

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Demographic Situation in Israel – 2008

- At the end of 2008 Israel's population numbered 7,374,000, of which 5,569,200 were Jews (75.5%), 1,487,600 Arabs (20.2%), and 317,100 others (4.3%) – the last comprising mostly immigrants and their families not registered as Jews in the Population Registry.
- In addition, 115,000 foreign workers (visa holders) stayed in Israel.
- The population in 2008 lived in fewer than 2.1 million households.
- In 2008 there were 156,923 births, 39,255 deaths, and 13,699 new immigrants.

### Population Growth in 2008

- In 2008 Israel's population grew by 1.8% (some 130,300 individuals), from 7,243,600 at the end of 2007 to 7,374,000 at the end of 2008.
- Total growth was due to a natural increase (excess of births over deaths) of 117,600 and a net international migration (excess of immigrants over emigrants) of 12,800.
- The Jewish population growth rate was 1.7% and within the Arab population 2.6%.
- The growth rate continued to decline within the Muslim population, dropping from 3.8% in 2000 to 2.8% in 2008.
- General population growth in 2008 reflects the stability in the growth rate in recent years and is similar to that in the 1980s, when increase rates were among the lowest in the country's history. In the 1990s the annual average growth rate was 3%.

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### **Population Distribution by Age and Sex**

- Israel's population is young in comparison with other Western countries. This is reflected in the high percentage of children aged 0-14 (28.4% in Israel compared to an average of 17% in other Western countries) and in the low percentage of the aging population aged 65 and over (9.7% in Israel compared to an average of 15% in other Western countries). One of the major reasons for this is the high fertility rate in Israel.
- The past decade has seen growth of the elderly population, particularly in the older age brackets of 75 and over, whose proportion has increased from 3.8% in the 1990s to 4.6% in 2008.
- In Israel there are 979 males for every 1,000 females. Up to age 34 the number of males exceeds the number of females. At age 35 the ratio reverses itself. At age 75 and over, there are 674 males for every 1,000 females.

### **Family Status (15 years old and over, 2007 data)**

- Some 42% of males aged 15 and over were unattached (unmarried: single/divorced/widowed), with 83% of these being single.
- Some 45% of females aged 15 and over were unattached, with 60% of these being single.
- At age 65 and over, 22% of males and 60% of females were unattached, this gap stemming from gender differences in life expectancy (with women living on average longer than men) and remarriage rates after divorce or widowhood (with remarriage rates higher for men than for women).
- Between the ages of 20 and 24, 88.7% of men were single compared to 70.7% among women.

### **Population Distribution by Country of Birth and Origin (Jews)**

- In 2008 Israeli natives numbered 3.9 million, accounting for 71% of the total number of Jews. Upon the founding of the State, Israeli natives accounted for just over a third (35%).
- The European-American origin group (European-American natives and Israeli natives whose father was born in Europe-America) accounted for 35% of the total population (just over 1.9 million), comprising the largest origin group. This group grew in the wake of the large immigration wave from the FSU<sup>1</sup> which began at the end of 1989. The population hailing from the FSU stood at 923.6 thousand at the end of 2008, with 75% born in the FSU and the rest in Israel to an FSU-born father.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to data limitations, all of the FSU has been assigned to Europe.

### **Geographic Distribution of the Population**

- Some 41% of the total population and 49% of the Jewish population live in the center of the country (Central District and Tel Aviv District).
- Some 45% of the Arab population lives in the Northern District, compared to 10% of Jews.
- The population in the Central District, Jerusalem District, and Judea and Samaria grew in 2008 by 2.3%, 2.4% and 5.1% respectively, rates higher than the national average of 1.8%. The population growth rates for the Southern District, Tel Aviv District, Northern District and Haifa District were lower than the national average (1.6%, 0.9%, 1.7%, and 1.0%, respectively).
- The natural increase (births in excess of deaths) is the main source of growth in all districts.
- In the Central District and in Judea and Samaria the net internal migration (the difference between the number of people moving into a place from other places in Israel and the number of people moving out) is positive. In the rest of the districts net internal migration is negative.

### **Population in Localities**

- Around 92% of the population resides in 228 urban localities numbering 2,000 residents and over. A quarter of Israel's residents live in the five largest localities numbering over 200,000 residents (Jerusalem, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Haifa, Rishon Lezion and Ashdod); 44% live in 14 large localities numbering at least 100,000 residents.
- Some 8% of the population lives in 945 rural localities (including 64.6 thousand residents living outside the localities).

### **Changes of Address (Internal Migration)**

- In 2008, over half-a-million residents notified the Ministry of Interior of a change of address. Under half (47%) notified of a change of address involving a change of locality, while the rest (53%) notified of a change of address within the same locality.
- About 86.1% of those who moved to another locality were Jews, 5.6% Arabs and 8.3% others.
- A national average of 42.3% of residents moved to another locality within the same district, with the rate being higher than the national average for the following districts: the North – 52.7%, Haifa – 47%, Tel Aviv – 44.8% and the South – 50%, and lower than the national average for the Central District – 40.3%, Jerusalem – 28.8%, and the Judea and Samaria region – 18.4%.
- Most of the Arab population (69.1%) that changed locality remained within the same district, as compared to 42.3% of the general population.

## Population Density

- Population density in Israel (number of residents living in a region relative to the region's area in square kilometers) continues to rise with population increase. In 2008 density reached 320.9 people per km<sup>2</sup>, compared to 220.4 per km<sup>2</sup> in 1990 (not including the population and area of Judea and Samaria).
- The central region (Central District and Tel Aviv District) has the highest density in the country at 2,044 people per km<sup>2</sup>. By contrast, the lowest density has been recorded for the peripheral areas: 277.7 per km<sup>2</sup> in the Northern District and 74.3 per km<sup>2</sup> in the Southern District. Israel has a comparatively higher population density than most countries in the world. For the sake of comparison, Slovenia, with a territory similar in size to Israel's, has a density of 99 per km<sup>2</sup>, while Austria and Switzerland, with a population similar in size to Israel's, have a density of 100 and 182 per km<sup>2</sup>, respectively. A population density greater than Israel's can be found in Belgium and Holland (343, 396 per km<sup>2</sup>, respectively).

## Marriage and Divorce (Data for 2007)

- Some 46 thousand couples got married in Israel<sup>2</sup> in 2007, of which 76% were Jews, 20% Muslims, 1.5% Christians and 2.1% Druze.
- More than 13 thousand couples got divorced in 2007, with 84% Jews, 9.3% Muslims, 0.6% Christians, 0.7% Druze, and 5.4% of unknown religion.
- For 88% of bridegrooms and 91% of brides this was a first time marriage.
- In 2007, the marriage rate for Jewish bridegrooms was 18.1 for every 1,000 males aged 15 and over, and for Jewish brides the marriage rate stood at 17.1 for every 1,000 females aged 15 and over. That same year, the rates stood at 26.4 for Muslim bridegrooms and 27.1 for Muslim brides.
- The median marriage age<sup>3</sup> of Jewish bridegrooms married for the first time in 2007 stood at 27.6, and among Muslim bridegrooms 26.0. Median age for Jewish brides married for the first time in 2007 stood at 25.3, and among Muslim brides 20.7.
- The divorce rate per 1,000 married men/women aged 17-49 among Jews was more than double that among Muslims, for both men (13.9 and 6.6, respectively) and women (13.7 and 6.4, respectively).

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<sup>2</sup> The marriage data include cases of marriage held at authorized religious institutions in Israel, and do not include cases of marriage held abroad and subsequently recorded in the Population Registry. By the end of 2008, the Population Registry had recorded 4,800 couples, with at least one member of the couple an Israeli resident, which were wed overseas in 2007. Since overseas marriages are recorded with great delay, it may be assumed that the final number of couples married overseas in 2007 was far higher than the number of couples recorded.

<sup>3</sup> The median age: the age below which one half of married individuals are found, and above which the second half is found.

- Over the past decade marriage age has risen in Israel. Among Jewish brides the median age at first marriage has gone up from 23.9 in 1997 to 25.3 in 2007, and among Jewish bridegrooms - from 26.4 to 27.6. Among Muslim brides the median age has climbed from 20.2 to 20.7, and among Muslim bridegrooms – from 24.7 to 26.0.

### **Live Births and Fertility**

- In 2008 there were 156.9 thousand births, with 72% among Jewish women, 22% among Muslim women, 3% among women with non-specified religion in the Population Registry, 2% among Druze women and 2% among Christian women.
- Overall fertility rate (average number of children per woman) in 2008 was 3.0 (compared to 2.9 in 2007).
- Overall fertility rate for Jewish women was 2.9, for Muslim women 3.8, for Druze women 2.5, for Arab-Christian women 2.2, and for women with unspecified religion 1.6.
- Average mother's age at first-time birth was 27 years.
- Multi-fetal births accounted for 4.7% of all live births in 2007, with most of these being twins (97%).
- For every 100 female infants born there were 104.7 male infants born. This ratio is within the normal biological range.
- Over the past decade the overall fertility rate in Israel has declined from 2.98 in 1998 to 2.96 in 2008. Among Jewish women the overall fertility rate has increased (from 2.67 to 2.88 respectively), while decreasing among the other religions (from 4.76 to 3.84 among Muslim women, from 3.10 to 2.49 among Druze women, from 2.69 to 2.18 among Arab-Christian women, and from 1.71 to 1.57 among women of unspecified religion).

### **Applications Submitted to Abortion Committees**

- In 2007 the abortion committees received 19,470 applications, of which 99.0% were approved by the committees.
- The rate of abortion applications was 11.3 per 1,000 women of fertility age (15-49), the highest rate being among non-Arab Christian women (21.7) and among women with unspecified religion (20.4). Among Muslim and Druze women the rates were low (6.2 and 6.3, respectively). The rate among Jewish women was 11.8.
- About 53% of all abortion approvals were granted under the "extramarital pregnancy" clause, 18% under the "risk to woman's health" clause, 18% under the "risk of physical or mental fetal defects" clause, and 10% under the "woman's age" clause.

## **Mortality**

- In 2008 there were 39,255 deaths in Israel, with the crude death rate being 5.4 per a thousand inhabitants.
- Life expectancy for men was 79.1 years and for women 83.0 years. For Jewish men, life expectancy was 79.9 and for Arab men 75.9. Among Jewish women, life expectancy was 83.3 and among Arab women 79.7.
- When compared with the rest of the world, Israeli men maintain a high ranking, with a life expectancy similar (rounded) to that in Australia, Japan, Sweden, and Switzerland, which rank the highest. Israeli women are ranked lower, having a life expectancy that is 4 years shorter than that in the leading country – Japan. Women in Ireland, Belgium, Germany, Holland, U.K., Greece and Portugal have a similar life expectancy.
- In the past decade, life expectancy at birth has risen among men by 3.0 years (from 76.1 to 79.1), and among women by 2.7 years (from 80.3 to 83.0). The gain in life expectancy is greater among Jewish men than among Arab men (3.4 years versus 1.5, respectively), and slightly greater among Arab women than Jewish women (2.9 years versus 2.6 years, respectively). The gap between women's life expectancy and that of men in the Arab sector has been widening steadily over the past decade, growing from 2.4 years to 4.2 years. Among the Jewish sector, this gap has slightly contracted.

## **Infant Mortality**

- In 2008, 594 infants died before reaching their first year. The infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births was 3.8: 2.9 among Jews and 6.5 among Arabs
- At the start of the 1990s the infant mortality rate was 8.8 per 1,000 live births.
- In an international comparison of infant mortality rates (rounded) for 2006, Israel ranks among the low-rate countries. The rate in Israel is similar to that in Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Holland, Greece, Spain and Switzerland. Infant mortality rates are lower in Italy, Ireland, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Finland, the Czech Republic, France and Sweden.
- In the past decade, the infant mortality rate in Israel has dropped by nearly 40%, from 6.0 to 3.9 per 1,000 live births. The drop in the Jewish sector has been greater than that in the Arab sector, with the infant mortality rate among Jews decreasing by 38% (from 4.7 to 2.9 per 1,000 live births), compared to a 26% decrease (from 8.8 to 6.5 per 1,000 live births) among Arabs.

## **Immigration to Israel**

- The number of new immigrants in 2008 was 13,699, of which 1.9 thousand were originally tourists who switched to immigrant status during their stay in Israel. In addition, 3.1 thousand immigrant citizens<sup>4</sup> arrived in Israel.
- About 42% of immigrants were born in the FSU; 12% in Ethiopia; 8% in France; 12% in the U.S.; and just over 3% in the U.K.
- General median immigrant age was 29.6 years, with the median age for Ethiopian immigrants being 20 years, and for FSU immigrants 34 years.
- Around 19% of the immigrants settled in the Southern District; 20% in the Central District; 20% in the Jerusalem District; 13% in the Tel Aviv District; 15% in the Northern District; 9% in the Haifa District; and 4% in Judea and Samaria.
- The number of immigrants has dropped significantly in recent years compared to the annual average number of immigrants (some 70 thousand) at the end of the 1990s.

## **Prolonged Stay of Israelis Overseas (Emigration from Israel) – Year 2007**

- The number of Israeli inhabitants who departed for a prolonged period overseas<sup>5</sup> in 2007 was 21.1 thousand, with 95% of them Jews and others (68% Jews) and 4.2% Arabs.
- Of the Jews and others who departed, 43% were Israeli born and the rest (57%) foreign born. Of the foreign born, 75% immigrated to Israel from 1990 onward.
- The number of Israeli residents who returned to Israel in 2007 following a prolonged stay overseas was 9.3 thousand, with 93% of them Jews and others (83% Jews), and 7% Arabs.
- Of the Jews and others who returned, 54.3% were Israeli born and the rest (46%) foreign born. Of the foreign born, 65% immigrated to Israel from 1990 onward.
- Net migration of Israeli inhabitants (not including immigrants) in 2007 was negative, standing at 11.7 thousand inhabitants, a rate of 1.6 per 1,000 inhabitants.

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<sup>4</sup> Immigrant citizen: anyone born to an Israeli citizen during his stay abroad, and entering Israel with the intention of settling.

<sup>5</sup> People who left for overseas in 2007 and stayed for an uninterrupted period of at least a year (365 days).

## **Labor Migration to Israel**

- The number of foreign workers (overseas nationals) with a work visa<sup>6</sup> who entered Israel in 2008 was 30,000. During the same period, 23 thousand work visa holders were recorded as having left Israel. Thus the number of foreign workers with a work visa in Israel, as of 2008, totaled 115 thousand.
- As of the end of 2008, over three quarters of foreign workers staying in Israel with a work visa came from Asian countries (mainly Thailand, the Philippines and China), and more than a fifth of foreign workers with a work visa came from European countries (primarily Romania and the FSU).
- Likewise, at the end of 2008, some 90 thousand foreign nationals who entered Israel on a tourist visa were found to have stayed beyond the visa expiration date. This figure is an upper limit estimate of "illegal" foreign workers, as a certain number of tourists who stayed beyond the visa expiration date filed an application for residence with the Ministry of Interior (the vast majority of them from the FSU).
- The number of foreign workers in Israel at the end of 2008 was 114.7, most of them from Asia – 89 thousand (China – 12.2 thousand, the Philippines – 29.3 thousand, Thailand – 29.7 thousand), and 23.7 thousand from Europe (mainly Romania – 10.9 thousand and the FSU – 9.8 thousand), the rest arriving from Africa and from America-Oceania.
- The past decade saw a large decline in the number of foreign nationals entering Israel on a work visa (down from 64 thousand in 1998 to 30 thousand in 2008). There was also a change in the composition of countries from which visa applicants in Israel arrived. Several of the prominent countries in 1998 registered a significant drop in the number of entrants to Israel in 2008: Romania (from 19.3 thousand to 1.4 thousand); Turkey (from 2.9 thousand to 0.9 thousand); Bulgaria (from 2.4 thousand to 0.2 thousand); Thailand (from 9.0 thousand to 5.8 thousand).

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<sup>6</sup> Including foreigners recorded as having a work visa at the border post, as well as foreigners who received a short-term work visa after arriving in Israel, at the Ministry of Interior district offices.

## Households<sup>7</sup>

- Households numbered 2,087,400 in 2008, of which 84% were Jewish, 14% Arab and 2% other sectors.
- An average household comprised 3.3 individuals, the average size of a Jewish household being 3.1 individuals versus 4.8 individuals per Arab household.
- Family households accounted for 81% of all households, with 94% consisting of one family, over 3% consisting of one family plus non-family individuals, and 2% comprising at least two families.
- Non-family households accounted for 19% of all households, the vast majority (93%) consisting of people living alone.

## Families<sup>8</sup>

- In 2008 there were 1,728.7 thousand families in Israel, the great majority of them living without additional individuals or an additional family in the household.
- Jewish families comprised 81% of all families and Arab families 16%, with families of other sectors accounting for the rest.
- Childless-couple families accounted for 24% of all families, this family type being more common in the Jewish sector (27%) than in the Arab sector (8%).
- A couple with children is the most common type of family (63%), this type being more common in the Arab sector (81%) than in the Jewish sector (60%). In nearly 80% of families consisting of a couple with children, the youngest child is up to 17 years of age – the figure being 77% in the Jewish sector and 87% in the Arab sector.
- Single-parent families account for 12% of all families – comprising 12% of all Jewish families and 10% of all Arab families. In about half of all single-parent families, the youngest child is up to 17 years of age – among Jews 49% and among Arabs 50%.
- In 93% of single-parent families with children up to age 17, the parent is a woman.
- In 57% of single-parent families with children up to age 17, the parent is divorced.
- Since 2000 the percentage of single-parent families has remained unchanged, comprising about 12% of all families in Israel and of all Jewish families as well.

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<sup>7</sup> A household is defined as a single person or group of persons living most of the week in the same apartment and sharing a food expenditure budget.

<sup>8</sup> A nuclear family is defined as a social cell consisting of two or more individuals living in the same household, and related to each other as spouses or as parents and children.