

## Gaza Strip



**Background** The Gaza Strip has been under the de facto governing authority of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) since 2007 and has faced years of conflict, poverty, and humanitarian crises. Inhabited since at least the 15th century B.C., the Gaza Strip area has been dominated by many different peoples and empires throughout its history; it was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in the early 16th century. The Gaza Strip fell to British forces during World War I, becoming a part of the British Mandate of Palestine. Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Egypt administered the newly formed Gaza Strip; Israel captured it in the Six-Day War in 1967. Under a series of agreements known as the Oslo Accords signed between 1993 and 1999, Israel transferred to the newly-created Palestinian Authority (PA) security and civilian responsibility for many Palestinian-populated areas of the Gaza Strip, as well as the West Bank. In 2000, a violent intifada or uprising began in response to perceived Israeli provocations, and in 2001, negotiations to determine the permanent status of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip stalled. Subsequent attempts to re-start negotiations have not resulted in progress toward determining final status and resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel in 2005 unilaterally withdrew all of its settlers and soldiers and dismantled its military facilities in the Gaza Strip, but it continues to control the Gaza Strip's land borders, maritime territorial waters, cyberspace, telecommunications, and airspace. In 2006, HAMAS won a majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council election. Fatah, the dominant Palestinian political faction in the West Bank, and HAMAS failed to maintain a unity government, leading to violent clashes between their respective supporters and HAMAS's violent seizure of all PA military and governmental institutions in the Gaza Strip in 2007. Since HAMAS's takeover, Israel and Egypt have enforced tight restrictions on movement and access of goods and individuals into and out of the territory. Fatah and HAMAS have since negotiated a series of agreements aimed at restoring political unity between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank but have struggled to enact them. Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip and the Israel Defense Forces periodically exchange projectiles and air strikes, respectively, threatening broader conflict. In 2021, HAMAS launched rockets into Israel, sparking an 11-day conflict that also involved other Gaza-based militant groups. Egypt, Qatar, and the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process negotiated ceasefires, averting a broader conflict. Since 2018, HAMAS has coordinated demonstrations along the Gaza-Israel security fence. HAMAS has also stood by while other militant groups, such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad, fought brief conflicts with Israel, most recently in August 2022 and May 2023.

On 7 October 2023, HAMAS militants inside the Gaza Strip launched a combined unguided rocket and ground attack into Israel. The attack began with a barrage of more than 3,000 rockets fired toward Israel from Gaza, and included thousands of terrorists infiltrating Israel by land, sea, and air via paragliders. Militants attacked military bases, clashed with security forces mostly in southern Israel, and simultaneously infiltrated civilian communities. During the attack, terrorists carried out massacres and murdered civilians, including torture, acts of abuse and rape, a massacre at the Supernova music festival near Kibbutz Re'im, as well as kidnapping approximately 240 civilians, including men, women, children, and soldiers. These attacks were followed soon after by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) air strikes inside Gaza. The next day, Israeli Prime Minister NETANYAHU formally declared war on Gaza. The IDF on 28 October launched a large-scale ground assault inside Gaza that is ongoing as of April 2024.

<b>Area</b>	total : 360 sq km land: 360 sq km water: 0 sq km
<b>Climate</b>	temperate, mild winters, dry and warm to hot summers
<b>Natural resources</b>	arable land, natural gas
<b>Population</b>	total: 2,141,643 (2024 est.)
<b>Population growth rate</b>	2.02% (2024 est.)
<b>Ethnic groups</b>	Palestinian Arab
<b>Religions</b>	Muslim 98.0 - 99.0% (predominantly Sunni), Christian <1.0%, other, unaffiliated, unspecified <1.0% (2012 est.)
<b>Languages</b>	Arabic, Hebrew (spoken by many Palestinians), English (widely understood)
<b>Real GDP (purchasing power parity)</b>	\$20.339 billion (2024 est.) \$27.694 billion (2023 est.) \$29.016 billion (2022 est.)
<b>Real GDP per capita</b>	\$3,800 (2024 est.) \$5,400 (2023 est.) \$5,800 (2022 est.)
<b>Exports</b>	\$2.885 billion (2024 est.) \$3.413 billion (2023 est.) \$3.533 billion (2022 est.)
<b>Exports - partners</b>	Jordan 51%, Turkey 12%, UAE 8%, Saudi Arabia 5%, UK 4% (2023)
<b>Exports - commodities</b>	scrap iron, tropical fruits, olive oil, building stone, prepared meat (2023)
<b>Imports</b>	\$8.264 billion (2024 est.) \$11.637 billion (2023 est.) \$12.257 billion (2022 est.)
<b>Imports - partners</b>	Egypt 25%, Jordan 17%, China 8%, Germany 7%, UAE 7% (2023)
<b>Imports - commodities</b>	cement, raw sugar, cars, baked goods, perfumes (2023)

Population Pyramid

