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## Palestinian Territories

**Total area:**

6,220 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:**

4,550,000 (2014)

**Literacy:**

70%

**Official languages:**

Arabic

**GDP (PPP) per capita:**

\$2,950 (2009 est.)

**Life expectancy:**

73 years

**Religions:**

75% Muslim, 17% Jewish, 8% Christian

### Prayer points

**Promoting those marginalised by disability or displacement**

Embrace's partner, the East Jerusalem YMCA, helps people who are marginalised because of disability or because they have experienced the trauma of displacement or illegal detention under the Israeli occupation. EJMCA provides much-needed counselling services and works with the Palestinian community to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities and vulnerable ex-detainees. Pray for survivors of political violence in Palestine. (Embrace the Middle East - April 2019)

**Antenatal and maternity care**

A wondrous gift is given: One humble birth more than 2,000 years ago brought us the hope of everlasting life. Today, in places where Jesus lived, babies are being born into poverty and conflict. But we can help them get a healthy start, thanks to your donations and prayers. Embrace's partner Caritas Jerusalem provides antenatal and maternity care to disadvantaged women, and postnatal support for them and their precious new babies. Please pray for women giving birth amid poverty and for the health of their newborns. (Embrace the Middle East - December 2018)

**Olive Harvest**

The olive harvest is beginning in Palestine and 100,000 Palestinian families depend on the harvest each year. Pray for the farmers as they gather the harvest in, often in difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances. Pray also for The Joint Advocacy Initiative - a ministry of the YMCA - as they seek to support Palestinian olive farmers by supplying teams of international volunteers to help with collecting the olives. (Embrace the Middle East - November 2016)

**Feeling unsafe**

Church leaders say many Christians in Israel and the Palestinian Territories now feel unsafe, after recently being the target of attacks and inflammatory speeches. An imam at the Al-Aqsa mosque in

East Jerusalem recently posted a video on the Internet urging Muslims to be in a constant state of war against the 'polytheist enemy', namely Christians, and also against Jews. In May, a mob attacked property in the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem, following a row between a Christian and a Muslim. Pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in Israel and the Palestinian Territories to be salt and light in their communities. Pray too that moderate Muslims and Christians will unite to stand against extremism in all its forms and promote religious tolerance. (Release International - July 2015)

### **Desperate times**

Destruction everywhere, thousands displaced, and homeless with no means to earn money - the plight of the people of Gaza, following the recent 50-day conflict with Israel, is desperate. Help is now starting to filter through to the neediest of families. A relief grant given by BMS World Mission to the European Baptist Federation (EBF) is enabling Pastor Hanna and Gaza Baptist Church (where he used to be pastor) to provide food vouchers for families to spend on groceries like rice, beans and cooking oil at a nearby supermarket. So far over 200 needy families, both Christian and Muslim, have received the vouchers, with plans to reach more families in the coming weeks. (BMS World Mission - November 2014)

### **Al-Ahli Hospital**

The staff at the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza City, the only Christian hospital in Gaza, has maintained an around-the-clock presence since the recent military action began. Receiving wounded people and providing them with critical medical care, the Al-Ahli hospital is experiencing shortages in medicine, fuel for electrical generators, food for patients, and food parcels for the community. In a recent communication related to South Sudan, the Archbishop of Canterbury said we should "batter the gates of heaven" with our prayers for peace. Surely the same must be said of Israel-Palestine. Let's pray too for the wounded, bereaved and for those at Al-Ahli hospital working to help them. (Church Mission Society - September 2014)

### **Clouded by violence**

The worldview of all who live in Israel or Palestine today is clouded by violence and conflict. The daily reality of checkpoints, guns and soldiers merely serves to reinforce entrenched historical opposition and prejudices. As a result, the encounter between Israeli and Palestinian is all too often preconditioned by both real and perceived threats, in a way which does not allow space for an alternative story to play out. Pray for the work of Musalha, which promotes reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians, as demonstrated in the life and teaching of Jesus, both among believers, and more widely in the two communities. (BMS World Mission - January 2013)

### **Request for Palestinian statehood**

The Palestinian request for statehood at the UN in September 2011 again highlighted how much the Israel-Palestine question is not just a Middle Eastern issue but a world question. Somewhere in the midst of entrenched, historical, cultural and religious views, lies a body of Christian believers who straddle both the Israeli and Palestinian cultural divides. Pray for wisdom for religious and political leaders on both sides as they seek to lead their respective communities to greater harmony and acceptance. (BMS World Mission - March 2012)

### **Reconciliation through Christ**

Checkpoints and blockades, violence and death - from the outside it is easy to wonder how anyone could study in such a situation. Pray for Christian students in the Palestinian Territories and elsewhere who are struggling to live the reality of our reconciliation through Christ in the midst of deep-rooted divisions along political, ethnic or social lines. Give thanks with us that our God is a God in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). Pray that others will see how followers of Christ think and behave in these situations of conflict and be drawn to our powerful God, who has demolished the dividing wall of hostility between him and us, and can do the same for the divisions among people. (IFES - January 2011)

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