



Palestine: Brands Forged by Centuries of Crisis

Palestine

COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT

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English Edition (also available in Russian and Chinese)



Brandmine



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Palestine: Brands Forged by Centuries of Crisis

Palestine has an olive oil brand in Whole Foods supplying 90% of Dr. Bronner's production, a Coca-Cola franchise built by a Jaffa-born refugee now aged ~88, and a 500-year soap industry that has never raised institutional capital. Fewer than 5% of family businesses have a succession plan. No one is looking.

QUICK FACTS

Market Size	\$19B GDP • 5.4M consumers (West Bank + Gaza) • 6M diaspora in Chile, Jordan, Gulf, US providing export channels that dwarf domestic demand
Unique Advantage	Highest crisis documentation density in Brandmine — movement restrictions, checkpoints, currency instability, intifadas • NDD material is unmatched
Biggest Challenge	Fewer than 5% have succession plans • Oslo-era generation ageing out • 2023–2025 escalation contracting West Bank GDP and accelerating timelines
Timing Factor	Oslo-era founders aged 50–70 in the window now • Al-Juneidi succession already active • NBC founder Zahi Khouri (~88) is the most urgent case we cover

“Palestinian businesses navigate movement restrictions, border closures, and supply chain disruptions that would end most enterprises in a week. The ones that survive are not just resilient — they are extraordinary.”

Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, Palestinian Economy Report

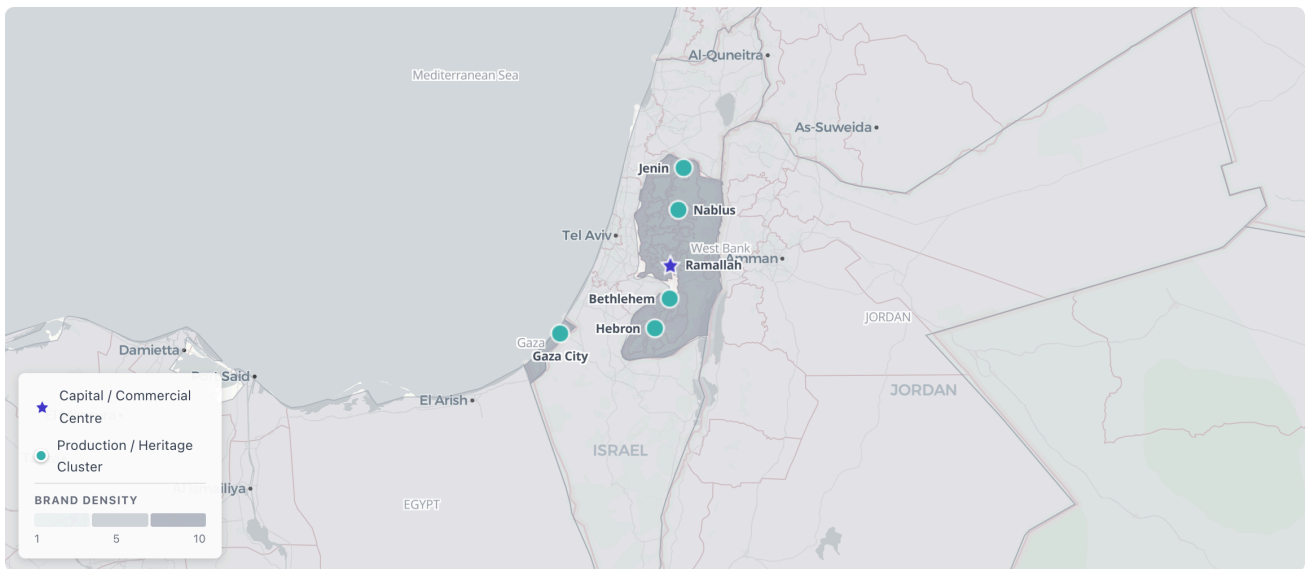
MAS, 2024

MARKETS: Palestine

SECTORS: Olive Oil & Agriculture · Food Processing · Artisan Crafts · Natural Beauty · Dairy Products · Confectionery

GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

Nablus heritage industries and Ramallah commercial capital: Palestine's two-city founder geography



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Palestine's founder map sets Nablus's deep industrial heritage — centuries-old olive-oil soap production and agricultural exports — against Ramallah's post-Oslo role as commercial capital, with brand continuity across checkpoints the defining operational constraint in a market institutional capital has never entered.

Brand activity concentrates in three West Bank cities -- Nablus (soap, food, olive oil), Ramallah (distribution, commercial), and Hebron (stone, marble) -- with a diaspora-return founder cluster centred on Jenin. The West Bank and Gaza operate as two fundamentally different business environments: West Bank brands have relative freedom of movement; Gaza brands operate under near-total economic isolation.

* * *

COUNTRY NARRATIVE

Palestine has a Coca-Cola franchise built by a man born in Jaffa, displaced at age ten, educated in America, and returned to rebuild at sixty. It has an olive oil brand that became the world's first fair-trade-certified extra virgin olive oil, now supplying 90% of Dr. Bronner's global production and selling on Whole Foods shelves. It has a traditional soap industry in Nablus that has operated continuously for five centuries, survived Ottoman rule, the British Mandate, Jordanian administration, Israeli occupation, two intifadas, and a global pandemic – and never raised a dollar of institutional capital.

None of these brands appear in PitchBook. None appear in Bloomberg. None appear in any analyst report that institutional investors read. The intelligence gap is not because these brands are small. It is because the infrastructure to find them does not exist in any language investors speak.

That is the void this article documents.

Whitepaper № 1 documents a synchronized transition wave across emerging markets: reform-era founders ageing out simultaneously, institutional investors unprepared. Palestine is the most acute single case — the narrowest window, the deepest crisis filter, and the highest density of undocumented Narrative Due Diligence material in any market Brandmine covers.

The Oslo cohort and the crisis filter

Palestine's founder cohort has a specific shape determined by a specific event. The Oslo Accords of 1993–1994 established the Palestinian Authority and, with the Paris Protocol of 1994, created Palestine's first modern commercial regulatory framework. Before Oslo, formal business registration was effectively impossible for Palestinians under Israeli military administration. After Oslo, a generation of entrepreneurs – many returning from diaspora, many commercialising heritage craft traditions, many building on Soviet-style cooperative structures – launched the first wave of privately registered Palestinian consumer enterprises.

The reform window ran from 1994 to approximately 2010. Founders who launched in this window are now 45 to 70 years old. Those who launched in the early Oslo years – 1994 to 1998 – are in or entering the succession danger zone.

What makes Palestine's wave structurally different from every other market Brandmine covers is the crisis filter it passed through. Brandmine classifies this wave shape as crisis-filtered: a single compressed founding window, subjected to repeated existential crises, each functioning as a successive sieve. The Second Intifada of 2000–2005 destroyed an estimated 40–60% of Palestinian GDP. Supply chains that crossed Israeli checkpoints became unreliable, then impossible, then occasionally viable again. Businesses that survived this crisis did not survive through luck. They survived by developing crisis management systems – supplier diversification, cash reserves, logistics redundancy, relationship networks – that were embedded in the founder's personal knowledge and nowhere else.

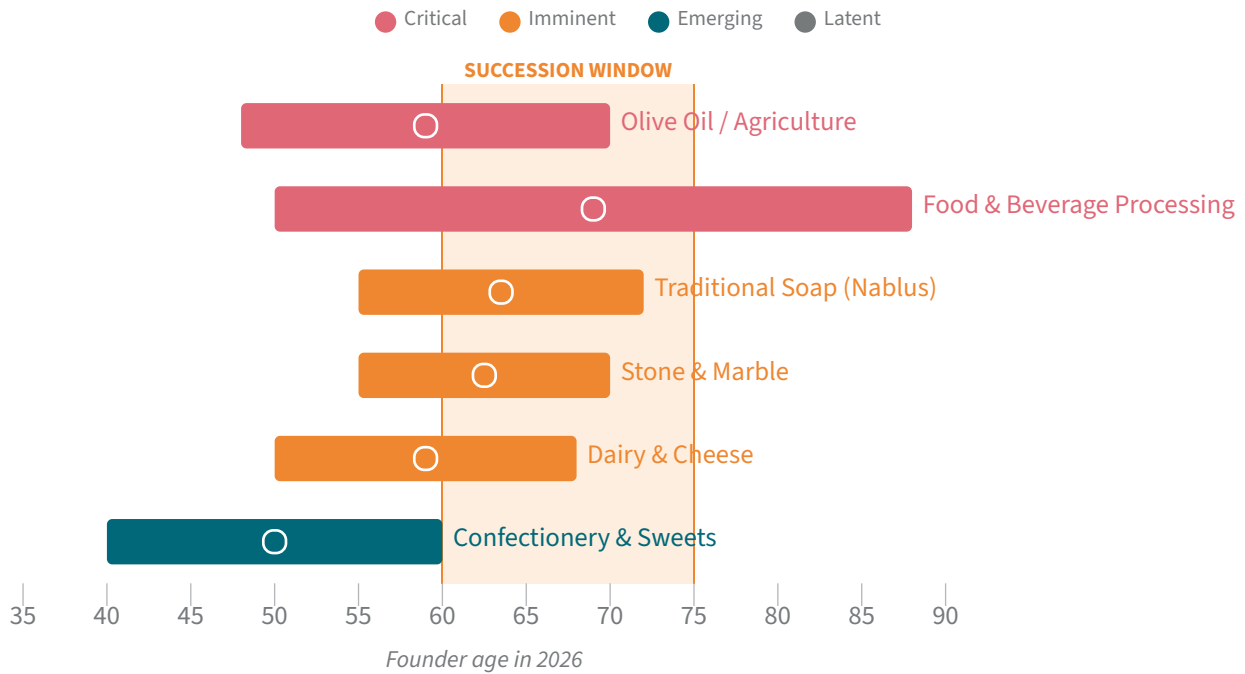
The businesses that still operate today have been tested not once but repeatedly. The 2007 Gaza blockade. The 2008–2009 Gaza War. The 2014 Gaza War. COVID-19. The 2023–2025 escalation, which contracted West Bank GDP by 13% and devastated Gaza's economy by an estimated 84%. Every surviving Palestinian consumer brand has a crisis response documented across at least three of these events. No other country produces this density of Narrative Due Diligence material.

The succession clock is running on a cohort that has never had time to plan. In a country where 95% of firms are family-owned SMEs with no succession infrastructure and institutional capital has never touched consumer brands, the transition wave arrives without warning, without advisors, and without buyers.

FOUNDER AGES BY SECTOR

Where Palestine's Founders Stand in 2026

Six sectors, one window — and zero institutional capital partners



Age ranges based on sector mapping research and industry founder profiles. Succession window (60–75) based on PwC Global Family Business Survey and INSEAD family business research. Source: Brandmine analysis.

Where Palestine’s succession pressure concentrates

Brandmine’s sector mapping identified fourteen candidate consumer sectors in Palestine. Eleven show meaningful founder-owned brand activity at commercial scale. Six carry the highest succession urgency. Here is where the wave is breaking.

The sector with the most documented crisis material in any market

Palestine’s olive oil industry is the country’s most thoroughly documented brand sector – and its most thoroughly misunderstood. The \$150M+ annual industry has 50% of Palestine’s cultivated land dedicated to olives, the world’s first FLO-certified fair trade EVOO (Canaan Palestine, 2004), and a concentration of diaspora-return founders with extraordinary personal and business crisis arcs. Estimated pool: 5–10 brands at \$5M+, 20–30 at the \$2M threshold Brandmine recommends for Palestine.

The anchor case is Canaan Palestine. Dr. Nasser Abufarha founded the company in 2004 in Jenin, during the Second Intifada’s economic nadir, when olive oil prices had crashed to 8 NIS per kilogram – approximately \$1.75. He built a cooperative network of 2,500+ farming families across 55 cooperatives. He achieved Fairtrade certification in 2004. By 2015 Canaan was generating \$9M+ annually and had become the world’s most cited Palestinian export success story. The Paris Protocol’s structural export cost disadvantage – adding

approximately 35% to Palestinian export costs versus the 15% regional average – is not an obstacle to founders who have designed around it from the start.

Al'Ard Palestinian Agri-Products, founded by Ziad Anabtawi in 2008, represents a second archetype: third-generation in a 1963 Nablus grocery family, the current founder built the commercial export brand. Al'Ard exports to the United States, United Kingdom, Europe, Chile, and Saudi Arabia, and won the 2020 Great Taste Award for its za'atar. Succession urgency: critical – Anabtawi's generation is now in the window.

The founder at the biological limit of leadership

Palestine's food and beverage processing sector contains an estimated 15–25 founder-owned brands at \$5M+, making it the country's largest absolute pool. It also contains the most urgent single succession case in Brandmine's coverage.

Zahi Khouri was born in Jaffa in 1938 – the same city, the same year, that would become the geographic heart of the 1948 displacement. He was ten years old when his family fled. He was educated in the United States, built a business career in construction and real estate, and returned to Palestine in 1998 at the age of sixty to build the National Beverage Company – the Coca-Cola franchise for the Palestinian territories. He received the Business for Peace Award in Oslo in 2015. He published a memoir in 2024. He is approximately 88 years old.

NBC operates four bottling plants across Ramallah, Jericho, Tulkarem, and Gaza. It employs 1,000 workers. It holds 86% of the Palestinian carbonated drinks market. It is a private company – entirely invisible to institutional databases. Its succession status is undisclosed.

Al-Juneidi Group – Palestine's largest dairy company, 400+ employees, 80,000–90,000 litres per day, with operations expanded to Jordan in 2003 and 2008 – has the most visible succession arc: the founder died, his son Alaa assumed leadership, and the transition was documented in a film screened at international festivals. It happened without planning, without advisors, and without institutional capital. It may have worked. It is the only documented Palestinian consumer brand succession event.

Siniora Food Industries, founded in 1920 in Jerusalem, has navigated more than a century of disruption. A 2025 MDPI case study documents that shipping a container to Gaza costs \$2,000 versus \$1,200 from China to Korea – a 67% premium entirely attributable to the Paris Protocol and Israeli border controls. The company has operated through the British Mandate, partition, occupation, two intifadas, and a pandemic. It has never stopped.

Five centuries and no succession plan

The Nablus soap industry is one of the oldest continuously operating commercial traditions in the world. Olive oil soap from Nablus – صابون نابلسي – was exported across the Ottoman Empire and beyond for five hundred years before the word “brand” existed in a commercial context. The current operators are founder-generation in modern commercial terms: families that have been in the trade for generations but built their formal commercial enterprises in the Oslo era. The pool at the \$2M threshold that Brandmine recommends for Palestine is 10–15 operating businesses, concentrated in the historic soap quarter. Story accessibility: medium – Arabic-language press, some English documentation through heritage and trade sources. Succession urgency: imminent. None of these businesses have ever had an institutional capital partner.

The largest absolute pool – invisible to every database

Palestine's stone and marble sector is not what investors think of when they think of Palestinian brands. It is also the largest consumer-adjacent sector in the country by revenue. Palestine is the world's twelfth-largest stone producer. The sector generates \$450–600M annually – 25% of total industrial output and 4.5% of GDP. There are 1,124 facilities. There are 45,000 workers. There is zero venture or private equity presence. The sector is 100% family-owned.

Al-Anan Stone & Marble was founded in 1996 in Hebron by Abdul-Samad Al-Atrash – a self-made entrepreneur who started as a shoemaker and transitioned to the stone industry. Al-Anan holds ISO certification, produces

150,000+ square metres annually, maintains what it claims is the largest stone inventory in the Middle East, and has signed export deals to Oman. Al-Atrash is an Oslo-era founder, now in the succession window.

TIMCO (Halayka family, Bethlehem, 1993) and Brothers Company (Bethlehem, 1993) are pre-Oslo or early-Oslo founding dates – their current operators are 55–70 years old. Premium Palestinian marble with a distinctive pinkish hue exports to Turkey, India, and Guatemala. The buyers know the product. No one has ever documented the founders who built it.

The multi-generational arcs that are already active

Palestine's dairy sector carries the most documented succession event in the country (Al-Juneidi). Its confectionery sector carries the most documented multi-generational arc: Al Arz Ice Cream, founded in Nablus around 1950, is now in its third generation under Raed Anabtawi, who reports “eight digit” revenues and 200 workers. Three generations of survival in a market that has passed through multiple existential crises is not a story that any database has captured.

Why Palestine's cohort is unlike any other

Palestine's succession wave is unique in one dimension that no other market Brandmine covers can match: the crisis filter has been running continuously for thirty years. The founders who survived the Second Intifada survived because they had embedded crisis management knowledge that is entirely tacit – in supplier relationships, logistics workarounds, cash flow management under extreme uncertainty, and the ability to operate when checkpoints close without warning. None of this knowledge exists in an org chart. None of it transfers automatically.

The Paris Protocol structure compounds the succession difficulty. Palestinian goods face export costs 35% above the regional average because all trade passes through Israeli-controlled crossings. Founders who built export businesses under this constraint did so through personal relationships, fair trade certification, diaspora networks, and direct buyer relationships – often in the United States, United Kingdom, Chile, and the Gulf states. When a Palestinian founder exits without a succession plan, the export relationships exit with them. The brand may survive. The market access may not.

The intelligence gap is linguistic and geopolitical simultaneously. Arabic-language press is the primary source for Palestinian business coverage. The key sources – Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), Al-Iqtisadi, This Week in Palestine, Wafa News Agency business coverage – are accessible in theory and inaccessible in practice to most institutional capital. Geopolitical opacity adds a second filter: Western analysts and investors who see “conflict zone” in a search result stop reading. The combination means that brands with decades of documented resilience, active international distribution, and direct diaspora connections to premium consumer markets in Chile, Jordan, the Gulf states, and the United States are not just undercovered – they are invisible.

The window and who is not inside it

Unlike Argentina, where L Catterton and Grupo Perez Companc are already positioned inside the transition window, Palestine has no institutional buyers already operating in consumer brands. PADICO and the Palestinian Investment Fund concentrate on telecommunications, banking, and real estate. Sadara Ventures and Gaza Sky Geeks focus on early-stage technology. The consumer brand sector – olive oil, food processing, traditional soap, stone, dairy, confectionery – has never had an institutional capital partner.

This is not evidence of a thin opportunity. It is evidence of an intelligence gap. The brands exist. The succession pressure is real. The diaspora distribution networks are active – Palestinian products reach Whole Foods, UK specialty retailers, Chilean supermarkets, and Gulf state premium importers. What does not exist is the

synthesis: the systematic documentation of which founders are approaching transition, what their businesses are worth, and which international buyers would pay for access.

What disappears when a Palestinian founder exits without a plan is not just a brand. It is the logistics infrastructure that routes around checkpoints. The supplier relationships maintained through three intifadas. The fair trade certification that took a decade to build. The diaspora buyer connections that no e-commerce platform can replicate. By the time these brands surface through conventional channels – if they ever do – the founders who carry this knowledge will have retired, sold at distress prices, or simply closed.

Palestine’s founder-owned consumer brands sit in a country with an extraordinary tradition of resilience documentation, in sectors that premium international consumers already buy, through diaspora networks that reach every major consumption market in the world. Zahi Khouri is 88. Nasser Abufarha’s cooperatives span 2,500 farming families. The Nablus soap quarter has five centuries of continuity and no institutional capital. The intelligence to find these founders is being assembled. In Palestine, it will be assembled faster than anywhere else in Brandmine’s coverage — or not at all.

KEY TAKEAWAY

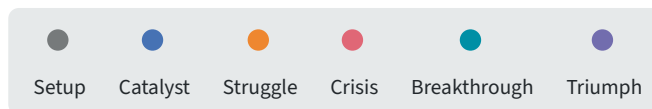
Palestinian brands will not surface through conventional channels. The only way to find them before the window closes is to read past the conflict framing -- the intelligence is there, in Arabic, waiting.

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TRANSFORMATION TIMELINE

The siege-tested generation, 1993–2024

From Oslo Accords to present — Palestine's founders built consumer brands through three decades of political uncertainty, Israeli closure policy, and the structural fragmentation of a territory without a unified market; brand continuity across checkpoints remains the defining operational constraint.



SETUP 1994

Oslo Accords create Palestine's first commercial framework

The Palestinian Authority is established. For the first time, Palestinian entrepreneurs can register businesses under a functioning regulatory framework. The Paris Protocol defines economic relations with Israel -- enabling trade but channelling it entirely through Israeli-controlled crossings, a structural constraint that will shape every business decision for the next three decades.

CATALYST 1997

Commercial expansion wave across West Bank cities

Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, and Bethlehem see rapid private enterprise growth. Industrial zones are established. The Nablus soap quarter, olive oil cooperatives, and food processing facilities begin operating at modern commercial scale for the first time. Founders who launch in this window are building on a foundation that has never existed before -- and will shortly be destroyed.

CATALYST 1998**NBC (National Beverage Company) founded by Zahi Khouri**

Zahi Khouri -- born in Jaffa in 1938, a refugee at age ten, educated in the United States -- returns to Palestine after Oslo to build the Coca-Cola franchise. He is sixty years old and starting over. Within two decades, NBC will operate four bottling plants (Ramallah, Jericho, Tulkarem, Gaza), hold 86% of the Palestinian fizzy drinks market, and employ 1,000 workers. It is the most documented diaspora-return founder story in Palestinian business history.

CRISIS 2000**Second Intifada destroys 40--60% of Palestinian GDP**

The uprising that begins in September 2000 and continues until 2005 is not just a political event -- it is an economic catastrophe. Palestinian GDP contracts by 40--60%. Movement restrictions, checkpoints, and curfews make supply chain management nearly impossible. The businesses that survive this crisis are not lucky; they are structurally superior. Every surviving founder has a documented crisis response from this period. This is the first entry in Palestine's NDD record.

CATALYST 2004**Canaan Palestine founded during economic collapse**

Dr. Nasser Abufarha, a Palestinian-American anthropologist who trained at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, returns to Jenin during the depths of the Second Intifada -- when olive oil prices have crashed to 8 NIS per kilogram -- and founds Canaan Palestine. The logic is counterintuitive and correct. By 2015, Canaan will generate \$9M+ annually, connect 2,500+ farming families across 55 cooperatives, and supply 90% of Dr. Bronner's global olive oil production. It becomes the first FLO-certified fair trade extra virgin olive oil in history.

CRISIS 2007**Gaza blockade begins**

Following the Hamas takeover of Gaza, Israel and Egypt impose a near-total blockade. Import and export are essentially severed. Gaza businesses that previously had access to regional markets are now operating in a sealed economy. The economic divergence between West Bank and Gaza, already significant, becomes absolute. NBC's Gaza bottling plant -- one of four -- continues to operate in extraordinary constraint.

CRISIS 2014**Al-Juneidi succession begins**

The founder of Al-Juneidi Group -- Palestine's largest dairy company, 400+ employees, 80,000--90,000 litres per day fresh milk production, expanded to Jordan -- dies. His son Alaa Al-Juneidi assumes leadership, fulfilling a deathbed promise by climbing Mount Everest. The story is documented in the film "The Promise," screened at the Chicago Palestine Film Festival. It is the most visible succession event in Palestinian consumer brands -- and it happened by accident, not by design.

CRISIS 2020**COVID-19 doubles Palestinian economic pressure**

The pandemic compounds existing movement restrictions. Supply chains that already passed through Israeli-controlled crossings face additional closure. Brands that had diversified export channels through fair trade networks and diaspora connections demonstrate superior resilience. The crisis adds another layer to the NDD record for every surviving Palestinian business.

CRISIS 2023**October escalation collapses Gaza economy and contracts West Bank**

The October 2023 escalation and subsequent conflict devastate Gaza's economy -- an estimated 84% GDP contraction by 2025. The West Bank contracts 13% as movement restrictions intensify and international trade becomes more difficult. For Palestinian consumer brands: this is the third existential crisis in twenty years. The businesses still operating are not just resilient -- they have been tested in ways no other founder cohort has faced.

STRUGGLE 2026**Succession window opens across all major sectors**

Oslo-era founders who built their businesses in the 1994--2010 period are now 50--70 years old. Fewer than 5% have formal succession plans. In a country where institutional capital has never touched consumer brands -- PADICO, PIF, and APIC concentrate entirely in telecoms, banking, and real estate -- there is no governance infrastructure, no exit market, and no succession advisory ecosystem. The window has opened. It will not stay open long.

Outreach quick reference

Metric	Reference
Dialing	+970
Currency	No national currency — Israeli new shekel (₪ / ILS), Jordanian dinar (JOD), and USD all circulate
Time Zone	UTC+2 (UTC+3 in daylight saving)
Working week	Sat–Thu (Friday rest day)
Capital	Ramallah (administrative); East Jerusalem claimed
Internet	.ps (country TLD)
Messaging	WhatsApp dominant; Telegram growing (~37%) — no state app blocks; Meta content restrictions on Palestinian accounts
Payment	Cash dominant; PalPay + Jawwal Pay (جوال باي) e-wallets the main digital rails; iBuraq instant transfers growing; cards at larger retailers; Gaza banking destroyed
Banking	No central bank with monetary authority (PMA regulates local banks); the system reaches global finance ONLY via Israeli correspondent banks, dependent on a discretionary Israeli waiver now renewed on a perpetual cliff-edge; Gaza banking largely destroyed. Verify current waiver/correspondent-access status before relying on transfers.
Languages	Arabic (official); English used in business
Entry	No Palestinian airport or independent crossing; all entry is via Israeli-controlled points (Ben Gurion, Allenby/King Hussein from Jordan, or Egypt) under Israeli rules; mandatory ETA-IL required pre-boarding (since Jan 2025); Gaza closed to ordinary travelers. Verify current ETA-IL rules and State Dept/FCDO advisories before travel.



About this research

This report draws on 0 verified sources across 1 language — primary documents, founder interviews, and trade press. Every figure and claim is cross-validated against independent references.

Full methodology at brandmine.ai.

ABOUT BRANDMINE

Exceptional founder-owned brands. Proven resilient. Ready now.

Brandmine delivers structured discovery intelligence on founder-owned consumer brands in emerging markets — researched in local languages, structured for investment decisions, delivered as focused reports.

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