

Palestinian Diaspora: Netherlands



Diaspora Mapping Working Group

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❖ The Netherlands country profile: Facts:

- **Full name:** The Kingdom of the Netherlands
- **Population:** 16.7 million (UN, 2011)
- **Capital:** Amsterdam; seat of government: the Hague
- **Area:** 41,864 sq km (16,164 sq miles)
- **Major language:** Dutch
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 79 years (men), 83 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 euro = 100 cents
- **Main exports:** Metal manufacturing, chemicals, foodstuffs
- **GNI per capita:** US \$49,050 (World Bank, 2010)
- **Internet domain:** .nl
- **International dialling code:** +31

1. NUMBERS OF PALESTINIANS

- **Palestinians in the Netherlands, (Source: *Palestinelink*, 2014):**
 - The town of Vlaardingen is home to a Palestinian community of approximately 5000 people, while the total number of Palestinians in the Netherlands is estimated at 12 – 15,000.
 - Among renowned Dutch Palestinians are poet Laureate of the Netherlands Ramsey Nasr, GroenLinks member of Parliament Arjan el Fassed, TV-presenter Kefa Allush and award winning filmmaker Hani Assad.

2. CONCENTRATION

- The town of Vlaardingen is home to a Palestinian community of approximately 5000 people.

3. PALESTINIAN HISTORICAL MIGRATION WAVES

- The workers of the ROMI margarine factory in Nablus were employed by the ROMI branch in the Netherlands and settled in Vlaardingen in the early 60's.
- The June-war of 1967, and the following occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem by Israel, turned their Palestinian passports invalid and their temporary residence in Vlaardingen became permanent. Vlaardinger Frans W. Assenberg wrote 'De historie van de Palestijnen in Vlaardingen' about the community (Source: *Palestinelink*, 2014):.

4. SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR PALESTINIANS

- The Palestinian in the Netherlands is from all segments of society: Students, workers and peasants, doctors, engineers, physicians, and artists.

5. PALESTINIAN DIASPORA TRADE AND INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

Representatives of 14 Palestinian companies, PalTrade, the Palestinian Federation of Industries (PFI), the Palestinian Businessmen Association (PBA) and the Palestinian Information Technology Association of Companies (PITA) travelled in a trade mission to the Netherlands on 27 October. The mission, funded by the NL Agency (a division of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs), was organised by the Netherlands Representative Office in Ramallah and the Netherlands Center for Trade Promotion (NCH).

During the visit, NCH organised a two-day information and country-branding event in The Hague with the aim of promoting opportunities to “Do Business in Palestine” among Dutch companies. Both Dutch and Palestinian officials and senior representatives from Dutch business organisations attended the event.

Palestinian companies from the ICT, agriculture, furniture, processed food, chemical industry, metal industry and stone and marble sectors also took part in a tailor-made individual networking programme. Activities included visits to local firms and business-to-business matchmaking with around 60 Dutch companies. Mo'men Sinokrot, commercial manager of Palestine Gardens (an agricultural exporter from the West Bank) said, “There was immense interest from the Dutch side to cooperate on many levels. Trade opportunities in the Netherlands are enormous and Palestinian companies have great potential to enter the market. I met several companies that are interested in buying our products and we are already collaborating with them.” Dr Yahya Al-Salqan, President and CEO of Jaffa.Net Computer Systems, explained that his company “...met with different Dutch ICT firms and explored opportunities to outsource software development to Palestine” (The Portland Trust, 2013).

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