

The World Factbook



Middle East :: West Bank

Introduction :: West Bank

Background:

From the early 16th century through 1917, the area now known as the West Bank fell under Ottoman rule. Following World War I, the Allied powers (France, UK, Russia) allocated the area to the British Mandate of Palestine. After World War II, the UN passed a resolution to establish two states within the Mandate, and designated a territory including what is now known as the West Bank as part of the proposed Arab state. Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War the area was captured by Transjordan (later renamed Jordan). Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950. In June 1967, Israel captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem during the 1967 Six-Day War. With the exception of East Jerusalem and the former Israeli-Jordanian border zone, the West Bank has remained under Israeli military control. Under a series of agreements signed between

1994 and 1999, Israel transferred to the Palestinian Authority (PA) security and civilian responsibility for many Palestinian-populated areas of the West Bank as well as the Gaza Strip. Negotiations to determine the permanent status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip stalled after the outbreak of an intifada in mid- 2000. In early 2003, the "Quartet" of the US, EU, UN, and Russia, presented a roadmap to a final peace settlement by 2005, calling for two states - Israel and a democratic Palestine. Following Palestinian leader Yasir ARAFAT's death in late 2004 and the subsequent election of Mahmud ABBAS (head of the Fatah political party) as the PA president, Israel and the PA agreed to move the peace process forward. Israel in late 2005 unilaterally withdrew all of its settlers and soldiers and dismantled its military facilities in the Gaza Strip and redeployed its military from several West Bank settlements but continues to control maritime, airspace, and other access. In early 2006, the Islamic Resistance Movement, HAMAS, won the Palestinian Legislative Council election and took control of the PA government. Attempts to form a unity government failed, and violent clashes between Fatah and HAMAS supporters ensued, culminating in HAMAS's violent seizure of all military and governmental institutions in the Gaza Strip. Fatah and HAMAS in early 2011 agreed to reunify the Gaza Strip and West Bank, but the factions have struggled to implement details on governance and security. The status quo remains with HAMAS in control of the Gaza Strip and the PA governing the West Bank. Since the collapse of direct talks between the Israelis and Palestinians in late 2010, President ABBAS has reaffirmed that he will not resume negotiations until Israel halts all settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Geography :: West Bank

Location:

Middle East, west of Jordan, east of Israel

Geographic coordinates:

32 00 N, 35 15 E

Map references:

Middle East

Area:

total: 5,860 sq km

country comparison to the world: 172

land: 5,640 sq km

water: 220 sq km

note: includes West Bank, Latrun Salient, and the northwest quarter of the Dead Sea, but excludes Mt. Scopus; East Jerusalem and Jerusalem No Man's Land are also included only as a means of depicting the entire area occupied by Israel in 1967

Area - comparative:

slightly smaller than Delaware

Land boundaries:

total: 404 km

border countries: Israel 307 km, Jordan 97 km

Coastline:

0 km (landlocked)

Maritime claims:

none (landlocked)

Climate:

temperate; temperature and precipitation vary with altitude, warm to hot summers, cool to mild winters

Terrain:

mostly rugged dissected upland, some vegetation in west, but barren in east

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Dead Sea -408 m

highest point: Tall Asur 1,022 m

Natural resources:

arable land

Land use:

arable land: 7.39%

permanent crops: 10.96%

other: 81.64% (2011)

Irrigated land:

240 sq km; note - includes Gaza Strip (2003)

Natural hazards:

droughts

Environment - current issues:

adequacy of freshwater supply; sewage treatment

Geography - note:

landlocked; highlands are main recharge area for Israel's coastal aquifers; there are about 355 Israeli civilian sites including about 145 small outpost communities in the West Bank and 32 sites in East Jerusalem (2010 est.)

Nationality:

noun: NA

adjective: NA

Ethnic groups:

Palestinian Arab and other 83%, Jewish 17%

Languages:

Arabic, Hebrew (spoken by Israeli settlers and many Palestinians), English (widely understood)

Religions:

Muslim 75% (predominantly Sunni), Jewish 17%, Christian and other 8%

Population:

2,676,740 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 142

note: approximately 325,500 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank (2011); approximately 186,929 Israeli settlers live in East Jerusalem (2010)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 34.4% (male 472,123/female 447,803)

15-24 years: 21.8% (male 298,875/female 284,545)

25-54 years: 35.9% (male 494,253/female 466,660)

55-64 years: 4.2% (male 55,785/female 55,872)

65 years and over: 3.8% (male 42,119/female 58,705) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 75.6 %

youth dependency ratio: 70.4 %

elderly dependency ratio: 5.2 %

potential support ratio: 19.2

note: data represents the Palestinian Territories (2013)

Median age:

total: 22 years

male: 21.8 years

female: 22.1 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

2.03% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 51

Birth rate:

23.81 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 66

Death rate:

3.53 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 214

Net migration rate:

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 107

Urbanization:

urban population: 74.3% of total population (2011)

rate of urbanization: 3.1% annual rate of change (2005-10 est.)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.06 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.05 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.05 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1.06 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.99 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.71 male(s)/female

total population: 1.04 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

64 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 96

Infant mortality rate:

total: 13.98 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 120

male: 15.71 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 12.15 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 75.46 years

country comparison to the world: 92

male: 73.38 years

female: 77.67 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

2.91 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 64

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

NA

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

NA

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

NA

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

2.2% (2007)

country comparison to the world: 115

Education expenditures:

NA

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 95.3%

male: 97.9%

female: 92.6%

notes: estimates are for the Palestinian Territories (2011 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 14 years

male: 13 years

female: 14 years (2006)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 38.8%

country comparison to the world: 12

male: 36.8%

female: 49.6%

note: includes Gaza (2010)

Government :: West Bank

Country name:

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: West Bank

Economy :: West Bank

Economy - overview:

The West Bank - the larger of the two areas comprising the Palestinian territories - has sustained a moderate rate of economic growth since 2008. Inflows of donor aid and government spending have driven most of the gains, however. Private sector development has been weak. After a multiyear downturn following the start of the second intifada in 2000, overall standard-of-living measures have recovered and now exceed levels seen in the late 1990s. Despite the Palestinian Authority's (PA) successful implementation of economic and security reforms and the easing of some movement and access restrictions by the Israeli Government, Israeli closure policies continue to disrupt labor and trade flows, industrial capacity, and basic commerce, eroding the productive capacity of the West Bank economy. The biggest impediments to economic improvements in the West Bank remain Palestinians' inability to access land and resources in Israeli-controlled areas, import and export restrictions, and a high-cost capital structure. The PA for the foreseeable future will continue to rely heavily on donor aid for its budgetary needs, and West Bank economic activity will depend largely on the PA's ability to attract such aid.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$8.022 billion (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 156

\$7.589 billion (2010 est.)

\$7.106 billion (2009 est.)

note: includes Gaza Strip

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$6.641 billion

note: includes Gaza Strip (2008 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

5.7% (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 49

6.8% (2010 est.)

7% (2009 est.)

note: includes Gaza Strip

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$2,900 (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 177

note: includes Gaza Strip

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 92.5%
government consumption: 24.5%
investment in fixed capital: 22.5%
investment in inventories: 0%
exports of goods and services: 19.8%
imports of goods and services: -59.3%
(2012 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 5.3%
industry: 12.4%
services: 82.2%
note: includes Gaza Strip (2012 est.)

Agriculture - products:

olives, citrus fruit, vegetables; beef, dairy products

Industries:

small-scale manufacturing, quarrying, textiles, soap, olive-wood carvings, and mother-of-pearl souvenirs

Industrial production growth rate:

NA%

Labor force:

745,600 (2010)
country comparison to the world: 150

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 16.1%
industry: 28.4%
services: 55.5%
note: includes Gaza Strip (2010 est.)

Unemployment rate:

22.6% (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 167
23.5% (2011 est.)

Population below poverty line:

18.3% (2010 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 3.2%

highest 10%: 28.2% (2009 est.)

Budget:

revenues: \$2.1 billion

expenditures: \$3.2 billion

note: includes Palestinian Authority expenditures in the Gaza Strip (2011 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

31.6% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 83

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-16.6% of GDP (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 214

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

2.8% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 80

2.9% (2011 est.)

note: includes Gaza Strip

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

6.8% (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 131

6.79% (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$160.1 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 178

\$114.4 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$6.674 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 118

\$6.674 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$1.042 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 156

\$851.1 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$2.532 billion (31 December 2011)

country comparison to the world: 95

\$2.45 billion (31 December 2010)

\$2.375 billion (31 December 2009)

Current account balance:

-\$2.1 billion (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 138

-\$690.7 million (2010 est.)

Exports:

\$666.1 million (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 168

\$518 million (2009)

note: includes Gaza Strip

Exports - commodities:

stone, olives, fruit, vegetables, limestone

Imports:

\$4.319 billion (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 136

\$3.601 billion (2009)

note: data include the Gaza Strip

Imports - commodities:

food, consumer goods, construction materials, petroleum, chemicals

Debt - external:

\$1.04 billion (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 161

\$1.3 billion (2007 est.)

note: data include the Gaza Strip

Exchange rates:

new Israeli shekels (ILS) per US dollar -

3.8559 (2012 est.)

3.578 (2011 est.)

3.73 (2010)

3.932 (2009)

3.588 (2008)

Energy :: West Bank

Electricity - production:

470 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 162

Electricity - consumption:

4.42 billion kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 119

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2011)

country comparison to the world: 146

Electricity - imports:

550 million kWh (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 74

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

140,000 kW

country comparison to the world: 159

note: includes Gaza Strip (2009 est.)

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

100% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 44

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 202

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 206

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 203

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 204

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 204

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 140

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 203

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 143

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

29,310 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 116

Refined petroleum products - exports:

1.92 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

Refined petroleum products - imports:

15,420 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 118

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 207

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 207

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 205

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 147

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 204

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

3.382 million Mt (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 135

Communications :: West Bank

Telephones - main lines in use:

337,000 (includes Gaza Strip) (2010)

country comparison to the world: 113

Telephones - mobile cellular:

2.405 million (includes Gaza Strip) (2010)

country comparison to the world: 131

Telephone system:

general assessment: continuing political and economic instability has impeded significant liberalization of the telecommunications industry

domestic: Israeli company BEZEK and the Palestinian company PALTEL are responsible for fixed line services; PALTEL plans to establish a fiber-optic connection to Jordan to route domestic mobile calls; the Palestinian JAWWAL company and WATANIYA PALESTINE provide cellular services

international: country code - 970; 1 international switch in Ramallah (2009)

Broadcast media:

the Palestinian Authority operates 1 TV and 1 radio station; about 30 independent TV and 25 radio stations; both Jordanian TV and satellite TV are accessible (2008)

Internet country code:

.ps; note - same as Gaza Strip

Internet users:

1.379 million (includes Gaza Strip) (2009)

country comparison to the world: 88

Transportation :: West Bank

Airports:

2 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 208

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 2

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1

under 914 m: 1 (2013)

Heliports:

1 (2013)

Roadways:

total: 5,147 km

country comparison to the world: 153

paved: 5,147 km

note: includes Gaza Strip (2006)

Military :: West Bank

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 579,248

females age 16-49: 547,782 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 30,925

female: 29,440 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:

NA

Transnational Issues :: West Bank

Disputes - international:

the current status of the West Bank is subject to the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement - permanent status to be determined through further negotiation; Israel continues construction of a "seam line" separation barrier along parts of the Green Line and within the West Bank; Israel withdrew from four settlements in the northern West Bank in August 2005; since 1948, about 350 peacekeepers from the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), headquartered in Jerusalem, monitor ceasefires, supervise armistice agreements, prevent isolated incidents from escalating, and assist other UN personnel in the region

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

refugees (country of origin): 727,471 (Palestinian refugees (UNRWA)) (2012)

IDPs: 160,000 (persons displaced within both the Gaza strip and the West Bank since 1967; as estimated by unofficial sources) (2011)