

Palestine – Gaza



April 2025

NB: Due to the ongoing war, the below information may change rapidly and is highly time-sensitive.

Country – capital	Gaza Strip, part of Palestinian Territories– Gaza city ¹ . Local name for Gaza: Qita' Ghazzah. ²
Population	Total population 2.1 million (est. 2024). Ethnic groups: Arabs. ³
Geography	Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Israel. ⁴
Languages	Arabic, Hebrew (spoken by many Palestinians), English (widely understood). ⁵
Writing system	Arabic. ⁶
Education and literacy	Literacy rate total population: 97.5% (male: 98.8%, female: 96.2% - est. 2020). ⁷ 4 years of primary school, 6 years middle education, 2 years secondary education at academic or vocational schools. After exam, tertiary education is possible. ⁸ Since the October 2023 war, most school buildings in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. Gaza's 660,000 school-age children have not had any access to formal education since that date. ⁹
Religions	Muslim 98-99% (Sunni), Christian <1.0%, other, unspecified. <1.0% (2012 est.) ¹⁰
Conflict history and overview	Since 1917, Palestine was home to a diverse population of Arabs, Jews, and Christians, under British mandate. ¹¹ After WWII, the UN partitioned Palestine into two independent States, Arab and Jewish, with Jerusalem under UN guard. In 1948, Israel proclaimed its independence and in the ensuing war with 5 Arab neighbours expanded its territory to 77% of mandate Palestine, including most of Jerusalem. Over half of the Palestinian Arab population fled or were expelled (the “ <i>Nakba</i> ”, catastrophe). ¹² After the Six-Day War, 1967, Israel annexed Gaza Strip, West Bank, Golan Heights, and Sinai. The first <i>intifada</i> (mass uprising) lasted from 1987-1993, killing 160 Israelis and, due to Israel's reaction, 1,087 Palestinians. ¹³ Under the Oslo Accords (1993-1999), the Palestinian Authority (PA) governed Gaza Strip and West Bank. ¹⁴ From 2000-2005, the second <i>intifada</i> (incl. suicide bombs and rocket attacks) reacted to perceived Israeli provocations; killing approx. 3,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israeli, halting a final agreement on a two-state solution. ¹⁵ Hamas won PA elections in 2006 and took Gaza by force. In 2007, Israel blocked the Gaza Strip and sealed it off in 2008. The UN has often condemned Israel for unlawful occupation and colonisation of Gaza and West Bank. ¹⁶ Hamas and Israel have fought several conflicts (2008-09, 2012, 2014), killing people on both sides but the vast majority Gaza civilians. ¹⁷ On 7 October 2023, Hamas militants inside the Gaza Strip launched a combined rocket and ground attack into Israel; carried out massacres, killing about 1200 civilians, tortured, abused and raped, and kidnapping 251 civilians and soldiers. ¹⁸ Israeli PM Netanyahu declared war on Hamas and launched heavy airstrikes, followed by large-scale ground assaults in Gaza. ¹⁹ Between 19 January and 18 March 2025, a cease-fire led to 8 rounds of exchange of hostages (alive and dead) against hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, ²⁰ until Israel restarted heavy bombings. ²¹ The Israeli massive crackdown on Hamas and its devastating impact on the population led to large-scale international protests, accusations of genocide, and warrants by International Court of Justice for Israeli and Hamas leaders. ²²
Humanitarian situation	Life expectancy at birth: 75 yrs (2024 est.). Population below poverty line: 29.2% (2016 est.). ²³ The Gaza Strip has faced many years of conflict, poverty, and humanitarian crises, esp. since Israel's (unlawful) closure of the area. ²⁴ As of 23 March 2025, > 50,000 (mostly) civilians were killed (and approx. 11,000 buried under rubble), > 113,000 wounded. ²⁵ The health and food system is destroyed, 95% of buildings (incl. schools, hospitals) destroyed/damaged, 90% of the population displaced. Widespread hunger and food shortages. ²⁶
Human rights situation	Gaza's blockade has increasingly restricted supplies such as food, medicines, water, fuel, while restrictions of movement, arbitrary arrests, forced displacement took place. ²⁷ On the other hand, Hamas authorities repressed protests, tortured prisoners and carried out executions. Palestinian armed groups summarily killed several suspected “collaborators”. ²⁸
Situation of women FGM – early marriages	Maternal mortality rate: 20 deaths per 100,000 live births (2020). ²⁹ Child marriages: 1% of girls are married by the age of 15 and 13% by 18. ³⁰ Increasing cases of gender-related violence since the war. ³¹ FGM prevalence: unknown. ³²
Situation of LGBTI	Consensual same-sex sexual acts are illegal. No legal protection against discrimination. ³³
IDPs / asylum/ migration in Malta	IDPs within Gaza: 1.9 million (90%) as of October 2023. ³⁴ Malta sea arrivals 2024: 4. ³⁵ Asylum seekers 2023: 15, 2024: 13; UNHCR refugees 2023: 72, 2024: 47. ³⁶

Country Factsheet Palestine - Gaza

- ¹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/> and <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/west-bank/>
- ² <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ³ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ⁵ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ⁶ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ⁷ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ⁸ <https://www.scholaro.com/db/countries/palestine>
- ⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/15/the-devastating-impact-of-15-months-of-war-on-gaza>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ¹¹ <https://www.pcrf.net/information-you-should-know/what-was-palestine-before-1948.html> ; <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/>
- ¹² <https://www.pcrf.net/information-you-should-know/what-was-palestine-before-1948.html> ; <https://www.un.org/unispal/timeline/> ; <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/>
- ¹³ <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/> ; https://www.btselem.org/statistics/first_intifada_tables
- ¹⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/> ; https://archive.ph/20130414103627/http://old.btselem.org/statistics/english/Casualties.asp?sD=29&sM=09&sY=2000&eD=15&eM=1&eY=2005&filterby=event&oferet_stat=before
- ¹⁶ <https://www.un.org/unispal/timeline/> ; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/14/gaza-israels-open-air-prison-15>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-44124396>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/15/the-devastating-impact-of-15-months-of-war-on-gaza>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ²⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2025/01/17/world/israel-hamas-gaza-ceasefire>
- ²¹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/stopping-israels-war-gaza>
- ²² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/15/the-devastating-impact-of-15-months-of-war-on-gaza>
- ²³ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ²⁴ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/> ; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/14/gaza-israels-open-air-prison-15>
- ²⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/3/23/israeli-offensive-in-gaza-has-killed-50000-palestinians-since-october-2023> ; <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/stopping-israels-war-gaza>
- ²⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/15/the-devastating-impact-of-15-months-of-war-on-gaza> ; <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/israelpalestine/stopping-israels-war-gaza>
- ²⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/israel-and-the-occupied-palestinian-territory/>
- ²⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/palestine-state-of/report-palestine-state-of/>
- ²⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/gaza-strip/>
- ³⁰ <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/palestine/>
- ³¹ <https://palestine.unfpa.org/en/publications/palestine-situation-report-15-february-2025> ; <https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2025-03/Palestine%20Situation%20Report%20%23%2015%20February%202025%20%28Final%29.pdf>
- ³² <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/arabstates/Palestine.Summary.19.Eng.pdf>
- ³³ <https://database.ilga.org/palestine-lgbti>
- ³⁴ <https://www.unocha.org/occupied-palestinian-territory> ; <https://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2025-03/Palestine%20Situation%20Report%20%23%2015%20February%202025%20%28Final%29.pdf>
- ³⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/mt/figures-at-a-glance>
- ³⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/mt/figures-at-a-glance>
- ³⁴ https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download?data_finder%5BdataGroup%5D=displacement&data_finder%5Bdataset%5D=population&data_finder%5BdisplayType%5D=totals&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B0%5D=REF&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B1%5D=ASY&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B2%5D=IDP&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B3%5D=OIP&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B4%5D=STA&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B5%5D=HST&data_finder%5BpopulationType%5D%5B6%5D=OOC&data_finder%5Byear_filterType%5D=range&data_finder%5Byear_rangeFrom%5D=2018&data_finder%5Byear_rangeTo%5D=2024&data_finder%5Bcoo_displayType%5D=all&data_finder%5Bcoa_displayType%5D=custom&data_finder%5Bcoa_country%5D%5B0%5D=132&data_finder%5Byear_%5D=&data_finder%5Bcoa_%5D=&data_finder%5Bcoa_%5D=&data_finder%5Badvanced_%5D=&data_finder%5Bsubmit%5D=&data_finder=on&sort%5Bcoo_id%5D=asc&page=6

© BDE 2025

This factsheet was compiled by Adri van den Berg for BDE. Adri worked for many years as a Country of Origin Information (COI) researcher, her final post before retiring being with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO, now EUAA) in Malta.