

Media Release

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On the Eve of the Jewish New Year: 8.585 Million Residents in the State of Israel

- On the eve of Rosh Hashanah 5777 (2016), the population of Israel numbered approximately 8,585,000 residents.¹
- The Jewish population numbered approximately 6,419,000 residents (74.8% of the total population), and the Arab population – approximately 1,786,000 residents (20.8%), and the population of "Others" (non-Arab Christians and those not classified by religion in the Population Register) numbered 380,000 residents (4.4%).
- Since Rosh Hashanah of last year,² the population in Israel increased by about 172,000 persons – an increase of 2.0%, similar to previous years.
- During the course of the year, about 189,000 infants were born, and about 46,000 persons died.
- Approximately 30,000 persons were added to the population in the migration balance. Of those, about 25,000 were new immigrants.

¹ This Media Release is based on preliminary data. The population estimate does not include foreign workers, whose number is estimated at approximately 192,000 at the end of 2014.

² Due to differences between the Jewish calendar and the secular calendar, the data refer to approximately 12.5 months that have elapsed since the previous Jewish New Year.

- **At the end of 2015**, the population of Israel numbered 8,463,000 residents, of whom 6,334,000 were Jews (74.8%), 1,758,000 were Arabs (20.8%), and 371,000 were Others (4.4%).
- **The rate of growth of the total population in 2015 was 2.0%**, similar to the previous decade. A similar rate of population growth in Israel was observed during the 1980s, when the rate of immigration to Israel was at a low point. In the 1990s, when there was high rate of immigration from the Former Soviet Union, the average rate of growth was approximately 3% per year.
- **In 2015, the growth rate in the Jewish population was 1.9%** (similar to previous years), and the growth rate in the Arab population was 2.2% (a decrease compared with 3.1% in 1996–2008).

Table 1. Population Growth Rate, by Population Group and Religion, 2015

	Religion	Rate of Growth
Total	Total Population	2.0
Population Group	Jews	1.9
	Arabs	2.2
	Others	3.8
Religion	Jews	1.9
	Moslems	2.4
	Christians	1.5
	Druze	1.4

Population by Age and Sex

- **The Israeli population is considered to be younger than the population of Western countries.** In 2015, the percentage of children aged 0-14 in Israel was 28.3%, and the percentage of those aged 65 and over was 11.1%.
- The share of persons **aged 75 and over** among the Israeli population has grown moderately over the years: 4.9% in 2015, compared with 3.8% at the beginning of the 1990s. Among Jews, the share of persons aged 75 and over was higher (5.9% in 2015, compared with 4.4% at the beginning of the 1990s).
- **The trend toward population aging is continuing.** In 2015, the median age of the Israeli population was 29.8 years, compared with 27.7 in 2000. A comparison by sex reveals that the median age of men was 28.7 in 2015, and the median age of women was 30.9.
- Over the past 20 years, the sex ratio in Israel has been on the rise. As of 2015, there were 983 males per 1,000 females in Israel, compared with 974 males per 1,000 females in 1995. Up to age 32, the number of males is greater than the number of females, and from the age of 33 and over the

number of females is greater than the number of males. For example, at age 75 and over, 700 males are alive per 1,000 females.

Population by Marital Status (Average for 2014)

- **In the Jewish population there is a trend toward delaying the age of marriage**, as evidenced in the high percentage of never-married persons aged 25-29. In 2014, 62.7% of the men and 45.8% of the women were still never-married at these ages, compared with approximately 54.0% of the men and 33.3% of the women at those ages who were never-married in 2000.
- Among the Moslem population, 47.1% of the men and 19.4% of the women aged 25-29 were never-married, compared with 35.7% of the men and 23.2% of the women in 2000.

Population by Origin

- **The proportion of Israeli-born citizens in the Jewish population has continuously increased since the establishment of the State:** 75.9% of the total Jewish population was Israeli-born in 2015, compared with only 35% at the time of the establishment of the State.
- **The largest group by continent of origin³ was Europe-America.** Asian-born immigrants who arrived in Israel mainly during the 1950s and 1960s. Since then, immigration from Asia has almost entirely ceased.

Table 2. Jews and Others by Origin

Origin	Population (thousands)	Percentage
Total	6,705.6	100.0
<i>Israel</i>	<i>2,835.4</i>	<i>42.3</i>
Europe-America	2,284.6	34.1
Africa	906.4	13.5
Asia	679.2	10.1

Geographic Distribution of the Population

- **Approximately 40% of Israel's population lives in the central region of the country (the Central and Tel Aviv districts).**
- **About half of the Jewish population is concentrated in the central region of the country (the Central and Tel Aviv Districts).**
- **Approximately 60% of the Arab population is concentrated in the northern region of Israel (the Northern and Haifa Districts).**

³ "Origin": For persons born abroad – own continent of birth; for persons born in Israel – father's continent of birth.

- In 2015, the population growth rate was 2.0%. The population growth rate recorded in the following areas was higher than the national average: the Judea and Samaria Area (4.1%), the Jerusalem and Central Districts (2.3%), and the Southern District (2.1%). In the other districts, the percentage of growth was lower than the national average.

Table 3. Geographic Distribution and Growth Rate of the Population, 2015

Percentages

District	Total population	Jews	Arabs	Growth rate – total population
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	2.0
Jerusalem	12.5	11.1	19.1	2.3
Northern	16.3	9.4	42.1	1.6
Haifa	11.6	10.6	14.3	1.5
Central	24.5	28.7	9.6	2.3
Tel Aviv	16.2	20.1	1.1	1.4
Southern	14.4	14.1	13.7	2.1
Judea and Samaria Area	4.6	6.0	0.0	4.1

- Of the eight major cities in Israel (those with over 200,000 residents), the highest growth rate in 2015 was in Netanya (2.7%).

Table 4. Population Growth in Major Cities in Israel

City	Rate of Growth
Jerusalem	1.9
Tel Aviv-Yafo	1.6
Haifa	0.7
Rishon LeZiyyon	1.5
Petah Tiqwa	2.5
Ashdod	1.0
Netanya	2.7
Be'er Sheva	1.1

- In 2015, the growth rate in rural localities reached 2.9%.

Localities

At the end of 2015, there were 1,214 localities in Israel – three more localities than in 2014.

- **Ganne Modi'in** in the Mate Binyamin regional council is a new locality. At the end of 2015, it had 2,350 residents. In previous years it was part of the city Modi'in Illit, and in 2015 it was decided that Ganne Modi'in would be granted the status of an autonomous locality in the area of Mate Binyamin.

- **Nes Amim** and **Abu Tulul** in the Southern District changed their status from "place" to locality and were added to the count of localities in Israel.

Of the 1,214 localities, 1,086 were Jewish, and 137 were non-Jewish (9 mixed localities were counted both among the Jewish localities and among the non-Jewish localities).

The population estimates for the end of 2015 led to several major changes in the distribution of localities by size group.

- **Bet Shemesh** exceeded the threshold of 100,000 residents, and in 2015 the estimated number of residents in the city was 104,000.
- The localities **Judeide Maker**, **Qadima-Zoran**, and **Shoham** exceeded the threshold of 20,000 residents.

Marriages and Divorces

- In 2014, 50,797 couples married in Israel. Of those, 73% were Jewish couples and 23% were Moslem couples.
- That year, 44,412 of the grooms married for the first time (87% of all grooms). The average age of marriage for the grooms who married for the first time in 2014 was 27.6 (27.9 among Jewish grooms, and 26.4 among Moslem grooms).
- That year, 45,547 of the brides married for the first time (90% of all brides). The average age of marriage for the brides who married for the first time in 2014 was 25.0 (25.9 among Jewish brides, and 22.2 among Moslem brides).
- The crude marriage rate⁴ was 6.2 per 1,000 marriages in the total population – 6.0 per 1,000 in the Jewish population, 6.3 per 1,000 in the Arab population, 8.0 per 1,000 in the Druze population, and 5.3 per 1,000 in the Christian population.
- An international comparison revealed that the crude marriage rate in Israel in 2014 (6.2 per 1,000) was among the highest in OECD countries, where the rates ranged from 3.0 per 1,000 in Portugal and Luxembourg to 7.9 per 1,000 in Turkey.
- 14,430 couples divorced in Israel in 2014. Of those, 79% were Jewish couples and 15% were Moslems.
- In 2014, the crude divorce rate⁵ (1.8 per 1,000 persons) was slightly lower than the average rate in OECD countries (2.0 per 1,000 persons).

⁴ The number of marriages occurring per thousand persons in an average population.

⁵ Number of divorces occurring per thousand persons in an average population.

Live Births and Fertility

- In 2015, 178,723 infants were born in Israel, approximately 1.3% more than in 2014. Of those, 74% were born to Jewish mothers and 23% were born to Arab mothers.

Table 9. Average Number of Children per Woman (Total Fertility Rate),⁶ by Year and Mother's Religion

Mother's Religion	First half of the 1970's	2014	2015
Total	3.80	3.08	3.09
Jewish	3.28	3.11	3.13
Moslem	8.47	3.35	3.32
Christian	3.65	2.27	2.12
Druze	7.25	2.20	2.19
Not classified by religion		1.72	1.72

- **The average age of mothers giving birth to their first child is on the rise** – from 25.1 in 1994 to 27.6 in 2015. The upward trend in the age of mothers giving birth to their first child has been found among all the religions.

Table 10. Average Age of a Mother at First Birth, by Mother's Religion, 2015

Year	Total	Jewish	Moslem	Druze	Christian
1994	25.1	25.8	22.8	22.8	25.0
2015	27.6	28.5	23.8	25.9	28.2
Difference	2.5	2.7	1.0	3.1	3.2

⁶ The average number of children a woman is expected to bear in her lifetime; the rate is based on the assumption that the women will survive for the entire period of their fertility (between the ages 15 and 49), and that they will give birth according to the specific fertility rates of women who are the same age as age they were in 2015. (The specific fertility rate is the number of live births for mothers of a given age, divided by the average permanent population of females of the same age.)

Table 11. Average Number of Children per Woman, by District, 2013

District	Average Number of Children per Woman
Total	3.09
Judea and Samaria Area	4.89
Jerusalem District	3.93
Southern District	3.49
Central District	2.85
Northern District	2.73
Tel Aviv District	2.69
Haifa District	2.55

Immigration

- **In 2015, 27,908 immigrants arrived in Israel, an increase of 16% in the number of immigrants compared with 2014.** The largest number of immigrants arrived from the following countries: Ukraine (6,886 immigrants), Russia (6,632), France (6,628), and the US (2,451).
- In 2015, **the rate of immigration increased to 3.3 immigrants per 1,000 residents** (compared with 3 immigrants per 1,000 residents in 2014).
- **The median age of immigrants who arrived in 2015 was 32.9.** The lowest median age was among immigrants from America and Oceania (27.1), whereas the highest median age was among European immigrants (34.4).
- **In 2015, approximately 42,600 foreign citizens entered Israel on a work visa.** The largest number of work immigrants arrived from the Former USSR, the Philippines, and Thailand. That year, approximately 38,600 workers from abroad who entered on a work visa left the country.

Households and Families

Demographic Characteristics of Households⁷ and Families⁸

- **In 2015, there were 2,411,700 households in Israel**, an increase of about 2% in the total number of households compared with 2014. This rate was similar to the population growth rate. About 83% of the households were headed by Jews, and about 15% were headed by Arabs.
- The average number of persons per household was 3.32 in the total population - 3.12 persons per household in the Jewish population, and 4.58 in the Arab population.
- About 80% of the households are "family" households (i.e., households with at least one nuclear family) and about 20% are "non-family" households, most of which are households with one person living alone (they comprise approximately about 18% of all households).
- The proportion of Jewish households with one person (approximately 20%) was three times higher than the proportion of Arab households with one person (approximately 6%).
- **In 2015, 1,986,200 families lived in Israel.** Most of the families (about 91%) lived without additional persons or additional families in the household.
- In 2015, there were 117,000 **single-parent families with at least one child up to age 17**. These families comprised approximately 11% of all families with children up to age 17 in Israel.
- The Tel Aviv District had the highest percentage of **couples without children** (about 33%, compared with the national average of about 24%), and the lowest percentage of couples with children up to age 17 (about 40%, compared with the national percentage of about 49%).
- The Southern District and the Haifa District had the highest percentage of single-parent families with children up to age 17 (7.6% and 7.1%, respectively, compared with the national percentage of 5.9%).
- The **average number of persons per family** was highest in the Judea and Samaria Area (4.71 persons per family), in the Jerusalem District (4.27), and in the Northern District (3.97); the lowest average number of persons per family was in the Tel Aviv District (3.22).

Note: Data on households and families are based on the Labour Force Survey 2015.

The data include all households, and do not include households in kibbutzim, institutions, student dormitories, and those who live outside of localities (Bedouins in the South).

⁷Household: A household is defined as one person or a group of persons living together in one dwelling on a permanent basis most of the week, who have a common expense budget for food. A household may include persons who are not a family.

⁸ Family (nuclear family): A nuclear family of two persons or more who share the same household and are related to one another as husband and wife, as an unmarried couple, or as parent and child. The main types of families are: a couple, a couple with children (in various age groups, defined by the age of the youngest child), or a single parent with children.