

## Defense Forces

**Branches:** Army, Naval Service, Army Air Corps.

**Military manpower:** males 15-49, 787,000; 627,000 fit for military service; 39,000 reach military age (17) annually

**Military budget:** \$381 million, 2.5% of central government budget (FY87)

## Israel (also see separate Gaza Strip and West Bank entries)



**Note:** the Arab territories occupied by Israel since the 1967 war are not included in the data below, as stated in the 1978 Camp David Accords and reaffirmed by the President's 1 September 1982 peace initiative, the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, their relationship with their neighbors, and a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan are to be negotiated among the concerned parties; the Camp David Accords further specify that these negotiations will resolve the location of the respective boundaries; pending the completion of this process, it is US policy that the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have yet to be determined (see West Bank and Gaza Strip entries); on 25 April 1982 Israel relinquished control of the Sinai to Egypt; statistics for the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights are included in the Syria entry

## Geography

**Total area:** 20,770 km<sup>2</sup>; land area: 20,330 km<sup>2</sup>

**Comparative area:** slightly larger than New Jersey

**Land boundaries:** 1,006 km total; Egypt 255 km, Jordan 238 km, Lebanon 79 km, Syria 76 km, West Bank 307, Gaza Strip 51 km

**Coastline:** 273 km

**Maritime claims:**  
*Continental shelf:* to depth of exploitation

*Territorial sea:* 6 nm

**Disputes:** Tabaa area and precise location of some individual boundary markers with Egypt; separated from Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and West Bank by the 1949 Armistice Line; West Bank and Gaza Strip are Israeli occupied with status to be determined; Golan Heights is Israeli occupied; Israeli troops in southern Lebanon since June 1982

**Climate:** temperate; hot and dry in desert areas

**Terrain:** Negev desert in the south; low coastal plain; central mountains; Jordan Rift Valley

**Natural resources:** copper, phosphates, bromide, potash, clay, sand, sulfur, asphalt, manganese, small amounts of natural gas and crude oil

**Land use:** 17% arable land; 5% permanent crops; 40% meadows and pastures; 6% forest and woodland; 32% other; includes 11% irrigated

**Environment:** sandstorms may occur during spring and summer; limited arable land and natural water resources pose serious constraints; deforestation

## People

**Population:** 4,297,379 (July 1988), average annual growth rate 1.71%

**Nationality:** noun—Israeli(s); adjective—Israeli

**Ethnic divisions:** 83% Jewish, 17% non-Jewish (mostly Arab)

**Religion:** 83% Judaism, 13.1% Islam (mostly Sunni Muslim), 2.3% Christian, 1.6% Druze

**Language:** Hebrew (official); Arabic used officially for Arab minority; English most commonly used foreign language

**Infant mortality rate:** 14/1,000 (1983)

**Life expectancy:** 72

**Literacy:** 88% Jews, 70% Arabs

**Labor force:** 1,400,000 (1984 est.), 29.5% public services; 22.8% industry, mining, and manufacturing; 12.8% commerce; 9.5% finance and business; 6.8% transport, storage, and communications; 6.5% construction and public works; 5.5% agriculture, forestry, and fishing; 5.8% personal and other services; 1.0% electricity and water (1983); unemployment about 6.7% (1985)

**Organized labor:** 90% of labor force

## Government

**Long-form name:** State of Israel

**Type:** republic

**Capital:** Israel proclaimed Jerusalem its capital in 1950, but the US, like nearly all other countries, maintains its Embassy in Tel Aviv-Yafo

**Administrative divisions:** 6 districts (mehot): Central, Haifa, Jerusalem, Northern, Southern, Tel Aviv

**Independence:** 14 May 1948 (from League of Nations mandate under British administration)

**Constitution:** no formal constitution; some of the functions of a constitution are filled by the Declaration of Establishment (1948), the basic laws of the Knesset (legislature)—relating to the Knesset, Israeli lands, the president, the government—and the Israeli citizenship law

**Legal system:** mixture of English common law, British Mandatory regulations, and national area, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic legal systems; commercial matters ruled substantially by codes adopted in 1948; no judicial review of legislative acts; in December 1985 Israel joined the UN Secretariat that it will no longer accept compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

**Annual holidays:** Israel declared independence on 14 May 1948; because the Jewish calendar is lunar, however, the holiday varies from year to year; all major Jewish religious holidays are also observed as national holidays

**Executive:** President has largely ceremonial functions, except for the authority to decide which political leader should try to form a ruling coalition following an election or the fall of a previous government; executive power vested in Cabinet; unicameral parliament (Knesset) of 120 members elected under a system of proportional representation; legislation promulgated fundamental laws in absence of a written constitution; two distinct court systems (secular religious)  
**Leaders:** Chaim HERZOG, President (since May 1983); Yitzhak SHAMIR, Prime Minister (since October 1986), who replaced Shimon PERES under an agreement whereby the positions of Prime Minister and that of Vice Prime Minister and Foreign Minister would be traded in October 1986

**Religion:** universal over age 18

**Electoral:** held every four years unless required by dissolution of Knesset; last election held in July 1984; next election must be held by November 1988

**Political parties and leaders:** Israel currently has a national unity government comprising seven parties that hold 97 of the Knesset's 120 seats; members of the unity government—Labor Alignment, Vice Premier and Foreign Minister

Shimon Peres; Likud Bloc, Prime Minister

Yitzhak Shamir; National Religious Party, Minister of Religious Affairs

Zevulun Hammer; SHAS, Yitzhak Peretz; Agudat Israel, Avraham Shapira;

Morasha-Po'aley Agudat Yisra'el, Avraham Verdiger; Ometz, Minister

Without Portfolio Yigael Hurwitz; opposition parties—Tehiya, Yuval Ne'eman;

MAPAM, Eliezer Granot, Citizens' Rights Movement, Shulamit Aloni;

RAKAH (Communist party), Meir

Winer; Progressive List for Peace, Muhammad Mi'ari; TAMI, Aharon Abuhatabira; Kakh, Meir Kahane; Tzomet Party,

Raphael Eytan

**Voting strength:** Labor Alignment, 41 seats; Likud, 41 seats; MAPAM, 6 seats; Tehiya, 4 seats; Citizens' Rights Movement, 5 seats; RAKAH, 4 seats; SHAS, 4

seats; National Religious Party, 5 seats; The Center Movement, 2 seats; Morasha-Po'aley Agudat Yisra'el, 1 seat; Agudat Yisra'el, 2 seats; Progressive List for Peace, 2 seats; Ometz, 1 seat; Kakh, 1 seat; TAMI, 1 seat; Tzomet, 1 seat

**Communist:** RAKAH (predominantly Arab but with Jews in its leadership) has some 1,500 members

**Other political or pressure groups:** Gush Emunim, Jewish nationalists advocating Jewish settlement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip; Peace Now, critical of government's West Bank/Gaza Strip and Lebanon policies

**Member of:** CCC, FAO, GATT, IAEA, IBRD, ICAC, ICAO, IDA, IDB—Inter-American Development Bank, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO, IOOC, INTELSAT, INTERPOL, IPU, ITU, IWC—International Wheat Council, OAS (observer), UN, UNESCO, UPU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WSG, WTO

## Economy

**GNP:** \$21.0 billion, \$5,070 per capita; real growth rate 1.6% (est. 1986)

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):** 48.1% (1986)

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

**Fishing:** catch 20,959 metric tons (1985)

**Industry:** food processing, diamond cutting and polishing, textiles and clothing, chemicals, metal products, transport equipment, electrical equipment, miscellaneous machinery, potash mining, high-technology electronics, tourism

**Electricity:** 4,192,000 kW capacity; 16,813 million kWh produced, 3,980 kWh per capita (1987)

**Exports:** \$7.1 billion (1986); polished diamonds, citrus and other fruits, textiles and clothing, processed foods, fertilizer and chemical products, military hardware, electronics

**Imports:** \$10.4 billion (c.i.f., 1986); military equipment, rough diamonds, oil, chemicals, machinery, iron and steel, cereals, textiles, vehicles, ships, aircraft

**Trade partners:** exports—US, UK, FRG, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy; imports—US, FRG, UK, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg

**Budget:** public revenues \$23.5 billion, expenditures \$23.3 billion (FY87)

**Monetary conversion rate:** 1.6 new sheqalim=US\$1 (December 1987); exchange rate calculated from a basket of foreign currencies

**Fiscal year:** 1 April-31 March

## Communications

**Railroads:** 594 km 1,435-meter gauge single track; diesel operated

**Highways:** 4,500 km; majority is bituminous surfaced

**Pipelines:** crude oil, 708 km; refined products, 290 km; natural gas, 89 km

**Ports:** 3 major (Ashdod, Haifa, Eilat), 5 minor

**Civil air:** 23 major transport aircraft

**Airfields:** 56 total, 53 usable; 27 with permanent-surface runways; 6 with runways 2,440-3,659 m; 11 with runways 1,270-2,439 m

**Telecommunications:** most highly developed in the Middle East though not the largest; good system of coaxial cable and radio relay; 1,500,000 telephones; 11 AM, 24 FM, 54 TV stations; 2 submarine cables; 2 Atlantic Ocean INTELSAT stations; 1 Indian Ocean INTELSAT station

## Defense Forces

**Branches:** Israel Defense Forces; historically there have been no separate Israeli military services; ground, air, and naval components are branches of Israel Defense Forces

**Military manpower:** eligible 15-49, 2,043,000; of 1,041,000 males 15-49, 860,000 fit for military service; of 1,002,000 females 15-49, 826,000 fit for military service; 42,000 males and 40,000 females reach military age (18) annually; both sexes liable for military service

**Military budget:** \$4.6 billion, 21% of central government budget (FY88)