrian forces but having suffered over 2,500 soldiers killed in a war which collectively took 10–35,000 lives in about 20 days.<sup>[235]</sup> An internal inquiry exonerated the government of responsibility for failures before and during the war, but public anger forced Prime Minister Golda Meir to resign.<sup>[236]</sup> In July 1976, an airliner was hijacked in flight from Israel to France by Palestinian guerrillas and landed at Entebbe International Airport, Uganda. Israeli commandos rescued 102 out of 106 Israeli hostages.

## Peace process

The 1977 Knesset elections marked a major turning point in Israeli political history as Menachem Begin's Likud party took control from the Labor Party.<sup>[237]</sup> Later that year, Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat made a trip to Israel and spoke before the Knesset in what was the first recognition of Israel by an Arab head of state.<sup>[238]</sup> Sadat and Begin signed the Camp David Accords (1978) and the Egypt–Israel peace treaty (1979).<sup>[239]</sup> In return, Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula and agreed to enter negotiations over an autonomy for Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.<sup>[239]</sup>

On 11 March 1978, a PLO guerilla raid from Lebanon led to the Coastal Road massacre. Israel responded by launching an invasion of southern Lebanon to destroy PLO bases. Most PLO fighters withdrew, but Israel was able to secure southern Lebanon until a UN force and the Lebanese army could take over. The PLO soon resumed its insurgency against Israel. In the next few years, the PLO infiltrated the south and kept up a sporadic shelling across the border. Israel carried out numerous retaliatory attacks.

Meanwhile, Begin's government provided incentives for Israelis to settle in the occupied West Bank, increasing friction with the Palestinians there.<sup>[240]</sup> The Jerusalem Law (1980) was believed by some to reaffirm Israel's 1967 annexation of Jerusalem by government decree, and reignited international controversy over the status of the city. No Israeli legislation has defined the territory of Israel and no act specifically included East Jerusalem therein.<sup>[241]</sup> In 1981 Israel effectively annexed the Golan Heights.<sup>[242]</sup> The international community largely rejected these moves, with the UN Security Council declaring both the Jerusalem Law and the Golan Heights Law null and void.<sup>[243][244]</sup> Several waves of Ethiopian Jews immigrated to Israel since the 1980s, while between 1990 and 1994, immigration from the post-Soviet states increased Israel's population by twelve percent.<sup>[245]</sup>

On 7 June 1981, during the Iran–Iraq War, the Israeli air force destroyed Iraq's sole nuclear reactor under construction just outside Baghdad, to impede Iraq's nuclear weapons programme. Following a series of PLO attacks in 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon to destroy the PLO bases.<sup>[246]</sup> In the first six days, the Israelis destroyed the military forces of the PLO in Lebanon and decisively defeated the Syrians. An Israeli government inquiry—the Kahan Commission—would later hold Begin and several Israeli generals indirectly responsible for the Sabra and Shatila massacre and hold Defense minister Ariel Sharon as bearing "personal responsibility".<sup>[247]</sup> Sharon was forced to resign.<sup>[248]</sup> In 1985, Israel responded to a Palestinian terrorist attack in Cyprus by bombing the PLO headquarters in Tunisia. Israel withdrew from most of Lebanon in 1986, but maintained a borderland buffer zone in southern Lebanon until 2000, from where Israeli forces engaged in conflict with Hezbollah. The First Intifada, a Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule,<sup>[249]</sup> broke out in 1987, with waves of uncoordinated demonstrations and violence in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Over the following six years, the Intifada became more organized



Territory held by Israel:

- before the Six-Day War
- after the war

The Sinai Peninsula was returned to Egypt in 1982.

and included economic and cultural measures aimed at disrupting the Israeli occupation. More than a thousand people were killed.<sup>[250]</sup> During the 1991 Gulf War, the PLO supported Saddam Hussein and Iraqi missile attacks against Israel. Despite public outrage, Israel heeded American calls to refrain from hitting back.<sup>[251][252]</sup>

In 1992, Yitzhak Rabin became prime minister following an election in which his party called for compromise with Israel's neighbours.<sup>[253][254]</sup> The following year, Shimon Peres on behalf of Israel, and Mahmoud Abbas for the PLO, signed the Oslo Accords, which gave the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) the right to govern parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.<sup>[255]</sup> The PLO also recognized Israel's right to exist and pledged an end to terrorism.<sup>[256]</sup> In 1994, the Israel–Jordan peace treaty was signed, making Jordan the second Arab country to normalize relations with Israel.<sup>[257]</sup> Arab public support for the Accords was damaged by the continuation of Israeli settlements<sup>[258]</sup> and checkpoints, and the deterioration of economic conditions.<sup>[259]</sup> Israeli public support for the Accords waned after Palestinian suicide attacks.<sup>[260]</sup> In November 1995, Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by Yigal Amir, a far-right Jew who opposed the Accords.<sup>[261]</sup>



Shimon Peres (left) with Yitzhak Rabin (center) and King Hussein of Jordan (right), prior to signing the Israel–Jordan peace treaty in 1994

During Benjamin Netanyahu's premiership at the end of the 1990s, Israel agreed to withdraw from Hebron,<sup>[262]</sup> though this was never ratified or implemented,<sup>[263]</sup> and signed the Wye River Memorandum, giving greater control to the PNA.<sup>[264]</sup> Ehud Barak, elected Prime Minister in 1999, withdrew forces from Southern Lebanon and conducted negotiations with PNA Chairman Yasser Arafat and U.S. President Bill Clinton at the 2000 Camp David Summit. Barak offered a plan for the establishment of a Palestinian state, including the entirety of the Gaza Strip and over 90% of the West Bank with Jerusalem as a shared capital.<sup>[265]</sup> Each side blamed the other for the failure of the talks.

## 21st century

In late 2000, after a controversial visit by Likud leader Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount, the Second Intifada began. It would continue for the next four and a half years. Suicide bombings were a recurrent feature of the Intifada.<sup>[267]</sup> Some commentators contend that the Intifada was pre-planned by Arafat due to the collapse of peace talks.<sup>[268][269][270][271]</sup> Sharon became prime minister in a 2001 election; he carried out his plan to unilaterally withdraw from the Gaza Strip and spearheaded the construction of the Israeli West Bank barrier,<sup>[272]</sup> ending the Intifada.<sup>[273]</sup> Between 2000 and 2008, 1,063 Israelis, 5,517 Palestinians and 64 foreign citizens had been killed.<sup>[274]</sup>

In 2006, a Hezbollah artillery assault on Israel's northern border communities and a cross-border abduction of two Israeli soldiers precipitated the month-long Second Lebanon War.<sup>[275][276]</sup> In 2007, the Israeli Air Force destroyed a nuclear reactor in Syria. In 2008, a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel collapsed. The 2008–2009 Gaza War lasted three weeks and ended after Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire.<sup>[277][278]</sup> Hamas announced its own ceasefire, with its own conditions of complete withdrawal and opening of border crossings. Despite neither the rocket launchings nor Israeli retaliatory strikes having completely stopped, the fragile ceasefire remained.<sup>[279]</sup> In what Israel described as a response to more than a hundred Palestinian rocket attacks on southern Israeli cities,<sup>[280]</sup> Israel

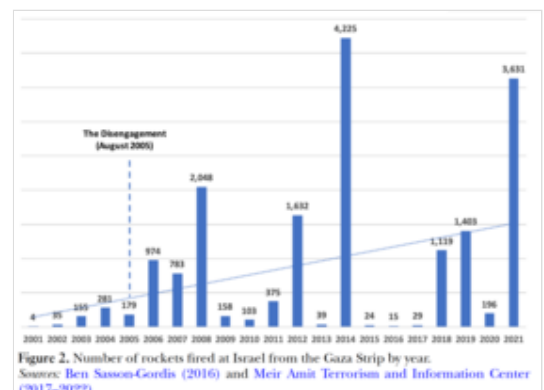


Figure 2. Number of rockets fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip by year.  
Source: Ben Sasson-Gordis (2016) and Meir Amit Terrorism and Information Center (2017–2022).

Rocket attacks fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip, 2001–2021<sup>[266]</sup>

began an operation in the Gaza Strip in 2012, lasting eight days.<sup>[281]</sup> Israel started another operation in Gaza following an escalation of rocket attacks by Hamas in July 2014.<sup>[282]</sup> In May 2021, another round of fighting took place in Gaza and Israel, lasting eleven days.<sup>[283]</sup>

By the 2010s, the increasing regional cooperation between Israel and Arab League countries have been established, culminating in the signing of the Abraham Accords. The Israeli security situation shifted from the traditional Arab–Israeli conflict towards the Iran–Israel proxy conflict and direct confrontation with Iran during the Syrian civil war. On 7 October 2023, Palestinian militant groups from Gaza, led by Hamas, launched a series of coordinated attacks on Israel, leading to the start of the 2023 Israel–Hamas war.<sup>[284]</sup> On that day, approximately 1300 Israelis, predominantly civilians, were killed in communities near the Gaza Strip border and during a music festival. Over 200 hostages, including elders, women, and children as young as 9 months, were kidnapped and taken to the Gaza Strip.<sup>[285][286][287]</sup>

## Geography

Israel is located in the Levant area of the Fertile Crescent. The country is at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, bounded by Lebanon to the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan and the West Bank to the east, and Egypt and the Gaza Strip to the southwest. It lies between latitudes 29° and 34° N, and longitudes 34° and 36° E.

The sovereign territory of Israel (according to the demarcation lines of the 1949 Armistice Agreements and excluding all territories captured by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War) is approximately 20,770 square kilometers (8,019 sq mi), of which two percent is water.<sup>[288]</sup> However Israel is so narrow (100 km at its widest, compared to 400 km from north to south) that the exclusive economic zone in the Mediterranean is double the land area of the country.<sup>[289]</sup> The total area under Israeli law, including East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, is 22,072 square kilometers (8,522 sq mi),<sup>[290]</sup> and the total area under Israeli control, including the military-controlled and partially Palestinian-governed territory of the West Bank, is 27,799 square kilometers (10,733 sq mi).<sup>[291]</sup>

Despite its small size, Israel is home to a variety of geographic features, from the Negev desert in the south to the inland fertile Jezreel Valley, mountain ranges of the Galilee, Carmel and toward the Golan in the north. The Israeli coastal plain on the shores of the Mediterranean is home to most of the nation's population.<sup>[292]</sup> East of the central highlands lies the Jordan Rift Valley, a small part of the 6,500-kilometer (4,039 mi) Great Rift Valley. The Jordan River runs along the Jordan Rift Valley, from Mount Hermon through the Hulah Valley and the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, the lowest point on the surface of the Earth.<sup>[293]</sup> Further south is the Arabah, ending with the Gulf of Eilat, part of the Red Sea. Makhtesh, or "erosion



Satellite images of Israel and neighboring territories during the day and night



cirques" are unique to the Negev and the Sinai Peninsula, the largest being the Makhtesh Ramon at 38 km in length.<sup>[294]</sup> Israel has the largest number of plant species per square meter of the countries in the Mediterranean Basin.<sup>[295]</sup> Israel contains four terrestrial ecoregions: Eastern Mediterranean conifer-sclerophyllous-broadleaf forests, Southern Anatolian montane conifer and deciduous forests, Arabian Desert, and Mesopotamian shrub desert.<sup>[296]</sup>

The forests accounted for 8.5% of the country's area in 2016, up from 2% in 1948, as the result of a large-scale forest planting program by the Jewish National Fund.<sup>[297][298]</sup>

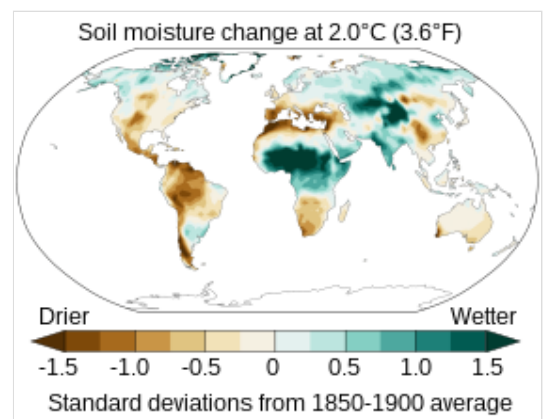
## Tectonics and seismicity

The Jordan Rift Valley is the result of tectonic movements within the Dead Sea Transform (DSF) fault system. The DSF forms the transform boundary between the African Plate to the west and the Arabian Plate to the east. The Golan Heights and all of Jordan are part of the Arabian Plate, while the Galilee, West Bank, Coastal Plain, and Negev along with the Sinai Peninsula are on the African Plate. This tectonic disposition leads to a relatively high seismic activity. The entire Jordan Valley segment is thought to have ruptured repeatedly, for instance during the last two major earthquakes along this structure in 749 and 1033. The deficit in slip that has built up since the 1033 event is sufficient to cause an earthquake of  $M_w \sim 7.4$ .<sup>[299]</sup>

The most catastrophic known earthquakes occurred in 31 BCE, 363, 749, and 1033 CE, that is every ca. 400 years on average.<sup>[300]</sup> Destructive earthquakes leading to serious loss of life strike about every 80 years.<sup>[301]</sup> While stringent construction regulations are in place and recently built structures are earthquake-safe, as of 2007 many public buildings as well as 50,000 residential buildings did not meet the new standards and were "expected to collapse" if exposed to a strong earthquake.<sup>[301]</sup>

## Climate

Temperatures in Israel vary widely, especially during the winter. Coastal areas, such as those of Tel Aviv and Haifa, have a typical Mediterranean climate with cool, rainy winters and long, hot summers. The area of Beersheba and the Northern Negev have a semi-arid climate with hot summers, cool winters, and fewer rainy days. The Southern Negev and the Arava areas have a desert climate with very hot, dry summers, and mild winters with few days of rain. The highest temperature in the world outside Africa and North America as of 2021, 54 °C (129 °F), was recorded in 1942 in the Tirat Zvi kibbutz in the northern Jordan River valley.<sup>[302][303]</sup> Mountainous regions can be windy and cold, and areas at elevation of 750 metres (2,460 ft) or more (same elevation as Jerusalem) will usually receive at least one snowfall each year.<sup>[304]</sup> From May to September, rain in Israel is rare.<sup>[305][306]</sup>



The projections of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report show clearly the impacts of climate change on Israel even at 2 degrees of warming.

There are four different phytogeographic regions in Israel, due to the country's location between the temperate and tropical zones. For this reason, the flora and fauna are extremely diverse. There are 2,867 known species of plants in Israel. Of these, at least 253 species are introduced and non-native.<sup>[307]</sup> There are 380 Israeli nature reserves.<sup>[308]</sup>

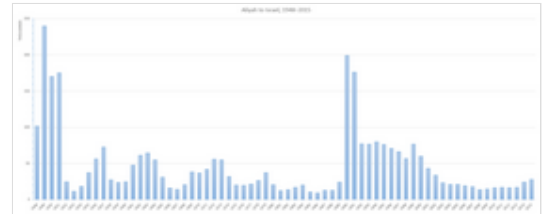
With scarce water resources, Israel has developed various water-saving technologies, including drip irrigation.<sup>[309]</sup> The considerable sunlight available for solar energy makes Israel the leading nation in solar energy use per capita—practically every house uses solar panels for water heating.<sup>[310]</sup> The Israeli Ministry of Environmental Protection

has reported that climate change "will have a decisive impact on all areas of life", particularly for vulnerable populations.<sup>[311]</sup>

## Demographics

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Israel has the largest Jewish population in the world and is the only country where Jews are the majority.<sup>[312]</sup> As of 31 December 2022, Israel's population was an estimated 9,656,000. In 2022, the government recorded 73.6% of the population as Jews, 21.1% as Arabs, and 5.3% as "Others" (non-Arab Christians and people who have no religion listed).<sup>[12]</sup> Over the last decade, large numbers of migrant workers from Romania, Thailand, China, Africa, and South America have settled in Israel. Exact figures are unknown, as many of them are living in the country illegally,<sup>[313]</sup> but estimates run from 166,000 to 203,000.<sup>[314]</sup> By June 2012, approximately 60,000 African migrants had entered Israel.<sup>[315]</sup> About 93% of Israelis live in urban areas.<sup>[316]</sup> 90% of Palestinian Israelis reside in 139 densely populated towns and villages concentrated in the Galilee, Triangle and Negev regions, with the remaining 10% in mixed cities and neighbourhoods.<sup>[317][318][319][320][321]</sup> The OECD in 2016 estimated the average life expectancy at 82.5 years, the 6th-highest in the world.<sup>[322]</sup> Israeli Arab life expectancy lags by 3 to 4 years,<sup>[323][324]</sup> although this is still higher than most Arab and Muslim countries.<sup>[325][326]</sup> Israel was established as a homeland for the Jewish people and is often referred to as a Jewish state. The country's Law of Return grants all Jews and those of Jewish ancestry the right to citizenship.<sup>[327]</sup> Retention of Israel's population since 1948 is about even or greater, when compared to other countries with mass immigration.<sup>[328]</sup> Jewish emigration from Israel (called yerida), primarily to the United States and Canada, is described by demographers as modest,<sup>[329]</sup> but is often cited by Israeli government ministries as a major threat to Israel's future.<sup>[330][331]</sup>



Immigration to Israel in the years 1948–2015.  
The two peaks were in 1949 and 1990

Approximately 80% of Israeli Jews are born in Israel, 14% are immigrants from Europe and the Americas, and 6% are immigrants from Asia and Africa.<sup>[332]</sup> Jews from Europe and the former Soviet Union and their descendants born in Israel, including Ashkenazi Jews, constitute approximately 44% of Jewish Israelis. Jews from Arab and Muslim countries and their descendants, including both Mizrahi and Sephardi Jews,<sup>[333]</sup> form most of the rest of the Jewish population.<sup>[334][335]</sup> Jewish intermarriage rates run at over 35% and recent studies suggest that the percentage of Israelis descended from both Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews increases by 0.5 percent yearly, with over 25% of schoolchildren now originating from both.<sup>[336]</sup> Around 4% of Israelis (300,000), ethnically defined as "others", are Russian descendants of Jewish origin or family who are not Jewish according to rabbinical law, but were eligible for citizenship under the Law of Return.<sup>[337][338][339]</sup>

The total number of Israeli settlers beyond the Green Line is over 600,000 (~10% of the Jewish Israeli population).<sup>[340]</sup> In 2016, 399,300 Israelis lived in West Bank settlements,<sup>[341]</sup> including those that predated the establishment of the State of Israel and which were re-established after the Six-Day War, in cities such as Hebron and Gush Etzion bloc. Additionally there were more than 200,000 Jews living in East Jerusalem,<sup>[342]</sup> and 22,000 in the Golan Heights.<sup>[341]</sup> Approximately 7,800 Israelis lived in settlements in the Gaza Strip, known as Gush Katif, until they were evacuated by the government as part of its 2005 disengagement plan.<sup>[343]</sup>

Israeli Arabs (including the Arab population of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights) comprise 21.1% of the population or 1,995,000 people.<sup>[344]</sup> In a 2017 poll, 40% of Arab citizens of Israel identified as "Arab in Israel" or "Arab citizen of Israel", 15% identified as "Palestinian", 8.9% as "Palestinian in Israel" or "Palestinian citizen of Israel", and 8.7% as "Arab"; a poll found that 60% of Israeli Arabs have a positive view of the state.<sup>[345][346]</sup>

Major urban areas



Israel has four major metropolitan areas: Gush Dan (Tel Aviv metropolitan area; population 3,854,000), Jerusalem (population 1,253,900), Haifa (924,400), and Beersheba (377,100).<sup>[347]</sup>

Israel's largest municipality, in population and area, is Jerusalem with 981,711 residents in an area of 125 square kilometres (48 sq mi).<sup>[348]</sup> Israeli government statistics on Jerusalem include the population and area of East Jerusalem, the status of which is in international dispute.<sup>[349]</sup> Tel Aviv and Haifa rank as Israel's next most populous cities, with populations of 474,530 and 290,306, respectively.<sup>[348]</sup> The (mainly Haredi) city of Bnei Brak is the most densely populated city in Israel and one of the 10 most densely populated cities in the world.<sup>[350]</sup>

Israel has 16 cities with populations over 100,000. As of 2018 there are 77 Israeli localities granted "municipalities" (or "city") status by the Ministry of the Interior,<sup>[351]</sup> four of which are in the West Bank.<sup>[352]</sup>

Largest cities in Israel								
Israel Central Bureau of Statistics <sup>[348]</sup>								
	Rank	Name	District	Pop.	Rank	Name	District	Pop.
 Jerusalem	1	<u>Jerusalem</u>	<u>Jerusalem</u>	981,711 <sup>a</sup>	11	<u>Ramat Gan</u>	<u>Tel Aviv</u>	172,486
	2	<u>Tel Aviv</u>	<u>Tel Aviv</u>	474,530	12	<u>Ashkelon</u>	<u>Southern</u>	153,138
	3	<u>Haifa</u>	<u>Haifa</u>	290,306	13	<u>Rehovot</u>	<u>Central</u>	150,748
	4	<u>Rishon LeZion</u>	<u>Central</u>	260,453	14	<u>Beit Shemesh</u>	<u>Jerusalem</u>	154,694
	5	<u>Petah Tikva</u>	<u>Central</u>	255,387	15	<u>Bat Yam</u>	<u>Tel Aviv</u>	128,465
 <u>Tel Aviv</u>	6	<u>Ashdod</u>	<u>Southern</u>	226,827	16	<u>Herzliya</u>	<u>Tel Aviv</u>	106,741
	7	<u>Netanya</u>	<u>Central</u>	233,104	17	<u>Kfar Saba</u>	<u>Central</u>	101,556
	8	<u>Bnei Brak</u>	<u>Tel Aviv</u>	218,357	18	<u>Hadera</u>	<u>Haifa</u>	103,041
	9	<u>Beersheba</u>	<u>Southern</u>	214,162	19	<u>Modi'in-Maccabim-Re'ut</u>	<u>Central</u>	99,171
	10	<u>Holon</u>	<u>Tel Aviv</u>	197,957	20	<u>Lod</u>	<u>Central</u>	85,351

  
Haifa

  
Rishon LeZion

<sup>^a</sup> This number includes East Jerusalem and West Bank areas, which had a total population of 573,330 inhabitants in 2019.<sup>[353]</sup> Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem is internationally unrecognized.

Language

Israel's official language is Hebrew. Until 2018, Arabic was also an official language,<sup>[11]</sup> in 2018 it was downgraded to having a 'special status in the state'.<sup>[9][10]</sup> Hebrew is the primary language of the state and is spoken daily by the majority of the population. Arabic is spoken by the Arab minority, with Hebrew taught in Arab schools.



Road sign in Hebrew, Arabic, and English

Due to mass immigration from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia (some 130,000 Ethiopian Jews live in Israel),<sup>[354][355]</sup> Russian and Amharic are widely spoken.<sup>[356]</sup> More than one million Russian-speaking immigrants arrived in Israel between 1990 and 2004.<sup>[357]</sup> French is spoken by around 700,000 Israelis,<sup>[358]</sup> mostly originating from France and North Africa (see Maghrebi Jews). English was an official language during the Mandate period; it lost this status after the establishment of Israel, but retains a role comparable to that of an official language.<sup>[359][360][361]</sup> Many Israelis communicate reasonably well in English, as many television programmes are broadcast in English with subtitles and the language is taught from the early grades in elementary school. Israeli universities offer courses in the English language on various subjects.<sup>[362]</sup>

## Religion

The religious affiliation of the Israeli population as of 2022 was 73.6% Jewish, 18.1% Muslim, 1.9% Christian, and 1.6% Druze. The remaining 4.8% included faiths such as Samaritanism and Bahá'í, as well as "religiously unclassified".<sup>[363]</sup>



The Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall, Jerusalem

The religious affiliation of Israeli Jews varies widely: a 2016 survey by Pew Research indicates that 49% self-identify as Hiloni (secular), 29% as Masorti (traditional), 13% as Dati (religious) and 9% as Haredi (ultra-Orthodox).<sup>[364]</sup> Haredi Jews are expected to represent more than 20% of Israel's Jewish population by 2028.<sup>[365]</sup>

Muslims constitute Israel's largest religious minority, making up about 17.6% of the population. About 2% of the population is Christian and 1.6% is Druze.<sup>[288]</sup> The Christian population comprises primarily Arab Christians and Aramean Christians, but also includes post-Soviet immigrants, foreign laborers, and followers of Messianic Judaism, considered by most Christians and Jews to be a form of Christianity.<sup>[366]</sup> Members of many other religious groups, including Buddhists and Hindus, maintain a presence in Israel, albeit in small numbers.<sup>[367]</sup> Out of more than one million immigrants from the former Soviet Union, about 300,000 are considered not Jewish by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.<sup>[368]</sup>

Israel comprises a major part of the Holy Land, a region of significant importance to all Abrahamic religions. The city of Jerusalem is of special importance to Jews, Muslims, and Christians, as it is the home of sites that are pivotal to their religious beliefs, such as the Old City that incorporates the Western Wall and the Temple Mount (Al-Aqsa Mosque compound) and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>[369]</sup> Other locations of religious importance in Israel are Nazareth (holy in Christianity as the site of the Annunciation of Mary), Tiberias and Safed (two of the Four Holy Cities in Judaism), the White Mosque in Ramla (holy in Islam as the shrine of the prophet Saleh), and the Church of Saint George and Mosque of Al-Khadr, Lod (holy in Christianity and Islam as the tomb of Saint George or Al Khidr). A number of other religious landmarks are located in the West Bank, among them Joseph's Tomb, the birthplace of Jesus, Rachel's Tomb, and the Cave of the Patriarchs. The administrative center of the Bahá'í Faith



and the Shrine of the Báb are located at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa; the leader of the faith is buried in Acre.<sup>[370][371][372]</sup> The Mahmood Mosque is affiliated with the reformist Ahmadiyya movement. Kababir, Haifa's mixed neighbourhood of Jews and Ahmadi Arabs, is one of a few of its kind in the country.<sup>[373][374]</sup>

## Education

Education is highly valued in the Israeli culture and was viewed as a fundamental block of ancient Israelites.<sup>[375]</sup> In 2015, the country ranked third among OECD members for the percentage of 25–64 year-olds that have attained tertiary education with 49% compared with the OECD average of 35%.<sup>[376]</sup> In 2012, the country ranked third in the number of academic degrees per capita (20 percent of the population).<sup>[377]</sup>



Multidisciplinary Brain Research Center at Bar-Ilan University

Israel has a school life expectancy of 16 years and a literacy rate of 97.8%.<sup>[288]</sup> The State Education Law (1953) established five types of schools: state secular, state religious, ultra orthodox, communal settlement schools, and Arab schools. The public secular is the largest school group, and is attended by the majority of Jewish and non-Arab pupils. Most Arabs send their children to schools where Arabic is the language of instruction.<sup>[378]</sup> Education is compulsory for children between the ages of three and eighteen.<sup>[379]</sup> Schooling is divided into three tiers – primary school (grades 1–6), middle school (grades 7–9), and high school (grades 10–12) – culminating with Bagrut matriculation exams. Proficiency in core subjects such as mathematics, the Hebrew language, Hebrew and general literature, the English language, history, Biblical scripture and civics is necessary to receive a Bagrut certificate.<sup>[380]</sup>

Israel's Jewish population maintains a relatively high level of educational attainment where just under half of all Israeli Jews (46%) hold post-secondary degrees.<sup>[381][382]</sup> Israeli Jews (among those ages 25 and older) have average of 11.6 years of schooling making them one of the most highly educated of all major religious groups in the world.<sup>[383][384]</sup> In Arab, Christian and Druze schools, the exam on Biblical studies is replaced by an exam on Muslim, Christian or Druze heritage.<sup>[385]</sup> In 2020, 68.7% of all Israeli twelfth graders earned a matriculation certificate.<sup>[386]</sup>

Israel has a tradition of higher education where its quality university education has been largely responsible in spurring the nation's modern economic development.<sup>[387]</sup> Israel has nine public universities subsidized by the state and 49 private colleges.<sup>[380][388][389]</sup> The Hebrew University of Jerusalem houses the National Library of Israel, the world's largest repository of Judaica and Hebraica.<sup>[390]</sup> The Technion and the Hebrew University consistently ranked among world's 100 top universities by ARWU ranking.<sup>[391]</sup> Other major universities include the Weizmann Institute of Science, Tel Aviv University, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Bar-Ilan University, the University of Haifa and the Open University of Israel.

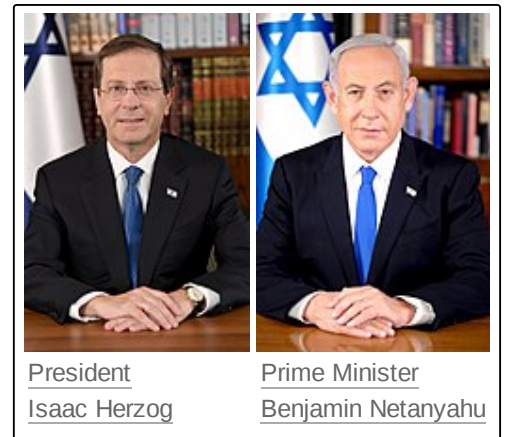


Mount Scopus Campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

## Government and politics

Israel has a parliamentary system, proportional representation and universal suffrage. A member of parliament supported by a parliamentary majority becomes the prime minister—usually this is the chair of the largest party. The prime minister is the head of government and of cabinet.<sup>[392][393]</sup> The president is head of state, with limited and largely ceremonial duties.<sup>[392]</sup>

Israel is governed by a 120-member parliament, known as the Knesset. Membership of the Knesset is based on proportional representation of political parties,<sup>[394]</sup> with a 3.25% electoral threshold, which in practice has resulted in coalition governments. Residents of Israeli settlements in the West Bank are eligible to vote<sup>[395]</sup> and after the 2015 election, 10 of the 120 members of the Knesset (8%) were settlers.<sup>[396]</sup> Parliamentary elections are scheduled every four years, but unstable coalitions or a no-confidence vote can dissolve a government earlier.<sup>[28]</sup> The first Arab-led party was established in 1988<sup>[397]</sup> and as of 2022, Arab-led parties hold about 10% of seats.<sup>[398]</sup> The Basic Law: The Knesset (1958) and its amendments prevent a party list from running for election to the Knesset if its objectives or actions include the "negation of the existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people".



President  
Isaac Herzog

Prime Minister  
Benjamin Netanyahu

The Basic Laws of Israel function as an uncodified constitution. In its Basic Laws, Israel defines itself as a Jewish and democratic state, and the nation-state of exclusively the Jewish people.<sup>[399]</sup> In 2003, the Knesset began to draft an official constitution based on these laws.<sup>[288][400]</sup>



The Knesset chamber, home to the Israeli parliament

Israel has no official religion,<sup>[401][402][403]</sup> but the definition of the state as "Jewish and democratic" creates a strong connection with Judaism. On 19 July 2018, the Knesset passed a Basic Law that characterizes the State of Israel as principally a "Nation State of the Jewish People", and Hebrew as its official language. The bill ascribes, an undefined, "special status" to the Arabic language.<sup>[404]</sup> The same bill gives Jews a unique right to national self-determination, and views the developing of Jewish settlement in the country as "a national interest", empowering the government to "take steps to encourage, advance and implement this interest."<sup>[405]</sup>

## Legal system

Israel has a three-tier court system. At the lowest level are magistrate courts, situated in most cities across the country. Above them are district courts, serving as both appellate courts and courts of first instance; they are situated in five of Israel's six districts. The third and highest tier is the Supreme Court, located in Jerusalem; it serves a dual role as the highest court of appeals and the High Court of Justice. In the latter role, the Supreme Court rules as a court of first instance, allowing individuals, both citizens and non-citizens, to petition against the decisions of state authorities.<sup>[406]</sup>



Supreme Court of Israel, Givat Ram, Jerusalem

Israel's legal system combines three legal traditions: English common law, civil law, and Jewish law.<sup>[288]</sup> It is based on the principle of *stare decisis* (precedent) and is an adversarial system. Court cases are decided by professional judges with no role for juries.<sup>[407]</sup> Marriage and divorce are under the jurisdiction of the religious courts: Jewish, Muslim, Druze, and Christian. The election of judges is carried out by a selection committee chaired by the justice minister (currently Yariv Levin).<sup>[408]</sup> Israel's Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty seeks to defend human rights and liberties in Israel. The United Nations Human Rights Council and

Israeli human rights organization Adalah have highlighted that this law does not in fact contain a general provision for equality and non-discrimination.<sup>[409][410]</sup> As a result of "Enclave law", large portions of Israeli civil law are applied to Israeli settlements and Israeli residents in the occupied territories.<sup>[411]</sup>

### Administrative divisions

The State of Israel is divided into six main administrative districts, known as *mehozot* (Hebrew: מחוזות; singular: *mahoz*) – Center, Haifa, Jerusalem, North, South, and Tel Aviv districts, as well as the Judea and Samaria Area in the West Bank. All of the Judea and Samaria Area and parts of the Jerusalem and Northern districts are not recognized internationally as part of Israel. Districts are further divided into fifteen sub-districts known as *nafot* (Hebrew: נפות; singular: *nafa*), which are themselves partitioned into fifty natural regions.<sup>[412]</sup>



District	Capital	Largest city	Population, 2021 <sup>[341]</sup>			
			Jews	Arabs	Total	note
<u>Jerusalem</u>	<u>Jerusalem</u>		66%	32%	1,209,700	<sup>a</sup>
<u>North</u>	<u>Nof HaGalil</u>	<u>Nazareth</u>	42%	54%	1,513,600	
<u>Haifa</u>	<u>Haifa</u>		67%	25%	1,092,700	
<u>Center</u>	<u>Ramla</u>	<u>Rishon LeZion</u>	87%	8%	2,304,300	
<u>Tel Aviv</u>	<u>Tel Aviv</u>		92%	2%	1,481,400	
<u>South</u>	<u>Beersheba</u>	<u>Ashdod</u>	71%	22%	1,386,000	
<u>Judea and Samaria Area</u>	<u>Ariel</u>	<u>Modi'in Illit</u>	98%	0%	465,400	<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Including 361,700 Arabs and 233,900 Jews in East Jerusalem, as of 2020.<sup>[342]</sup>  
<sup>b</sup>Israeli citizens only.

### Israeli citizenship law

The two primary pieces of legislation relating to Israeli citizenship are the 1950 Law of Return and 1952 Citizenship Law. The law of return grants Jews the unrestricted right to immigrate to Israel and obtain Israeli citizenship. Individuals born within the country receive citizenship at birth if at least one parent is a citizen.<sup>[413]</sup>

Israeli law defines Jewish nationality as distinct from Israeli nationality. In fact, the Supreme Court of Israel has ruled that an Israeli nationality does not exist.<sup>[414][415]</sup> A Jewish national is defined in Israel law as any person practicing Judaism and their descendants.<sup>[414]</sup> Legislation has defined Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people since 2018.<sup>[416]</sup>

## Israeli-occupied territories

Overview of administration and sovereignty in Israel, the Palestinian territories and the Golan Heights

Area		Administered by	Recognition of governing authority	Sovereignty claimed by	Recognition of claim
<u>Gaza Strip</u>		<u>Palestinian National Authority</u> ( <i>de jure</i> ) Controlled by <u>Hamas</u> ( <i>de facto</i> )	<u>Witnesses to the Oslo II Accord</u>	<u>State of Palestine</u>	<u>140 UN member states</u>
<u>West Bank</u>	<u>Palestinian enclaves</u> (Areas A and B)	<u>Palestinian National Authority</u> and <u>Israeli military</u>			
	<u>Area C</u>	<u>Israeli enclave law</u> ( <u>Israeli settlements</u> ) and <u>Israeli military</u> ( <u>Palestinians under Israeli occupation</u> )			
	<u>East Jerusalem</u>	<u>Israeli administration</u>			
<u>West Jerusalem</u>			<u>Russia, Czech Republic, Honduras, Guatemala, Nauru, and the United States</u>	<u>United Nations as an international city along with East Jerusalem</u>	<u>Various UN member states and the European Union; joint sovereignty also widely supported</u>
<u>Golan Heights</u>			<u>United States</u>	<u>Syria</u>	<u>All UN member states except the United States</u>
<u>Israel (proper)</u>			<u>164 UN member states</u>	<u>Israel</u>	<u>164 UN member states</u>

In 1967, as a result of the Six-Day War, Israel captured and occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Israel also captured the Sinai Peninsula, but returned it to Egypt as part of the 1979 Egypt–Israel peace treaty.<sup>[239]</sup> Between 1982 and 2000, Israel occupied part of southern Lebanon, in what was known as the Security Belt. Since Israel's capture of these territories, Israeli settlements and military installations have been built within each of them, except Lebanon.

The Golan Heights and East Jerusalem have been fully incorporated into Israel under Israeli law, but not under international law. Israel has applied civilian law to both areas and granted their inhabitants permanent residency status and the ability to apply for citizenship. The UN Security Council has declared the annexation of the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem to be "null and void" and continues to view the territories as occupied.<sup>[417][418]</sup> The status of East Jerusalem in any future peace settlement has at times been a difficult issue in negotiations between Israeli governments and representatives of the Palestinians.

The West Bank excluding East Jerusalem is known in Israeli law as the Judea and Samaria Area; the almost 400,000 Israeli settlers residing in the area are considered part of Israel's population, have Knesset representation and are subject to a large part of Israel's civil and criminal laws, and their output is considered part of Israel's



economy.<sup>[419][fn 4]</sup> The land itself is not considered part of Israel under Israeli law, as Israel has consciously refrained from annexing the territory, without ever relinquishing its legal claim to the land or defining a border.<sup>[419]</sup> Israeli political opposition to annexation is primarily due to the perceived "demographic threat" of incorporating the West Bank's Palestinian population into Israel.<sup>[419]</sup> Outside of the Israeli settlements, the West Bank remains under direct Israeli military rule, and Palestinians in the area cannot become Israeli citizens. The international community maintains that Israel does not have sovereignty in the West Bank, and considers Israel's control of the area to be the longest military occupation in modern history.<sup>[422]</sup> The West Bank was occupied and annexed by Jordan in 1950, following the 1949 Armistice Agreements. Only Britain recognized this annexation and Jordan has since ceded its claim to the territory to the PLO. The population are mainly Palestinians, including refugees of the 1948 Arab–Israeli War.<sup>[423]</sup> From their occupation in 1967 until 1993, the Palestinians living in these territories were under Israeli military administration. Since the Israel–PLO letters of recognition, most of the Palestinian population and cities have been under the internal jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, and only partial Israeli military control, although Israel has redeployed its troops and reinstated full military administration during periods of unrest. In response to increasing attacks during the Second Intifada, the Israeli government started to construct the Israeli West Bank barrier.<sup>[424]</sup> When completed, approximately 13% of the barrier will be constructed on the Green Line or in Israel with 87% inside the West Bank.<sup>[425][426]</sup>

Israel's claim of universal suffrage has been questioned due to its blurred territorial boundaries and its simultaneous extension of voting rights to Israeli settlers in the occupied territories and denial of voting rights to their Palestinian neighbours, as well as the alleged ethnocratic nature of the state.<sup>[427][428]</sup>

The Gaza Strip is considered to be a "foreign territory" under Israeli law; Israel, along with Egypt, operates a land, air, and sea blockade of the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip was occupied by Israel after 1967. In 2005, as part of Israel's unilateral disengagement plan, Israel removed its settlers and forces from the territory, however, it continues to maintain control of its airspace and waters. The international community, including numerous international humanitarian organizations and bodies of the UN, consider Gaza to remain occupied.<sup>[429][430][431][432][433]</sup> Following the 2007 Battle of Gaza, when Hamas assumed power in the Gaza Strip,<sup>[434]</sup> Israel tightened control of the Gaza crossings along its border, as well as by sea and air, and prevented persons from entering and exiting except for isolated cases it deemed humanitarian.<sup>[434]</sup> Gaza has a border with Egypt, and an agreement between Israel, the European Union, and the PA governed how border crossing would take place.<sup>[435]</sup> The application of democracy to its Palestinian citizens, and the selective application of Israeli democracy in the Israeli-controlled Palestinian territories, has been criticized.<sup>[436][437]</sup>

## International opinion



Map of Israel showing the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights



Israeli West Bank barrier is a separation barrier built by Israel along the Green Line and inside parts of the West Bank.

The International Court of Justice said, in its 2004 advisory opinion on the legality of the construction of the Israeli West Bank barrier, that the lands captured by Israel in the Six-Day War, including East Jerusalem, are occupied territory, and further found that the construction of the wall within the occupied Palestinian territory to violate international law.<sup>[438]</sup> Most negotiations relating to the territories have been on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 242, which emphasizes "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war", and calls on Israel to withdraw from occupied territories in return for normalization of relations with Arab states ("Land for peace").<sup>[439][440][441]</sup> Israel has been criticized for engaging in systematic and widespread violations of human rights in the occupied territories, including the occupation itself,<sup>[442]</sup> and war crimes against civilians.<sup>[443][444][445][446]</sup> The allegations include violations of international humanitarian law<sup>[447]</sup> by the UN Human Rights Council,<sup>[448]</sup> The U.S. State Department has called reports of abuses of significant human rights of Palestinians 'credible' both within Israel<sup>[449]</sup> and the occupied territories.<sup>[450]</sup> Amnesty International and other NGOs have documented mass arbitrary arrests, torture, unlawful killings, systemic abuses and impunity<sup>[451][452][453][454][455][456]</sup> in tandem with a denial of the right to Palestinian self-determination.<sup>[457][458][459][460][461]</sup> Prime Minister Netanyahu has defended the country's security forces for protecting the innocent from terrorists<sup>[462]</sup> and expressed contempt for what he describes as a lack of concern about the human rights violations committed by "criminal killers".<sup>[463]</sup>

The international community widely regards Israeli settlements in the occupied territories illegal under international law.<sup>[464]</sup> The United Nations however, has been accused of bias against Israel.<sup>[465][466]</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 2334 (passed 2016) states that Israel's settlement activity constitutes a "flagrant violation" of international law and demands that Israel stop such activity and fulfill its obligations as an occupying power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.<sup>[467]</sup> A United Nations special rapporteur concluded that settlement program was a war crime under the Rome Statute,<sup>[468]</sup> and Amnesty International found that the settlement program constitutes an illegal transfer of civilians into occupied territory as well as amounting to "pillage", which is prohibited by both the Hague Conventions and the Geneva Conventions as well as being a war crime under the Rome Statute.<sup>[469]</sup>

## Apartheid accusations

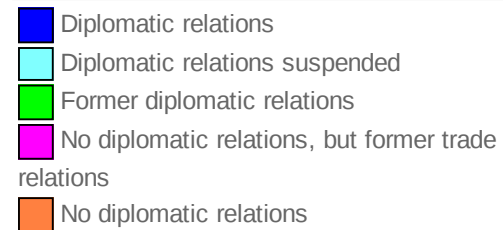
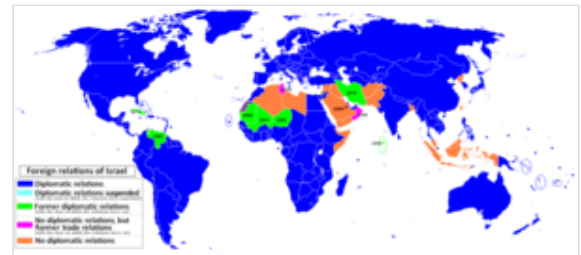
Israel's treatment of the Palestinians within the occupied territories have drawn widespread accusations that it is guilty of apartheid, a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute and the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.<sup>[470][471]</sup> A 2021 survey of academic experts on the Middle East found an increase from 59% to 65% of these scholars describing Israel as a "one-state reality akin to apartheid".<sup>[472][473]</sup> This claim has been affirmed by the Israeli human rights organizations Yesh Din and B'tselem, along with other international human rights groups, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, with the criticism extending to its treatment of Palestinians within Israel.<sup>[474][475]</sup> Amnesty's report was criticised by politicians and representatives from Israel and its closest allies such as, the United States,<sup>[476]</sup> the United Kingdom,<sup>[477]</sup> the European Commission,<sup>[478]</sup> Australia,<sup>[479]</sup> Netherlands<sup>[480]</sup> and Germany,<sup>[481]</sup> while said accusations were welcomed by Palestinians,<sup>[482]</sup> representatives from other states, and organizations such as the Arab League.<sup>[483]</sup> In 2022, Michael Lynk, a Canadian law professor appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Council said that the situation met the legal definition of apartheid.<sup>[484]</sup> Subsequent reports from his successor, Francesca Albanese and from Permanent United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Israel Palestine conflict chair Navi Pillay echoed the opinion.<sup>[485][486]</sup>

## Foreign relations

Israel maintains diplomatic relations with 164 member states of the United Nations, as well as with the Holy See, Kosovo, the Cook Islands and Niue. It has 107 diplomatic missions;<sup>[487]</sup> countries with whom they have no diplomatic relations include most Muslim countries.<sup>[488]</sup> Six out of twenty-two nations in the Arab League have

normalized relations with Israel. Israel remains formally in a state of war with Syria, a status that dates back uninterrupted to 1948. It has been in a similarly formal state of war with Lebanon since the end of the Lebanese Civil War in 2000, with the Israel–Lebanon border remaining unagreed by treaty.

Despite the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, Israel is still widely considered an enemy country among Egyptians.<sup>[489]</sup> Iran withdrew its recognition of Israel during the Islamic Revolution.<sup>[490]</sup> Israeli citizens may not visit Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen without permission from the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>[491]</sup> As a result of the 2008–09 Gaza War, Mauritania, Qatar, Bolivia, and Venezuela suspended political and economic ties with Israel,<sup>[492]</sup> though Bolivia renewed ties in 2019.<sup>[493]</sup>



The United States and the Soviet Union were the first two countries to recognize the State of Israel, having declared recognition roughly simultaneously.<sup>[494]</sup> Diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union were broken in 1967, following the Six-Day War, and renewed in October 1991.<sup>[495]</sup> The United States regards Israel as its "most reliable partner in the Middle East",<sup>[496]</sup> based on "common democratic values, religious affinities, and security interests".<sup>[497]</sup> The US has provided \$68 billion in military assistance and \$32 billion in grants to Israel since 1967, under the Foreign Assistance Act (period beginning 1962),<sup>[498]</sup> more than any other country for that period until 2003.<sup>[498][499][500]</sup> Most surveyed Americans have also held consistently favorable views of Israel.<sup>[501][502]</sup> The United Kingdom is seen as having a "natural" relationship with Israel because of the Mandate for Palestine.<sup>[503]</sup> By 2007, Germany had paid 25 billion euros in reparations to the Israeli state and individual Israeli Holocaust survivors.<sup>[504]</sup> Israel is included in the European Union's European Neighbourhood Policy.<sup>[505]</sup>



Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat at the signing ceremony of the Oslo Accords with then US President Bill Clinton

Although Turkey and Israel did not establish full diplomatic relations until 1991,<sup>[506]</sup> Turkey has cooperated with the Jewish state since its recognition of Israel in 1949. Turkey's ties to other Muslim-majority nations in the region have at times resulted in pressure from Arab and Muslim states to temper its relationship with Israel.<sup>[507]</sup> Relations between Turkey and Israel took a downturn after the 2008–09 Gaza War and Israel's raid of the Gaza flotilla.<sup>[508]</sup> Relations between Greece and Israel have improved since 1995 due to the decline of Israeli–Turkish relations.<sup>[509]</sup> The two countries have a defense cooperation agreement and in 2010, the Israeli Air Force hosted Greece's Hellenic Air Force in a joint exercise. The joint Cyprus-Israel oil and gas explorations centered on the Leviathan gas field are an important factor for Greece, given its strong links with Cyprus.<sup>[510]</sup> Cooperation in the world's longest submarine power cable, the EuroAsia Interconnector, has strengthened Cyprus–Israel relations.<sup>[511]</sup>

Azerbaijan is one of the few majority Muslim countries to develop strategic and economic relations with Israel.<sup>[409]</sup> Kazakhstan also has an economic and strategic partnership with Israel.<sup>[512]</sup> India established full diplomatic ties with Israel in 1992 and has fostered a strong military, technological and cultural partnership with the country since then.<sup>[513]</sup> India is the largest customer of the Israeli military equipment and Israel is the second-largest military partner of India after Russia.<sup>[514]</sup> Ethiopia is Israel's main ally in Africa due to common political, religious and security interests.<sup>[515]</sup>

## Foreign aid

Israel has a history of providing emergency foreign aid and humanitarian response to disasters across the world.<sup>[516]</sup> In 1955 Israel began its foreign aid programme in Burma. The programme's focus subsequently shifted to Africa.<sup>[517]</sup> Israel's humanitarian efforts officially began in 1957, with the establishment of Mashav, the Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation.<sup>[518]</sup> In this early period, whilst Israel's aid represented only a small percentage of total aid to Africa, its programme was effective in creating goodwill; however, following the 1967 war relations soured.<sup>[519]</sup> Israel's foreign aid programme subsequently shifted its focus to Latin America.<sup>[517]</sup> Since the late 1970s Israel's foreign aid has gradually decreased, although in recent years Israel has tried to reestablish aid to Africa.<sup>[520]</sup> There are additional Israeli humanitarian and emergency response groups that work with the Israel government, including IsraAid, a joint programme run by Israeli organizations and North American Jewish groups,<sup>[521]</sup> ZAKA,<sup>[522]</sup> The Fast Israeli Rescue and Search Team,<sup>[523]</sup> Israeli Flying Aid,<sup>[524]</sup> Save a Child's Heart<sup>[525]</sup> and Latet.<sup>[526]</sup> Between 1985 and 2015, Israel sent 24 delegations of IDF search and rescue unit, the Home Front Command, to 22 countries.<sup>[527]</sup> Currently Israeli foreign aid ranks low among OECD nations, spending less than 0.1% of its GNI on development assistance.<sup>[528]</sup> The country ranked 38th in the 2018 World Giving Index.<sup>[529]</sup>

## Military

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is the sole military wing of the Israeli security forces and is headed by its Chief of General Staff, the *Ramatkal*, subordinate to the Cabinet. The IDF consists of the army, air force and navy. It was founded during the 1948 Arab–Israeli War by consolidating paramilitary organizations—chiefly the Haganah.<sup>[530]</sup> The IDF also draws upon the resources of the Military Intelligence Directorate (*Aman*).<sup>[531]</sup> The IDF have been involved in several major wars and border conflicts, making it one of the most battle-trained armed forces in the world.<sup>[532]</sup>



F-35 fighter jets of the Israeli Air Force

Most Israelis are conscripted at age 18. Men serve two years and eight months and women two years.<sup>[533]</sup> Following mandatory service, Israeli men join the reserve forces and usually do up to several weeks of reserve duty every year until their forties. Most women are exempt from reserve duty. Arab citizens of Israel (except the Druze) and those engaged in full-time religious studies are exempt, although the exemption of yeshiva students has been a source of contention.<sup>[534][535]</sup> An alternative for those who receive exemptions on various grounds is *Sherut Leumi*, or national service, which involves a programme of service in social welfare frameworks.<sup>[536]</sup> A small minority of Israeli Arabs also volunteer in the army.<sup>[537]</sup> As a result of its conscription programme, the IDF maintains approximately 176,500 active troops and 465,000 reservists, giving Israel one of the world's highest percentage of citizens with military training.<sup>[538]</sup>

The military relies heavily on high-tech weapons systems designed and manufactured in Israel as well as some foreign imports. The Arrow missile is one of the world's few operational anti-ballistic missile systems.<sup>[539]</sup> The Python air-to-air missile series is often considered one of the most crucial weapons in its military history.<sup>[540]</sup> Israel's Spike missile is one of the most widely exported anti-tank guided missiles in the world.<sup>[541]</sup> Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile air defense system gained worldwide acclaim after intercepting hundreds of rockets fired by Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip.<sup>[542][543]</sup> Since the Yom Kippur War, Israel has developed a network of reconnaissance satellites.<sup>[544]</sup> The *Ofeq* programme has made Israel one of seven countries capable of launching such satellites.<sup>[545]</sup>



Iron Dome is the world's first operational anti-artillery rocket defense system.



Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons<sup>[546]</sup> and per a 1993 report, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction.<sup>[547]</sup> Israel has not signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons<sup>[548]</sup> and maintains a policy of deliberate ambiguity toward its nuclear capabilities.<sup>[549]</sup> The Israeli Navy's Dolphin submarines are believed to be armed with nuclear missiles offering second-strike capability.<sup>[550]</sup> Since the Gulf War in 1991, all homes in Israel are required to have a reinforced security room, Merkhav Mugan, impermeable to chemical and biological substances.<sup>[551]</sup>

Since Israel's establishment, military expenditure constituted a significant portion of the country's gross domestic product, with peak of 30.3% of GDP in 1975.<sup>[552]</sup> In 2021, Israel ranked 15th in the world by total military expenditure, with \$24.3 billion, and 6th by defense spending as a percentage of GDP, with 5.2%.<sup>[553]</sup> Since 1974, the United States has been a particularly notable contributor of military aid.<sup>[554]</sup> Under a memorandum of understanding signed in 2016, the U.S. is expected to provide the country with \$3.8 billion per year, or around 20% of Israel's defense budget, from 2018 to 2028.<sup>[555]</sup> Israel ranked 9th globally for arms exports in 2022.<sup>[556]</sup> The majority of Israel's arms exports are unreported for security reasons.<sup>[557]</sup> Israel is consistently rated low in the Global Peace Index, ranking 134th out of 163 nations for peacefulness in 2022.<sup>[558]</sup>

## Economy

Israel is considered the most advanced country in Western Asia and the Middle East in economic and industrial development.<sup>[559][560]</sup> As of October 2023, the IMF estimated Israel's GDP at 521.7 billion dollars and Israel's GDP per capita at 53.2 thousand (ranking 13th worldwide), a figure comparable to other highly developed and rich countries.<sup>[561]</sup> Israel has the second highest poverty rate amongst the world's developed countries, largely due to the high poverty rate amongst Palestinian citizens of Israel.<sup>[562]</sup> It is the third richest country in Asia by nominal per capita income.<sup>[563]</sup> Israel has the highest average wealth per adult in the Middle East.<sup>[564]</sup> *The Economist* ranked Israel as the 4th most successful economy among the developed countries for 2022.<sup>[565]</sup> It has the most billionaires in the Middle East, and the 18th most in the world.<sup>[566]</sup> In recent years Israel had one of the highest growth rates in the developed world.<sup>[567]</sup> In 2010, it joined the OECD.<sup>[34][568]</sup> The country is ranked 20th in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report<sup>[569]</sup> and 35th on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index.<sup>[570]</sup> Israel was also ranked fifth in the world by share of people in high-skilled employment.<sup>[571]</sup> Israeli economic data covers the economic territory of Israel, including the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank.<sup>[420]</sup>



The Diamond Exchange District in Ramat Gan



Tel Aviv Stock Exchange

Despite limited natural resources, intensive development of the agricultural and industrial sectors over the past decades has made Israel largely self-sufficient in food production, apart from grains and beef. Imports to Israel, totaling \$96.5 billion in 2020, include raw materials, military equipment, investment goods, rough diamonds, fuels, grain, and consumer goods.<sup>[288]</sup> Leading exports include machinery and equipment, software, cut diamonds, agricultural products, chemicals, and textiles and apparel; in 2020, Israeli exports reached \$114 billion.<sup>[288]</sup> The Bank of Israel holds \$201 billion of foreign-exchange reserves, the 17th highest in the world.<sup>[288]</sup> Since the 1970s, Israel has received military aid from the United States, as well as economic assistance in the form of loan guarantees, which now account for roughly half of Israel's external debt. Israel has one of the lowest external debts in the developed world, and is a lender in terms of net external debt (assets vs. liabilities abroad), which in 2015 stood at a surplus of \$69 billion.<sup>[572]</sup>

Israel has the second-largest number of startup companies after the United States,<sup>[573]</sup> and the third-largest number of NASDAQ-listed companies.<sup>[574]</sup> It is the world leader for number of start-ups per capita.<sup>[575]</sup> Israel has been dubbed the "Start-Up Nation".<sup>[576][577][578][579]</sup> Intel<sup>[580]</sup> and Microsoft<sup>[581]</sup> built their first overseas research and development facilities in Israel, and other high-tech multinational corporations have opened research and development centres in the country.

The days which are allocated to working times in Israel are Sunday through Thursday (for a five-day workweek), or Friday (for a six-day workweek). In observance of Shabbat, in places where Friday is a work day and the majority of population is Jewish, Friday is a "short day". Several proposals have been raised to adjust the work week with the majority of the world.<sup>[582]</sup>

## Science and technology

Israel's development of cutting-edge technologies in software, communications and the life sciences have evoked comparisons with Silicon Valley.<sup>[583][584]</sup> Israel is first in the world in expenditure on research and development as a percentage of GDP.<sup>[585]</sup> It is ranked 14th in the Global Innovation Index in 2023,<sup>[586]</sup> and fifth in the 2019 Bloomberg Innovation Index.<sup>[587]</sup> Israel has 140 scientists, technicians, and engineers per 10,000 employees, the highest number in the world.<sup>[588][589][590]</sup> Israel has produced six Nobel Prize-winning scientists since 2004<sup>[591]</sup> and has been frequently ranked as one of the countries with the highest ratios of scientific papers per capita.<sup>[592][593][594]</sup> Israeli universities are ranked among the top 50 world universities in computer science (Technion and Tel Aviv University), mathematics (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and chemistry (Weizmann Institute of Science).<sup>[391]</sup>



Matam high-tech park in Haifa

In 2012, Israel was ranked ninth in the world by the Futron's Space Competitiveness Index.<sup>[595]</sup> The Israel Space Agency coordinates all Israeli space research programmes with scientific and commercial goals, and have indigenously designed and built at least 13 commercial, research and spy satellites.<sup>[596]</sup> Some of Israel's satellites are ranked among the world's most advanced space systems.<sup>[597]</sup> Shavit is a space launch vehicle produced by Israel to launch small satellites into low Earth orbit.<sup>[598]</sup> It was first launched in 1988, making Israel the eighth nation to have a space launch capability. In 2003, Ilan Ramon became Israel's first astronaut, serving on the fatal mission of Space Shuttle Columbia.<sup>[599]</sup>

The ongoing water shortage has spurred innovation in water conservation techniques, and a substantial agricultural modernization, drip irrigation, was invented in Israel. Israel is also at the technological forefront of desalination and water recycling. The Sorek desalination plant is the largest seawater reverse osmosis desalination facility in the world.<sup>[600]</sup> By 2014, Israel's desalination programmes provided roughly 35% of Israel's drinking water and it is expected to supply 70% by 2050.<sup>[601]</sup> As of 2015, more than 50 percent of the water for Israeli households, agriculture and industry is artificially produced.<sup>[602]</sup> In 2011, Israel's water technology industry was worth around \$2 billion a year with annual exports of products and services in the tens of millions of dollars. As a result of innovations in reverse osmosis technology, Israel is set to become a net exporter of water.<sup>[603]</sup>

Israel has embraced solar energy; its engineers are on the cutting edge of solar energy technology<sup>[605]</sup> and its solar companies work on projects around the world.<sup>[606][607]</sup> Over 90% of Israeli homes use solar energy for hot water, the highest per capita.<sup>[310][608]</sup> According to government figures, the country saves 8% of its electricity consumption per year because of its solar energy use in heating.<sup>[609]</sup> The high annual incident solar irradiance at its geographic latitude creates ideal conditions for what is an internationally renowned solar research and development

industry in the Negev Desert.<sup>[605][606][607]</sup> Israel had a modern electric car infrastructure involving a countrywide network of charging stations.<sup>[610][611][612]</sup> However, Israel's electric car company Better Place shut down in 2013.<sup>[613]</sup>



The world's largest solar parabolic dish at the Ben-Gurion National Solar Energy Center.<sup>[604]</sup>

## Energy

Israel began producing natural gas from its own offshore gas fields in 2004. In 2009, a natural gas reserve, Tamar, was found near the coast of Israel. A second reserve, Leviathan, was discovered in 2010.<sup>[614]</sup> The natural gas reserves in these two fields could make Israel energy-secure for more than 50 years. In 2013, Israel began commercial production of natural gas from the Tamar field. As of 2014, Israel produced over 7.5 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas a year.<sup>[615]</sup> Israel had 199 billion bcm of proven reserves of natural gas as of 2016.<sup>[616]</sup> The Leviathan gas field started production in 2019.<sup>[617]</sup>

Ketura Sun is Israel's first commercial solar field. Built in 2011 by the Arava Power Company, the field consists of 18,500 photovoltaic panels made by Suntech, which will produce about 9 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity per year.<sup>[618]</sup> In the next twenty years, the field will spare the production of some 125,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide.<sup>[619]</sup>

## Transport

Israel has 19,224 kilometres (11,945 mi) of paved roads,<sup>[620]</sup> and 3 million motor vehicles.<sup>[621]</sup> The number of motor vehicles per 1,000 persons is 365, relatively low among developed countries.<sup>[621]</sup> Israel has 5,715 buses on scheduled routes,<sup>[622]</sup> operated by several carriers, the largest and oldest of which is Egged, serving most of the country.<sup>[623]</sup> Railways stretch across 1,277 kilometres (793 mi) and are operated by government-owned Israel Railways.<sup>[624]</sup> Following major investments beginning in the early to mid-1990s, the number of train passengers per year has grown from 2.5 million in 1990, to 53 million in 2015; railways transport 7.5 million tons of cargo, per year.<sup>[624]</sup>



Ben Gurion International Airport

Israel is served by three international airports: Ben Gurion Airport, the country's main hub for international air travel; Ramon Airport; and Haifa Airport. Ben Gurion, Israel's largest airport, handled over 15 million passengers in 2015.<sup>[625]</sup> The country has three main ports: the Port of Haifa, the country's oldest and largest, on the Mediterranean coast, Ashdod Port; and the smaller Port of Eilat on the Red Sea.

## Tourism

Tourism, especially religious tourism, is an important industry in Israel, with the country's beaches, archaeological, other historical and biblical sites, and unique geography also drawing tourists. Israel's security problems have taken their toll on the industry, but the number of tourists is on the rebound.<sup>[626]</sup> In 2017, a record 3.6 million tourists visited Israel, yielding a 25 percent growth since 2016 and contributed NIS 20 billion to the Israeli economy.<sup>[627][628][629][630]</sup>

## Real estate



Housing prices in Israel are listed in the top third of all countries,<sup>[631]</sup> with an average of 150 salaries required to buy an apartment.<sup>[632]</sup> As of 2022, there are about 2.7 million properties in Israel, with an annual increase of more than 50,000.<sup>[633]</sup> However, the demand for housing exceeds supply, with a shortage of about 200,000 apartments as of 2021.<sup>[634]</sup> As a result, by 2021 housing prices rose by 5.6%.<sup>[635]</sup> In 2021, Israelis took a record of NIS 116.1 billion in mortgages, an increase of 50% from 2020.<sup>[636]</sup>



Ein Bokek resort on the shore of the Dead Sea

## Culture

Israel's diverse culture stems from the diversity of its population: Jews from diaspora communities around the world brought their cultural and religious traditions back with them.<sup>[637]</sup> Arab influences are present in many cultural spheres,<sup>[638]</sup> such as architecture,<sup>[639]</sup> music,<sup>[640]</sup> and cuisine.<sup>[641]</sup> Israel is the only country where life revolves around the Hebrew calendar. Holidays are determined by the Jewish holidays. The official day of rest is Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath.<sup>[642]</sup>

## Literature

Israeli literature is primarily poetry and prose written in Hebrew, as part of the renaissance of Hebrew as a spoken language since the mid-19th century, although a small body of literature is published in other languages. By law, two copies of all printed matter published in Israel must be deposited in the National Library of Israel. In 2001, the law was amended to include audio and video recordings, and other non-print media.<sup>[643]</sup> In 2016, 89 percent of the 7,300 books transferred to the library were in Hebrew.<sup>[644]</sup>

In 1966, Shmuel Yosef Agnon shared the Nobel Prize in Literature with German Jewish author Nelly Sachs.<sup>[645]</sup> Leading Israeli poets include Yehuda Amichai, Nathan Alterman, Leah Goldberg, and Rachel Bluwstein.<sup>[646]</sup> Internationally famous contemporary Israeli novelists include Amos Oz, Etgar Keret and David Grossman.<sup>[647][648]</sup>



Shmuel Yosef Agnon, laureate of the Nobel Prize in Literature

## Music and dance

Israeli music includes Mizrahi and Sephardic music, Hasidic melodies, Greek music, jazz, and pop rock.<sup>[649][650]</sup> The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra<sup>[651][652]</sup> has been in operation for over seventy years and performs more than two hundred concerts each year.<sup>[653]</sup> Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman and Ofra Haza are among the internationally acclaimed musicians born in Israel. Israel has participated in the Eurovision Song Contest nearly every year since 1973, winning the competition four times and hosting it twice.<sup>[654][655]</sup> Eilat has hosted its own international music festival, the Red Sea Jazz Festival, every summer since 1987.<sup>[656]</sup> The nation's canonical folk songs are known as "Songs of the Land of Israel".<sup>[657]</sup>



Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Zubin Mehta

## Cinema and theatre



Ten Israeli films have been final nominees for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards. Palestinian Israeli filmmakers have made films dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict and status of Palestinians within Israel, such as Mohammed Bakri's 2002 film *Jenin, Jenin* and *The Syrian Bride*.

Continuing the strong theatrical traditions of the Yiddish theatre in Eastern Europe, Israel maintains a vibrant theatre scene. Founded in 1918, Habima Theatre in Tel Aviv is Israel's oldest repertory theater company and national theater.<sup>[658]</sup> Other theatres include Ohel, the Cameri and Gesher.<sup>[659][660]</sup>

## Arts

Israeli Jewish art has been particularly influenced by the Kabbalah, the Talmud and the Zohar. Another art movement that held a prominent role in the 20th century was the School of Paris. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the Yishuv's art was dominated by art trends emanating Bezalel. Beginning in the 1920s, the local art scene was heavily influenced by modern French art, first introduced by Isaac Frenkel Frenel.<sup>[661][662]</sup> Jewish masters of the school of Paris, such as Soutine, Kikoine, Frenkel, Chagall heavily influenced the subsequent development of Israeli art.<sup>[663][664]</sup> Israeli sculpture took inspiration from modern European sculpture as well Mesopotamian, Assyrian and local art.<sup>[665][666]</sup> Avraham Melnikov's roaring lion, David Polus' Alexander Zaid and Ze'ev Ben Zvi's cubist sculpture exemplify some of the different streams in Israeli sculpture.<sup>[665][667][668]</sup>

Common themes in Israeli art are the mystical cities of Safed and Jerusalem, the bohemian café culture of Tel Aviv, agricultural landscapes, biblical stories and war. Today Israeli art has delved into Optical art, AI art, digital art and the use of salt in sculpture.<sup>[664]</sup>

## Architecture

Due to the immigration of Jewish architects, architecture in Israel has come to reflect different styles. In the early 20th century Jewish architects sought to combine Occidental and Oriental architecture producing buildings that showcase a myriad of infused styles.<sup>[669]</sup> The eclectic style gave way to the modernist Bauhaus style with the influx of German Jewish architects (among them Erich Mendelsohn) fleeing Nazi persecution.<sup>[670][671]</sup> The White City of Tel Aviv is a UNESCO heritage site.<sup>[672]</sup> Following independence, multiple government projects were commissioned, a grand part built in a brutalist style with heavy emphasis on the use of concrete and acclimatization to the Israel's desert climate.<sup>[673][674]</sup>



Bauhaus Museum, Tel Aviv

Several novel ideas such as the Garden City were implemented Israeli cities; the Geddes plan of Tel Aviv became renowned internationally for its revolutionary design and adaptation to the local climate.<sup>[675]</sup> The design of kibbutzim also came to reflect ideology, such as the planning of the circular kibbutz Nahalal by Richard Kauffmann.<sup>[676]</sup>

## Media

The 2017 *Freedom of the Press* annual report by Freedom House ranked Israel as the Middle East and North Africa's most free country, and 64th globally.<sup>[677]</sup> In the 2017 Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders, Israel (including "Israel extraterritorial" since 2013 ranking)<sup>[678]</sup> was placed 91st of 180 countries, first in the

Middle East and North Africa region.<sup>[679]</sup> Reporters Without Borders noted that "Palestinian journalists are systematically subjected to violence as a result of their coverage of events in the West Bank".<sup>[680]</sup> More than fifty Palestinian journalists have been killed by Israel since 2001.<sup>[681]</sup>

## Museums

The Israel Museum in Jerusalem is one of Israel's most important cultural institutions<sup>[682]</sup> and houses the Dead Sea Scrolls,<sup>[683]</sup> along with an extensive collection of Judaica and European art.<sup>[682]</sup> Israel's national Holocaust museum, Yad Vashem, is the world central archive of Holocaust-related information.<sup>[684]</sup> ANU - Museum of the Jewish People on the campus of Tel Aviv University, is an interactive museum devoted to the history of Jewish communities around the world.<sup>[685]</sup>

Israel has the highest number of museums per capita.<sup>[686]</sup> Several Israeli museums are devoted to Islamic culture, including the Rockefeller Museum and the L. A. Mayer Institute for Islamic Art, both in Jerusalem. The Rockefeller specializes in archaeological remains from Middle East history. It is also the home of the first hominid fossil skull found in Western Asia, called Galilee Man.<sup>[687]</sup>

## Cuisine

Israeli cuisine includes local dishes as well as Jewish cuisine brought to the country by immigrants. Particularly since the late 1970s, an Israeli fusion cuisine has developed.<sup>[688]</sup> Israeli cuisine has adopted, and continues to adapt, elements of the Mizrahi, Sephardi, and Ashkenazi styles of cooking. It incorporates many foods traditionally eaten in the Levantine, Arab, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines, such as falafel, hummus, shakshouka, couscous, and za'atar. Schnitzel, pizza, hamburgers, French fries, rice and salad are common in Israel.

Roughly half of the Israeli-Jewish population attests to keeping kosher at home.<sup>[689][690]</sup> Kosher restaurants make up around a quarter of the total as of 2015.<sup>[688]</sup> Together with non-kosher fish, rabbits and ostriches, pork—often called "white meat" in Israel<sup>[691]</sup>—is produced and consumed, though it is forbidden by both Judaism and Islam.<sup>[692]</sup>

## Sports

The most popular spectator sports in Israel are association football and basketball.<sup>[693]</sup> The Israeli Premier League is the country's premier football league, and the Israeli Basketball Premier League is the premier basketball league.<sup>[694]</sup> Maccabi Haifa, Maccabi Tel Aviv, Hapoel Tel Aviv and Beitar Jerusalem are the largest football clubs. Maccabi Tel Aviv, Maccabi Haifa and Hapoel Tel Aviv have competed in the UEFA Champions League and Hapoel Tel Aviv reached the UEFA Cup quarter-finals. Israel hosted and won the 1964 AFC Asian Cup; in 1970 the Israel national football team qualified for the FIFA World Cup, the only time it participated in the World Cup. The 1974 Asian Games, held in Tehran, were the last Asian Games in which Israel participated, plagued by the Arab countries that refused to compete with Israel. Israel was excluded from the 1978 Asian Games and



Shrine of the Book, repository of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Jerusalem



A meal including falafel, hummus, French fries and Israeli salad



Maccabi Haifa F.C. fans at Sammy Ofer Stadium in the city of Haifa

since then has not competed in Asian sport events.<sup>[695]</sup> In 1994, UEFA agreed to admit Israel, and its football teams now compete in Europe. Maccabi Tel Aviv B.C. has won the European championship in basketball six times.<sup>[696]</sup>

Israel has won nine Olympic medals since its first win in 1992, including a gold medal in windsurfing at the 2004 Summer Olympics.<sup>[697]</sup> Israel has won over 100 gold medals in the Paralympic Games and is ranked 20th in the all-time medal count. The 1968 Summer Paralympics were hosted by Israel.<sup>[698]</sup> The Maccabiah Games, an Olympic-style event for Jewish and Israeli athletes, was inaugurated in the 1930s, and has been held every four years since then. Krav Maga, a martial art developed by Jewish ghetto defenders during the struggle against fascism in Europe, is used by the Israeli security forces and police. Its effectiveness and practical approach to self-defense, have won it widespread admiration and adherence around the world.<sup>[699]</sup>

Chess is a leading sport in Israel. There are many Israeli grandmasters and Israeli chess players have won a number of youth world championships.<sup>[700]</sup> Israel stages an annual international championship and hosted the World Team Chess Championship in 2005. The Ministry of Education and the World Chess Federation agreed upon a project of teaching chess within Israeli schools, and it has been introduced into the curriculum of some schools.<sup>[701]</sup> The city of Beersheba has become a national chess center, with the game being taught in the city's kindergartens. Owing partly to Soviet immigration, it is home to the largest number of chess grandmasters of any city in the world.<sup>[702][703]</sup> The Israeli chess team won the silver medal at the 2008 Chess Olympiad<sup>[704]</sup> and the bronze, coming in third among 148 teams, at the 2010 Olympiad. Israeli grandmaster Boris Gelfand won the Chess World Cup 2009.<sup>[705]</sup>



Boris Gelfand, chess Grandmaster

## See also

- Index of Israel-related articles
- Outline of Israel

## References

### Notes

1. Recognition by other UN member states: Russia (West Jerusalem),<sup>[1]</sup> the Czech Republic (West Jerusalem),<sup>[2]</sup> Honduras,<sup>[3]</sup> Guatemala,<sup>[4]</sup> Nauru,<sup>[5]</sup> and the United States.<sup>[6]</sup>
2. Jerusalem is Israel's largest city if including East Jerusalem, which is widely recognized as occupied territory.<sup>[7]</sup> If East Jerusalem is not counted, the largest city would be Tel Aviv.
3. Arabic has a 'special status in the state' with its use by state institutions to be set in law, under a Basic Law of 2018,<sup>[9][10]</sup> prior to which it had been an official language of the State of Israel.<sup>[11]</sup>
4. Israeli population and economic data covers the economic territory of Israel, including the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank.<sup>[420][421]</sup>
5. The personal name "Israel" appears much earlier, in material from Ebla.<sup>[56]</sup>
  - a. /ʔizri.əl, -rei-/; Hebrew: יִשְׂרָאֵל *Yisrā'ēl* [jɪsʁa'el]; Arabic: إِسْرَائِيل *Isrā'īl*
  - b. Hebrew: מְדִינַת יִשְׂרָאֵל *Medīnat Yisrā'ēl* [medi'nat jɪsʁa'el]; Arabic: دَوْلَة إِسْرَائِيل *Dawlat Isrā'īl*
  - c. The Jerusalem Law states that "Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel" and the city serves as the seat of the government, home to the President's residence, government offices, supreme court, and parliament. United Nations Security Council Resolution 478 (20 August 1980;

14–0, U.S. abstaining) declared the Jerusalem Law "null and void" and called on member states to withdraw their diplomatic missions from Jerusalem.<sup>[23]</sup> See [Status of Jerusalem](#) for more information.

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79. Broshi, Maguen (2001). *Bread, Wine, Walls and Scrolls* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=etTUEorS1zMC&pg=PAPA174>). Bloomsbury Publishing. p. 174. ISBN 978-1-84127-201-6. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20230210203455/https://books.google.com/books?id=etTUEorS1zMC&pg=PAPA174>) from the original on 10 February 2023. Retrieved 1 December 2018.
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81. Finkelstein & Silberman 2002, p. 307: "Intensive excavations throughout Jerusalem have shown that the city was indeed systematically destroyed by the Babylonians. The conflagration seems to have been general. When activity on the ridge of the City of David resumed in the Persian period, the new suburbs on the western hill that had flourished since at least the time of Hezekiah were not reoccupied."
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84. "British Museum – Cuneiform tablet with part of the Babylonian Chronicle (605–594 BCE)" ([https://web.archive.org/web/20141030154541/https://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/me/c/cuneiform\\_nebuchadnezzar\\_ii.aspx](https://web.archive.org/web/20141030154541/https://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/c/cuneiform_nebuchadnezzar_ii.aspx)). Archived from the original ([https://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/me/c/cuneiform\\_nebuchadnezzar\\_ii.aspx](https://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/c/cuneiform_nebuchadnezzar_ii.aspx)) on 30 October 2014. Retrieved 30 October 2014.
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87. *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, ed. by Achtemeier, etc., Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1985, p. 103
88. Grabbe, Lester L. (2004). *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period: Yehud – A History of the Persian Province of Judah v. 1* ([https://books.google.com/books?id=-MnE5T\\_ORbMC&dq=%22gave%2Bthe%2BJews%2Bpermission%2Bto%2Breturn%2Bto%2BYehud%2Bprovince%2Band%2Bto%2Brebuilt%2Bthe%22&pg=PAPA355](https://books.google.com/books?id=-MnE5T_ORbMC&dq=%22gave%2Bthe%2BJews%2Bpermission%2Bto%2Breturn%2Bto%2BYehud%2Bprovince%2Band%2Bto%2Brebuilt%2Bthe%22&pg=PAPA355)). T & T Clark. p. 355. ISBN 978-0-567-08998-4. Archived ([https://web.archive.org/web/20231219070639/https://books.google.com/books?id=-MnE5T\\_ORbMC&pg=PAPA355&dq=%22gave%2Bthe%2BJews%2Bpermission%2Bto%2Breturn%2Bto%2BYehud%2Bprovince%2Band%2Bto%2Brebuilt%2Bthe%22](https://web.archive.org/web/20231219070639/https://books.google.com/books?id=-MnE5T_ORbMC&pg=PAPA355&dq=%22gave%2Bthe%2BJews%2Bpermission%2Bto%2Breturn%2Bto%2BYehud%2Bprovince%2Band%2Bto%2Brebuilt%2Bthe%22)) from the original on 19 December 2023. Retrieved 1 December 2018.
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90. Ben-Sasson, H.H. (1976). *A History of the Jewish People* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=2kSovzudhFUC&pg=PA226>). Harvard University Press. p. 226. ISBN 978-0-674-39731-6. "The expansion of Hasmonean Judea took place gradually. Under Jonathan, Judea annexed southern Samaria and began to expand in the direction of the coast plain... The main ethnic changes were the work of John Hyrcanus... it was in his days and those of his son Aristobulus that the annexation of Idumea, Samaria and Galilee and the consolidation of Jewish settlement in Trans-Jordan was completed. Alexander Jannai, continuing the work of his predecessors, expanded Judean rule to the entire coastal plain, from the Carmel to the Egyptian border... and to additional areas in Trans-Jordan, including some of the Greek cities there."
91. Ben-Eliyahu, Eyal (30 April 2019). *Identity and Territory: Jewish Perceptions of Space in Antiquity* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=ZSyDDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA13>). Univ of California Press. p. 13. ISBN 978-0-520-29360-1. OCLC 1103519319 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1103519319>). "From the beginning of the Second Temple period until the Muslim conquest—the land was part of imperial space. This was true from the early Persian period, as well as the time of Ptolemy and the Seleucids. The only exception was the Hasmonean Kingdom, with its sovereign Jewish rule—first over Judah and later, in Alexander Jannaeus's prime, extending to the coast, the north, and the eastern banks of the Jordan."
92. Schwartz, Seth (2014). *The ancient Jews from Alexander to Muhammad* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=Y6pkAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA85>). Cambridge University Press. pp. 85–86. ISBN 978-1-107-04127-1. OCLC 863044259 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/863044259>). "The year 70 ce marked transformations in demography, politics, Jewish civic status, Palestinian and more general Jewish economic and social structures, Jewish religious life beyond the sacrificial cult, and even Roman politics and the topography of the city of Rome itself. [...] The Revolt's failure had, to begin with, a demographic impact on the Jews of Palestine; many died in battle and as a result of siege conditions, not only in Jerusalem. [...] As indicated above, the figures for captives are conceivably more reliable. If 97,000 is roughly correct as a total for the war, it would mean that a huge percentage of the population was removed from the country, or at the very least displaced from their homes. Nevertheless, only sixty years later, there was a large enough population in the Judean countryside to stage a massively disruptive second rebellion; this one appears to have ended, in 135, with devastation and depopulation of the district."
93. Werner Eck, "Sklaven und Freigelassene von Römern in Iudaea und den angrenzenden Provinzen", *Novum Testamentum* 55 (2013): 1–21

94. Raviv, Dvir; Ben David, Chaim (2021). "Cassius Dio's figures for the demographic consequences of the Bar Kokhba War: Exaggeration or reliable account?" (<https://doi.org/10.1017%2FS1047759421000271>). *Journal of Roman Archaeology*. 34 (2): 585–607. doi:10.1017/S1047759421000271 (<https://doi.org/10.1017%2FS1047759421000271>). ISSN 1047-7594 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/1047-7594>). S2CID 245512193 (<https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:245512193>). "Scholars have long doubted the historical accuracy of Cassius Dio's account of the consequences of the Bar Kokhba War (Roman History 69.14). According to this text, considered the most reliable literary source for the Second Jewish Revolt, the war encompassed all of Judea: the Romans destroyed 985 villages and 50 fortresses, and killed 580,000 rebels. This article reassesses Cassius Dio's figures by drawing on new evidence from excavations and surveys in Judea, Transjordan, and the Galilee. Three research methods are combined: an ethno-archaeological comparison with the settlement picture in the Ottoman Period, comparison with similar settlement studies in the Galilee, and an evaluation of settled sites from the Middle Roman Period (70–136 CE). The study demonstrates the potential contribution of the archaeological record to this issue and supports the view of Cassius Dio's demographic data as a reliable account, which he based on contemporaneous documentation."
95. Mor, Menahem (18 April 2016). *The Second Jewish Revolt*. BRILL. pp. 483–484. doi:10.1163/9789004314634 (<https://doi.org/10.1163%2F9789004314634>). ISBN 978-90-04-31463-4. "Land confiscation in Judaea was part of the suppression of the revolt policy of the Romans and punishment for the rebels. But the very claim that the sikarikon laws were annulled for settlement purposes seems to indicate that Jews continued to reside in Judaea even after the Second Revolt. There is no doubt that this area suffered the severest damage from the suppression of the revolt. Settlements in Judaea, such as Herodion and Bethar, had already been destroyed during the course of the revolt, and Jews were expelled from the districts of Gophna, Herodion, and Aqraba. However, it should not be claimed that the region of Judaea was completely destroyed. Jews continued to live in areas such as Lod (Lydda), south of the Hebron Mountain, and the coastal regions. In other areas of the Land of Israel that did not have any direct connection with the Second Revolt, no settlement changes can be identified as resulting from it."
96. Oppenheimer, A'haron and Oppenheimer, Nili. *Between Rome and Babylon: Studies in Jewish Leadership and Society*. Mohr Siebeck, 2005, p. 2.
97. H.H. Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People* ([https://www.google.com/books/edition/A\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Jewish\\_People/2kSovzudhFUC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA334](https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_History_of_the_Jewish_People/2kSovzudhFUC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA334)), Harvard University Press, 1976, ISBN 978-0-674-39731-6, page 334: "In an effort to wipe out all memory of the bond between the Jews and the land, Hadrian changed the name of the province from Judaea to Syria-Palestina, a name that became common in non-Jewish literature."
98. Ariel Lewin. *The archaeology of Ancient Judea and Palestine* ([https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Archaeology\\_of\\_Ancient\\_Judea\\_and\\_Pal/zlToSqE0k\\_cC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA33](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Archaeology_of_Ancient_Judea_and_Pal/zlToSqE0k_cC?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA33)). Getty Publications, 2005 p. 33. "It seems clear that by choosing a seemingly neutral name – one juxtaposing that of a neighboring province with the revived name of an ancient geographical entity (Palestine), already known from the writings of Herodotus – Hadrian was intending to suppress any connection between the Jewish people and that land." ISBN 978-0-89236-800-6
99. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*. 4:6.3-4
100. Edward Kessler (2010). *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=87Woe7kkPM4C&pg=PA72>). Cambridge University Press. p. 72. ISBN 978-0-521-70562-2. "Jews probably remained in the majority in Palestine until some time after the conversion of Constantine in the fourth century. [...] In Babylonia, there had been for many centuries a Jewish community which would have been further strengthened by those fleeing the aftermath of the Roman revolts."
101. Cohn-Sherbok, Dan (1996). *Atlas of Jewish History*. Routledge. p. 58. ISBN 978-0-415-08800-8.
102. Lehmann, Clayton Miles (18 January 2007). "Palestine" (<https://archive.today/20130407005423/http://sunburst.usd.edu/~clehmann/erp/Palestine/palestin.htm>). *Encyclopedia of the Roman Provinces*. University of South Dakota. Archived from the original (<http://sunburst.usd.edu/~clehmann/erp/Palestine/palestin.htm>) on 7 April 2013. Retrieved 9 February 2013.
103. Judaism in late antiquity, Jacob Neusner, Bertold Spuler, Hady R Idris, Brill, 2001, p. 155
104. The Darkening Age: The Christian Destruction of the Classical World by Catherine Nixey 2018



105. "היהודים בארץ-ישראל בימי האימפריה הרומית הנוצרית." [The Jews in the Land of Israel in the Days of the Christian Roman Empire]. *ארץ-ישראל בשלהי העת העתיקה: מבואות ומחקרים* [Eretz Israel in Late Antiquity: Introductions and Studies] (in Hebrew). Vol. 1. יד יצחק בן-צבי. ירושלים: 210–212. ISBN 978-965-217-444-4.
106. Ehrlich, Michael (2022). *The Islamization of the Holy Land, 634–1800*. Arc Humanities Press. pp. 3–4. ISBN 978-1-64189-222-3. OCLC 1302180905 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/1302180905>). "The Jewish community strove to recover from the catastrophic results of the Bar Kokhva revolt (132–135 CE). Although some of these attempts were relatively successful, the Jews never fully recovered. During the Late Roman and Byzantine periods, many Jews emigrated to thriving centres in the diaspora, especially Iraq, whereas some converted to Christianity and others continued to live in the Holy Land, especially in Galilee and the coastal plain. During the Byzantine period, the three provinces of Palestine included more than thirty cities, namely, settlements with a bishop see. After the Muslim conquest in the 630s, most of these cities declined and eventually disappeared. As a result, in many cases the local ecclesiastical administration weakened, while in others it simply ceased to exist. Consequently, many local Christians converted to Islam. Thus, almost twelve centuries later, when the army led by Napoleon Bonaparte arrived in the Holy Land, most of the local population was Muslim."
107. David Goodblatt (2006). "The Political and Social History of the Jewish Community in the Land of Israel, c. 235–638". In Steven Katz (ed.). *The Cambridge History of Judaism*. Vol. IV. Cambridge University Press. pp. 404–430. ISBN 978-0-521-77248-8. "Few would disagree that, in the century and a half before our period begins, the Jewish population of Judah () suffered a serious blow from which it never recovered. The destruction of the Jewish metropolis of Jerusalem and its environs and the eventual refounding of the city... had lasting repercussions. [...] However, in other parts of Palestine the Jewish population remained strong [...] What does seem clear is a different kind of change. Immigration of Christians and the conversion of pagans, Samaritans and Jews eventually produced a Christian majority"
108. Bar, Doron (2003). "The Christianisation of Rural Palestine during Late Antiquity". *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*. 54 (3): 401–421. doi:10.1017/s0022046903007309 (<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022046903007309>). ISSN 0022-0469 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0022-0469>). "The dominant view of the history of Palestine during the Byzantine period links the early phases of the consecration of the land during the fourth century and the substantial external financial investment that accompanied the building of churches on holy sites on the one hand with the Christianisation of the population on the other. Churches were erected primarily at the holy sites, 12 while at the same time Palestine's position and unique status as the Christian 'Holy Land' became more firmly rooted. All this, coupled with immigration and conversion, allegedly meant that the Christianisation of Palestine took place much more rapidly than that of other areas of the Roman empire, brought in its wake the annihilation of the pagan cults and meant that by the middle of the fifth century there was a clear Christian majority."
109. Kohen, Elli (2007). *History of the Byzantine Jews: A Microcosmos in the Thousand Year Empire* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=r-9qJRP20MIC&pg=PA26>). University Press of America. pp. 26–31. ISBN 978-0-7618-3623-0. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20231219070638/https://books.google.com/books?id=r-9qJRP20MIC&pg=PA26#v=onepage&q&f=false>) from the original on 19 December 2023. Retrieved 30 March 2023.
110. "Roman Palestine" (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Palestine/Roman-Palestine>). *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20231030111546/https://www.britannica.com/place/Palestine/Roman-Palestine>) from the original on 30 October 2023. Retrieved 30 March 2023.
111. מילכה, לוי-רובין; Levy-Rubin, Milka (2006). "The Influence of the Muslim Conquest on the Settlement Pattern of Palestine during the Early Muslim Period / הכיבוש כמעצב מפת היישוב של ארץ-ישראל בתקופה המוסלמית הקדומה". *Cathedra: For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* / קתדרה 78–53: (121): 78–53. ISSN 0334-4657 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0334-4657>). JSTOR 23407269 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23407269>).

112. Ellenblum, Ronnie (2010). *Frankish Rural Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-511-58534-0. OCLC 958547332 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/958547332>). "From the data given above it can be concluded that the Muslim population of Central Samaria, during the early Muslim period, was not an autochthonous population which had converted to Christianity. They arrived there either by way of migration or as a result of a process of sedentarization of the nomads who had filled the vacuum created by the departing Samaritans at the end of the Byzantine period [...] To sum up: in the only rural region in Palestine in which, according to all the written and archeological sources, the process of Islamization was completed already in the twelfth century, there occurred events consistent with the model propounded by Levtzion and Vryonis: the region was abandoned by its original sedentary population and the vacuum was apparently filled by nomads who, at a later stage, gradually became sedentarized"
113. Gil, Moshe (1997). *A History of Palestine, 634–1099*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-59984-9.
114. Broshi, Magen (1979). "The Population of Western Palestine in the Roman-Byzantine Period". *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*. **236** (236): 1–10. doi:10.2307/1356664 (<https://doi.org/10.2307/1356664>). ISSN 0003-097X (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0003-097X>). JSTOR 1356664 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1356664>). S2CID 24341643 (<https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:24341643>).
115. "crusades" (<https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/?q=crusades>). *Oxford English Dictionary* (Online ed.). Oxford University Press. (Subscription or participating institution membership (<https://www.oed.com/public/login/loggingin#withyourlibrary>) required.)
116. Kramer, Gudrun (2008). *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (<https://archive.org/details/historyofpalesti00krea/page/376>). Princeton University Press. p. 376 (<https://archive.org/details/historyofpalesti00krea/page/376>). ISBN 978-0-691-11897-0.
117. Joel Rappel, History of Eretz Israel from Prehistory up to 1882 (1980), vol. 2, p. 531. "In 1662 Sabbathai Sevi arrived to Jerusalem. It was the time when the Jewish settlements of Galilee were destroyed by the Druze: Tiberias was completely desolate and only a few of former Safed residents had returned...."
118. "Palestine – Ottoman rule" (<https://www.britannica.com/place/Palestine#ref45065>). *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20211204202215/https://www.britannica.com/place/Palestine#ref45065>) from the original on 4 December 2021. Retrieved 27 November 2018.
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120. Rosenzweig 1997, p. 1 (<https://books.google.com/books?id=wKuU3ZBS7gEC&pg=PA1>). "Zionism, the urge of the Jewish people to return to Palestine, is almost as ancient as the Jewish diaspora itself. Some Talmudic statements ... Almost a millennium later, the poet and philosopher Yehuda Halevi ... In the 19th century ..."
121. Eisen, Yosef (2004). *Miraculous journey: a complete history of the Jewish people from creation to the present*. Targum Press. p. 700. ISBN 978-1-56871-323-6.
122. Morgenstern, Arie (2006). *Hastening redemption: Messianism and the resettlement of the land of Israel*. Oxford University Press. p. 304. ISBN 978-0-19-530578-4.
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129. Kornberg 1993. "How did Theodor Herzl, an assimilated German nationalist in the 1880s, suddenly in the 1890s become the founder of Zionism?"
130. Herzl 1946, p. 11.
131. "Chapter One" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20181210124104/http://www.jewishagency.org/israel/content/23396>). *The Jewish Agency for Israel*. 21 July 2005. Archived from the original (<http://www.jewishagency.org/israel/content/23396>) on 10 December 2018. Retrieved 21 September 2015.
132. Stein 2003, p. 88. "As with the First Aliyah, most Second Aliyah migrants were non-Zionist orthodox Jews ..."
133. Moris, Beni (2001). *Righteous victims: a history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, 1881 - 2001* (1. Vintage Books ed.). New York, NY: Vintage Books. ISBN 9780679744757. "Many of these newcomers possessed a mixture of socialist and nationalist values, and they eventually succeeded in setting up a separate Jewish economy, based wholly on Jewish labor."
134. Romano 2003, p. 30.
135. Moris, Beni (2001). *Righteous victims: a history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, 1881 - 2001* (1. Vintage Books ed.). New York, NY: Vintage Books. ISBN 9780679744757. "Another major cause of antagonism was the labor controversy. The hard core of Second Aliyah socialists, who were to become the Yishuv's leaders in the 1920s and 1930s, believed that the settler economy must not depend on or exploit Arab labor... But, in reality, rather than "meshing," the nationalist ethos had simply overpowered and driven out the socialist ethos... There were other reasons for the "conquest of labor." The socialists of the Second Aliyah used the term to denote three things: overcoming the Jews' traditional remove from agricultural labor and helping them transform into the "new Jews"; struggling against employers for better conditions; and replacing Arabs with Jews in manual jobs."
136. Gelvin, James (2014) [2002]. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=wflFVze1MqQC&pg=PA81>) (3 ed.). Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-85289-0. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20231009012922/https://books.google.com/books?id=wflFVze1MqQC&pg=PA81#v=onepage&q&f=false>) from the original on 9 October 2023. Retrieved 9 November 2020.

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143. Scharfstein 1996, p. 269. "During the First and Second Aliyot, there were many Arab attacks against Jewish settlements ... In 1920, Hashomer was disbanded and Haganah ("The Defense") was established."
144. "League of Nations: The Mandate for Palestine, July 24, 1922" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110804221156/http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1922mandate.html>). *Modern History Sourcebook*. 24 July 1922. Archived from the original (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1922mandate.html>) on 4 August 2011. Retrieved 27 August 2007.
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169. Imseis 2021, pp. 13–14: 'As to territorial boundaries, under the plan the Jewish State was allotted approximately 57 percent of the total area of Palestine even though the Jewish population comprised only 33 percent of the country. In addition, according to British records relied upon by the ad hoc committee, the Jewish population possessed registered ownership of only 5.6 percent of Palestine, and was eclipsed by the Arabs in land ownership in every one of Palestine's 16 sub-districts. Moreover, the quality of the land granted to the proposed Jewish state was highly skewed in its favour. UNSCOP reported that under its majority plan "[t]he Jews will have the more economically developed part of the country embracing practically the whole of the citrus-producing area"—Palestine's staple export crop—even though approximately half of the citrus-bearing land was owned by the Arabs. In addition, according to updated British records submitted to the ad hoc committee's two sub-committees, "of the irrigated, cultivable areas" of the country, 84 per cent would be in the Jewish State and 16 per cent would be in the Arab State".'
170. Morris 2008, p. 75: "The night of 29–30 November passed in the Yishuv's settlements in noisy public rejoicing. Most had sat glued to their radio sets broadcasting live from Flushing Meadow. A collective cry of joy went up when the two-thirds mark was achieved: a state had been sanctioned by the international community."
171. Morris 2008, p. 396: "The immediate trigger of the 1948 War was the November 1947 UN partition resolution. The Zionist movement, except for its fringes, accepted the proposal."
172. Matthews, John: Israel-Palestine land division (<http://booksand-ebooks.com/political-commentary/israel-palestine-land-division>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20231005145922/http://booksand-ebooks.com/political-commentary/israel-palestine-land-division>) 5 October 2023 at the Wayback Machine
173. Imseis 2021, pp. 14–15: 'Although the Zionists had coveted the whole of Palestine, the Jewish Agency leadership pragmatically, if grudgingly, accepted Resolution 181(II). Although they were of the view that the Jewish national home promised in the Mandate was equivalent to a Jewish state, they well understood that such a claim could not be maintained under prevailing international law..Based on its own terms, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that the partition plan privileged European interests over those of Palestine's indigenous people and, as such, was an embodiment of the Eurocentricity of the international system that was allegedly a thing of the past. For this reason, the Arabs took a more principled position in line with prevailing international law, rejecting partition outright . .This rejection has disingenuously been presented in some of the literature as indicative of political intransigence,69 and even hostility towards the Jews as Jews'
174. Morris 2008, p. 66: at 1946 "The League demanded independence for Palestine as a "unitary" state, with an Arab majority and minority rights for the Jews.", p. 67: at 1947 "The League's Political Committee met in Sofar, Lebanon, on 16–19 September, and urged the Palestine Arabs to fight partition, which it called "aggression," "without mercy." The League promised them, in line with Bludan, assistance "in manpower, money and equipment" should the United Nations endorse partition.", p. 72: at December 1947 "The League vowed, in very general language, "to try to stymie the partition plan and prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.""
175. Bregman 2002, pp. 40–41.
176. Gelber, Yoav (2006). *Palestine 1948*. Sussex Academic Press. p. 17. ISBN 978-1-902210-67-4.
177. Morris 2008, p. 77–78.
178. Tal, David (2003). *War in Palestine, 1948: Israeli and Arab Strategy and Diplomacy*. Routledge. p. 471. ISBN 978-0-7146-5275-7.
179. Morris 2008.
180. Clifford, Clark, "Counsel to the President: A Memoir", 1991, p. 20.

181. Henry Laurens (2007). *La Question de Palestine*. Vol. 3. Paris: Fayard. p. 104. "L'entrée en guerre des pays arabes pose un problème juridique complexe. Le franchissement des frontières peut constituer un acte d'agression ou une menace contre la paix, justifiant une condamnation et une intervention des Nations unies, mais si les armées pénètrent seulement dans la partie arabe du plan de partage, elles peuvent être considérées comme appelées par la population et à ce stade leur intervention ne serait pas par elle-même une menace contre la paix. Elle ne commencerait qu'avec l'attaque de la partie juive. Or, en certains points, les armées arabes menacent directement le territoire juif et dans d'autres les Juifs se sont déjà largement installés en territoire arabe." [The entry into (the) war of the Arab countries poses a complex legal problem. The crossing of the borders can constitute an act of aggression or a threat against peace, justifying a condemnation and an intervention by the United Nations, but if the armies penetrate only the Arab part of the partition plan, they can be considered as called on (to do so) by the population and at this stage their **intervention** would not in itself be a threat against the peace. That would only start were the Jewish part attacked. Now, the Arab armies do directly threaten Jewish territory at certain points while in others the Jews have already largely taken up positions in Arab territory.]
182. Karsh, Efraim (2002). *The Arab–Israeli conflict: The Palestine War 1948*. Osprey Publishing. p. 50. ISBN 978-1-84176-372-9.
183. Ben-Sasson 1985, p. 1058.
184. Morris 2008, p. 205.
185. Rabinovich, Itamar; Reinharz, Jehuda (2007). *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings on Society, Politics, and Foreign Relations, Pre-1948 to the Present* ([https://archive.org/details/isbn\\_9780874519624/page/74](https://archive.org/details/isbn_9780874519624/page/74)). Brandeis. p. 74 ([https://archive.org/details/isbn\\_9780874519624/page/74](https://archive.org/details/isbn_9780874519624/page/74)). ISBN 978-0-87451-962-4.
186. David Tal (2004). *War in Palestine, 1948: Israeli and Arab Strategy and Diplomacy* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=Vs2PAgAAQBAJ&pg=PAPR4>). Routledge. p. 469. ISBN 978-1-135-77513-1. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20231219070640/https://books.google.com/books?id=Vs2PAgAAQBAJ&pg=PAPR4#v=onepage&q&f=false>) from the original on 19 December 2023. Retrieved 1 December 2018. "some of the Arab armies invaded Palestine in order to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state, Transjordan..."
187. Morris 2008, p. 187: "A week before the armies marched, Azzam told Kirkbride: "It does not matter how many [Jews] there are. We will sweep them into the sea." ... Ahmed Shukeiry, one of Haj Amin al-Husseini's aides (and, later, the founding chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization), simply described the aim as "the elimination of the Jewish state." ... al-Quwwatli told his people: "Our army has entered ... we shall win and we shall eradicate Zionism""
188. Morris 2008, p. 198: "the Jews felt that the Arabs aimed to reenact the Holocaust and that they faced certain personal and collective slaughter should they lose"
189. "PDF copy of Cablegram from the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to the Secretary-General of the United Nations: S/745: 15 May 1948" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20140107030419/http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S%2F745>). Un.org. 9 September 2002. Archived from the original (<https://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/745>) on 7 January 2014. Retrieved 13 October 2013.
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191. Morris, Benny (2004). *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. Cambridge University Press. p. 602. ISBN 978-0-521-00967-6.
192. "עיצוב יחסי יהודים - ערבים בעשור הראשון" (<https://lib.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=13336>). *lib.cet.ac.il*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20221008065301/https://lib.cet.ac.il/pages/item.asp?item=13336>) from the original on 8 October 2022. Retrieved 2 September 2021.
193. "Two Hundred and Seventh Plenary Meeting" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070912101430/http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/1ce874ab1832a53e852570bb006dfaf6/0b3ab8d2a7c0273d8525694b00726d1b>). The United Nations. 11 May 1949. Archived from the original (<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/1ce874ab1832a53e852570bb006dfaf6/0b3ab8d2a7c0273d8525694b00726d1b>) on 12 September 2007. Retrieved 13 July 2007.

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195. Lustick 1988, pp. 37–39.
196. "Israel (Labor Zionism)" (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/iltoc.html>). *Country Studies*. Archived (<https://archive.today/20120710212220/http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/iltoc.html>) from the original on 10 July 2012. Retrieved 12 February 2010.
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200. Laskier, Michael "Egyptian Jewry under the Nasser Regime, 1956–70" pp. 573–619 from *Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 31, Issue # 3, July 1995 p. 579.
201. "Population, by Religion" ([http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ\\_shnaton\\_e.html?num\\_tab=st02\\_02&CYear=2016](http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html?num_tab=st02_02&CYear=2016)). Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. 2016. Archived ([https://web.archive.org/web/20160918223343/http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ\\_shnaton\\_e.html?num\\_tab=st02\\_02&CYear=2016](https://web.archive.org/web/20160918223343/http://www.cbs.gov.il/reader/shnaton/templ_shnaton_e.html?num_tab=st02_02&CYear=2016)) from the original on 18 September 2016. Retrieved 4 September 2016.
202. Bard, Mitchell (2003). *The Founding of the State of Israel*. Greenhaven Press. p. 15.
203. Hakohen, Devorah (2003). *Immigrants in Turmoil: Mass Immigration to Israel and Its Repercussions in the 1950s and After*. Syracuse University Press. ISBN 978-0-8156-2969-6.; for ma'abarot population, see p. 269.
204. Clive Jones, Emma Murphy, *Israel: Challenges to Identity, Democracy, and the State*, (<https://books.google.com/books?id=A144y7qwRJMC&pg=PA37>) Routledge 2002 p. 37: "Housing units earmarked for the Oriental Jews were often reallocated to European Jewish immigrants; Consigning Oriental Jews to the privations of *ma'aborot* (transit camps) for longer periods."
205. Segev 2007, pp. 155–157.
206. Shindler 2002, pp. 49–50.
207. Kameel B. Nasr (1996). *Arab and Israeli Terrorism: The Causes and Effects of Political Violence, 1936–1993* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=QRXURzwdXS4C&pg=PAPA40>). McFarland. pp. 40–. ISBN 978-0-7864-3105-2. "Fedayeen to attack...almost always against civilians"
208. Gilbert 2005, p. 58.
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  - \* Makdisi, Saree (2010). *Palestine Inside Out: An Everyday Occupation* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=2dBM3Ago2BAC&pg=PAPA299>). W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN 978-0-393-33844-7. "longest-lasting military occupation of the modern age"
  - \* Kretzmer, David (Spring 2012). "The law of belligerent occupation in the Supreme Court of Israel" (<https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/review/2012/irrc-885-kretzmer.pdf>) (PDF). *International Review of the Red Cross*. **94** (885): 207–236. doi:10.1017/S1816383112000446 (<https://doi.org/10.1017%2FS1816383112000446>). S2CID 32105258 (<https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:32105258>). "This is probably the longest occupation in modern international relations, and it holds a central place in all literature on the law of belligerent occupation since the early 1970s"
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  - \* Weill, Sharon (2014). *The Role of National Courts in Applying International Humanitarian Law* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=bDnnAgAAQBAJ&pg=PAPA22>). Oxford University Press. p. 22. ISBN 978-0-19-968542-4. "Although the basic philosophy behind the law of military occupation is that it is a temporary situation modern occupations have well demonstrated that *rien ne dure comme le provisoire* A significant number of post-1945 occupations have lasted more than two decades such as the occupations of Namibia by South Africa and of East Timor by Indonesia as well as the ongoing occupations of Northern Cyprus by Turkey and of Western Sahara by Morocco. The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, which is the longest in all occupation's history has already entered its fifth decade."
  - \* Azarova, Valentina. 2017, *Israel's Unlawfully Prolonged Occupation: Consequences under an Integrated Legal Framework* ([http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/israels\\_unlawfully\\_prolonged\\_occupation\\_7294](http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/israels_unlawfully_prolonged_occupation_7294)), European Council on Foreign Affairs Policy Brief: "June 2017 marks 50 years of Israel's belligerent occupation of Palestinian territory, making it the longest occupation in modern history."
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### Government

- Official website ([https://www.gov.il/en/departments/prime\\_ministers\\_office/govil-landing-page](https://www.gov.il/en/departments/prime_ministers_office/govil-landing-page)) of the Israel Prime Minister's Office
- Official website (<https://www.cbs.gov.il/en/Pages/default.aspx>) of the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics
- The Israel Collection (<https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/israel>) at the National Library of Israel

### General information

- Israel (<https://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/296740>) at the *Encyclopædia Britannica*
- Israel (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14628835>) at BBC News Online
- Israel (<https://www.oecd.org/israel/>) at the OECD
- Israel (<http://ucblibraries.summon.serialssolutions.com/#!/search?ho=t&l=en&q=Israel>) web resources provided by GovPubs at the University of Colorado Boulder Libraries

## Maps

-  [Wikimedia Atlas of Israel](#)
  -  Geographic data related to [Israel \(https://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/1473946\)](https://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/1473946) at [OpenStreetMap](#)
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