

# Palestine - Israel

## FACT SHEET

AFSC ▪ Middle East ▪ Peacebuilding Unit ▪ June 2003



### Occupied Territories

(The Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem)

Area:

**West Bank:**

2,263 sq mi;

**Gaza Strip:** 139 sq mi

Population:

**West Bank** (incl. East Jerusalem); 1, 873, 476; (additionally, there are 380,000 illegal Israeli settlers in the West Bank)

**Gaza Strip:** 1,229,000; (additionally, there are 6,500 illegal Israeli settlers in the Gaza Strip)

Official language:  
Arabic

Ethnic groups:

**West Bank**, including East Jerusalem:  
Palestinian Arab and other 83%; Jewish 17%,

**Gaza Strip:** Palestinian Arab and other 99.4%, Jewish (settlers) 0.6%

Religions:

**West Bank:** Muslim 75%, Jewish 17%, Christian and other 8%,

**Gaza Strip:** Muslim 98.7%, Christian 0.7% Jewish (settlers) 0.6%

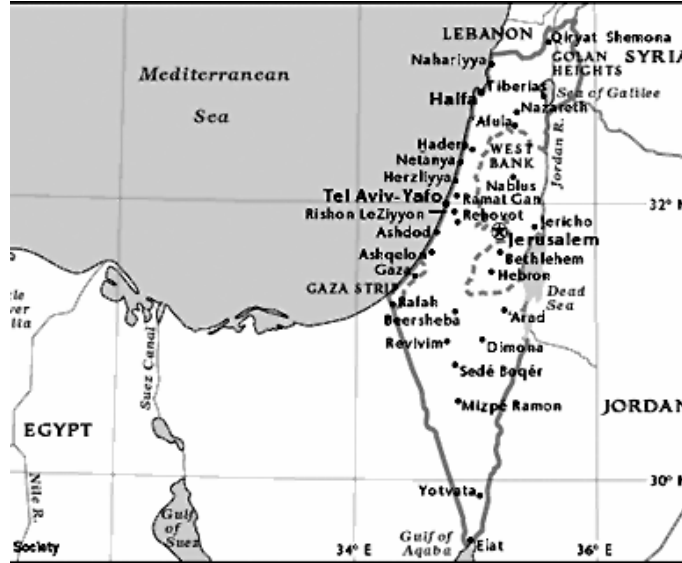
Economy:

**Family businesses:** olive oil, soap, textiles, olive-wood carvings etc.; agriculture: olives, citrus, vegetables, beef, dairy products, fruits.

**GDP per capita:**

West Bank and the Gaza Strip \$300 (2001 est.)

**Economic Aid from US:** \$121 million



### Israel

Area:

20,770 sq km

Population:

6,592,000 (this number includes the settler population living in the West Bank and Gaza)

Ethnic groups:

Jewish 77.2%, Palestinians (including Muslims, Christians and Druze) 22.8%

Religions:

Jewish 80.2%, Muslim 14.6%, Christians 2.1%, other 3.2%

Official Languages:  
Hebrew, Arabic (used by Arab minority)

Economy:

**industry:** high-technology products, diamonds, wood and paper products, food, beverages, tobacco, cement, etc.

**Agriculture:** citrus, vegetables, cotton, beef, poultry and dairy products

GDP per capita:  
\$19,000 (2002 estimate)

Economic Aid from the US:  
\$1.2 billion

(sources: PASSIA, The World Fact Book, Global Exchange, USAID)

### Did you know that:

- There are 145 "official" and 50 "unofficial" illegally built settlements\* in the occupied territories of the West Bank including East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip (Peace Now)
- There are 200,000 settlers in the West Bank, 6,500 settlers in Gaza Strip (Peace Now), 173,000 in East Jerusalem
- There are 4.5 million Palestinian refugees in the World, of which 3.7 million are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Some 1.3 million refugees live in 59 refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza and neighboring countries. (UNRWA)
- UN Partition plan from 1947 allocated to the Arab state 42.88% and 56.74% to Israel of the total territory. Today Israel proper is on 78% of historic Palestine. (Gush Shalom)
- The US provides Israel with \$3.0 billion in aid annually; with \$1.8 billion in military aid combined with the economic aid of \$1.2 billion, aid to Israel (whose population is 0.1% of the world's population) constitutes 30% of the total US foreign aid budget (Washington Report on Middle East Affairs)
- The poverty rate of the Palestinian population is 50.8% (Sept. 2002 est.) with 55% unemployment rate (estimate made after September 2000)
- To this day Israel has not declared its borders; fifty-five years after its establishment, Israel still has no formal written constitution



# Chronology of Events

1917 Balfour declaration\*

1918 Disintegration of the Ottoman Empire; the area becomes known as British-mandate Palestine

1936 Arab Revolt against British Mandate

1947 UN proposes partition plan; establishment of UN Special Committee on Palestine

Establishment of the state of Israel;

Al-Nakba\*—750,000 Palestinians flee or are driven out of their homes, 500

Palestinian villages are destroyed; UN passes resolution 194

1956 Suez war; Israel invades Gaza Strip and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, while Suez Canal is taken by France and Great Britain

1964 Palestine Liberation Organization\* (PLO) founded Six Day war; Israel military occupies the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip; The second wave of refugees – 200, 000 Palestinians flee to surrounding countries; UN Security Council adopts Resolution 242

1973 October/Yom Kippur war; Syria and Egypt launch a coordinated attack on Israeli forces occupying Golan Heights and Sinai desert; UN Security Council adopts Resolution 338.

1974 UN General Assembly (passes Resolution 3326) and Arab League recognize PLO as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

1979 Camp David peace treaty between Egypt and Israel

1980 Israeli Knesset\* adopts the Jerusalem Law which extends Israeli law to East Jerusalem.

1982 Israeli army invades Lebanon under the command of Ariel Sharon. 2000 Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Shatila refugee camps were massacred.

1987 The Palestinian uprising intifada\* begins in Gaza and spreads to the West Bank.

1988 The Palestinian National Council proclaims an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza; 55 countries recognize the Palestinian state

1991 Madrid peace conference

1993 Declaration of Principles (DOP)\*; Israeli Knesset approves DOP;

1994 PLO establishes Palestinian Authority (PA) with Yasser Arafat as its head; Cairo Agreement, Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin sign the Gaza-Jericho Self-Rule Accord;

1995 Oslo II, agreement

signed in Washington

1998 Israel and PNA sign Wye River Memorandum

2000 Camp David II Summit begins; Second intifada begins

2001 Ariel Sharon is elected Prime Minister of Israel

2002 Israeli army invades

Jenin Refugee Camp, home to 14,000 Palestinian civilians, rendering 4,000 civilians homeless

Israel begins construction of its separation wall to enclose the West Bank

2003 Ariel Sharon is re-elected Prime Minister of Israel

US-led Roadmap to Peace is introduced

## Glossary

**Settlements-** illegally\* built up areas in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (\*according to international law).

**Intifada-** literal meaning in Arabic is "shaking off", Palestinian mass uprising against Israeli occupation; December, 1987 first intifada started; October 2000 second or Al-Aqsa intifada began.

**PLO-** Palestinian Liberation Organization was founded in 1964 as an umbrella organization for Palestinian resistance; after signing of the Oslo agreement the Palestinian National Authority was established as the Palestinian governing body in the occupied territories

**Knesset-** Israeli Parliament; consists of 120 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve a four-year term; Yesha Council- extra-parliamentary movement, representative for 144 Israeli illegal settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

**Al-Nakba-** the catastrophe in Arabic the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948 and the beginning of the Palestinian Refugee problem

**Declaration of principles (DOP)-** Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements was signed by the representatives of the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993; this agreement established limited Palestinian self-rule.

**Balfour Declaration-** The British Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, wrote to Jewish leader Lord Rothschild, to assure him that his government supported the ideal of providing a homeland for the Jews. The British hoped thereby to win more Jewish support for the Allies in the First World War. The "Balfour Declaration" became the basis for international support for the founding of the modern state of Israel.

## Resources

Peace Now: [www.peacenow.org.il/English.asp](http://www.peacenow.org.il/English.asp)

Gush Shalom: [www.gush-shalom.org/english/](http://www.gush-shalom.org/english/)

UNRWA: [www.un.org/unrwa/](http://www.un.org/unrwa/)

Human Rights Watch: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

PASSIA: [www.passia.org/](http://www.passia.org/)

