



## Country Profile: Gaza Strip

The State of Israel is a parliamentary democracy with a modern economy. Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem as a result of the 1967 War. Pursuant to negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established in the Gaza Strip and West Bank in 1994. Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, took control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 and exercises control there. The division of responsibilities and jurisdiction in the West Bank between Israel and the PA is complex and subject to change. Palestinian Authority security forces are responsible for keeping order in certain areas, and the PA exercises a range of civil functions in those areas of the West Bank. Definitive information on entry, customs requirements, arrests, and other matters in the West Bank and Gaza is subject to change without prior notice or may not be available. Tourist facilities are widely available. Travelers may visit the web site of the [Israeli Ministry of Tourism](#) for tourist information. Read the Department of State [Background Notes](#) on Israel for additional information.

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### COUNTRY OVERVIEW



<b>Country Name:</b>	Gaza Strip
<b>Continent:</b>	Middle East
<b>Capital City:</b>	
<b>Boundary Countries:</b>	Egypt, Israel
<b>Recommended Hospitals in Capital:</b>	
<b>Main Cities:</b>	
<b>Country Size:</b>	360 sq km
<b>Population:</b>	1,551,859

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### COUNTRY GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Language:</b>	Arabic, Hebrew (spoken by many Palestinians), English (widely understood)
<b>Currency:</b>	
<b>Predominant Religions:</b>	Muslim (predominantly Sunni) 99.3%, Christian 0.7%
<b>National Holidays:</b>	
<b>Economic Status:</b>	High population density, limited land access, and strict internal and external security controls have kept economic conditions in the Gaza Strip - the smaller of the two areas under the Palestinian Authority (PA) - even more degraded than in the West Bank. The beginning of the second intifada in September 2000 sparked an economic downturn, largely the result of Israeli closure policies; these policies, which were imposed to address security concerns in Israel, disrupted labor and trade access to and from the Gaza Strip. In 2001, and even more severely in 2003, Israeli military measures in PA areas resulted in the destruction of capital, the disruption of administrative structures, and widespread business closures. The Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in September 2005 offered some medium-term opportunities for economic growth, but Israeli-imposed crossings closures, which became more restrictive after HAMAS violently took over the territory in June 2007, have resulted in widespread private sector layoffs and shortages of most goods. The status of the crossings, which are closed to all but the most basic goods, has not changed following Israel's military offensive into the Gaza Strip in early 2009.
<b>Security:</b>	Palestinian Authority security forces have operated only in the West Bank, not in the Gaza Strip, since Hamas seized power in June 2007; law and order and other security functions are performed by Hamas security organizations

<b>US Presence:</b>	<p>Americans living or traveling in Israel, the West Bank or Gaza are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv or the Consulate General in Jerusalem through the <a href="#">State Department's travel registration web site</a>, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Israel, the West Bank or Gaza. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate General to contact them in case of emergency.</p> <p><a href="#">The U.S. Embassy</a> is located at 71 Hayarkon Street in Tel Aviv. The U.S. mailing address is Unit 7228, Box 0001, APO AE 09830. The telephone number is (972) (3) 519-7575. The emergency number after 4:30 p.m. and before 8:00 a.m. local time is (972) (3) 519-7551. The fax number is (972) (3) 516-4390. The Embassy can be <a href="#">contacted by email</a>.</p> <p>The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy should be contacted for information and assistance in the following areas: Israel, the Golan Heights, and ports of entry at Ben Gurion Airport, Haifa Port, the northern (Jordan River) and southern (Arava) border crossings connecting Israel and Jordan, and the border crossings between Israel and Egypt.</p> <p>The Consular Section of <a href="#">the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem</a> is located at 27 Nablus Road in Jerusalem. The U.S. mailing address is Unit 7228, Box 0039, APO AE 09830. The telephone number is (972) (2) 622-7200. The Consular Section's public telephone number for information and assistance is (972) (2) 628-7137, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Messages may be left at that number at other times. For after-hours emergencies directly involving an American citizen (after 4:30 p.m. and before 8:00 a.m. local time,) calls should be directed to (972) (2) 622-7250. The Consular Section's fax number is (972) (2) 627-2233. You may <a href="#">contact the Consulate by e-mail</a>.</p> <p>The Consular Section of the U.S. Consulate General should be contacted for information and assistance in the following areas: Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Allenby crossing connecting the West Bank and Jordan, and the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt.</p> <p>A U.S. Consular Agent who reports to the Embassy in Tel Aviv maintains an office in Haifa at 26 Ben Gurion Boulevard, telephone (972) (4) 853-1470. The Consular Agent can provide both routine and emergency services in the northern part of Israel.</p>
<b>Major Airports:</b>	Airports- 1, Airports with paved runway- 1

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