



## 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 PLO Executive Committee Chairman and 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. In late 2010, direct peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians collapsed. In November 2012, the UN General Assembly upgraded the Palestinian status at the UN to that of an observer "state." The Israeli government and ABBAS returned to formal peace negotiations in July 2013.

## **Geography :: West Bank**

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### **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.)

**People and Society :: West Bank**

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**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 (predominantly Sunni), Jewish, Christian and other

**Population:**

2,731,052 (July 2014 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 142

**note:** approximately 341,400 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank (2012); approximately 196,400 Israeli settlers live in East Jerusalem (2011)

**Age structure:**

**0-14 years:** 33.7% (male 472,480/female 448,078)

**15-24 years:** 21.7% (male 303,578/female 289,119)

**25-54 years:** 36.4% (male 511,443/female 483,276)

**55-64 years:** 3.8% (male 59,762/female 59,372)

**65 years and over:** 3.8% (male 43,629/female 60,315) (2014 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:** 22.4 years

**male:** 22.2 years

**female:** 22.5 years (2014 est.)

#### **Population growth rate:**

1.99% (2014 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 52

#### **Birth rate:**

23.41 births/1,000 population (2014 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 67

#### **Death rate:**

3.51 deaths/1,000 population (2014 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 216

#### **Net migration rate:**

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2014 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 84

#### **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:** 1.04 male(s)/female

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

**total population:** 1.04 male(s)/female (2014 est.)

#### **Maternal mortality rate:**

64 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

**country comparison to the world:** 95

#### **Infant mortality rate:**

**total:** 13.49 deaths/1,000 live births  
**country comparison to the world:** 117  
**male:** 15.13 deaths/1,000 live births  
**female:** 11.75 deaths/1,000 live births (2014 est.)

#### **Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population:** 75.69 years  
**country comparison to the world:** 91  
**male:** 73.58 years  
**female:** 77.92 years (2014 est.)

#### **Total fertility rate:**

2.83 children born/woman (2014 est.)  
**country comparison to the world:** 66

#### **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:** 118

#### **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.)

#### **Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:**

**total:** 38.8%  
**country comparison to the world:** 15  
**male:** 34.5%  
**female:** 62.2%  
*note:* includes Gaza (2012)

**Government:: West Bank**

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**Country name:**

**conventional long form:** none  
**conventional short form:** West Bank

## **Economy :: West Bank**

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### **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:** 157

\$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:** 42

6.8% (2010 est.)

7% (2009 est.)

*note:* includes Gaza Strip

### **GDP - per capita (PPP):**

\$2,900 (2008 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 179

*note:* includes Gaza Strip

### **GDP - composition, by end use:**

**household consumption:** 99.5%

**government consumption:** 29.5%

**investment in fixed capital:** 18%

**investment in inventories:** 0%

**exports of goods and services:** 14.9%

**imports of goods and services:** -62%

(2013 est.)

### **GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

**agriculture:** 4.2%

**industry:** 17.9%

**services:** 77.9%

*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:**

3%

**country comparison to the world:** 95

### **Labor force:**

1.025 million (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 142

### **Labor force - by occupation:**

**agriculture:** 16.1%

**industry:** 28.4%

**services:** 55.5%

*note:* includes Gaza Strip (2010 est.)

### **Unemployment rate:**



22.5% (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 169

23% (2012 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:** 84

#### **Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):**

-16.6% of GDP (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 214

#### **Fiscal year:**

calendar year

#### **Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

1.7% (2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 47

2.8% (2012 est.)

*note:* includes Gaza Strip

#### **Commercial bank prime lending rate:**

6.8% (31 December 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 126

6.97% (31 December 2012 est.)

#### **Stock of narrow money:**

\$232.2 million (31 December 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 174

\$180.2 million (31 December 2012 est.)

**Stock of broad money:**

\$9.301 billion (31 December 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 106

\$8.143 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**Stock of domestic credit:**

\$1.248 billion (31 December 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 149

\$1.042 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**Market value of publicly traded shares:**

\$2.634 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 96

\$2.532 billion (31 December 2011)

\$2.45 billion (31 December 2010 est.)

**Current account balance:**

-\$2.1 billion (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 145

-\$690.7 million (2010 est.)

**Exports:**

\$666.1 million (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 168

\$846.1 million (2011 est.)

*note:* includes Gaza Strip

**Exports - commodities:**

stone, olives, fruit, vegetables, limestone

**Imports:**

\$5.474 billion (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 125

\$4.319 billion (2010 est.)

*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: 162**

\$1.3 billion (2007 est.)

*note:* data include the Gaza Strip

### **Exchange rates:**

new Israeli shekels (ILS) per US dollar -

3.621 (2013 est.)

3.856 (2012 est.)

3.73 (2010)

3.932 (2009)

3.588 (2008)

## **Energy :: West Bank**

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### **Electricity - production:**

445 million kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 165**

### **Electricity - consumption:**

4.573 billion kWh (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 118**

### **Electricity - exports:**

0 kWh (2012)

**country comparison to the world: 212**

### **Electricity - imports:**

550 million kWh (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 77**

### **Electricity - installed generating capacity:**

140,000 kW

**country comparison to the world: 165**

*note:* includes Gaza Strip (2010 est.)

### **Electricity - from fossil fuels:**

100% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 41**

### **Electricity - from nuclear fuels:**

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 204**

**Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:**

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 208**

**Electricity - from other renewable sources:**

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 140**

**Crude oil - production:**

0 bbl/day (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 144**

**Crude oil - exports:**

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 205**

**Crude oil - imports:**

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 141**

**Crude oil - proved reserves:**

0 bbl (1 January 2009 es)

**country comparison to the world: 206**

**Refined petroleum products - production:**

0 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 208**

**Refined petroleum products - consumption:**

29,310 bbl/day (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 115**

**Refined petroleum products - exports:**

514.8 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 113**

**Refined petroleum products - imports:**

16,330 bbl/day (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 114**

**Natural gas - production:**

0 cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 208

**Natural gas - consumption:**

0 cu m (2010 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 208

**Natural gas - exports:**

0 cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 207

**Natural gas - imports:**

0 cu m (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 78

**Natural gas - proved reserves:**

0 cu m (1 January 2013 es)

**country comparison to the world:** 206

**Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:**

2.502 million Mt (2011 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 143

**Communications :: West Bank**

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**Telephones - main lines in use:**

406,000 (includes Gaza Strip) (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 104

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

3.041 million (includes Gaza Strip) (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 132

**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**

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#### **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:** 4,686 km

**country comparison to the world:** 153

**paved:** 4,686 km

*note:* includes Gaza Strip (2010)

### **Military :: West Bank**

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#### **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.)

## **Transnational Issues :: West Bank**

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### **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):** 748,899 (Palestinian refugees (UNRWA)) (2013)

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