

	Quick Facts	
	Immigration detainees (2019)	Not Available
	Detained minors (2017)	0
	International migrants (2019)	1,956,346
	New asylum applications (2019)	9,444

NOTES ON USING THIS PROFILE

- Sources for the data provided in this report are available online at: <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/middle-east/israel>
- "Observation Dates" indicate the timeframe statistical data correspond to or other data were last validated. More than one statistical entry for a year indicates contrasting reports.

STATISTICS

Detention, expulsion, and incarceration statistics

		Observation Date			Observation Date
Total number of immigration detainees by year	Not Available	2019	Criminal prison population	20,245	2015
				19,358	2013
Percentage of foreign prisoners	38.9	2014	Prison population rate (per 100,000 of national population)	265	2015
				249	2013

Demographics and immigration-related statistics

		Observation Date			Observation Date
Population	8,700,000	2020	International migrants	1,956,346	2019
	8,064,000	2015		2,011,700	2015
	7,700,000	2012		2,046,900	2013
International migrants as a percentage of the population	24.9	2015	Refugees	16,107	2019
	26.5	2013		18,569	2018
				25,473	2017
				32,909	2016
				32,946	2015
				39,716	2014
				48,325	2013
Ratio of refugees per 1000 inhabitants	3.73	2016	Total number of new asylum applications	9,444	2019
	5	2014		226	2014
	6.23	2013		2,593	2013
	6.54	2012		1,999	2012
Refugee recognition rate	100	2014	Stateless persons	42	2016
				88	2015
				10	2014
				14	2013

DOMESTIC LAW

LEGAL TRADITION

	Name	Observation Date
Legal tradition	Civil law	2017
	Common law	2017
	Jewish law	2017
	Muslim law	2017

LAWS AND REGULATIONS				
Core pieces of national legislation	Name	Year Adopted	Last Year Amended	
	Prevention of Infiltration (Offences and Jurisdiction) Law, 5714-1954, 8 LSI 133 (5714-1953/54). as amended	1954	2014	
	Law of Return 5710-1950	1950	1970	
	Law No. 5712-1952, Entry into Israel Law	1952	2017	
	The Citizenship and Entry Into Israel Law (Temporary Provision) 5763-2003	2003		
	The Law for the Prevention of Infiltration	1954	2014	
CRIMINALIZATION OF IMMIGRATION-RELATED OFFENCES				
Does the country provide specific criminal penalties for immigration-related violations?	Fines	Incarceration	Observation Date	
	Yes	Yes	1954	
CRIMINALIZATION OF IMMIGRATION-RELATED OFFENCES				
Grounds for criminal immigration-related detention/incarceration and maximum potential duration of incarceration	Grounds for Incarceration	Maximum Number of Days of Incarceration		Observation Date
	Unauthorized re-entry	2555		1954
	Unauthorized entry	1825		1954
	Unauthorised stay	1825		1954
CRIMINALIZATION OF IMMIGRATION-RELATED OFFENCES				
Has the country decriminalized immigration-related violations?	Has the country decriminalized immigration-related violations?			Observation Date
	No			1954
VULNERABLE PERSONS				
Is the detention of vulnerable persons provided in law? Are they detained in practice?	Name	In Law	In Practice	Observation Date
	Accompanied minors	Provided	No	2016

COVID-19 UPDATES

	Update Status	Observation Date
<p>Latest Update</p>	<p>Prior to the Covid-19 crisis, large numbers of Palestinians travelled to work in Israel on a daily or weekly basis. However, due to fears that such travel could further spread the virus, Israel’s emergency regulations required Palestinian workers to remain in the country and prevented them from returning to the West Bank. (Authorities issued stay permits for 30 or 60 days.) Although employers were required to provide workers with accommodation, reports quickly emerged revealing that Palestinians were being housed in inhumane accommodation—including some units without beds, toilets, or running water—which fell far below the standards of other foreign nationals’ accommodation. In April, a coalition of NGOs launched a petition urging the Israeli government to ensure the health and living conditions of Palestinian workers. The petitioners wrote, “The State of Israel is exploiting the most disadvantaged workers, keeping them under conditions akin to slavery. Their dignity is trampled upon as they are given accommodation in unsupervised construction sites, their health is neglected as no one provides them insurance during a global health crisis, and their liberty is denied when their employers process their papers but, in fact, bind them to their workplaces.” Authorities responded, issuing new legislation that required employers to pay for their employees’ health insurance—and eventually amending the emergency regulations to specify the living conditions that employers are required to provide. This was an important step: As countries such as Germany and Singapore have witnessed, poor worker accommodation units have frequently become virus hotspots. More recently, on 28 June, as cases began to rise again, Israel’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development informed all organisations employing Palestinians that employees would be required to remain in Israel for three weeks, and that they were to be provided with health insurance and adequate accommodation. Reports indicate that Palestinian workers have faced movement restrictions. They have been required to remain within the boundaries of their workplace and nearby accommodation, and may not leave the premises to purchase food or medication—their Israeli employer must instead provide such supplies.</p>	<p>2020</p>
	<p>After deconfinement began on 27 in Israel, new Covid infections increased sharply. However, the real number of infections in the country is difficult to assess because of fears amongst workers about the consequences of presenting themselves for testing. Migrant workers and asylum seekers appear to have a much higher infection rate than the rest of the population. The government’s National Information and Knowledge Center reports that 25 percent of tested foreign workers were positive for COVID-19. However, due to the fear of losing their jobs if they are infected, many asylum-seekers do not get tested. Official estimates put the number of foreign workers in Tel Aviv alone at roughly 40,000. In a joint press statement on 11 May, UN officials called for the release of all children detained by the Israeli authorities in prisons and detention centres. Mentioning the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the statement said that “since the start of the COVID-19 crisis in Israel, legal proceedings are on hold, almost all prison visits are cancelled, and children are denied in-person access to their families and their lawyers. This creates additional hardship, psychological suffering, and prevents the child from receiving the legal advice to which they are entitled.” At the end of March, UN officials estimated that 194 Palestinian were detained in Israel. On 16 April, a Palestinian NGO pressed Israeli authorities to ensure the rights of detainees. The organisation, Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, highlighted “overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and inadequate access to healthcare” while pointing out that Palestinian prisoners are classified separately to regular prisoners. A petition was submitted to the Israeli High Court of Justice to demand that inmates be allowed to communicate with their family. At the time of this update, the court only responded by allowing minors a 10-minute call every two weeks. On 14 April, a coalition of NGOs issued an open letter to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) urging the body to do more to protect “Palestinian prisoners’ right to health, particularly as many are minors, chronically ill, members of vulnerable groups, or held under administrative detention in contravention of international law.” The letter states that Israeli occupying authorities have disregarded Covid-19 guidelines in dealing with Palestinian prisoners and mentions that while the Israeli government released some 400 non-violent prisoners selected on the basis of health conditions and age, the government has not established the same release policy for Palestinian prisoners. Although some Palestinian prisoners had been freed, the government had not established any health or safety precautions to assist those infected or to protect the communities they are returning to.</p>	<p>2020</p>
	<p>Israel has implemented several measures impacting migrants and asylum seekers as well as prisoners. While one NGO, Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, has reported that they were able to get some people released from immigration detention since the crisis began, the GDP has found no additional reports detailing what, if any, measures are being taken by authorities in administrative immigration detention centres. There have also been increasing calls by rights actors demanding that Israel release Palestinian children held in Israeli jails, in particular as prisoners’ exposure to the coronavirus has increased. In a 11 April interview with the Times of Israel, an advocate from the group Hotline explained that since the crisis began they have been emphasizing in their work getting asylum seekers released from detention: “Someone can be in jail for six months for a very light felony, and then they are suddenly transferred to administrative detention. All it takes is a decision by an official from the Population and Immigration Authority, who deems them a danger to society. ... At that point, they can be held for a year or even two. So we try to get them released and give them legal representation. It’s become more urgent now, because there is a risk of mass contagion in prisons. In recent weeks we have been able to release seven people, and we are currently representing 10 more in an attempt to set them free.” Israel closed its borders in mid-March, barring all non-citizens from entering the country to curb the spread of Covid-19. The Population and Immigration Authority said that an exception would be made for non-nationals whose “centre of life is in Israel.” The Ministry of the Interior then extended all visas for non-citizens that are currently in Israel until 30 June 2020. Also in early March, authorities suspended all family visits to the country’s prisons as well as lawyers’ visits. These and other measures provoked widespread protests in prisons, in particular after reports that prisoners had been exposed to security personnel who had tested positive for Covid-19. According to Haaretz (23 March), “Palestinian prisoners serving sentences in Israeli jails for security-related offenses are threatening to go on a hunger strike to protest measures enforced by the Israel Prison Service, seeking to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. The prisoners object to searches conducted in their cells by prison guards without any protective gloves or face masks, as well as a ban on leaving cells and meeting their attorneys and family members, who the prison service fears might infect prisoners or guards with the virus if allowed into prisons.” On 1 April 2020, a Palestinian prisoner released from Ofer prison who had spent 12 days detained alongside 36 people, tested positive for Covid-19. However, even after being notified of this, the Israeli prison administration announced no plans to release or even test the prisoners held there. Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP) reported on 19 March: “Four Palestinian prisoners detained at Israel’s Megiddo prison, located inside Israel northwest of the occupied West Bank city of Jenin, were placed in isolation after they were in contact with a COVID-19 positive Israeli officer. ... Megiddo prison is one of several detention facilities located inside Israel where Palestinian child ‘security prisoners’ are held. ‘We know the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is for people to avoid being in close proximity to each other, said Ayed Abu Eqtaish, Accountability Program director at DCIP. ‘There is no way Israeli prison authorities can ensure the health and well-being of Palestinian child detainees as long as they continue to be in a custodial detention setting.’ An investigation by DCIP previously found Palestinian child prisoners detained in Israel’s Damon prison were held in poor conditions, including small rooms without access to clean and private bathroom facilities. Conditions such as these increase risks and exposure to unsanitary conditions where the COVID-19 virus thrives.”</p>	<p>2020</p>

INTERNATIONAL LAW

Relevant international treaties and date of ratification			
International treaties	Name		Ratification Year
	CRPD, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities		2012
	CTOCTP, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children		2008
	ICCPR, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights		1991
	ICESCR, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights		1991
	CEDAW, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women		1991
	CAT, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment		1991
	CRC, Convention on the Rights of the Child		1991
	ICERD, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination		1979
	PCRSR, Protocol to the Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees		1968
	CRSSP, Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons		1958
	CRSR, Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees		1954
Ratio of relevant international treaties ratified	11/19		
Relevant international treaties and date of ratification			
Ratio of complaints procedures accepted	Number		Observation Date
	0		2017
Relevant international treaties and date of ratification			
Relevant recommendations issued by treaty bodies	Name	Recommendation Excerpt	Recommendation Year
	Committee against Torture	45. The State party should take the legislative and other measures necessary with a view to ensuring that the detention of persons entering its territory irregularly is only used as a last resort, when determined to be strictly necessary and proportionate in each individual case, and for as short a period as possible.	2016
	Human Rights Committee	§20 [...] (d) Ensure that the new legislation abolishes the system of automatic detention of asylum seekers and requires that in each case, detention is reasonable, necessary and proportionate in light of the circumstances, and reassessed as it extends in time	2014
Committee on the Rights of the Child	§70 [...] (d) Cease with immediate effect the detention of children on the basis of their immigration status; (e) Conduct individual assessments and evaluations of the best interests of the child at all decision stages of the migration process affecting children, and with the involvement of child protection professionals, the judiciary as well as children themselves. Primary consideration should also be given to the best interests of the child in any proceeding resulting in the child's or their parents' detention, return or deportation;	2013	
Non treaty-based international human rights mechanisms			
Relevant recommendations of the UN Universal Periodic Review	Recommendation Issued	Year Issued	Observation Date
	No	2009	2017
	Yes	2013	2017

INSTITUTIONAL INDICATORS

Institutions responsible for immigration detention

Custodial authority	Agency	Ministry	Ministry Typology	Observation Date
		Interior Ministry	Interior or Home Affairs	2011
		Ministry of Interior	Interior or Home Affairs	2009

Institutions responsible for immigration detention

Detention Facility Management	Entity Name	Entity Type	Observation Date
	Israel Prison Service	Governmental	2016
	Ministry of Interior	Governmental	2016
	Israel Prison Service	Governmental	2011
	Immigration Administration	Governmental	2011
	Israeli immigration police	Governmental	2010
	Immigration Police	Governmental	2009
	Israel Prison Service	Governmental	2008
	Immigration Administration	Governmental	2003

Institutions responsible for immigration detention

Types of detention facilities used in practice	Immigration detention centre (Administrative)	Immigration field office (Administrative)	Transit centre (Administrative)	Reception centre (Administrative)	Offshore detention centre (Administrative)	Hospital (Administrative)	Border guard (Administrative)	Police station (Criminal)	National penitentiary (Criminal)	Local prison (Criminal)	Juvenile detention centre (Criminal)	Informal camp (Ad hoc)	Immigration detention centre (Ad hoc)	Surge facility (Ad hoc)	Observation Date
															2015

More information about immigration detention in Israel is available at the website of the Global Detention Project (www.globaldetentionproject.org)