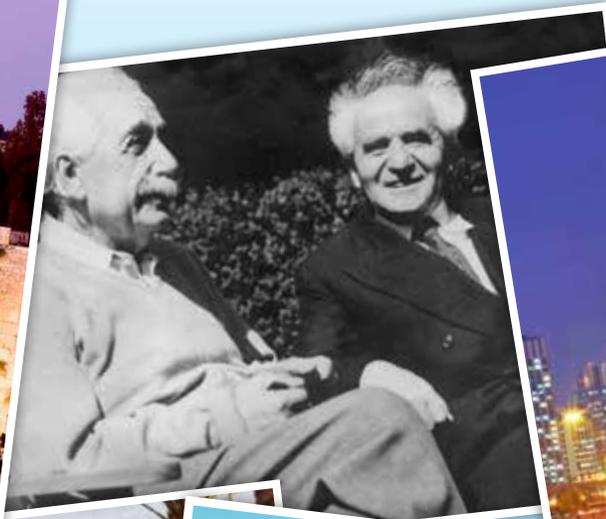


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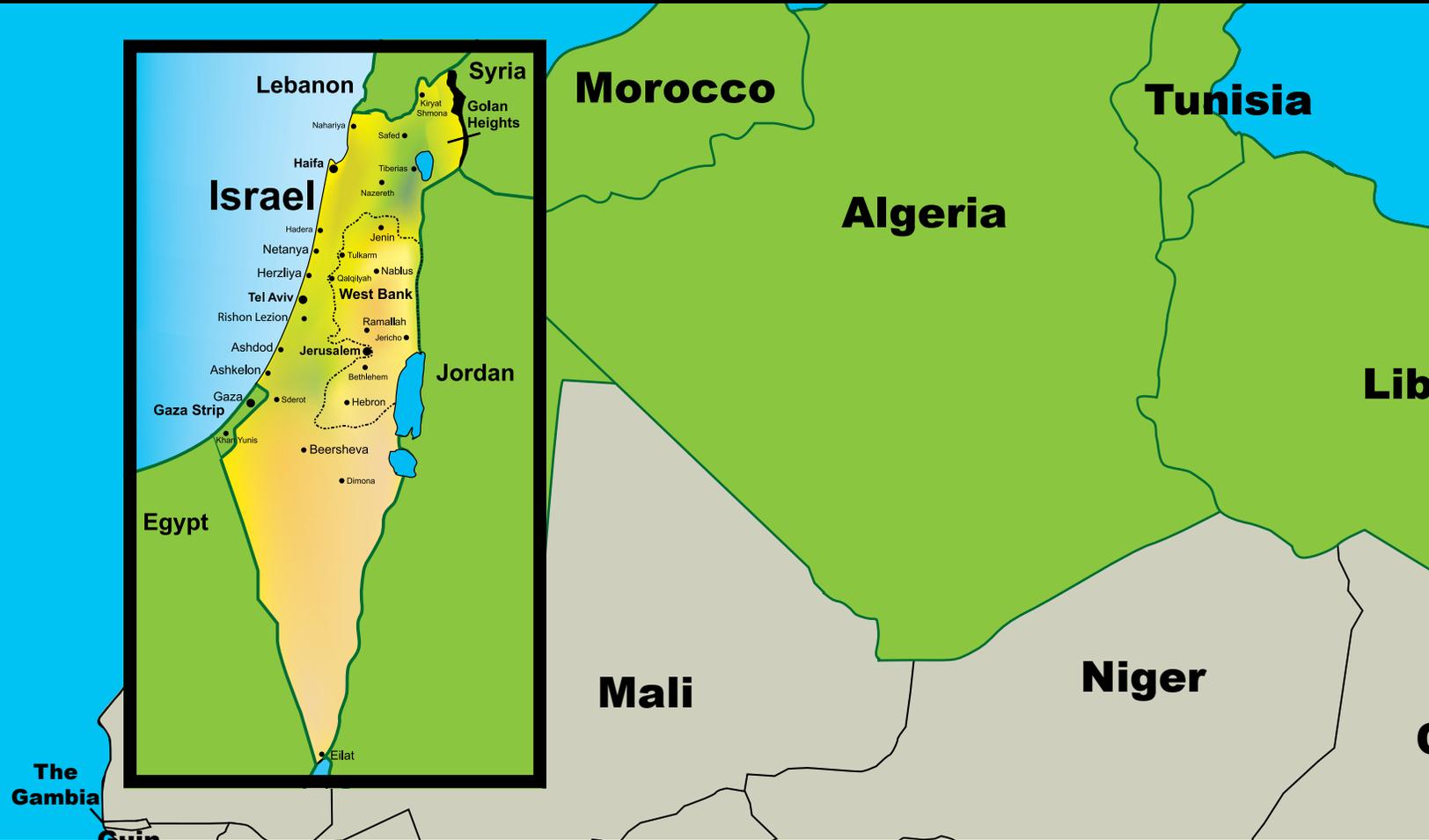
Geography • Politics • Zionism • History • People • Culture



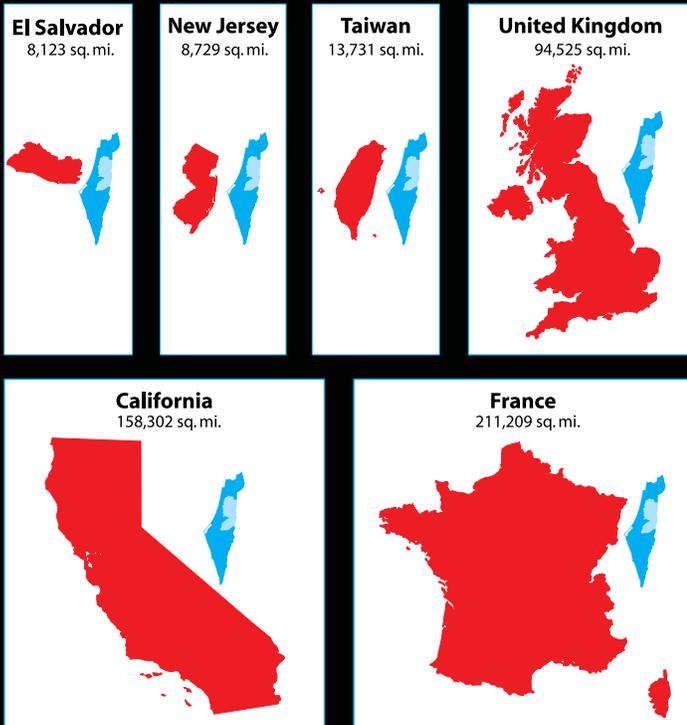
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Regional



**Israel's territory is 8,019 square miles (sq. mi.).
That makes it smaller than...**



Facts About the Region

- Israel's land mass is about 1/6 of 1 percent of the Middle East.
- There are roughly 450 million people across the region. The vast majority are Arab and Muslim. Around 20 million are Christian. 7 million are Jews, nearly all of them living in Israel.
- Israel is the only Middle Eastern country where the Christian population is growing instead of decreasing. Between 1948 and 2020, their numbers increased from 34,000 to 180,000.

World Religions

Christianity:	2.4 billion people
Islam:	1.8 billion people
Hinduism:	1.2 billion people
Buddhism:	535 million people
Judaism:	14.7 million people

URL links for all sources cited in this booklet are at www.standwithus.com/booklets-footnotes.

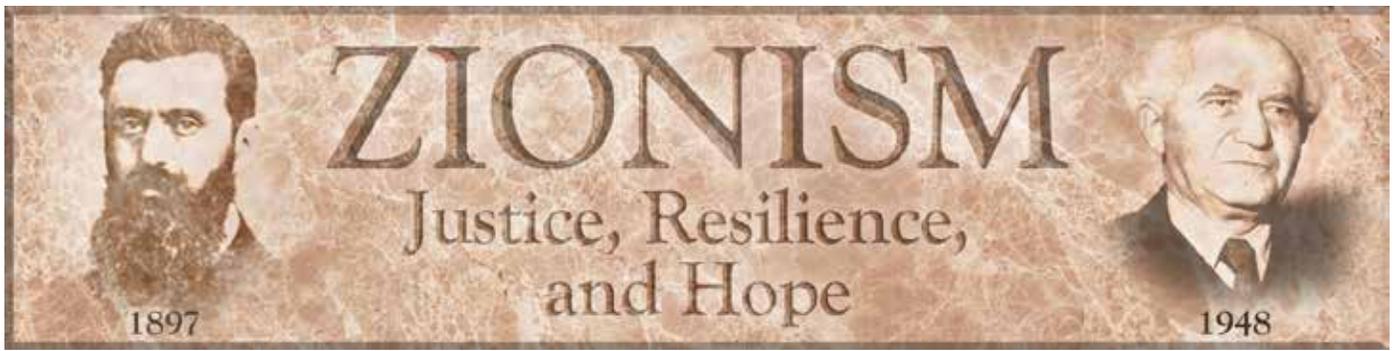
For more information see StandWithUs Fact Sheets at www.standwithus.com/factsheets.

Map



In the following pages, you will learn how the Jewish people restored their freedom in their ancestral homeland after 2,000 years of living under the rule of others. You will see how they built a vibrant society and how it strives to live up to the ethical and humanitarian ideals of both its ancient heritage and of modern times despite the challenges it faces.

You will also learn about the Arab-Israeli conflict, terrorism, and efforts to achieve justice and peace in the region.



A continuous Jewish presence in Israel for over 3,000 years

The Zionist movement "should stop" because it could lead to war, but "who can challenge the rights of the Jews in Palestine? Good Lord, historically it is really your country."

Yusuf Diya al-Khalidi,
Mayor of Jerusalem, 1899

"It is, indeed, not the birth of a nation, for the Jewish nation through centuries of oppression and captivity have preserved their sentiment of nationality as few peoples could...it is the rebirth of a nation."

Lord Robert Cecil, British
lawyer, MP, and diplomat, 1918

"We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement... We will wish the Jews a hearty welcome home... our two movements complement one another."

Emir Faisal, a leader of
the Arab world, 1919

"It is manifestly right that the scattered Jews should have a national center and a national home and be reunited, and where else but in Palestine, with which for 3,000 years they have been intimately and profoundly associated?"

Winston Churchill, 1921



Jews are indigenous to Israel, the birthplace of their identity, language, religion, and culture. Zion is an age-old name for Jerusalem and the land of Israel. That is why Zionism is the name of the liberation movement of the Jewish people who sought to restore their freedom and independence in their ancestral homeland.

Theodor Herzl founded the modern Zionist movement in 1897, but the dream of restoration and return had always been at the core of Judaism and Jewish identity. Rome tried to obliterate the millennia-old Jewish state in the first century, but unlike other nations conquered in ancient times, the Jews survived and never lost their profound attachment to their land of origin. Jews lived in the land of Israel continuously for 3,000 years. Those forced into exile expressed their yearning to return in their daily liturgy and prayers. For 2,000 years many came back in periodic waves of immigration. By the late 1860s, Jews once again were the majority in Jerusalem.¹

Zionists adapted this historic dream to modern political ideals and circumstances. Inspired by national liberation movements, they hoped to overcome the 1,900 years of oppression and injustice Jews had endured across Europe and the Middle East. The Zionists believed that if the scattered Jews reunited in their historic homeland, joining the Jews who were already there, they could restore their freedom, be free from prejudice, and further develop their unique culture.

Disagreements arose among Zionists as Jews from different countries and with different ideologies—religious and secular, socialist and conservative—joined together. But they united around fundamental principles that combined idealism and practicality. They would seek official support from other national governments. They would return legally, purchase the land, and restore it through their own labor. Zionists envisioned living in friendship with non-Jewish communities and believed the entire region would benefit from their restoration of the land.

Within 50 years the Zionist dream became a reality. Britain recognized the thriving communities Jews had built and, in the 1917 Balfour Declaration, endorsed the "Zionist aspirations." The international community turned Britain's policy into international law at the San Remo Conference in 1920, and the League of Nations then carved out the Palestine Mandate as a national home for the Jewish people.

On May 14, 1948, Jews reestablished a state in their ancestral homeland, fulfilling the Zionist dream of Jewish self-determination. Israel's Declaration of Independence articulated its values as a Jewish and democratic state with equal rights for all citizens, regardless of ethnic or religious background.

Today, Jewish and non-Jewish Zionists around the world support the state of Israel and hope to see the full Zionist vision realized—a safe and thriving Israel living at peace with its neighbors.



The remains of Gamla, evidence of an ancient Jewish city in the Golan Heights, where, in 67 C.E., Jews fought to the last person against the Roman army. Thousands of inhabitants were killed. Others jumped to their deaths from Gamla's cliffs to avoid capture and certain slavery. The city was destroyed and never rebuilt.



The Kotel ha-Ma'aravi:
the Western Wall

This outer retaining wall on the west side of the Temple Mount was all that remained after the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 C.E. It became Judaism's holiest site, and for centuries, Jews worshiped at the Kotel and put their prayers, written on scraps of paper, into its crevices.



When the Romans defeated the Jews in 70 C.E., they built this Titus Arch in Rome to commemorate their victory. The sculpture depicts the booty the Romans took when they ransacked and destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem. The Roman victors renamed the conquered Jewish region "Palestine."²



Jews are one of the few ancient peoples who have survived into modern times. Judaism is among the world's oldest living religions.

Jewish civilization was already over 1,000 years old when the Romans conquered Judea, but the Jews safeguarded their unique heritage for the next two millennia. No matter how far they wandered, how much they adapted to their host societies, or how much they were persecuted, Jews maintained their identity.

The Jews, who emerged as a people over 3,500 years ago, created the religion of Judaism. Its sacred books have bound them together for millennia. Whether they are religious or secular, Jews are connected by the ethics and values that Judaism teaches. Parents passed the tradition to their children, who passed it on to their own children, and so it has continued for thousands of years.

Jews everywhere observe the holy days in almost identical ways and repeat the rituals and prayers that Jewish families have used since the days of ancient Israel.

Jews share the same life-cycle rituals. When an eight-day-old infant is circumcised, or adolescents celebrate their bar and bat mitzvahs and the whole community celebrates, they are reenacting age-old Jewish traditions. When a loved one dies,



Fragment of a sixth-century mosaic (Byzantine Period) depicting King David playing the lyre, found in the ancient synagogue of Gaza. —Israel Museum



A boy carries a Torah scroll at his bar mitzvah at the Western Wall.

“Jews prefer being prisoners in Jerusalem to enjoying the freedom they could acquire elsewhere....The love of the Jews for the Holy Land which they lost...is unbelievable.”

—Jesuit Father Michael Naud on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, 1674³

Jewish customs and prayers comfort the grieving and spell out how the community should support and console the mourners.

Jewish life centers around home and family. Jewish tradition sanctifies family relationships. Parents’ devotion and sense of responsibility for passing on Jewish identity have bound generations to the past while linking them to the future.

Jews have always identified with Zion, the Jewish homeland. It is at the core of Jewish history, religious texts, and identity. The Hebrew language, the Torah, the laws in the Talmud, the Jewish calendar, and Jewish holidays and festivals all originated in ancient Israel and revolve around its seasons, way of life, and history. Some Jews consider title to the land to be at the heart of the promise between God and the Jewish people in the Torah, which dates back thousands of years. Zion and Jerusalem are mentioned 809 times in the Hebrew Bible. When Israel was reestablished in 1948, Jews everywhere came to embrace Israel and once again recognize it as the center of Jewish life and continuity.

“The Greeks and the Romans...are gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time but it burned out...the Jews saw them all, survived them all...all things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces passed, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?” —Mark Twain, 1898⁴

¹Dore Gold, “Jerusalem in International Diplomacy: Demography,” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, October 27, 2006. ²Michael Grant, *The Jews in the Roman World*, 1973, p. 255; Elliott A Green, “What Did Rome Call the Land of Israel...,” *Midstream*, October 1995. ³R.P. Michael Naud, *Voyage Nouveau de la Terre-Sainte*, Paris, 1702, pp. 58, 563. ⁴Mark Twain, “Concerning the Jews,” *Harper’s Magazine*, March 1898.

Evolution of the Region

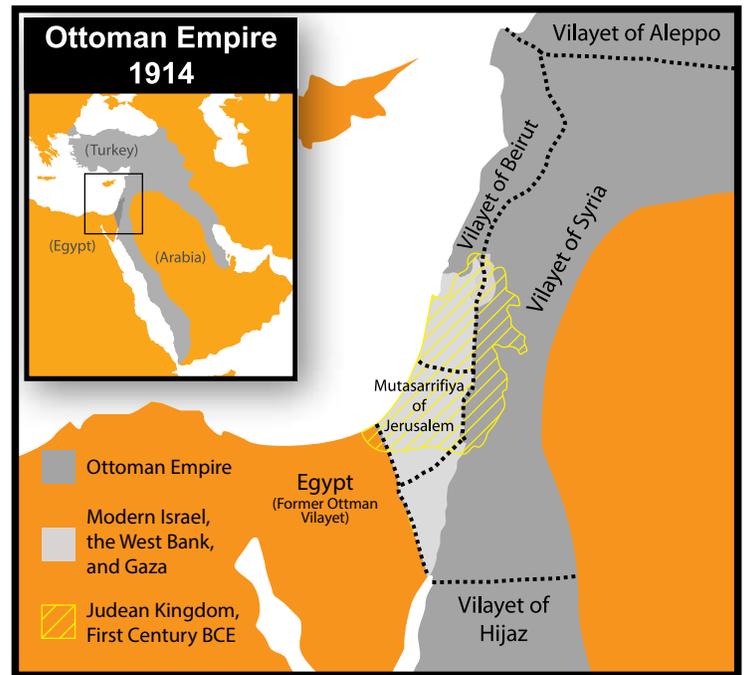
The Rise and Fall of Empires

In the first century, the Roman Empire defeated the over 1,000-year-old nation of Judea, destroyed its Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and exiled hundreds of thousands of Jews. To erase all memory of Judea, Rome renamed it “Palestine.” This name referenced the Philistines, an ancient people believed to have migrated from the Aegean Sea, who fought the Jews during Biblical times.¹ Afterward, Westerners referred to the Jewish-Christian Holy Land as Palestine.

For the two millennia after the Roman conquest, no other state or unique national group developed in Palestine, and no ruler chose Jerusalem as its capital. Instead, different empires came, colonized, ruled, and disappeared. Jews remained throughout these changes, living under the rule of various non-Jewish majority populations. Their numbers grew as exiled Jews returned in periodic waves of immigration; their numbers fell when the area’s rulers persecuted them.

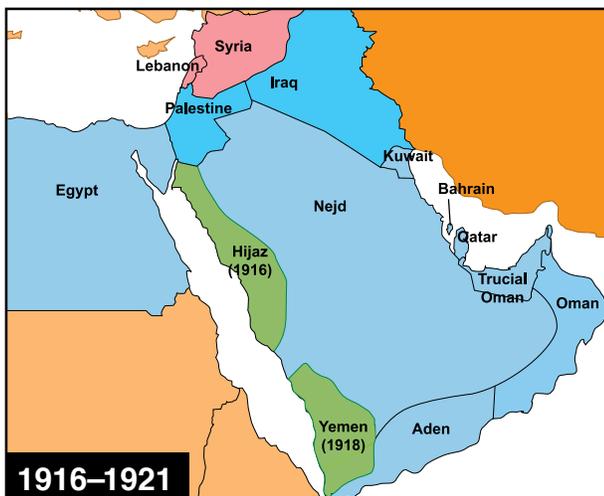
Between 1517 and 1917, Palestine was an unimportant backwater of the sprawling Ottoman Empire, which, at its height in 1683, covered vast parts of the Middle East, North Africa, and Eastern Europe. It was separated into small subdistricts within the large province of Syria (and later Beirut). The Palestine region initially prospered under the Ottomans, but, during the Empire’s decline, it was reduced to a sparsely populated, impoverished, and barren area.²

When the Ottoman Empire was defeated in World War I (1914–1918), its lands were ceded to the victorious Allies. Just as the Allies carved new nations out of Europe’s defeated empires, so too they carved nations out of the former Ottoman Empire and created most of the Middle Eastern states we know today, including Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria. They also drew Palestine’s boundaries and officially recognized it as the Jewish national home.



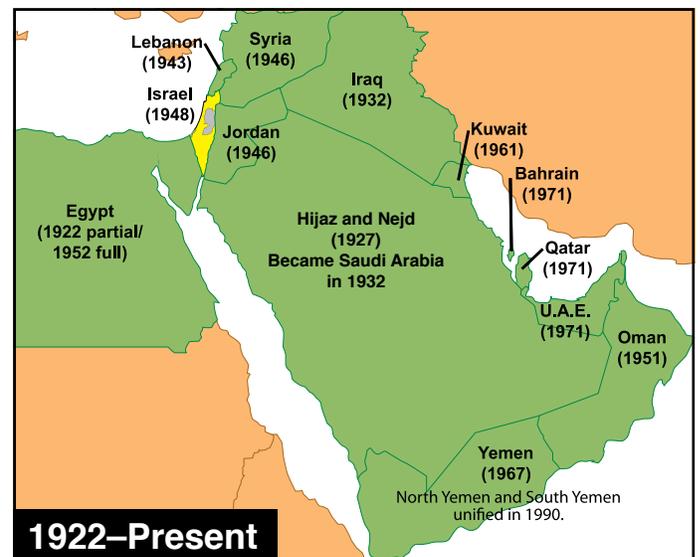
Under Ottoman rule, the former lands of the Judean kingdom were broken up into various provinces and did not constitute a single political unit.

The Middle East: A neighborhood of young countries



- British Mandate
- British Protectorate
- French Mandate
- Independent From Foreign Power (Date of Independence)

The newly established League of Nations set up “mandates” to be administered by France and England until the new territories were ready for self-government. The boundaries established at the end of World War I would be changed several times before assuming their current form.



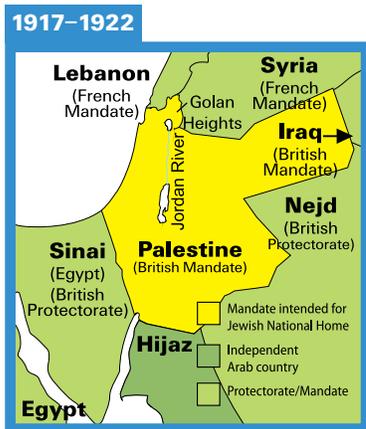
- Israel (1948) Independence
- West Bank
- Decolonization of Arab States (Date of Independence)

The independence of most of the Middle East’s modern nation-states is relatively recent, although the region is home to many ancient cultures. Several of these states, such as Bahrain and Kuwait, are younger than Israel.

¹Michael Grant, *The Jews in the Roman World*, 1973, p. 255; Elliott A Green, “What Did Rome Call the Land of Israel...,” *Midstream*, October 1995.
²League of Nations, “An Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine, during the period 1st July, 1920–30th June, 1921,” July 1921.

Israel Reborn

The League of Nations recognized the Jews' deep ties to their historic homeland, admired the thriving community that had been revitalizing since the 1880s, and established the Palestine Mandate for a Jewish homeland. **This is modern Israel's story in maps.**



In the 1917 Balfour Declaration, Britain endorsed "Zionist aspirations" to reestablish the Jewish homeland in Palestine and promised to "facilitate" the effort.¹ In 1920 the Covenant of the League of Nations adopted this and turned it into international law.² In 1922 the League of Nations instructed the British Mandate authorities to "facilitate" Jewish immigration and settlement of Palestine.³ They also required the British to protect the civil and religious rights of all other peoples living there.



When the 1948 war ended, Jordan annexed the area west of the Jordan River and renamed it the "West Bank," while Egypt occupied Gaza. Jordan and Egypt's control of the areas was not recognized as legitimate by the international community. With these ceasefire lines, Israel was only nine miles wide at its center, leaving its population centers vulnerable to military and terrorist attacks. In the 1950s and 1960s, terrorists opposed to Israel's existence repeatedly launched attacks from Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza.



In 1922 Britain cut off 77 percent of the Palestine Mandate to Jewish immigration, giving the land to a powerful Arab clan called the Hashemites. This would become the nation of Jordan. In 1923, Britain gave the Golan Heights to the French Mandate of Syria. During the Mandate term Palestinian described both Jewish and Arab residents of Palestine.



In 1967, when Israel's neighbors again mobilized for a full-scale invasion and blocked her waterways, Israel preempted them in a defensive war. In six days of fighting, Israel captured strategically vital buffer zones: the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza, and the West Bank.

Israel immediately offered to negotiate with Jordan, Syria, and Egypt and exchange land for peace. Arab governments refused to talk to or recognize Israel.⁴ In 1973 Syria and Egypt launched a surprise attack to destroy Israel on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur and were again defeated.

1947: UN Partition Proposal

UN Resolution 181 recommended partitioning the remaining Palestine Mandate between Arabs and Jews. The Jewish portion had a Jewish majority. Jewish leaders accepted it though their portion comprised only 13 percent of the original Mandate and 60 percent of it was the arid Negev Desert. Arab leaders rejected the plan and made no counteroffer. Instead, they launched the 1948 war to seize the whole area and eliminate Israel.



Proposal Rejected by Arab Leaders



Hoping to foster peace, Israel gave up the entire Sinai Peninsula—which it had captured in 1967—to Egypt in the 1979 Camp David Peace Accords. In 1994 Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty.

Using a "land for peace" model, Israel and the Palestinians tried to negotiate the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. By the time Palestinian Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat began the violent second intifada in 2000, 98 percent of Palestinians lived under an autonomous Palestinian government.

Seeing it had no peace partner and hoping for progress, Israel withdrew unilaterally from Lebanon in 2000 and from Gaza and parts of the West Bank in 2005. Nonetheless, following the withdrawal, Israel continues to face serious threats from Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

¹Balfour Declaration, November 17, 1917. ²Treaty of Sevres, Section VII, Article 94, August 10, 1920. ³Council of the League of Nations, The Palestine Mandate, Article 6, July 24, 1922. ⁴Government of Israel, Land-for-Peace Principle, June 19, 1967. (Document reproduced in Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz's *Israel in the Middle East: Documents and Readings*, 2008, pp. 238–9.)

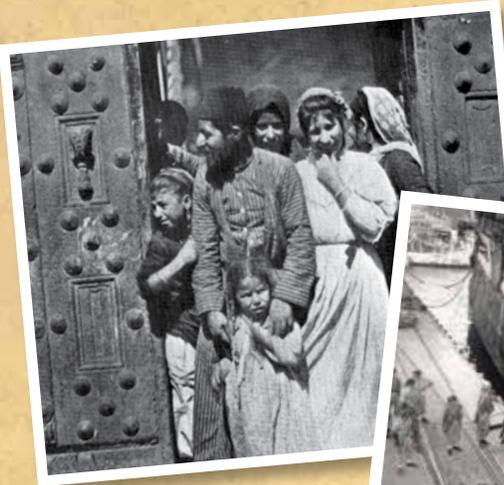
RESTORING THE

Jews are indigenous to Israel and have lived there continuously for over 3,000 years. Even after the Roman conquest in the first century, Jewish communities remained and periodically flourished, and exiled Jews returned in waves of immigration. But Jews became an oppressed

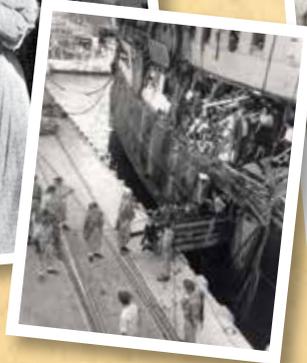
The Modern Revival Begins—Pre-World War I

In the mid-1800s a new energy seized the Jewish community in Palestine. With help from philanthropists like Sir Moses Montefiore and donations from ordinary Jews around the world, Jews branched out from the cities and began purchasing land and building farms, villages, and schools. More exiles returned. By 1854 Jews were the largest religious group in Jerusalem; by 1870 they had once again become the majority of the city's population.¹

They were young, energetic idealists imbued with Western political principles and the dreams of national liberation that were sweeping across Europe. Many were socialists. They believed their country could be restored through their hard, physical labor and dedication. They hoped to start a renaissance of Jewish culture and to restore Jewish dignity, self-reliance, and independence.



Jewish family in Tiberias, 1893.



Jewish immigrants disembark.



Young Jewish pioneer.



Jewish pioneers in Palestine.

Between 1882 and 1914, new kinds of Jewish immigrants arrived—the “Lovers of Zion” and other types of early Zionists—who laid the groundwork for the modern Jewish state.

These immigrants sought freedom from the oppression and persecution that had plagued Jews in Europe and the Middle East.

Between 1881 and 1906, Jews in Russia were slaughtered, their homes and towns were destroyed, and their women were raped. In Kishinev “[t]he mob was led by priests and the general cry, ‘Kill the Jews’ was taken up all over the city. The Jews...were slaughtered like sheep...Babies were literally torn to pieces by the frenzied and bloodthirsty mob.”

—*New York Times*, April 28, 1903, p. 6

“Like the miserable dog without an owner, he [the Jew] is kicked by one because he crosses [a Muslim’s] path, and cuffed by another because he cries out—to seek redress he is afraid, lest it bring worse upon him; he thinks it better to endure than to live in the expectation of his complaint being revenged upon him.” —British Consul in Jerusalem, William T. Young, to Colonel Patrick Campbell, May 25, 1839²

The returning Jews had no powerful nation to help them. They had no weapons. They were often penniless.

The land was only sparsely populated, and much of it had become barren. The Jews wanted to restore the land’s once-famous fertility and build villages and communities where none existed. The region was an impoverished backwater of the Ottoman Empire.

“The country was...and is now, underdeveloped and under-populated...There are...large cultivable areas that are left untilled. The summits and slopes of the hills are admirably suited to the growth of trees, but there are no forests. Miles of sand dunes that could be redeemed, are untouched.” —Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine to the League of Nations, June 1921³

The land was inhabited by a mix of Arabs, Bedouins, Jews, Turks, and other groups. Arabs were the majority. Many arrived with various conquering empires over the centuries, while others were descended from locals who had converted from Judaism and Christianity.

The area included such an assortment of ethnic groups that over 50 different languages were spoken (“Palestine,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, 1911, p. 600).

JEWISH HOMELAND

minority in their homeland, and their numbers rose and fell depending on the kindness or cruelty of the region's different rulers. In the 1700s and early 1800s, crippling taxes, discrimination, persecution, and natural disasters brought the Jewish community to a new low.



Founding of Tel Aviv, 1909.

Using money donated from Jewish communities around the world, the Jews legally bought the land they developed primarily from absentee landowners. Most of it was uncultivated swampland or sand dunes.

"They (Jews) paid high prices for the land, and in addition, they paid to certain occupants of those lands a considerable amount of money which they were not legally bound to pay." —Hope Simpson Report, 1930⁵

"Of the total of 418,000 dunums (quarter-acres) acquired by Jews in Palestine [between 1878 and 1914], 58 percent was sold by non-Palestinian [Arab] absentee landlords and 36 percent by Palestinian absentee

landlords, for a total of 94 percent."

—Palestinian-American historian Rashid Khalidi⁶

"Arab claims that the Jews have obtained too large a proportion of good land cannot be maintained. Much of the land now carrying orange groves was sand dunes or swamps and uncultivated when it was bought."

—Peel Commission Report, 1937⁷

Through backbreaking labor the early Jewish pioneers cleared the wastelands and malarial swamps, reforested the hillsides, and built towns and villages.

"Nobody knows of all the hardships, sickness and wretchedness they [the early Zionists] underwent. No observer from afar can feel what it is like to be without a drop of water for days, to lie for months in cramped tents visited by all sorts of reptiles, or understand what our wives, children, and mothers go through....No one looking at a completed building realizes the sacrifice put into it." —Memoir of an early Zionist,⁸ 1885

"Jewish agricultural colonies...developed the culture of oranges....They drained swamps. They planted eucalyptus trees. They practiced, with modern methods, all the processes of agriculture....Every traveler in Palestine...is impressed by...the beautiful stretches of prosperous cultivation about them."

—Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine to the League of Nations, June 1921⁹

Evolution of the term "Palestine"

From the second century, when Rome renamed the Jewish state "Palestine," until the mid-20th century, "Palestine" was often associated with Jews and the Jewish homeland.

Jews in the area used the name Palestine for their symphonies, newspapers, and other enterprises. There was the *Palestine Post* (later the *Jerusalem Post*), the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, the Palestine Electric Company, the Palestine Potash Company, and others. There were also Arab institutions such as the Palestine Arab Congress and a newspaper called *Filastin*.

Arabs and Jews who lived in the Palestine Mandate all had Palestine Mandate passports, and were referred to as "Palestine Arabs" and "Palestine Jews."

Before and after World War II, antisemites in Europe and the U.S. told Jews to get out and "go back home to Palestine."

After 1948, when the reborn Jewish state took the name Israel, the term "Palestine" went out of usage to refer to Israel and began to be associated with Arabs alone.

The founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) by the Arab League in 1964 solidified the exclusive association between "Palestine" and "Palestinian" with Arabs in the region.



Top: A map produced in 1759 by a German mapmaker shows the geographic boundaries of Israel's 12 ancient tribes in the region that became known as Palestine after 135 C.E.

Middle: The earliest currency of Palestine (1927) was inscribed with both Hebrew and Arabic, the languages of Jews and Arabs.

Bottom: A Palestine stamp from the Mandate era. Notice the Hebrew and Arabic writing.

Post-World War I

Britain and the League of Nations created the Palestine Mandate as the Jewish national home in part because of the growing number of Jews and their achievements in the pre-World War I period. Between 1890 and 1915, the Jewish population rose from 42,900 to 83,000.¹⁰ They had built thriving farms; created villages, towns, and social institutions; introduced innovations like socialist communes; revived Hebrew; and created a rich culture.

“During the last two or three generations, the Jews have recreated in Palestine a community....This community [has] its town and country population, its political, religious and social organizations, its own language, its own customs, its own life.”

—The Churchill or British White Paper, June 1922¹¹

“The British Government was impressed by the reality, the strength and the idealism of this [Zionist] movement. It recognised its value in ensuring the future development of Palestine.”

—Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine to the League of Nations, 1921¹²



Tel Aviv, circa 1930.

During the Mandate (1920-1948), Zionists continued their prewar policies of purchasing and restoring the land, often using innovative agricultural techniques.

By 1935 the Jewish National Fund had planted over 1.7 million trees.¹³

Zionists also developed industry, power plants, urban life, and social institutions, such as labor unions, political parties, hospitals, universities, and a national orchestra. Three universities were founded before 1948. The Hebrew Opera first performed in 1922. The Palestine Orchestra, later the Israeli Philharmonic, was founded in 1936.

Zionists hoped to live in friendship and cooperation with the Arab population and believed that restoring the land would benefit everyone. Many Arabs welcomed this development, which also attracted Arab immigrants from the neighboring countries. An estimated 25 percent to 37 percent of immigrants to pre-state Israel were Arabs, not Jews. Between 1922 and 1946 alone, approximately 100,000 Arabs entered the country from neighboring lands. Approximately 363,000 Jews immigrated in the same period.¹⁴

“Those good Jews brought...prosperity over Palestine without damage to anyone or taking anything by force.” —Syrian Alawi notable’s letter to French Prime Minister, June 1936¹⁵

“No one doubted that the Arabs had benefited from Jewish immigration. Their numbers had almost doubled between 1917 and 1940, wages had gone up, the standard of living had risen more than anywhere else in the Middle East.” —Historian Walter Laqueur¹⁶

Over time, Arab leaders in Palestine became increasingly hostile to the Jewish community. The most prominent, Haj Amin al-Husseini, incited mass violence against Jews in 1920, 1921, 1929, and from 1936 to 1939. He would go on to collaborate with Hitler during the Holocaust.

The British violated the Mandate obligations in response to Arab protests. They repeatedly restricted Jewish immigration and land purchases. As antisemitism mounted in Europe and led into the devastation of the Holocaust, these policies doomed hundreds of thousands of Jews who otherwise could have reached safety in Palestine, which had been established in part to serve as a refuge for persecuted Jews.



Palestinian Arab leader Mufti Haj Amin al-Husseini meets with Adolf Hitler in Germany, 1941. Al-Husseini recruited a Bosnian Muslim SS unit for Hitler.

By 1947 the conflict between the Jewish and Arab national movements had escalated and led the UN to recommend partitioning the Mandate into a Jewish state alongside an Arab state. The area the UN allotted for the Jewish state had a Jewish majority. They now numbered 650,000 and formed one-third of the whole Mandate population. Over 70 percent of the land for the proposed Jewish portion was not privately owned but was state land that belonged to the British Mandate.¹⁷ The 277 rural Jewish communities stretched throughout the countryside.¹⁸ Tel Aviv had grown from 550 people in 1911 to 230,000 in 1948.¹⁹



First Aliyah group of Biluim, 1882.



Celebrating Israel's fourth Independence Day, 1952.

The Kibbutz—Utopian Socialist Community

Inspired by socialism, Zionism, agrarian ideals, and necessity, young Zionists created unique collective communities dedicated to equality and communal ownership of all wealth. They worked cooperatively in decision-making, production, consumption, welfare, and education.

The first kibbutz was established by 12 young pioneers in 1910 at Degania. The kibbutz movement became one of the largest communal movements in history.

Today Israel has 270 kibbutzim with 130,000 people. Though they are less utopian and agricultural than they were originally, they still try to uphold the idealism of their founders.

The Hebrew term for immigration to Israel is “aliyah” or “going up.” There were five different waves of aliyah prior to World War II, when Jews from around the world joined the Jews who were already living there.

Date	Numbers / Motive	Majority From
1st Aliyah 1882–1903	25,000 Pre-Zionist socialists and religious Jews wanted to escape persecution and/or rebuild their homeland.	Russia, Romania, Kurdistan, and Yemen
2nd Aliyah 1904–1914	40,000 Escape pogroms and persecution; restore nationhood and dignity and realize socialist ideals.	Russia and Poland
3rd Aliyah 1919–1923	35,000 Escape persecution and impoverishment; restore nationhood and dignity and realize socialist ideals.	53% from Russia, 36% from Poland, 11% from Lithuania, Romania, and Western and Central Europe
4th Aliyah 1924–1928	67,000 Escape persecution and impoverishment.	Poland
5th Aliyah 1929–1939	250,000 Escape persecution and antisemitism.	Germany, Austria, and other countries

In May 1948 the Jewish state of Israel was reborn and the Jews’ 2,000-year yearning to restore their freedom and bring Jews around the world back together in their ancestral home became a reality.

But difficult struggles lay ahead: state-building, absorbing successive waves of immigrants and refugees (the majority of whom came from Arab countries), defending the new state from wars and terrorism, finding paths to peace, and keeping Judaism’s ancient, ethical tradition vibrant—even while facing harsh realities and an often hostile world.

The young state of Israel worked hard to meet these challenges.

¹Dore Gold, “Jerusalem in International Diplomacy: Demography,” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, October 27, 2006. ²Quoted in David Landes, “Palestine Before the Zionists,” *Commentary*, May 1976, p. 22. ³Arieh L. Avneri, *The Claim of Dispossession*, 4th ed., 2005, p. 12; Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*, 1989, pp. 17–18; “Demography of Palestine & Israel, the West Bank and Gaza,” Jewish Virtual Library. ⁴League of Nations, “An Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine,” July 1921. ⁵Sir John Hope Simpson, “Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development,” 1930, p. 5. ⁶Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 1998, pp. 112–113. ⁷The Peel Commission Report, Chapter IX, July 1937. ⁸Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 2001, p. 133. ⁹League of Nations, “Interim Report on Civil Administration...,” op. cit. ¹⁰“Demography of Palestine & Israel, the West Bank and Gaza,” Jewish Virtual Library. ¹¹The Churchill White Paper, in Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin (eds.), *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict*, 4th ed., 1987, p. 45. ¹²League of Nations, “Interim Report on Civil Administration...,” op. cit. ¹³Jewish National Fund, “JNF Centennial Celebration,” JNF website. ¹⁴Howard Sachar, *A History of Israel*, 2000, pp. 156, 167; Yehoshua Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, Vol. 2, 1977, pp. 17–18, 39. ¹⁵Quoted in Daniel Pipes, *Greater Syria*, 1990, p. 179. ¹⁶Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 1989, p. 510. ¹⁷Moshe Aumann, “Land Ownership in Palestine, 1880–1948,” in Michael Curtis et al, *The Palestinians*, 1975, p. 29. ¹⁸Naftali Greenwood, “Redeemers of the Land,” October 18, 1999. ¹⁹The Economist, “Tel Aviv,” *The Economist: Cities Guide*.

ARAB-ISRAELI WARS AND TERRORISM: 1920–PRESENT

“This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades.” —Azzam Pasha, *Secretary-General of the Arab League* (BBC, May 15, 1948)

“We have come from an anguished and grieving land...from a people...that has not known a single year—not a single month—in which mothers have not wept for their sons.” —Yitzhak Rabin, 1993

■ = Wars

■ = Major Terrorist Event

1920–1929 Anti-Jewish Violence Instigated by Haj Amin al-Husseini

Palestinian leader Haj Amin al-Husseini repeatedly incited riots against Jews. In the 1920 incidents, six Jews were killed and 200 wounded; in 1921, 43 Jews were killed and 147 wounded. In response Jews organized defensive forces that would later become the Haganah, the forerunner of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).



Hebron massacre.

In 1929 Arab rioters attacked Jews in Jerusalem, Safed, Jaffa, and Kfar Darom (a kibbutz in the Gaza Strip). The centuries-old Jewish community of Hebron was destroyed, and 67 civilians were slaughtered. British authorities reported incidents of rape, torture, beheadings of babies, and mutilation. British High Commissioner John Chancellor wrote, “I do not think that history records many worse horrors in the last few hundred years.”¹ In total, 135 Jews were killed, and 350 were maimed or wounded.

1936–1939 Great Arab Revolt

With the support of Nazi Germany, Haj Amin al-Husseini led a three-year rebellion against the British, the Jews, and his political opponents to force an end to Jewish immigration and land purchases. An estimated 415 Jews, 200 Britons, and 5,000 Arabs were killed.²

1947–1949 Israel’s War of Independence

In November 1947, Arab forces in the Palestine Mandate rejected the UN proposal to establish an Arab state alongside a Jewish state. With the help of surrounding Arab states, they launched a civil war against the Jews. On May 14, 1948, Israel declared independence. The armies of Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon, and Iraq immediately invaded to destroy the Jewish state. Israel managed to prevail in 15 months of war but lost 1 percent of its population in the fighting. Another tragic consequence of the war was that 850,000 Jews from across the Middle East and up to 750,000 Palestinian Arabs became refugees.

1949–1956 The Fedayeen Raids

Arab terrorists (fedayeen), trained and equipped by Egypt, repeatedly attacked Israeli civilians from bases in Lebanon, Gaza, and Jordan. One thousand three hundred Israelis were killed or wounded in terrorist attacks.



Fedayeen ambushed this bus and massacred its civilian passengers.

1956 The Sinai/Suez War

Egypt increased its fedayeen attacks, prevented Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal, and blockaded the Israeli port of Eilat, violating international law and threatening Israel’s economic survival. With the support of France and Britain, Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza. Israel completely withdrew six months later when Egypt assured Israel unimpeded navigation, and UN peacekeeping forces were stationed in the Sinai.

1959 Al Fatah Raids

The Egyptian-born Yasser Arafat formed Fatah in 1959 to conduct guerrilla warfare operations against Israel. In 1965 Fatah adopted “the entanglement theory,” which presumed that its repeated attacks would force Israel to respond aggressively against the Arab states hosting Arafat’s fighters, thereby escalating the animosity between Israel and her Arab neighbors.



Home damaged by Syrian regular shelling in the Galilee before 1967.

1964 Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Formed

The PLO was formed in Egypt, supported by the Arab League as an umbrella organization for anti-Israel militant groups. In 1968 Arafat’s Fatah joined the PLO and eventually dominated it. Over the decades the PLO carried out thousands of attacks against Israelis and others around the world, including the first airplane hijackings.



1967

The Six-Day War

Leading up to June 1967, the government of Egypt illegally blocked Israel's access to international waters and expelled UN peacekeepers from its border with Israel. Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq then surrounded Israel with 250,000 troops, and their leaders began making genocidal threats.³ After diplomacy failed, Israel struck first in self-defense against Egypt and Syria, capturing Gaza, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. Jordan ignored Israel's calls to stay out of the war and attacked anyway. In response, Israel pushed Jordan out of eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank.



IDF liberates the Old City of Jerusalem, 1967.

1967–1970

The War of Attrition

Shortly after the Six-Day War ceasefire, Egyptian President Gamal Nasser ordered attacks on Israelis in the Sinai. During the three-year-long conflict, 1,424 Israeli soldiers and more than 100 Israeli civilians were killed.

1972

The Munich Massacre

After 1967 Palestinian terrorists attacked Israelis worldwide. In their most public operation, the group Black September held hostage and murdered 11 members of the Israeli Olympic Team at the 1972 Munich Olympics. It is widely accepted that the terrorists were controlled by Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction of the PLO.



Munich massacre, 1972.

1973

The Yom Kippur War

Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel on the holiest day of the Jewish year. Caught unprepared, the IDF nonetheless managed to fend off this assault, cutting off Egyptian forces across the Suez Canal and pushing Syrian troops back from the Golan Heights. While Israel was victorious militarily, the human toll was devastating—2,688 Israeli soldiers were killed in the nearly three weeks of fighting.

1982–1985

The Lebanon War

After Jordan expelled the PLO in 1970, it entrenched itself in southern Lebanon. During Lebanon's ensuing civil war (1975–1990), PLO attacks on northern Israel intensified. Israel entered Lebanon in 1982 to root out the organization. The PLO was forced to relocate to Tunis. In 1985 Israel withdrew to a security zone, approximately four miles wide along the border, and stayed until it unilaterally withdrew in 2000. By 1982, 95,000 people had already died in the bitter Lebanese civil war. During this civil war, Lebanese Christian Phalangists entered the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila and massacred an estimated 460 to 700 people, including 200 PLO fighters. Although no Israelis were involved in the massacre, an Israeli court determined that Israel and General Ariel Sharon had indirect responsibility for it because the IDF did not stop the Phalangists' entry into the camps.

1987–1991

First Intifada

The PLO promoted the intifada ("shaking off") after false rumors of Israeli atrocities circulated through Palestinian territories. Palestinians claim this was a nonviolent uprising, but it quickly turned violent with 277 Israelis killed and more than 1,400 Israeli civilians and 1,700 Israeli soldiers injured. Almost half of the Palestinian casualties (1,000) were caused by other Palestinians in the "intrafada," or internal, fighting among Palestinian factions.⁴

1993

First Suicide Bombing in Israel

A civilian was killed in a suicide bombing at a rest stop near Jerusalem. This tactic has come to be used by radical Islamic terrorist factions all over the world.

2000–2005

Second "Al-Aqsa" Intifada

A campaign of suicide bombings and terrorist attacks began on September 29, 2000, and within five years had left over 1,084 Israelis dead and over 7,000 injured—71 percent of them civilians. Approximately 3,000 Palestinians were also killed in this conflict, the majority of them combatants.



Aftermath of suicide bombing, second intifada.

2006

Second Lebanon War

Hezbollah, the Iranian-supported terrorist group in Lebanon, attacked from across the Israeli-Lebanese border on July 12, killing eight soldiers and kidnapping two, and simultaneously launched barrages of rockets at civilians in northern Israel. Israel responded with a military operation that lasted 34 days.

2005–2021

Hamas Rocket War

Since Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, Hamas and other terrorist groups have fired roughly 20,000 rockets and mortars at civilian communities in Israel. They have also built tunnels into Israel in an effort to kidnap and murder Israeli civilians and soldiers. Israel was forced to launch four military operations to protect its people from terrorist groups in Gaza. These took place in 2009 (Operation Cast Lead), 2012 (Pillar of Defense), 2014 (Protective Edge), and 2021 (Guardian of the Walls). In 2018 Hamas exploited a planned protest on the border between Gaza and Israel, walking distance from where Israeli families live. They used non-violent protesters as cover for shootings, explosives, firebombs, and other attacks as part of an effort to infiltrate Israeli territory. The violence later escalated with rocket fire, along with flaming kites and balloons, burning down massive amounts of Israeli farmland. Civilians in Gaza have suffered immensely as a result of these conflicts, because Hamas and other terrorist groups embed their weapons, tunnels, and fighters in civilian areas and put Palestinians directly in harm's way.

¹Tom Segev, *One Palestine Complete*, 2000, p. 327. ²Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 2001 p. 133; "The 1936 Riots," The Jewish Virtual Library. ³Michael Oren, *Six Days of War*, 2002, p. 293. ⁴Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG), "Collaborators: New Impetus for an Old Witch Hunt," *PHRMG Monitor*, February 2002.

Aftermath of Wars: Arab and Jewish Refugees

The 1948 war resulted in two tragic crises: 850,000 Jews living in Arab states and up to 750,000 Arabs living in the Palestine Mandate became refugees. These were the catastrophic results of decisions made by Arab and Palestinian leaders. First, they launched a war to destroy Israel, instead of negotiating peace. Second, they dramatically increased their systemic oppression against Jews across the region.

“The Palestinian refugee problem was born of war, not by design.” —Historian Benny Morris¹

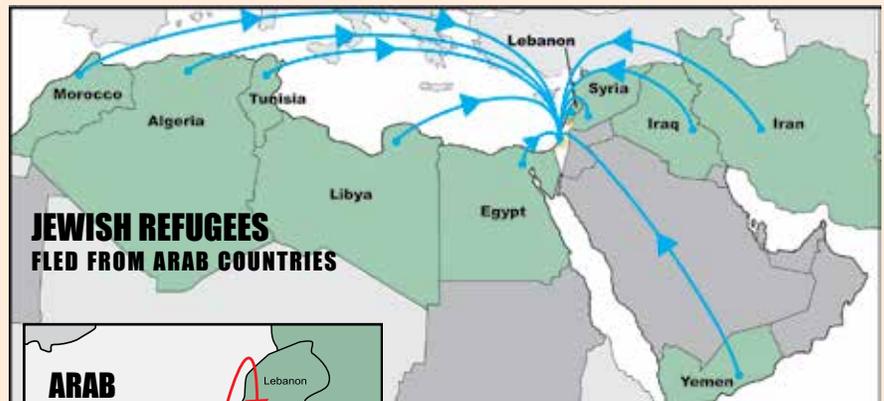
JEWISH REFUGEES FROM ARAB/MUSLIM COUNTRIES

Over 10,000 Jews became refugees from areas of the Palestine Mandate where Arab armies prevailed in the 1948 war.² In the West Bank and Gaza, Arab armies razed Jewish communities and killed or expelled all Jews and did not allow any to live in either territory after the war. Jordan took control of the West Bank and refused to protect Jewish holy sites. In East Jerusalem alone, 57 synagogues, libraries, and houses of learning, many of them centuries old, were desecrated and destroyed, their stones later used to build urinals, sidewalks, and roads.³

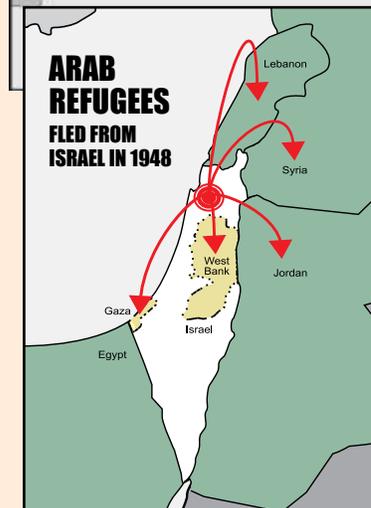
Over 850,000 Jews fled rising persecution or were expelled from Arab and Muslim lands after the War of Independence. They became homeless though some of their communities were over 2,000 years old. Between 1948 and 2016, the Jewish population in Middle Eastern and North African countries dropped from around 900,000 to less than 15,000.⁴

Israel resettled close to 600,000 Jews from Arab lands. The new state, barely recovered from the devastation of the 1948 war, struggled to absorb both the now-homeless Jews from Arab lands and 300,000 European refugees of World War II. Israel’s 1948 population of 650,000 more than doubled in three years as it fulfilled its mission to be a refuge for persecuted Jews. “No influx like it had been witnessed in modern times. It was an ‘open door’ from which older and vastly wealthier nations would have recoiled in dismay,” noted historian Howard Sachar.⁵ In Israel, many of the Jewish refugees lived in refugee camps for years and had to overcome discriminatory attitudes and poverty. Despite these challenges, they became an integral part of Israeli society, politics, and culture.

Jewish refugees today: These early refugees are no longer refugees. Like the tens of millions of other refugees of the last century, the Jews resettled in other nations. Two-thirds of them chose to live in Israel. These refugees from the Middle East and their descendants make up over half of Israel’s Jewish population.



Over 850,000 Jews fled or were expelled from Arab and Muslim lands after 1948 (see chart below).



Between 472,000 and 750,000 Palestinian Arabs were displaced by the 1948 Arab–Israeli war. Most fled to the territories of Gaza and the West Bank as well as neighboring Arab countries.



New York Times, May 16 1948: “Nine Hundred Thousand [Jews] in Africa and Asia Face Wrath of Their Foes.”



Temporary refugee camps called “ma’abarot” were set up in Israel during the state’s early years to absorb Jewish refugees.

Declining Jewish Population in Middle Eastern Countries⁶

	1948	2016		1948	2016
Algeria	140,000	50	Libya	38,000	0
Egypt	75,000	40	Morocco	265,000	2,500
Iran	100,000	10,400	Syria	30,000	20
Iraq	150,000	7	Tunisia	105,000	1,000
Lebanon	20,000	0	Yemen	55,000	50

Between 472,000 and 750,000 Palestinian Arabs (scholars debate the numbers) became refugees from what became Israel for several reasons:⁸

- Most fled to escape the fighting, which Israel didn't start and didn't want.
- Wealthy classes fled to avoid the coming war. Without their leadership, Palestinian civil society fell apart, causing more flight.
- A minority left because Arab leaders encouraged them to get out of the way of advancing Arab armies, promising victory would be quick and they could soon return.
- A minority left as Arab propaganda backfired when its manufactured tales of Israeli atrocities caused panic.⁹
- A minority of Israeli troops forced Arab residents from their homes, often in sensitive strategic zones vital to the survival of the young state of Israel, such as the road supplying Jews in Jerusalem with food and other basic supplies.

This refugee crisis was a collective trauma that remains central to Palestinian identity to this day. At the same time, during the 1948 war, 160,000 Arabs who lived within Israel's borders accepted Israel's invitation to coexist peacefully and become Israeli citizens. They elected three Arab citizens of Israel to the first Knesset.⁷ After difficult postwar problems between the government and Arab citizens of Israel were resolved, they became freer, more educated, and more prosperous than average citizens living in all other Arab countries. While some Arab citizens identify with Palestinian nationalism, a 2013 poll showed that over half accepted Israel's right to be a Jewish-majority state, and over 63 percent considered Israel a good place to live.¹⁰

Responsibility for the Palestinian refugee crisis is "split among the Yishuv/Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab countries—with enormous responsibility lying with the Palestinians who started the conflict."
—Historian Benny Morris¹¹

"The Arab armies entered Palestine to protect the Palestinians... but instead they abandoned them, forced them to emigrate and to leave."—Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas, 1976¹²

"We will smash the country. The Arabs should conduct their wives and children to safe areas until the fighting has died down."
—Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said, 1948¹³

"Since 1948 we have been demanding the return of the refugees to their homes. But we ourselves are the ones who encouraged them to leave. Only a few months separated our call to them to leave and our appeal to the United Nations to resolve on their return."—Khalid al-Azm, Syrian Prime Minister, 1948–1949¹⁴



Palestinian refugee camps like this one were set up in the territories and neighboring Arab countries following the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. The camps now are small, rundown cities that the Arab leadership never improved, and the inhabitants and their descendants are still considered refugees. Most Arab countries still refuse to integrate them and, unfortunately, use them as pawns in the propaganda war against Israel.

Discriminatory treatment of Palestinian refugees: The tens of millions of refugees from other war-torn areas in the world during this period resettled in other countries, but Palestinians were not allowed to do the same. Neighboring Arab states (with the exception of Jordan) would not resettle the Palestinian Arabs despite their shared history, language, and religion. Instead, Arab governments confined them in refugee camps and neighborhoods, refused them citizenship, and then used their plight as a propaganda weapon against Israel.

"The Arab states do not want to solve the refugee problem. They want to keep it an open sore, as an affront to the UN and as a weapon against Israel."—Sir Alexander Galloway, former UNRWA official in Jordan, 1952¹⁵

"Since 1948 Arab leaders... have used the Palestine people for selfish political purposes. This is... criminal."—King Hussein of Jordan, 1960¹⁶

"All the Arab countries want to keep this problem looking like an open wound."—Ana Liria-Franch, regional representative in Cairo for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 2003¹⁷

The "Right of Return": Arab governments promised refugees they could go back to their homes. Arab leaders openly stated that their goal was to dismantle the Jewish state demographically.

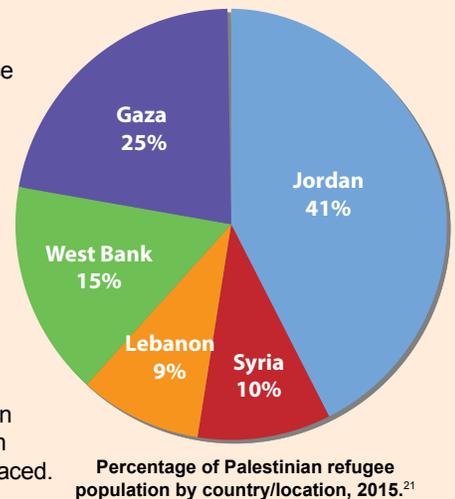
"If Arabs return to Israel—Israel will cease to exist."
—Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of Egypt, 1961¹⁸

"The right of return... would extinguish Israel as a Jewish state, and that's not an option."—Barack Obama, President of the United States, 2008¹⁹

The refugees today: The UN has given special treatment to Palestinian refugees. In 1949 it set up UNRWA, an agency exclusively serving the Palestinian refugees. UNRWA's website reports that the agency "is unique in terms of its long-standing commitment to one group of refugees... and to four generations of refugees."²⁰ All the world's other refugees are served by one UN agency, UNHCR, and no other group's descendants are also considered refugees. As of 2017, roughly 5 million Palestinians qualify for UNRWA aid. After the PA was established, it governed 38 percent of the Palestinian refugees but did not use its billions of foreign aid dollars to improve their living conditions or opportunities.

There have been widespread calls to fundamentally reform or replace UNRWA. Part of the reason is that UNRWA has been exposed numerous times for promoting violence and hate through schools and other institutions.

Another reason—while it provides essential services to Palestinian refugees, it has also helped fuel the Israeli–Palestinian conflict rather than resolve it. Experts, advocates, and democratic governments that fund UNRWA differ about whether the institution can be changed from within or needs to be entirely replaced.



⁸Benny Morris, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*, 1989, p. 286; David Meir-Levi, "The Origins of the Refugee Problem," *Jewish World*, 2005. ⁹Anita Shapira, "The Past is not a Foreign Country," *New Republic*, November 29, 1999. ¹⁰Gerald M. Steinberg, "Jerusalem—1948, 1967, 2000: Setting the Record Straight," *Canadian Jewish News*, August 24, 2000. ¹¹Statistics derived from Mitchell Bard, *Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 2001, pp. 192–198 and "Vital Statistics: Jewish Population of the World: 1882–Present (2012)," Jewish Virtual Library. ¹²Howard Sachar, *A History of Israel*, 2000, pp. 395–405. ¹³Statistics derived from Mitchell Bard, *Myths and Facts*, pp. 192–198 and "Vital Statistics," Jewish Virtual Library. ¹⁴Knesset website. ¹⁵Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 2001, pp. 252–258; Yoav Gelber, *Palestine 1948*, 2001, pp. 74–84. ¹⁶Sachar, op. cit., p. 333; "Israel and the Arabs: The 50 Year Conflict," BBC documentary. Cited by CAMERA, "Pattern of Bias," July 1999. ¹⁷Abraham Rabinovich, "Arab Israelis Find Israel 'Good Place to Live,'" *Free Beacon*, June 2, 2014. ¹⁸Benny Morris, "Ethnic Cleansing and pro-Arab Propaganda," *Haaretz*, October 23, 2016, at www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.748673 ¹⁹Mahmoud Abbas, *Falastin a-Thaura*, March 1976, cited in "Palestine's Pawns," *Wall Street Journal*, June 5, 2003. ²⁰Quoted in Nimr el-Hawari, *Sir An-Nakbah*, 1952. ²¹*The Memoirs of Khalid al-Azm*, 1973, Part I, pp. 386–387. ²²Alexander H. Joffe and Asaf Romirowsky, "A Tale of Two Galloways," *Middle Eastern Studies*, September 2010. ²³Quoted in Alan Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel*, 2003, pp. 87–88. ²⁴Quoted in Paul Garwood and Maggie Michael, "Palestinian refugees: championed by Arab world yet treated like outcasts," AP, December 30, 2003. ²⁵Quoted in the Swiss *Zibicher Woche*, September 1, 1961. ²⁶Barack Obama, "Obama: Opposes 'Right of Return' Inside Israel," YouTube, video interview, May 2, 2008. ²⁷Self-description of UNRWA from UNRWA website. ²⁸Statistics from UN/UNRWA website.

The Aftermath of the 1967 War

The term “occupation” refers to Israel’s military rule in the West Bank (and Gaza, until 2005), which began after the 1967 war. After the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993, the newly created Palestinian Authority began governing almost all of the Palestinian population. Israel intended to gradually end its military presence in the area, but has been unable to do so due to continued terrorism and the lack of a final peace agreement.

Key Facts

Israel took control of the West Bank and Gaza because of the broader Arab–Israeli conflict. The term “occupation” often implies an aggressive effort to take over and rule a foreign people, but the territories came under Israeli control during its defensive war in 1967. Arab states and Palestinians refused to accept the Jewish state’s right to exist and mobilized again in 1967 to destroy it (see page 13). As Israel defended itself and drove back Jordanian, Egyptian, and Syrian troops, it captured the territories that fell on Israel’s side of the armistice lines.

Palestinians did not make territorial claims to the West Bank and Gaza until Israel captured them from Egypt and Jordan in 1967. During Egypt and Jordan’s 19-year occupation (1948–1967), no one called for a Palestinian state that would include Gaza and the West Bank. West Bank residents became Jordanian citizens. The original PLO Covenant (1964) explicitly excluded the territories from its description of Palestine and called instead for the destruction of Israel and for replacing it with Arab rule.¹ The PLO amended its charter to include a claim to the territories only after Israel captured them in 1967.²

The PLO “does not exercise any regional sovereignty over the West Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, on the Gaza Strip or the Himmah Area.”

—Article 24, PLO Covenant, 1964

Israel repeatedly tried to end the occupation after 1967. Israel had no wish to rule over the Palestinians. Within two weeks after hostilities ended, Israel offered to exchange land for peace, but Arab leaders categorically rejected the offer, officially issuing the “three nos” in Khartoum, Sudan.

“No peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it.”

—Khartoum Resolution, September 1, 1967³

Between 1967 and 1969, then again in the 1979 Israel–Egypt peace treaty, and from 1991 until today, Israel’s leaders have sought to peacefully resolve the conflict with the Palestinians, but their efforts have been repeatedly rejected.⁴

Israel was forced to continue its presence in Gaza and the West Bank from 1967 until 1993 because no Palestinian leader emerged as a peace partner. International and customary law required Israel to administer the territories until a successful peace treaty could be negotiated. UN Resolution 242 did not call for Israel to withdraw from all territories acquired but called for

the belligerents to negotiate for peace and mutually recognize new borders. Initially, the international community assumed that Israel would negotiate with Jordan and Egypt, which had occupied the territories between 1949 and 1967, but Egypt and Jordan refused to negotiate at the time. The two nations renounced their claims to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank territories in 1979 and 1988, respectively. After Yasser Arafat and the PLO claimed to accept Israel’s existence and negotiate for peace, Israel seized the opportunity to resolve the conflict.

During its administration of the territories, Israel sought to improve the lives of the Palestinians. Military barriers came down, and for the first time since the 1948 war, Israelis and Palestinians could travel freely between the territories and the Jewish state. Israel also removed all the Jordanian and Israeli military barriers that had divided Jerusalem between 1948 and 1967. Israel helped modernize Palestinian water and other infrastructure, aiding in the creation of more than 2,000 manufacturing plants, establishing seven universities, expanding schools, teaching modern agriculture, setting up medical programs, and opening over 100 health clinics. Israel instituted freedom of the press, of association, and of religion, and it “launched something entirely new—the first authentically Palestinian administration the local Arabs had ever known.”⁵ Unemployment plummeted to 2 percent, life expectancy soared, and the population nearly doubled in the 26 years between 1967 and 1993.⁶

- West Bank per capita income rose 80 percent between 1967 and 1973.⁷
- Unemployment in Gaza plummeted to 2 percent.⁸
- Infant mortality plunged from 60 to 15 per 1,000 births between 1968 and 2000.⁹
- Israel disbursed millions of dollars to improve refugee camps.¹⁰
- The number of Palestinian school children rose 102 percent, and illiteracy dropped to 14 percent for adults over age 15.¹¹

“During the 1970s, the West Bank and Gaza constituted the fourth-fastest-growing economy in the world—ahead of such ‘wonders’ as Singapore, Hong Kong and Korea, and substantially ahead of Israel itself.”

—Historian Efraim Karsh¹²

Nevertheless, the conflict continued, and many Palestinians wanted their own state rather than living under Israeli rule.

1993–2007: Israel scaled back its military rule. Per the 1993 Oslo Accords, Israel turned civil governance over to the Palestinian-elected government, the Palestinian Authority (PA), which was created in 1994. Israel's plan was to help create a self-governing Palestinian state in all of Gaza and most of the West Bank, incorporating land where 98 percent of Palestinians live.

- By 1997 Israeli troops had left Palestinian towns and cities and turned them over to the PA. These areas were home to 98 percent of all Palestinians who were now self-governing under the PA.¹³
- In 2000, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat rejected a major peace offer that would have created a Palestinian state. He followed this by launching the second intifada, a brutal campaign of suicide bombings and other attacks against Israeli civilians. President Bill Clinton called this a "colossal historical blunder."
- Despite ongoing terrorism and the collapse of peace negotiations, Israel continued its withdrawals. In August 2005 Israel withdrew all soldiers and civilians from Gaza and from sections of the northern West Bank. Even Jewish cemeteries were moved out of the area. In a painful, divisive process, Israel uprooted more than 8,500 Jews who had built thriving communities over the previous 30 years in Gaza and who had employed over 10,000 Palestinians from the surrounding areas. Israel left its expensive infrastructure intact for future use by the Palestinians.

Settlements

After 1967, Israelis began building communities in the West Bank and Gaza, often called "settlements." Settlements have been politically and legally contentious from the beginning. The Palestinian Authority and some UN bodies claim they are illegal and a central obstacle to peace. The Israeli government and numerous legal scholars argue that settlements are legal and an issue that can be resolved if Palestinian leaders negotiate in good faith. For example, according to Eugene Rostow, the former Dean of Yale Law School, "The Jewish right of settlement in the area is equivalent in every way to the right of the existing Palestinian population to live there."¹⁴

Israel's Territorial Claims Include:

Legal claims: The British Mandate (1920–1948) was the last legal sovereign authority for the West Bank. Jordan illegally held the territory between 1948 and 1967. As such, Israel argues that it remains an unallocated portion of the British Mandate, which was established for the purpose of creating a Jewish national home.¹⁵

Historical claims: Judea and Samaria (renamed the West Bank by Jordan in 1951) were the cradle of Jewish civilization and had a continuous Jewish presence for 3,000 years until the 1948 war, when Jewish inhabitants were killed and approximately 10,000 were expelled by the Jordanians.¹⁶

Security-related claims:

Arab states and terrorist groups repeatedly launched attacks from the West Bank's strategic heights that overlook many of Israel's largest cities and towns. UN Resolution 242 envisioned bilateral negotiations that would give Israel more secure borders and lead to greater regional stability. If the racist terrorist groups that rule Gaza gain control of the West Bank, Israel's most populated area would be in danger of constant rocket fire and other attacks.



Israel's security concerns stem from its vulnerability to attacks from nearby territories.

Israel's security

needs remain urgent. Today, the Hamas-led Palestinian government in Gaza continues to call for Israel's destruction, and Israel is repeatedly attacked from Palestinian and Lebanese territories. Hamas has close ties with Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah, all of which call for Israel's destruction (see pages 24–27).

Unresolved Border Issues

The pre-1967 boundary (Green Line) is not an internationally recognized border. It is an armistice line, marking positions held by Israeli and Arab troops when the final truce was called at the end of the 1948 war. The Green Line remained an armistice line because Arab leaders refused to negotiate to set final border lines. The Oslo Accords called for, among other things, Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate for a final border between the state of Israel and a future Palestinian state. To date, these negotiations have not resolved outstanding issues to the satisfaction of both parties.

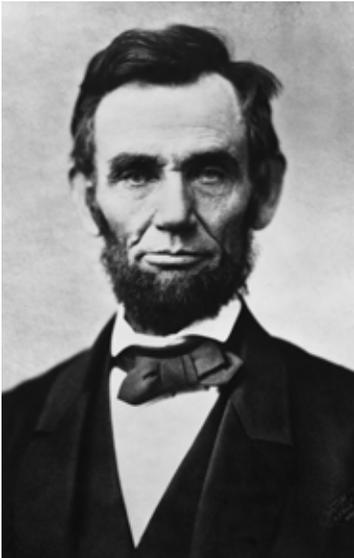
Facts About Israeli Settlements in the West Bank:¹⁷

- 1967–1979: Forty-seven Jewish communities were built in the territories on undeveloped land. Most were built to ensure security, but some Israelis, such as the survivors of the Gush Etzion block, returned to rebuild Jewish communities that Arab forces had captured and destroyed in the 1948 war.
- After 1977, 74 additional communities were built in the territories on unallocated and uninhabited land.
- After 1995 no new communities were built. In 2012 the existing 121 authorized communities included 350,000 Israelis living on 1.7 percent of West Bank land.
- Eighty percent of the settlers live in communities close to the Green Line, currently consisting of suburbs of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

¹Article 24 of original Palestinian National Charter, 1964. ²The amended Palestinian National Charter passed by the 4th Palestinian National Council, 1968. ³Khartoum Resolutions, September 1967. ⁴Letters between President Sadat, Prime Minister Begin, and President Carter attached to the Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt, March 26, 1979. ⁵Howard Sachar, *History of Israel*, 2000, pp. 678, 707. ⁶Efraim Karsh, "What Occupation?" *Commentary*, July 2002; "Demography of Palestine & Israel, the West Bank and Gaza," Jewish Virtual Library; Bennett Zimmerman et al, "The Million Person Gap: The Arab Population in the West Bank and Gaza," February 2006, p. 12. ⁷Sachar, op. cit. p. 688. ⁸Ibid. p. 687. ⁹Karsh, op. cit. ¹⁰Sachar, op. cit. p. 687. ¹¹Karsh, op. cit. ¹²Karsh, op. cit. ¹³Freedom House, "Freedom in the World: Palestinian Authority-Administered Territories [Israel] (2002)." ¹⁴Eugene W. Rostow, "Bricks and Stones: Settling for Leverage; Palestinian Autonomy," *New Republic*, April 23, 1990. ¹⁵The Palestine Mandate, 1922. ¹⁶Anita Shapira, "The Past Is Not a Foreign Country: The Failure of Israel's 'New Historians' To Explain War and Peace," *New Republic*, November 29, 1999. ¹⁷Jeffrey Helmreich, "Diplomatic and Legal Aspects of the Settlement Issue," *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, January 19, 2003; Tovah Lazaroff, "Frontlines: Is Settlement Growth Booming?" *Jerusalem Post*, December 30, 2010.

The Evolution Of U.S.–Israel Relations

Americans and Israelis developed deep ties through shared histories, values, and interests. Israel differs in that it was built by Jewish people returning to their ancestral home. However, both nations were shaped by idealists who fled war and oppression, and wanted to build a better future. Likewise, both deeply value human rights and democracy as a way to overcome flaws and challenges in their respective societies.



“Restoring the Jews to their national home in Palestine ... is a noble dream and one shared by many Americans.”

—President Abraham Lincoln (1863)¹

As World War I came to an end and new nations were carved out of old colonial empires, the U.S. endorsed the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate over Palestine, which were the forerunners for the modern state of Israel.

Despite their deeply shared values, the U.S. never automatically gave preference to Israel. The young state had to prove itself and fit into America’s larger geostrategic, economic, and political interests. Israel gradually became a critical U.S. ally and a valued partner in trade, humanitarian programs, and scientific research. The partnership has benefited both nations.

Along with its commitment to a safe and secure Israel, U.S. policymakers have also supported Arab states, assisted Palestinians, and repeatedly sought to help bring peace to the region.

Israel was politically isolated in the Middle East by the Arab League’s diplomatic boycott (imposed in 1948). Israel was further isolated by the Soviet and non-aligned nations blocs, which severed diplomatic relations with it in the mid-1950s. Instead, Israel developed strong relationships with Iran (until 1979), Turkey, and other European and Latin American nations. When the Soviet Union fell (1989), Israel rapidly formed diplomatic, trade, and cooperative agreements with India and other Asian nations and with Eastern European states. Nonetheless, the U.S. remains Israel’s most steadfast partner and ally.



“Since 1948, United States Presidents and both houses of Congress, on a bipartisan basis and supported by the American people, have repeatedly reaffirmed the special bond between the United States and Israel, based on shared values and shared interest.”

—Congressional resolution, March, 2012²

1948: U.S. recognized Israel

The United States was the first nation to recognize the reestablished state of Israel.

1950–67: While recognizing that Israel shares U.S. values, U.S. supported Arab states and Israel

The U.S. government believed that one of the best policies for peace in the Middle East was a balance of military power between all the countries in the region. France and Germany were Israel’s main arms partners. U.S. economic aid was equally even-handed. Between 1946 and 1971, Israel received an average of \$60 million in U.S. aid per year. During the same period, Arab states received an average of \$170 million a year.³ The U.S. also financed almost two-thirds of the budget for UNRWA, the UN agency that supports Palestinian refugees.⁴ Nonetheless, the U.S. recognized that Israel shared its values.

Israel “carries the shield of democracy, and it honors the sword of freedom.”

—U.S. President John F. Kennedy

“The Israelis have shown qualities that Americans identify with: guts, patriotism, idealism, a passion for freedom.” —U.S. President Richard M. Nixon

1967–68: U.S. regarded Israel as an ally in the Middle East

Israel’s surprising victory over Soviet-backed Arab countries in the 1967 war convinced the U.S. that Israel could help the U.S. policy of containing Soviet expansion in the Middle East. In 1968, for the first time, Congress agreed to sell U.S. Phantom jets to Israel. At the same time, the U.S. also continued to provide sophisticated military equipment to Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states.

1969: Israel proved its strategic value by capturing new Soviet military equipment

The Soviets supplied arms and their newest military technology to their Arab allies. In a daring raid in December 1969, called “Operation Rooster 53,” Israeli paratroopers captured the newest Soviet radar in Egypt and gave the technological information to the U.S.⁵

1970: Israel proved its strategic value when Syria threatened Jordan

The U.S. asked Israel to support Jordan when Syrian tanks invaded. Israeli jets did not attack. They simply flew low enough for the invading Syrian tank commanders to see Israel’s Stars of David on the wings. The Syrian tanks quickly withdrew from Jordan.



Israel participates in international space mission, 2003.



Israeli American chemists Arieh Warshel and Michael Levitt shared the 2013 Nobel Prize in chemistry for the development of multiscale models for complex chemical systems.



1973–80: The U.S. recognized Israel as a vital strategic partner

After Israel's victory against the surprise Arab attack in the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the U.S. saw that Israel could pit itself against Soviet military technology and weaponry. The U.S. realized Israel was its only militarily strong, stable friend in the Middle East. Israel became eligible to sell military equipment to the U.S., and the two countries began joint, limited military programs.

"A strong, secure Israel is not just in Israel's interest, it's in the interest of the U.S. and...of the entire free world."
—U.S. President Jimmy Carter

"My commitment to the security and future of Israel is based upon basic morality as well as enlightened self-interest."
—U.S. President Gerald Ford

1981: U.S.–Israel ties grew stronger

President Ronald Reagan believed Israel was critical for U.S. interests in the Middle East. The U.S. and Israel signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" for military and strategic cooperation.

"Only by full appreciation of the critical role the State of Israel plays in our strategic calculus can we build the foundation for thwarting Moscow's designs on territories and resources vital to our security and our national well-being."
—U.S. President Ronald Reagan

1980s–Present: U.S. military grants to Israel helped not only Israel but the U.S. and other countries as well

At a fraction of the cost the U.S. spends to protect its allies and interests in Europe, East Asia, and Iraq, the U.S. protects its Middle East interests through military grants to Israel. The amount the U.S. spends annually to protect South Korea alone is equal to the amount it grants to Israel. However, South Korean expenses are in the U.S. defense budget, while Israeli costs are in the foreign aid budget.⁶

All of the military financing that the U.S. grants to Israel is spent in the U.S. This spending generates American profits and jobs. "More than 1,000 companies in 47 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have signed contracts worth billions of dollars."⁷

Israeli technological developments save the U.S. significant funds in research and development.

1985: Israel became a major U.S. trading partner

The U.S. and Israel signed an agreement giving U.S. goods free access to Israeli markets. U.S. exports to Israel grew 437 percent by 2001, bringing profits to U.S. businesses. Israel became second only to Canada in per capita imports of U.S. products.

1987: The U.S. recognized Israel as a major non-NATO ally

By 1988, the U.S. was storing military equipment in Israel, holding joint military exercises, and working together in developing missile defense technology—an unprecedented level of military cooperation between two nations.⁸

1991: Israel cooperated with U.S. requests during the Gulf War

Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles into Israel during the first Gulf War. At the request of the U.S., Israel did not launch any counterattacks to defend itself in order to protect the U.S.-led coalition.

1990–Present: Israel and U.S. researchers cooperated in technological and biomedical breakthroughs

Israel and America have worked hand-in-hand in research and development of high-tech and biomedical products.

Israel has more companies traded on NASDAQ than any other country except the U.S. and China.⁹ Companies like Microsoft, IBM, and Intel established research-and-development centers in Israel, where Israeli and American researchers work jointly. Israeli and American researchers shared Nobel Prizes in 2002 in economics, 2004 in chemistry, 2005 in economics, and 2009 in chemistry.¹⁰

1996–Present: Allies on the front line against terrorism

The U.S. and Israel signed a counterterrorism cooperation accord on April 30, 1996, pledging to jointly fight international terrorism and form a joint counterterrorism group. In 1999 they agreed to "share intelligence assessments, and prepare plans for cooperation in the development of technological means for counterterrorism."¹¹ Israel provides the U.S. with extensive intelligence on terrorist groups.

The U.S. continues to aid Middle East governments

The U.S. has been a principal backer of Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the Gulf states. It has given \$2 billion a year to Egypt since 1979 and regularly sold state-of-the-art military equipment to Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The U.S. has also continued to be a major supporter of Palestinian refugees and the Palestinian Authority, directly as well as through the UN.

¹All presidents' quotes in "U.S. Presidents on Israel," Jewish Virtual Library. ²Resolution, "112th Congress 2nd Session H.R. 4133," March 5, 2012. ³Mitchell Bard, "U.S. Aid to Israel," Jewish Virtual Library. ⁴Mitchell Bard, "The United Nations and Israel," Jewish Virtual Library; Mohammed Daraghme, "Palestinian Aid Groups Refuse U.S. Money," AP, January 5, 2004. ⁵"Operation 'Rooster,'" Jewish Virtual Library. ⁶Tamar Sternthal, "WSJ Columnist Overstates U.S. Aid to Israel by Almost \$1 Trillion," CAMERA, December 12, 2003. ⁷Bard, "U.S. Aid to Israel," op. cit. ⁸Mitchell Bard, "U.S.–Israel Relations: A Special Alliance," Jewish Virtual Library. ⁹Leon Lazaroff, "China to capitalize on Nasdaq jump with Tech IPOs, BNY says," Bloomberg News, May 7, 2012. ¹⁰Dr. E. E. Jaffe, "Israeli-American Nobel Prize Winner," Jewish Federation of Delaware, 2002; Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, "Press Release," October 6, 2004; "The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2004," Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, "Press Release," October 10, 2005; Thomas H. Maugh II, "2 Americans, Israeli, Share Nobel Prize in Chemistry," *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 2009. ¹¹"Counterterrorism Cooperation Accord Between the Government of the State of Israel and the Government of the United States of America," April 30, 1996; "Counterterrorism Group Formed," October 1999, Jewish Virtual Library.

ISRAEL'S SEARCH FOR PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS



The Zionist movement and then the reborn state of Israel always sought friendship with neighboring states, envisioning a future of cooperation in joint trade, science, environmental, and humanitarian projects. After World War I some Arab leaders shared this vision:

"We Arabs...look with deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement...We will wish the Jews a hearty welcome home...our two movements complete one another....I think that neither can be a real success without the other."

—Emir Faisal, Leader of the Arab National Movement, March 3, 1919¹

But within a short time, many Arab leaders became hostile to Zionism, denied the Jewish state's right to exist as their neighbor, and repeatedly tried to destroy it. Nonetheless, Israel has clung to the dream of peaceful coexistence. The small Jewish nation has reemerged and protected itself with strong defenses while simultaneously reaching out for friendship and compromise. The state of Israel has always shown its willingness to make painful concessions for genuine peace. As of 2021, six of the 22 Middle Eastern states have signed peace agreements with Israel: Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco.

1937: Zionists accepted Britain's partition recommendation with some reservations. Based on the Peel Commission report, the proposal called for a Jewish state in only 4 percent of the original British Mandate, which included Jordan, and a Palestinian Arab state confederated with Jordan in the remaining 96 percent of the land. Arab leaders rejected it.

1947: Zionists accepted the UN Partition Plan. UN Resolution 181 recommended dividing the Palestine Mandate into a Jewish and Arab state. Forty-five percent of the land was allotted for an Arab state and 55 percent for a Jewish state, though over 60 percent of the Jewish portion was the arid Negev Desert. Arab states rejected the compromise and launched a war to seize all of the land. The UN did not intervene to enforce its recommendation.

1949: Armistice agreements: After the 1948 war (see page 12), Israel and neighboring Arab states agreed to an armistice. The Old City of Jerusalem and the West Bank were occupied by Jordan and the Gaza Strip was occupied by Egypt. The UN-sponsored Lausanne talks were intended to lead to permanent peace agreements, but the Arab states refused to make peace, and their hostility to the Jewish state intensified. In 1951 Jordan's King Abdullah was assassinated for trying to negotiate peace with Israel.

"We have a secret weapon...and this is time. As long as we do not make peace with the Zionists, the war is not over; and as long as the war is not over, there is neither victor nor vanquished."—Azzam Pasha, Secretary General of the League of Arab States (1945–1952), 1949²

1967: Israel accepted UN Resolution 242's land-for-peace formula: The belligerents were to make peace, recognize each other's sovereignty, and negotiate for more "secure borders."³ In return, Israel was to withdraw from certain territories captured in the 1967 war. Contrary to Arab leaders' claims, the carefully crafted resolution did not call for Israel to withdraw from all the territories. Arab states rejected this formula and remained committed to the "three nos" of their Khartoum Resolution—no peace, no negotiations, and no recognition of the Jewish state.

1979: Peace treaty with Egypt: When Egyptian President Anwar Sadat came to Jerusalem and made a sincere peace offer, Israel welcomed him. Although Israel had discovered oil and gas in the Sinai, it gave the entire Sinai Peninsula to Egypt (91 percent of all the land captured in the 1967 war) in accordance with Resolution 242, dismantled all Jewish communities that had been built, left its oil drilling infrastructure intact, and gave up the oil revenues the wells had produced. In 1981 President Sadat was assassinated by Egyptian extremists for striking a deal with Israel.

1993: Oslo Peace Accords with the PLO: After the PLO agreed to peace negotiations, Israel agreed to withdraw from most of the territories and grant self-government to the Palestinians. In exchange, the PLO was supposed to stop incitement, renounce terrorism, and accept Israel's right to exist in peace as a Jewish state within secure borders. By 1997, 98 percent of the Palestinian people were governed by the Palestinian Authority.

1994: Peace treaty with Jordan: King Hussein and Israel had multiple working arrangements, but Hussein kept them hidden due to pressure from Arab states. The regional atmosphere changed after the Oslo Accords of 1993, allowing Jordan and Israel to publicly formalize their peaceful relations.

2000: Camp David and withdrawal from southern Lebanon: U.S. President Bill Clinton hosted Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat for peace negotiations at Camp David. Barak agreed to a far-reaching agreement that would have established a Palestinian state. Arafat rejected the offer and promoted a massive wave of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. Clinton called this a "colossal historical blunder." Also in 2000, Israel withdrew its troops from the security zone it had established in southern Lebanon to protect its civilians from rockets. The Iran-sponsored terrorist group Hezbollah responded with increased terrorism and rocket fire in the years that followed, leading to the 2006 Lebanon War.

2005: Unilateral disengagement from Gaza and parts of the West Bank: Though the Palestinian Authority was not living up to its commitments, Israel withdrew from parts of the northern West Bank and from the area it still controlled in Gaza—uprooting more than 8,500 Israelis from their homes. These actions were taken with the hope of breaking the impasse in the peace process and to facilitate a two-state solution with defined borders. As of this printing, these expectations have not been realized.

2008: Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert presented a far-reaching compromise, but PA President Mahmoud Abbas rejected it and made no counteroffer. Prime Minister Olmert offered all of Gaza, 94 percent of the West Bank with land swaps equivalent to the remaining 6 percent, evacuation of 60,000 Israelis from the West Bank, a shared capital in Jerusalem with an international body overseeing holy sites, and a family reunification program for approximately 50,000 Palestinian refugees as a compromise on the Palestinian demand for a "right of return" for Palestinian refugees.⁴ President Abbas did not respond.

2009–14: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeatedly asked PA President Abbas to resume direct negotiations for two states for two peoples, but Abbas refused until 2013.⁵ During the most recent negotiations in 2014, Netanyahu reportedly agreed to a peace framework presented by the U.S. administration, but Abbas rejected it.

2020: The Abraham Accords: Beginning in August 2020, the U.S. administration facilitated an unprecedented wave of normalization and peace agreements between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco. These agreements have already led to deep cooperation among governments and people across the region, and numerous reports have predicted that more Arab states will take similar steps in the near future.

¹Emir Faisal letter to Felix Frankfurter, March 3, 1919, reprinted in *The Israel-Arab Reader*, 1969, p. 21. ²Quoted in Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel*, 2000, p. 453. ³Khartoum Resolutions, September 1967. ⁴Richard Boudreaux, "Olmert's Peace Offers Put Livni in Tight Spot," *Los Angeles Times*, February 4, 2009. ⁵Tovah Lazaroff and Khaled Abu Toameh, "PM calls on Abbas to return to negotiating table," *Jerusalem Post*, May 8, 2012.



ISRAELI–PALESTINIAN PEACE EFFORTS

“We, who have come from a land where parents bury their children...say to you today in a loud and clear voice: Enough of blood and tears. Enough.”

—Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Speech on the White House Lawn, 1993



The handshake on the White House lawn at the signing of the Oslo Accords. (Pictured left to right: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, U.S. President Bill Clinton, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.)

High hopes for a new era of peace began with the Oslo Accords. The accords promised to end decades of warfare and to fulfill Palestinian aspirations while ensuring Israel’s security.

Since its founding in 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)’s explicit goal had been to replace Israel, not to live alongside it. New opportunities arose in the early 1990s when the first intifada ended and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat claimed that he recognized Israel. Israel’s enemies seemed ready to lay down their arms and make peace. Israel was prepared to welcome the opportunity. Most Israelis and Palestinians were full of hope and optimism.

PLO and Israeli representatives began secret talks in Oslo, Norway, in 1992. Arafat, the architect of terrorism against Israel, claimed he would renounce terrorism and incitement, recognize Israel’s right to exist, and accept a two-state solution. In return Israel and the United States looked beyond the PLO’s terrorist

past, acknowledged the PLO as the official representative of the Palestinian people, and agreed to Palestinian self-rule.

The Oslo process did not go smoothly. Though the Palestinian Authority (PA) governed 98 percent of its civilian population by 1997, escalating Palestinian incitement and terrorism led Israel to delay further withdrawals. Palestinians questioned Israel’s commitment to Oslo because of these delays, while calls to violence by official Palestinian media, agencies, clerics, and political leaders led many Israelis to question Arafat’s sincerity. At Camp David in 2000, Arafat rejected Israel’s offer of a two-state solution, which was endorsed by U.S. President Bill Clinton, and made no counteroffer. The campaign of terrorism known as the second (al-Aqsa) intifada erupted two months later. In 2003 the UN, the EU, the U.S., and Russia endorsed a new plan, the “road map,” to revive the peace process. When the negotiations envisioned in the road map also failed, Israel embarked upon a policy of unilateral withdrawals. Subsequent peace talks have yielded no significant progress.

Important Events in the Oslo Peace Process

September 13, 1993: Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin shook hands on the White House lawn and signed the **Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DoP)**. The DoP laid out gradual steps for Israeli withdrawals. In exchange the PLO was to refrain from all incitement and all violence, dismantle terrorist groups, and eliminate the clauses in its charter that call for the destruction of Israel. The most difficult issues—Jerusalem, refugees, final borders, settlements, and security—were to be negotiated five years later once Israel was assured that its former enemy had sincerely renounced violence and the goal of destroying the Jewish state.¹

April 16, 1993: Hamas carried out the first of its many suicide bombings against Israelis. These brutal attacks were partly aimed at undermining peace talks.

May 4, 1994: The Palestinian Authority was established to govern the Palestinians in the **Gaza–Jericho Agreement**. Israel turned civil service administration over to the PA and withdrew from Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

July 1, 1994: Arafat’s exile in Tunisia ended, and he returned to the Gaza Strip with his PLO associates.



Peace Rally in Tel Aviv, 1995.

The Oslo Accords, The Road Map, The Gaza Disengagement: 1993–Present

October 14, 1994: The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Rabin, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, and Arafat.

September 28, 1995: In **Oslo II** or the **Israeli–Palestinian Interim Agreement**, Israel was scheduled to withdraw from Palestinian population centers, which would then be governed by the PA. The West Bank and Gaza were divided into Areas A, B, and C. Areas A and B include the vast majority of the Palestinian population and are now ruled by the PA. Area C is mostly empty but includes Israeli settlements and small Palestinian communities. It is controlled by Israel, and its status is to be decided in peace negotiations. Israel completed the withdrawal from population centers in December 1995. Oslo II also called for the creation of a Palestinian police force of 30,000 to keep order and control militant factions. Israel agreed to provide arms for the new police force. The PLO again agreed to stop incitement, amend the PLO charter that still called for Israel's destruction, and guarantee respect for Jewish holy sites in its territory.

November 4, 1995: Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli extremist who rejected any concessions to Palestinians, and Peres became prime minister.

October 23, 1998: The **Wye River Memorandum** was drafted to clarify each side's ongoing obligations and to address Palestinian violations of previous agreements to end incitement, amend the PLO charter, and dismantle terrorist groups. Further Israeli withdrawals were tied to Palestinians fulfilling these obligations.

July 11–25, 2000: In **Camp David negotiations** to resolve final status issues, Clinton acted as mediator. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered 95 percent of a contiguous West Bank, 100 percent of Gaza, a capital in eastern Jerusalem, the removal of Jewish communities from those areas, and \$30 billion to help resettle Palestinian refugees. Palestinians did not respond to the offer. PLO officials later claimed that Barak's offer would have given them only disconnected enclaves. Israeli and U.S. officials disputed this claim.



Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, U.S. President Bill Clinton, and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at Camp David, 2000.

“You understand that we plan to eliminate the state of Israel and establish a purely Palestinian state. We will make life unbearable for Jews by psychological warfare and population explosion.... I have no use for Jews; they are and remain Jews.”

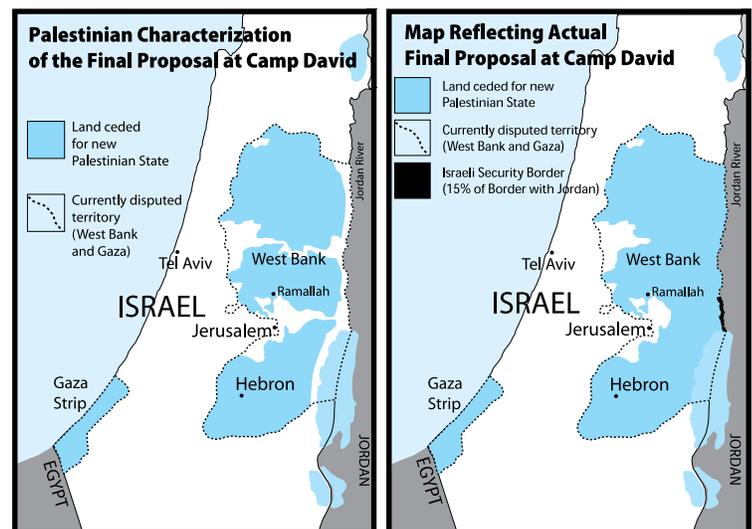
—Yasser Arafat to an Arab audience in Stockholm, Sweden, January 30, 1996²

The final proposals made to the Palestinians “couldn't be a floor for negotiations. It couldn't be a ceiling. It was the roof.... Those who say there were cantons, completely untrue. It was contiguous.” —Dennis Ross, U.S. envoy and negotiator³

September 28–30, 2000: Violence erupted, marking the start of the **al-Aqsa** or **second intifada**, a campaign of Palestinian terrorism, which effectively ended the Oslo process. Though at the time Palestinians claimed Israeli prime ministerial candidate Ariel Sharon's walk on the Temple Mount triggered the violence, Palestinian leaders (including Palestinian Minister of Communication Imad Al-Faluji) later admitted publicly that the intifada had been planned since the end of the Camp David negotiations.⁴

January 22–28, 2001: At the **Taba Conference**, where Barak made another offer, including 97 percent of the West Bank, again, no deal was reached. Barak's offer was rescinded as Israeli elections approached and terrorist attacks against Israel escalated.

March 27, 2002: The Arab League proposed the Arab Peace Initiative. After initially failing to gain traction, the plan was relaunched in 2007. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert welcomed it, with reservations.



Palestinian leaders claimed the offer they rejected at Camp David for a Palestinian state was a nonviable series of cantons (left). U.S. Middle East envoy and negotiator Dennis Ross asserted that Israel's Camp David proposal was contiguous (right) and far-reaching. (Maps from Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace*, 2004.)



June 4, 2003: The road map for peace was formally endorsed at the Aqaba Summit by Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas, Jordan's King Abdullah II, and U.S. President George Bush. It was meant to lead to a peace deal but reached a deadlock early on.

November 11, 2004: Arafat died in Paris. Former PA Prime Minister and Arafat colleague Abbas (Abu Mazen) was elected chairman of the PLO and later president of the PA.

August 2005: Israel unilaterally withdrew from the remaining 20 percent of the Gaza Strip that was still under Israeli rule and from the northern West Bank, uprooting Israeli communities (including the deceased from cemeteries).

January 2006: Ehud Olmert became interim Israeli prime minister after Sharon suffered a stroke. Hamas, a terrorist group dedicated to destroying Israel in accordance with its founding charter, won the PA parliamentary elections.

2006: Hamas kidnapped IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. The Hezbollah war broke out.

June 2007: Hamas launched a violent coup that separated the PA into Hamas-controlled Gaza and the PA-controlled West Bank.

2008: Israeli PM Olmert offered Palestinian President Abbas all of Gaza, virtually all of the West Bank after land swaps, and more in return for peace. Abbas never responded.

2009–2016: Numerous U.S. efforts to facilitate peace negotiations failed. In 2016, Palestinian leaders rejected outlines of a peace agreement presented by the U.S., saying, "It is not possible for us to recognize a Jewish state."

2020: The U.S. released a new peace plan which was embraced by Israeli leaders and unequivocally rejected by Palestinian leaders. Israeli PM Netanyahu began discussing a controversial plan to annex/apply Israeli sovereignty to parts of the West Bank that would become part of Israel under the U.S. plan. This plan was suspended as part of Israel's peace deal with the UAE.

Diverse Political Parties in the Peace Process

Year	U.S.	Israel	Palestinians
1993	President Bill Clinton, Mideast Envoy Dennis Ross	Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Labor Party	PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat
1995	President Bill Clinton, Mideast Envoy Dennis Ross	Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Labor Party	PA President Yasser Arafat
1996	President Bill Clinton, Mideast Envoy Dennis Ross	Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Likud Party	PA President Yasser Arafat
1999	President Bill Clinton, Mideast Envoy Dennis Ross	Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Labor Party	PA President Yasser Arafat
2001	President George W. Bush, Mideast Envoy Dennis Ross	Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Likud Party	PA President Yasser Arafat
2004	President George W. Bush	Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Likud Party	PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas
2006	President George W. Bush	Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Kadima Party	PA President Mahmoud Abbas
2009–2020	President Barack Obama (2009–2016) President Donald Trump (2017–2020)	Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Likud Party	PA President Mahmoud Abbas; Hamas Leader Ismail Haniyeh, Gaza

Terrorism Since the Start of the Oslo Peace Process⁵

In the five years after the Oslo Accords were signed, Palestinian terrorist groups opposed to the two-state solution killed 233 Israelis, more than the number killed (216) in the entire 15 years that preceded the accords. Despite escalating terrorism and incitement, Israel continued to withdraw until 98 percent of Palestinians were governed by the PA. Israel intermittently reoccupied these areas as needed for security purposes with its defensive operations during the second intifada. The violence undermined the central premise of the Oslo Accords, that differences would be resolved peacefully, and effectively shattered the Oslo peace process. Since 2001, 25,000 rockets and mortars have been fired at Israel from Gaza—roughly 20,000 of those were launched by Hamas and other terrorist groups in the years after Israel withdrew from the area.

Year	Israelis Murdered in Terrorist Attacks
September 1993–1994	26
1994	65
1995	29
1996	56
1997	41
1998	16
1999	8
2000—Second Intifada Begins	44
2001	207
2002	452
2003	208
2004	117
2005	56
2006	30
2007	13
2008	36
2009	15
2010	11
2011	22
2012	10
2013	6
2014	25
2015	30
2016	20

¹Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangement," September 13, 1993. ²Quoted in "Arafat in Stockholm," *Arutz-7*, February 27, 1996. ³Interview with Dennis Ross on *Fox News Sunday*, April 21, 2002. ⁴Lamia Lahoud, "PA minister: Intifada planned since July," *Jerusalem Post*, March 4, 2001. ⁵Statistics compiled from "Fatalities in Palestinian Terror Attacks (1967–2005)," Jewish Virtual Library; 2007 data from Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Anti-Israel Terrorism in 2007 and its Trends in 2008: Overview," June 5, 2008; Israel Security Agency, "2010 Summary: Data and Trends in Palestinian Terrorism"; Israel Security Agency, "2013 Annual Summary."



TERRORIST

SEPTEMBER 28, 2000–2007: The Oslo process came to an end in September 2000 when multiple extremist Palestinian groups, with the backing of Yasser Arafat and the PA, launched a terrorist war against Israel called the second intifada or the Oslo War. These groups hijacked the peace agenda from ordinary Palestinians and forced Israel to focus on self-defense.

Though there had been terrorism throughout the Oslo years, it now escalated into an organized, systematic campaign of roadside explosives, ambushes, and shootings. The intifada's signature tactic, suicide bombing, was the most lethal, causing 47 percent of all Israeli casualties. Terrorists targeted Israeli civilians. Suicide bombers struck restaurants, dance clubs, synagogues, bar mitzvah celebrations, and public buses. Snipers shot at commuters on the highways. Attackers infiltrated private homes and launched rockets into schoolyards.

During the Oslo negotiations, Yasser Arafat, the PLO, and the PA committed to disarming and dismantling terrorist groups. Instead, they continued to arm terrorists, promote incitement, and give terrorists financial and ideological support, hoping to force more concessions from Israel.

The PA officially celebrated suicide bombers as heroic martyrs and authorized public incitement in the media, schools, and mosques to attack Israel and Israelis. Many PA security officials doubled as terrorist operatives. By 2005 Israel's counterterrorism measures had quelled the second intifada.

In January 2006 PA Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas announced he would continue the PA policy of paying suicide bombers' families with annual stipends.³ In the same month, the radical Islamic group Hamas won the majority vote in the PA elections, and, in a violent coup in 2007, took over the Gaza Strip.

"Whoever thinks that the intifada broke out because of the despised Sharon's visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque is wrong. This intifada was planned in advance, ever since President Arafat's return from the Camp David negotiations, where he turned the table upside down on President Clinton."

—PA Communications Minister
Imad Al-Faluji, March 3, 2001¹

Terrorism Against Israel Sept. 28, 2000 - Dec. 31, 2005²

25,770 terrorist attacks

147 suicide bombings
(causing 48% of all deaths)

1,084 killed

7,454 injured

71% of dead and wounded were
civilians (2000–2005)

Palestinian Terrorist Groups Dedicated to Israel's Destruction

Terrorists come from a large network of armed Palestinian groups. Some groups, like Hamas, are radical Islamists, while others, like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), are secular. Immediately following Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in the fall of 2005, Al Qaeda and Hezbollah operatives established cells in Gaza. Though these groups often compete with one another, they also frequently collaborate. All receive encouragement, financial support, weapons, and, in some cases, direction from states such as Iran, Qatar, and Turkey. For example, Iran has given Hamas and Hezbollah millions of dollars annually, the Hamas leader Khaled Mashal lives in Qatar, and Hamas and Hezbollah signed an agreement in 2004 to increase attacks on Israel.⁴

HAMAS (ISLAMIC RESISTANCE MOVEMENT)⁵

FOUNDED:	1987.
LEADERS:	Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (1987-2004); Khaled Mashal (2004-2017); Ismail Haniyeh (2017-present)
LOCATION:	West Bank/Gaza; Leaders also in Lebanon, Qatar, Egypt, Iran, and Turkey
IDEOLOGY:	Muslim Brotherhood Islamism. Opposes PLO. "Israel will exist until Islam will obliterate it. There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad (holy war)."-Hamas Charter
OPERATIONS:	Shootings, bombings, rocket attacks, suicide missions. 773 terrorist attacks in just 2003 and 2004. 41 suicide bombings (1993-2000). 58 suicide bombings (2000-2005). 377 Israelis killed, 2,076 wounded (9/00-4/04). 29 suicide bombers foiled and arrested (2005). 40 percent of all suicide bombers (2000-2005). Thousands of rockets fired at Israeli civilians (2001-Present).
NOTES:	Governs Gaza. Major player in the terrorist war against Israel. Has shifted strategy from suicide bombings to rockets, mortars, and tunnels. Closely tied to Iran, Lebanon, Qatar, and Turkey. Has received funding from groups in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, Western Europe, Hezbollah, and others. Listed as terrorist organization by U.S. State Department, the European Union (EU), Canada, Japan, and Israel.



Bombing of Sbarro Restaurant in Jerusalem.

GROUPS

"We love death like our enemies love life!"

—Ismail Haniyeh, 2014⁶

"We may lose or win [tactically], but our eyes will continue to aspire to the strategic goal, namely, to Palestine from the river to the sea [euphemism for all of Israel]. Whatever we get now cannot make us forget this supreme truth."

—Faisal Husseini, PLO representative and a PA minister, April 2001⁷

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO)⁸

FOUNDED:	1964
FOUNDER/ LEADERS:	Egyptian-born Ahmed Shukairy. Sponsored by Egyptian president Gamal Nasser. Yasser Arafat, PLO chairman: 1969-2004. Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), PLO co-founder, served as PLO chair, 2005-present.
IDEOLOGY:	Secular Arab nationalist. "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the State of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time. Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history." —PLO Charter, 1968
OPERATIONS:	Plane hijackings, hostage taking, bombings, assassinations. 1968-1982: targeted Israeli civilians and Jews globally and conducted operations against Lebanese, Jordanians, and Americans. Tried to overthrow King Hussein of Jordan and was crushed by Hussein's army in September of 1970.
NOTES:	Founded as umbrella organization for militant Palestinian nationalist groups. 1974: UN recognizes PLO as sole representative of the Palestinian people. 1993: PLO is signatory of Oslo Peace Accords and says it formally recognizes Israel. Becomes dominant political party in the PA. 1996: PLO votes for amending its charter to eliminate clauses calling for destruction of Israel. Charter remains unchanged in public documents. Accused by the international community of extensive corruption and theft of international aid during its governance of the PA.



Yasser Arafat.

MOVEMENT FOR THE NATIONAL LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (FATAH)⁹

Offshoot Militias of Fatah: Tanzim and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade

FOUNDED:	1959
FOUNDER:	Egyptian-born Yasser Arafat, with Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and others.
IDEOLOGY:	Revolutionary nationalist liberation group. Took over PLO in 1968 and remains PLO's largest faction.
OFFSHOOT MILITIAS:	Tanzim: founded in 1983, Fatah's military and operational wing. Marwan Barghouti, Tanzim leader in West Bank, currently in Israeli jail serving five life terms for planning deadly attacks against Israeli civilians. Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade: founded in 2000 after outbreak of second intifada. Most Fatah operatives work in Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade.
OPERATIONS:	Guerilla warfare, shootings, bombings, rockets, and suicide attacks. 214 terrorist attacks in just 2003 and 2004. 33 suicide bombings (2000-2005). 1st female suicide bomber (1/27/02). 5 female suicide bombers dispatched (2002-2005). 47 suicide bombers foiled and arrested (2005).
NOTES:	Fatah has several militias, including Force-17. Midway into the second intifada, Fatah militias started coordinating with radical Islamist terrorist groups for joint terrorist attacks.



Reem Riyashi poses with her child before launching a suicide attack that killed four Israelis in 2004.



TERRORIST

PALESTINE ISLAMIC JIHAD (PIJ)¹⁰

FOUNDED:	1979
FOUNDER/ LEADERS:	Fathi 'Abd al-Aziz al Shaqaqi (1979-1995), Sheikh 'Abd al-Aziz 'Odah, Dr. Ramadan Shalah.
LOCATION:	West Bank and Gaza. Sponsored by Iran and Syria.
IDEOLOGY:	Radical Islamist and nationalist. Committed to "creation of an Islamic Palestinian state and the destruction of Israel through holy war." Opposes pro-Western and Arab governments. -BBC Report
OPERATIONS:	Shootings, bombings, rocket attacks, and suicide bombings. 1,000 terrorist attacks (2000-2004). 950 Israelis wounded, 150 killed. 39 suicide bombings (2000-2005). Jenin battle, 2002. PIJ's hub was in Jenin, the Palestinian terrorist "suicide capital." 59 suicide bombers foiled and arrested (2005). Thousands of rockets fired at Israeli civilians (2001-Present).
NOTES:	Small group but an increasingly major player. Recruits followers in mosques and universities. Closely tied to and supported by the Iranian regime.



HEZBOLLAH (PARTY OF GOD)¹¹

FOUNDED:	1982. Official manifesto released February 16, 1985.
FOUNDER/ LEADERS:	Iranian Revolutionary Guards; spiritual father Sheik Muhammed Hussein Fadlallah; General Secretary Sheik Abbas al-Musawi, 1991-1992; Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, 1992 to present.
LOCATION:	Southern Lebanon. Established by Iran.
IDEOLOGY:	Shia Islamic fundamentalist terrorist group/Lebanese political party. Goals are to establish Islamic state across the Arab world, eliminate Israel, and "fight western imperialism."
OPERATIONS:	Shootings, rocket attacks, bombings, kidnappings, suicide bombings. 241 U.S. Marines killed by suicide bombers driving a truck. Bombed U.S. marine barracks and embassy in Beirut, 1983. Beheaded U.S. CIA Chief William Buckley, Beirut, 1985. 29 killed in bombing of Israeli Embassy, Buenos Aires, 1992. 96 killed in bombing of Israeli Cultural Center, Buenos Aires, 1994. 813 terrorist attacks, 1990-1995. 3 Israeli border guards kidnapped and murdered, 2000. 183 terrorist attacks (May 2000-May 2004). Initiated a war across internationally recognized border of Israel by kidnapping two Israeli soldiers, killing eight, and shelling northern Israeli towns, 2006. Killed five Israelis and one Bulgarian in a bus bombing in Bulgaria (2012).
NOTES:	Not Palestinian-based but extensively supports Palestinian terrorist groups. Sent troops into Syria to support brutal dictator Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian Civil War. Operatives now in Caribbean and Central, North, and South America. Listed as a terrorist organization by U.S. State Department.



GROUPS

Smaller Terrorist Groups

POPULAR FRONT FOR THE NATIONAL LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (PFLP)¹²

SPLINTER GROUPS:

POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE — GENERAL COMMAND (PFLP-GC)
 DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (DFLP)



FOUNDED:	1967
FOUNDER/LEADERS:	George Habash (1971-2000); Ahmad Sadat (2001-present).
LOCATION:	West Bank, Gaza, Syria, and Lebanon.
IDEOLOGY:	Marxist/Leninist, revolutionary nationalism through armed insurrection. Refuses to recognize Israel. Broke with PLO in 1974 for its "stages strategy" ("liberating" Palestine in stages rather than in a single war) but later rejoined the PLO.
OPERATIONS:	Initiated showcase, media-oriented attacks in the 1970s, such as plane hijackings, shootings, bombings, and suicide attacks. Assassinated Israeli Tourism Minister Rechavim Ze'evi, October 2001. 8 suicide bombings (2000-2005). 14 suicide bombers were stopped and arrested (2005). Fought alongside Syrian regime in its brutal war against its own people. As of 2015 over 200,000 people have been killed in Syria, including nearly 3,000 Palestinian refugees.
NOTES:	Major players in the 1970s and 1980s, but PFLP and related groups are small and considered minor players today. However, the PFLP and its terrorist operatives are regularly glorified by far left anti-Israel academics and activists in the West.



The bed of a child murdered by a terrorist.

Additional terror groups not listed here also pose serious threats to Israeli civilians.



The aftermath of a suicide bomb attack on a Tel Aviv bus station, 2006.



A Palestinian suicide bomb attack on an Israeli bus, March 5, 2003, 17 people murdered, 53 injured.

¹Quoted by Lamia Lahoud, "PA Minister: Intifada planned since July," *Jerusalem Post*, March 4, 2001. ²Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Palestinian Terrorism in 2005," December 31, 2005. ³Jonathan D. Halevi, "Abbas Approves PA Assistance to Families of Suicide Bombers," *News First Class*, December 5, 2005. ⁴Terrorist Group Profile for Hizballah, *Country Reports on Terrorism, 2004*, United States Department of State, April 2005; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Special Information Bulletin," April 4, 2005. ⁵Hamas, Jewish Virtual Library; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Suicide Bombing terrorism during the current Israeli-Palestinian confrontation," January 1, 2006; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), "2005 Terrorism Review," January 2, 2006. ⁶Palestinian Media Watch, July 31, 2014, at http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=12235. ⁷Quoted in the Lebanese *Al-Safir*, March 21, 2001. ⁸"PLO" at Jewish Virtual Library; CAMERA, "Yasir Arafat's Timeline of Terror," November 13, 2004; Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Yasir Arafat: A Political Biography*, 2003. ⁹Fatah's Political Program, Jewish Virtual Library; Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), "Fatah Tanzim," ICT website; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Suicide Bombing," op. cit.; MFA, "2005 Terrorism Review," op. cit. ¹⁰"Palestinian Islamic Jihad," Jewish Virtual Library; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Special Information Bulletin," February 28, 2005; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Suicide Bombing," op. cit.; MFA, "2005 Terrorism Review," op. cit. ¹¹ICT, "Hezbollah," ICT website; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Background Information about Hezbollah..." July 13, 2006; U.S. Department of State, "Background Information on Foreign Terrorist Organizations"; MFA, "Terrorism from Lebanon-Hezbollah," January 29, 2004. ¹²"PFLP," Jewish Virtual Library; Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine," ICT website; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Suicide Bombing," op. cit.; MFA, "2005 Terrorism Review," op. cit.

TERRORIST WARS



Conventional wars against Israel ended after the 1973 war and the 1979 Israel–Egypt peace treaty. Since then, Israel has had to defend itself against terrorist organizations supported by governments like Iran, Syria, Qatar, and Turkey.

Iranian proxy Hezbollah, based in Lebanon, triggered a war against Israel in 2006, referred to as the second Lebanon or Hezbollah war (see page 13). Iranian-backed Hamas, which governs Gaza, forced Israel to launch four military operations to stop incessant barrages of rockets: Operations Cast Lead (December 2008), Pillar of Defense (November 2012), Protective Edge (July 2014), and Guardian of the Walls (May 2021).

In 2005 Israel evacuated all its soldiers and 8,500 citizens from Gaza to promote peace. Israel's withdrawal, however, brought escalating terrorism, not peace. In 2006 Iranian-backed Hamas won Palestinian Authority (PA) parliamentary elections and violently seized control of Gaza in 2007. Between 2005 and 2008, Hamas and allied groups fired over 9,500 mortars and rockets at Israel's southern communities, forcing Israel to launch Operation Cast Lead. The attacks soared again in 2012, forcing Israel to mount Operation Pillar of Defense. A subsequent 20-month truce ended when Hamas affiliates kidnapped and murdered three Israeli teens and again launched rocket barrages, forcing Israel to begin Operation Protective Edge in July 2014.

"If somebody is sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that. And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing."
—U.S. President Barack Obama, July 2008.¹

Hamas exploited truces to smuggle arms and upgrade its weaponry despite Israel's blockade, which was deemed legal by the UN Palmer Report.² By 2014 Gaza's terrorists had long-range Iranian rockets that put 80 percent of Israel in rocket range. They also built elaborate underground tunnels for infiltrating Israeli communities to kidnap or kill Israelis on a mass scale, as they planned to do on the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah in 2014.³

Hamas' goal, as stated in its founding document and regularly repeated by its leaders, is the murder of Jews, the "obliteration" of Israel, and its replacement with a Taliban-like Muslim theocracy (Hamas charter, 1988). Iranian-backed Hamas rejects all negotiations and compromise and shares the ideology of radical Islamists surging in the region.

The psychological trauma for Israelis: Hamas rockets and mortars have hit kindergartens, hospitals, schools, day care centers, homes, and shopping malls. In 2014 a rocket landed one mile from Ben Gurion Airport.⁴ Too often, Israelis live in dread as warning sirens give them only 15 to 60 seconds to reach bomb shelters. In Sderot, a town bordering Gaza, 94 percent of children suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome.⁵



Afik Zahavi, 4, was murdered by a rocket when he arrived at school. Afik was an only child, born to a woman after years of infertility.

Israel's response: restraint and continued transfer of humanitarian aid, but it was eventually compelled to mount major operations to stop the attacks. Israel attempted to avoid major military operations, limiting its response to periodic pinpoint strikes, destroying rocket-launching sites, munitions depots, and arms-smuggling tunnels. When rocket attacks escalated, Israel sought truces, but Hamas rejected such offers in 2008, 2012, and 2014. Nonetheless, Israel continued transferring thousands of tons of humanitarian aid, fuel, and medical supplies to Gaza's civilians through designated border crossings.

Israel's goal in each major operation: disable Hamas' military capabilities while preventing harm to ordinary Palestinians.

"Residents of Gaza...we are not fighting against you. This terrorist organization [Hamas] has brought disaster to two peoples."
—Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, December 27, 2008⁶

Israel's targets were Hamas' 15,000 to 20,000 armed fighters, its terrorism infrastructure, and lethal attack tunnels.⁷

Hamas consistently committed human rights abuses and war crimes, intentionally putting Israeli and Palestinian civilians in harm's way. It indiscriminately targeted Israeli civilians and systematically used human shields. By calling upon civilians to gather at targeted buildings and firing from and hiding its arsenals in schools, mosques, hospitals, homes, and UN buildings, Hamas turned these protected structures into legitimate military targets under international law. This happened with UNRWA schools and Gaza's Al-Wafa Hospital in 2014.⁸ Hamas entrapped Palestinians and intentionally put them in harm's way.

AGAINST ISRAEL

“Each and every missile against Israel constitutes a crime against humanity, whether it hits or misses, because it is directed at civilian targets.”—Palestinian Envoy to the UN Human Rights Council, July 9, 2014⁹

Hamas regularly attempted to manipulate the media and exaggerate the number of civilian deaths to win world sympathy in what some called its “civilian death strategy.”¹⁰ The BBC reported that the horrifying pictures Hamas claimed were taken during Operation Protective Edge were actually from 2009 or earlier or depicted atrocities in Iraq and Syria.¹¹ Hamas directed social media activists to call all fatalities “innocent civilians,” even if they were combatants, and to never show rockets fired from civilian centers.¹² After Operation Cast Lead, Hamas officials admitted that the majority of the estimated 1,166 to 1,400 Palestinian fatalities were combatants,¹³ as were the majority of the 167 fatalities during Operation Pillar of Defense. Although research is still in process, most studies estimate that in 2014’s Operation Protective Edge, around half of those killed were combatants.¹⁴

Hamas has a “crass... strategy designed to force Israel to kill their own [Palestinian] civilians so that the rest of the world will condemn them [Israel].” —Former U.S. President William Clinton, July 17, 2014¹⁵

In each major military operation, Israel went beyond the requirements of international law to protect Gaza’s civilians. Israel warned about impending attacks so civilians could move to safe areas through hundreds of thousands of personal telephone calls, millions of widely distributed leaflets, and radio broadcasts.¹⁶ Unfortunately, there were still many civilian casualties because Hamas urged civilians not to seek safer areas.¹⁷

“Israel’s use of individualized, specific warnings by phone and text goes far beyond what the law requires.” —Professor Laurie Blank, Emory Law School, July 2014¹⁸

- Israel used surgical strikes and precision munitions to avoid damaging structures near military targets and regularly aborted operations when innocent bystanders appeared.¹⁹
- Israel ensured the regular transport of goods during all its major military operations, even observing unilateral truces to ensure their delivery, and treated

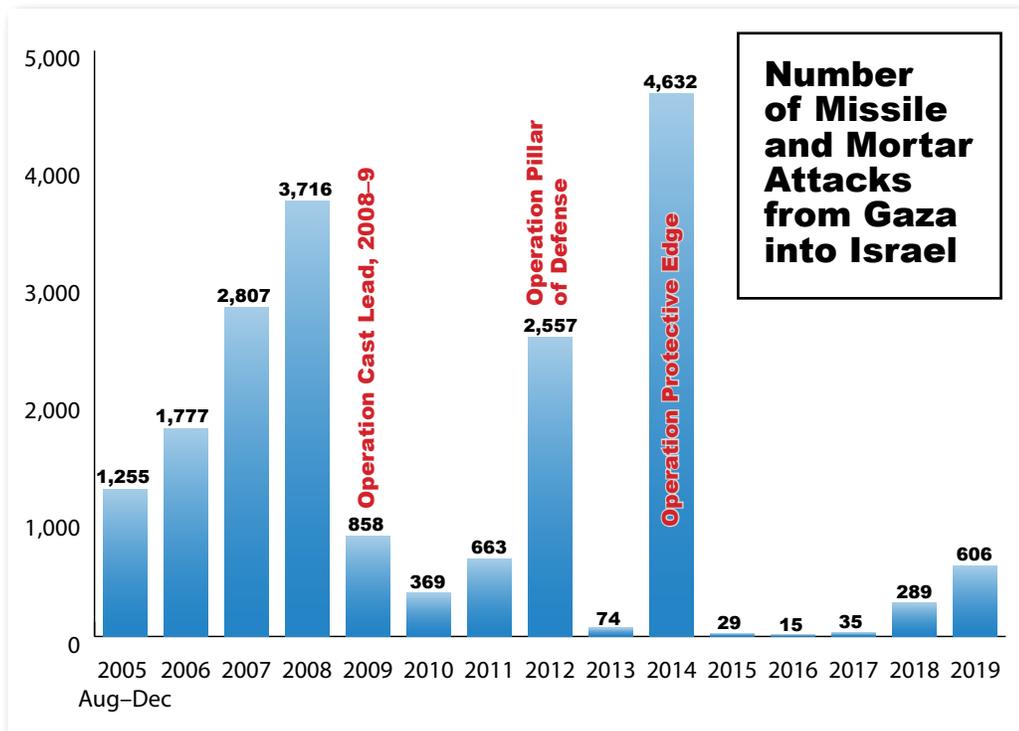
wounded civilians and setting up a field hospital in Gaza in 2014.²⁰

- The UN Goldstone Report initially criticized Israel’s action during Operation Cast Lead, but the report’s chairman, Judge Richard Goldstone, retracted his main criticisms after more evidence emerged, confirming that “Israel had not intentionally targeted civilians as a matter of policy.”²¹

“Israel may be raising the moral standards of warfare.” —Will Saletan, July 2014²²

Some claim that Israel used “disproportionate force” because Palestinians suffered more casualties than Israel. The law of proportionality does not mean that the casualties or sophistication of weaponry must be equal. The law prohibits actions in which “the incidental civilian injuries would be clearly excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage,” according to the International Criminal Court.²³ Israel’s response has been proportionate to the threat Hamas poses. Unfortunately, civilian casualties are a tragic result of wars Israel did not want.

Palestinian casualties were high because Hamas intentionally endangered civilians while its underground bunkers protected Hamas leaders and weapons. In contrast, Israel’s elaborate civil defense system has saved countless lives. Warning sirens, bomb shelters, and the Iron Dome—which shot down 90 percent of the rockets headed for civilian centers—are demonstrative of a government that invests in protecting its own people.



Number of Missile and Mortar Attacks from Gaza into Israel

¹Dr. Aaron Lerner, “Obama’s Sderot Remarks Illustrate How Olmert Team’s Inaction Is Incomprehensible,” IMRA, July 23, 2008. ²Sir Geoffrey Palmer, Chair, “Report of the Secretary General’s Panel of Inquiry on the May 31, 2010 Flotilla Incident,” September 2011. ³Gil Cohen, “Hamas firing long-range M-302 rockets at Israel, capable of 150-km distance,” *Ha’aretz*, July 9, 2014. Lawrence A. Franklin, “Hamas Mega-Attack Planned through Gaza Terror Tunnels,” *Gatestone Institute*, July 25, 2014. ⁴Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Rocket fire from Gaza and Palestinian ceasefire violations after Operation Cast Lead (Jan 2009),” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, July 9, 2014. Jad Mouawad, “Airlines Suspend Flights to Israel After Hamas Rocket Falls Near Main Airport,” *New York Times*, July 22, 2014. ⁵Eli Ashkenazi and Mijal Grinberg, “Study: Most Sderot kids exhibit post-traumatic stress symptoms,” *Ha’aretz*, January 17, 2008. ⁶Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “The Hamas war against Israel. Statements by Israeli leaders,” January 18, 2009. ⁷Marie Colvin, “Iran Hones Skills of Hamas Fighters,” *The Australian*, March 10, 2008. ⁸Hamas Commander: Iran Training Our Men,” *Jerusalem Post*, March 9, 2008. ⁹International Committee of the Red Cross, “Rule 10. Civilians Objects Loss of Protection from Attack,” Customary International Humanitarian Law, 2014; “WATCH: Footage of IDF strike on Gaza hospital,” *Times of Israel*, July 23, 2014. ¹⁰MEMRI, “Palestinian Envoy to UNHRC: ‘Israelis Warn Civilians Before Attacks, We Don’t,’” Interview on Egyptian TV, posted July 13, 2014. ¹¹Marvin Kalb, “Kalb: Media used as a weapon in the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah war,” Harvard Kennedy School Shorenstein Center, March 13, 2007; *Tablet Staff*, “Top Secret: Hamas Command Bunker in Gaza Revealed,” *Tablet Magazine*, July 29, 2014; Thane Rosenbaum, “Hamas Civilian Death Strategy,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 21, 2014. ¹²BBC Trending, “#BBCtrending: Are #GazaUnderAttack images accurate?,” BBC News, July 8, 2014. ¹³Hamas Interior Ministry To Social Media Activists: Always Call The Dead ‘Innocent Civilians,’ Don’t Post Photos Of Rockets Being Fired From Civilian Population Centers,” MEMRI, Special Dispatch No. 5739, July 17, 2014. ¹⁴*Ha’aretz News Service*, “Hamas admits 600–700 of its men were killed in Cast Lead,” *Ha’aretz*, September 11, 2010. ¹⁵Al Jazeera Publishes Updated List of Gaza Dead, Analysis Confirms Israel Targeting Combatants,” *Algemeiner*, July 21, 2014. ¹⁶“Bill Clinton: Hamas ‘Crass Strategy’ is to Kill Palestinians,” *The Tower*, July 17, 2014. ¹⁷Will Saletan, “Israel May Be Raising The Moral Standards Of Warfare,” *Slate*, July 12, 2014. ¹⁸“IDF: Hamas’ Use of Human Shields is a War Crime,” *IDF Blog*, July 14, 2014. ¹⁹Laurie R. Blank, “Getting the law right on the Israel-Hamas conflict,” *The Hill*, July 11, 2014. ²⁰Sharon Schwartz, “Two New Videos From The Israeli Army That May Pose a Big Problem for Critics,” *The Blaze*, July 16, 2014; IDF, “Pinpoint Strikes: Targeting Terrorists, Avoiding Civilians,” IDF blog, July 11, 2014. ²¹Sam Sokol, “Palestinians unlikely to use IDF field hospital,” *Jerusalem Post*, July 20, 2014. ²²Richard Goldstone, “Reconsidering the Goldstone Report on Israel and War Crimes,” *Washington Post*, April 1, 2011. ²³Will Saletan, “Israel May Be Raising The Moral Standards Of Warfare,” *Slate*, July 12, 2014. ²⁴Shoshana Bryen, “The Doctrine of Proportionality,” *Gatestone Institute*, July 20, 2014.

REGIONAL THREAT: A NUCLEAR IRAN



“An atomic bomb would not leave anything in Israel but would just produce minor damages in the Muslim world.”

—Ali Rafsanjani, former Iranian president, 2001²

“Israel is a cancerous tumor that must be removed.”

—Iranian leader Ayatollah Khamenei, 2012¹

In 1979, just as Israel made peace with its most powerful regional enemy, Egypt, a new threat emerged. The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran brought to power religious extremists who have brutally oppressed their own people and supported terrorism across the region. The theocratic regime severed the friendly ties that had existed between Israel and Iran since 1950.³ Its leaders began using genocidal rhetoric calling for Israel’s destruction and racing to build nuclear weapons capability in defiance of six UN Security Council resolutions.⁴ The international community regards a nuclear Iran as a global threat.⁵ Israel believes this threat jeopardizes its very existence.

Iranian leaders are more likely to use nuclear weapons than any state that has possessed them to date. Religious extremists with an expansionist, apocalyptic ideology, the regime’s leaders want to spread the Islamic revolution worldwide.⁶ They have encouraged their citizens to carry out suicide attacks,⁷ sacrificed tens of thousands of Iranian children,⁸ and committed grave human rights violations in pursuit of their goals.⁹

A nuclear Iran would trigger a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, further destabilizing the volatile region. Neighboring states such as Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia¹⁰ have already indicated that they, too, plan to start nuclear programs.

The risk of nuclear terrorism, with “dirty” weapons in the hands of terrorists, would escalate in Israel and around the world. Iran is already the world’s leader of state-sponsored terrorism¹¹ and has sponsored terrorism in the Middle East, Europe, and Central Asia.¹² Iran and its proxies have also killed Americans: 241 U.S. marines in Lebanon in 1983¹³ and 23 soldiers in Saudi Arabia in 1996.¹⁴ Iran has given “lethal” support to the insurgency in Iraq,¹⁵ to the Taliban in Afghanistan,¹⁶ and to President Assad in the brutal Syrian civil war.

A nuclear Iran could destabilize the world economy by manipulating oil supplies and prices. Iran has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, the shipping route for 40 percent of the world’s crude oil, and it could bully the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia into altering oil prices.¹⁷

A nuclear Iran poses special threats to Israel.

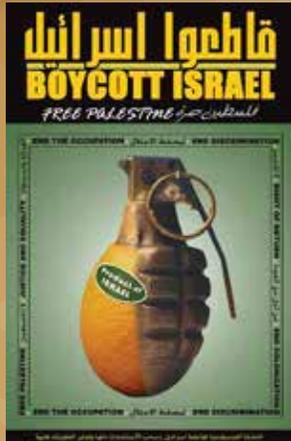
- The Iranian regime has repeatedly issued genocidal threats against Israel, attacked Jews and Israelis around the world, and committed acts of war against Israel. Between 2011 and 2012, Iranian agents attacked or attempted to attack Israeli diplomatic missions in India, Thailand, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.¹⁸
- Iran has been the main supporter of Hezbollah¹⁹ and Hamas,²⁰ terrorist groups dedicated to the destruction of Israel.
- A nuclear attack would be catastrophic for Israel, a small country of only 8,000 square miles and 8.1 million people.²¹

Israel and the international community are trying to stop Iran’s nuclear quest through UN resolutions, stiff economic sanctions, and negotiations. Both Israel and the U.S. have declared that they hope the conflict can be solved diplomatically but that Israel has the right to defend itself militarily if needed.

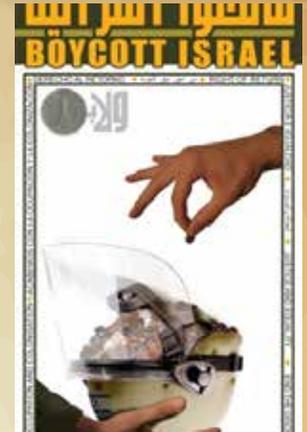
¹Ayatollah Khamenei, “Friday prayer sermons in Tehran,” The Office of the Supreme Leader Sayyid Ali Khamenei, February 3, 2012. (Note: In the Farsi version Khamenei is quoted as using the word “Israel.” In the English translation of the speech, “Israel” is replaced with “The Zionist Regime.” This is either a mistake or an intentional mistranslation.)
²Iran: “We will help ‘cut out the cancer of Israel,’” *The Telegraph*, February 3, 2012. “Rachel Brandenburg, “Iran and the Palestinians,” U.S. Institute of Peace. “AFP, “Iran Nuclear Plant Violates UN Resolutions: Envoys,” Channel NewsAsia, January 12, 2012. “World Leaders Oppose a Nuclear Iran,” Stop Iran’s Nukes website. “Office of the Supreme Leader Sayyid Ali Khamenei, “IR Leader Receives Researchers on Mahdism,” July 9, 2011; “Iran’s Ahmadinejad: Sharon Dead and Others to Follow Suit,” *Iran Focus*, January 5, 2006. “Iran’s New Government Glorifies Martyrdom,” MEMRI, July 29, 2005, Global Security, “Intelligence,” n.d. “Dave Siavashi, “Brainwashing Children: Basij militia to be established in 6,000 elementary schools,” *Iran News Now*, November 12, 2009. “Amnesty International, “Annual Report 2011,” 2011. “Richard Beeston, “Six Arab States Join Rush to Go Nuclear,” *London Sunday Times*, November 4, 2006. “Greg Bruno, “State Sponsors,” Council on Foreign Relations, October 13, 2011. “Richard Esposito and Brian Ross, “Iran ‘Directed’ Washington DC Terror Plot, U.S. Says,” ABC News, October 11, 2011. “PBS, “Terrorist Attacks on Americans: 1979–1988,” *Frontline*. “Philip Shenon, “23 U.S. Troops Die in Truck Bombing in Saudi Base,” *New York Times*, June 26, 1996. “U.S. State Department Report on Terrorism, 2009, Chapter 3. “U.S. officials: Taliban fighters training in Iran,” CNN, March 23, 2010. “Iran’s Oil Industry: A House of Cards?,” Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, July 5, 2007. “Daniel Byman, “Iran, Terrorism, and Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2008, AP: “Did Iran plot to kill Israelis in Azerbaijan?” CBS News, February 21, 2012; Herb Keinson, Gil Hoffman, and JPost.com Staff, “Netanyahu: Iran is behind attacks on Israeli embassies,” *Jerusalem Post*, February 13, 2012; Daniel Ten Kate and Suttinee Yuvejwattana, “Iranian Bombing Suspects ‘Targeted’ Israelis, Thai Police Say,” Bloomberg, February 15, 2012. “Ali Akbar Velayati, advisor to the Supreme Leader Khamenei, Al-Jazeera TV, July 25, 2009. “Palestinian Hamas Groups Admits that Its Fighters are Trained in Iran,” *Times* (UK), March 9, 2008. “Elliot Abrams, “Israel and Iran: The Grounds for an Attack,” *World Affairs Journal*, May/June, 2012.

The Soft War Against Israel

B.I.D.S. BOYCOTT DIVESTMENT SANCTIONS



When Israel's enemies realized they could not defeat the Jewish state through conventional or terrorist wars, they launched a new weapon: an international propaganda campaign that coalesced into BDS, the international boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement against Israel. BDS activists manipulate facts and human rights rhetoric to falsely accuse Israel of crimes and call for punishing it with BDS. The campaign does nothing to advance peace or help Palestinians. Its goal is to instill hostility to Israel, deny its right to exist, persuade liberal democracies to ostracize it, and pave the way for acceptance of BDS's ultimate goal, as stated by its founders—the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state.



Palestinian and Arab leaders have led anti-Jewish, anti-Israel boycotts since the 1920s, and some Arab countries still enforce rigid anti-Israel boycotts.¹ Today's variant—BDS—was launched by extremist NGOs and governments at the UN Conference against Racism held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa. It was reinvigorated when the second intifada subsided in 2005 and Palestinian extremists assumed leadership of BDS.²

BDS appears decentralized, but is a cohesive, well-organized movement with a long-term strategy. It mobilizes radical allies and attempts to recruit progressive groups in liberal democracies, especially the U.S. BDS leaders carefully hone and synchronize their slogans, strategy, and actions; conduct skills-training sessions; groom new leaders; operate speakers' bureaus; and provide how-to manuals.³ The EU and various foundations are major funders of many BDS groups.⁴

BDS spreads anti-Israel propaganda by generating publicity through resolutions to boycott Israel or divest from companies doing business with Israel and through high-profile demonstrations. BDS takes several forms:

- **Cultural and academic boycotts** of Israeli academia, artists, scientists, and athletes; pressuring popular artists to cancel performances in Israel; disrupting events featuring Israeli speakers and performers abroad.
- **Economic boycotts** promoted through divestment resolutions presented to university student governments, mainline churches, unions, local governments, professional associations, and corporate shareholder meetings; through pressuring retailers to stop stocking Israeli products.
- **Travel/diplomatic boycotts through "lawfare,"** which occurs when BDS activists falsely accuse Israeli officials of war crimes and obtain unjust arrest warrants issued against

them. For example, Israeli politician Tzipi Livni had to cancel her UK trips in 2009 for fear of arrest.⁵

BDS often makes false claims of success, though it has had relatively few victories thus far, even on college campuses. Over 250 university presidents and scholarly organizations denounced academic boycotts against Israel. Just 18 of America's 2,000 student governments considered divestment from 2016 to 2017, and only eight passed it. Even in those few cases, university administrations immediately rejected the idea and spoke out against BDS. However, BDS groups do not measure success by the number of votes they win but rather by the number of people they reach, the publicity they generate, and their effectiveness in mainstreaming anti-Israel propaganda.

BDS is fundamentally discriminatory. It blames Israel alone for the lack of peace and singles out the Jewish state for condemnation. As *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman wrote, "Criticizing Israel is not anti-Semitic, and saying so is vile. But singling out Israel ... is anti-Semitic, and not saying so is dishonest."⁶ At times, this discrimination is concealed through "partial boycotts" targeting settlements in the West Bank. However, BDS activists have clearly stated that such tactics are merely a stepping stone to a total boycott aimed at eliminating Israel as a whole.

BDS attempts to conceal its extremist agenda: the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state.

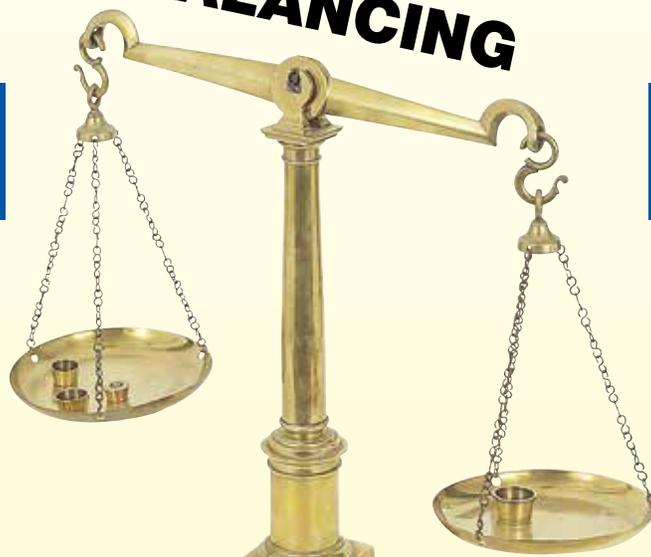
- "We oppose a Jewish state in any part of Palestine."—BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti⁷
- A central BDS demand is the alleged "right of return" to Israel of millions of Palestinian refugees that would turn Jews into a minority in their own state. According to Barghouti, "a return for refugees would end Israel's existence as a Jewish state."⁸

¹ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, "A Survey of Palestine Volume I," p. 31, Government Printer, Palestine, December 1945 and January 1946 and Mitchell Bard, "The Arab Boycott," Jewish Virtual Library, September 27, 2007. ² Gerald M. Steinberg, "The Centrality of NGOs in the Durban Strategy," *Yale Israel Journal* 9 (Summer 2006) and "Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS," BDS website, July 9, 2005. ³ US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, "Divest Now! A Handbook for Student Divestment Campaigns," September 16, 2010. ⁴ NGO Monitor, "BDS: Funders," NGO-Monitor website. ⁵ Ian Black, "UK to review war crimes warrants after Tzipi Livni arrest row," *The Guardian*, December 15, 2009. ⁶ Thomas Friedman, "Campus Hypocrisy," *New York Times*, October 16, 2002. ⁷ John Y. Jones, "Omar Barghouti—Strategies for Change," Vimeo, September 2013. ⁸ Ali Mustafa, "Boycotts work: An interview with Omar Barghouti," Electronic Intifada, May 31, 2009, at <http://electronicintifada.net/content/boycotts-work-interview-omar-barghouti/8263>.

ISRAEL'S SELF-DEFENSE

The long history of terrorism against Israel has forced it to develop innovative counterterrorism strategies. Israel is now respected as a global expert in the field, and its policies have become a model for other democracies committed to upholding humanitarian standards. In responding to the wars and terrorism since 2000, Israel has sought ways to defend its citizens and, at the same time, protect the lives of innocent Palestinian and Lebanese civilians who were also victimized by those who want to destroy Israel.

BALANCING



Self-Defense and



Murdered by terrorists: Five members of the Fogel family, including a three-month-old baby, March 2011.



Missiles and ammunition said to come from Iran, displayed in Eilat (photo by IDF spokesman).



Terrorists have smuggled bombs and terrorists into Israel using ambulances.



Rockets are frequently fired from Palestinian areas into Israeli schools, hospitals, homes, and communities.

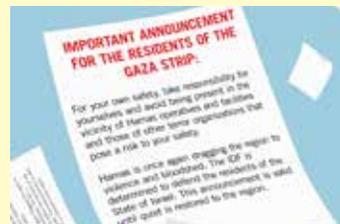
Humanitarian Values



Israeli doctor treating a casualty of the Syrian civil war.



Israel delivering aid to Gaza.



Translation of leaflet dropped by Israel to safeguard Gazan civilians.

The guiding principles of Israel's policies are:

Humanitarian

- Save the lives of Israeli citizens.
- Protect the lives and well-being of innocent Palestinians.
- Uphold civil and human rights with Supreme Court review of contested policies.

Defensive

- Stop terrorists and dismantle their infrastructures.
- Prevent the success of terrorist missions.
- Root out terrorist leaders and their supporters.

“Why don't [Syrian forces] learn from the Israeli army, which tries, through great efforts, to avoid shelling area populated by civilians in Lebanon and Palestine?”

—Faisal al-Qassem, *Al Jazeera Arabic anchor*, 2014.¹



Palestinian militants frequently use women and children as human shields during attacks.

Israel has been under incessant attack since its inception in 1948. It has had to learn how to preserve its humanitarian values while protecting its citizens.

Intelligence Gathering

Israel's most effective and important weapon is its intelligence operations, which allow it to monitor and preempt attacks against its citizens.

Deterrence and Prevention Measures

Israel has chosen not to use its full military power to eliminate the terrorists in order to limit the loss of innocent Palestinian lives. One strategy was to try to block the terrorists' ability to access Israeli population centers. There are no natural barriers between Israel and the West Bank. Jordan put up barriers when it occupied the West Bank, but Israel removed them when it gained control of the area in the 1967 war. For the next 33 years, people traveled more freely between the two regions. However, this free movement ended when the terrorist campaign erupted in 2000. Israel had to prevent terrorists from simply walking or driving into Israeli communities to maim and murder men, women, and children. While Israel's security measures have saved lives, they have undoubtedly made Palestinian lives more difficult as well. Terrorist groups have forced Israel to make a terrible choice between creating hardships for Palestinians and keeping Israelis alive.

Israel Employs Several Forms of Prevention:

Checkpoints	Bypass Roads	Security Barrier
<p><i>All checkpoints are temporary, legal, and part of the jointly agreed-upon Oslo Accords. Recognizing that they create hardships, Israel has worked to decrease waiting times and minimize face-to-face interactions with soldiers at checkpoints.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security checks within pre-'67 Israel: All Israelis and visitors must go through metal detectors and bag and/or potential body checks when they enter public places such as malls, bus stations, museums, clubs, cafes, hotels, and religious sites. • Checkpoints at border crossings: There were 26 checkpoints between Israel and the territories in September 2005.³ They regulate entry from the West Bank into Israel and resemble the checkpoints other nations put along their borders with neighboring states. • Security checkpoints and road blocks within the West Bank: These checkpoints try to prevent terrorists from moving freely within the West Bank and were built around cities known to be terrorist centers, such as Nablus. In 2005, as construction of the fence progressed, Israel reduced the number of checkpoints and roadblocks. When PA security efforts improved in 2009, the number of manned Israeli roadblocks dropped to 10 and the number of checkpoints dropped to 14.⁴ • Emergency checkpoints and seam zone checkpoints: By September 2005, as construction of the fence progressed, Israel was able to reduce the number of West Bank checkpoints and roadblocks. These are erected during high alerts and then quickly dismantled.⁵ As terrorism declined Israel reduced the number of checkpoints. By 2012 only 10 remained and are active only during terrorist alerts.⁶ 	<p><i>Bypass roads were agreed on in the Oslo Accords.</i></p> <p>Israel built highways in the West Bank that bypassed crowded population centers, and the Oslo Accords permitted their construction. The roads were used freely by both Palestinians and Israelis until the intifada started in 2000. Then, to reduce the number of casualties from roadside attacks and drive-by shootings, Israel reserved certain roads for only Israeli citizens of all religions, including Muslims, Christians, Jews, Druze, and others. In 2017, there were roughly 25 miles of such roads. At the same time, Israelis were prohibited from driving on roads reserved only for Palestinians, such as the old Bethlehem—Hebron road, to improve Palestinians' commute and reduce the risk of attacks by terrorists.</p>	<p><i>Israel did not begin building the West Bank security barrier until 2002, when terrorism reached unprecedented levels. Though many have protested against the barrier, it is similar to barriers that other democracies have built, such as those between India and Pakistan (Kashmir), Spain and Morocco, and South and North Korea. Israel built it to save lives.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since construction of the fence began in 2002, the number of terrorist attacks has dropped by more than 90 percent. • Ninety-seven percent of the barrier is a chain-link fence; approximately 3 percent (10 miles) is a concrete wall, built to prevent the sniper shootings that were frequent in selected areas. • Though the fence is not complete, only 5 to 8 percent of West Bank land and only three-tenths of 1 percent of Palestinians will be on the Israeli side of the fence.⁷ • Palestinians can bring their grievances about the barrier to Israel's Supreme Court, which in several cases has ruled in the favor of the Palestinians, resulting in rerouting of the fence.⁸

THE SUNDAY TIMES
MAY 07, 2006

Israel foils (Palestinian) plot to kill Palestinian president²

Israeli intelligence uncovered a Hamas plot to assassinate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, reported in the *Sunday Times* of London.



An armed terrorist dressed as a woman is captured by Israeli military.

SELF-DEFENSE

Special Operations: Precision Attacks

When the PA proved unable or unwilling to dismantle terrorist groups, Israel was forced to take active defensive measures to root out terrorists, their infrastructure, and their arms-smuggling tunnels. Its guiding principle was to only target terrorists and to spare the civilian population, although this has not always been possible.

Air Force Strikes	Land-based Raids	Targeted Strikes	House Demolitions
<p>Israel tries to limit the use of airstrikes because terrorists often surround themselves with civilians. In addition Israel uses controlled, limited precision air attacks to destroy military targets such as terrorist planning centers, terrorist training bases, and ammunition depots.</p> <p>Israel regularly aborts missions at the last minute to prevent civilian casualties. It developed a camera-equipped missile, the Delilah, which can be redirected with a push of a button if civilians appear in the target zone.⁹</p>	<p>In many cases, instead of using its aerial bombing capacity, Israel uses its own soldiers to dismantle terrorist bases. This helps avoid harm to innocent civilians but risks soldiers' lives. In 2002 Israel used ground troops in Jenin, the "terrorist capital," though aerial bombardment would have prevented Israeli deaths. Instead, 23 Israeli soldiers were killed and 75 were wounded in Jenin's booby-trapped roads and houses. Despite the many days of fighting, the UN reported that no more than 52 Palestinians died. Seventy-three percent of them were armed combatants, dispelling the huge numbers of casualties initially reported by a variety of media outlets (which even initially referred to the occurrence as a massacre).¹⁰</p>	<p>In accordance with the rules of war, Israel attempted to prevent future attacks through pinpoint operations against the masterminds and engineers of terrorist groups. After Hamas leaders were cut down by such precision operations, lower-echelon Hamas leaders went into hiding, which dramatically impeded their ability to gather support and mount attacks.¹¹ On occasion, these pinpoint attacks cause civilian deaths, even of children, partly because terrorists use civilians as human shields. Israel has tried to develop techniques to avoid all civilian casualties. By 2011, 91 percent of those killed in targeted strikes were terrorists.</p>	<p>In August 2002, after multiple suicide bombings, the Israeli government approved demolishing terrorists' houses in extreme cases to deter future attacks and destroy weapon stashes. In 2005 the IDF announced it would halt the practice, amid disagreements over whether or not it helps prevent deadly attacks. It was resumed in 2014 due to an increase in attacks and murders of Israeli civilians. When the IDF plans to demolish terrorists' homes, it gives advance warning so nobody is physically hurt. This practice remains controversial inside and outside Israel. Israel also demolished Gaza houses that concealed arms-smuggling tunnels, called "arteries of terror." Almost 100 such tunnels were uncovered between 2000 and September 2005. Yet even with this emergency measure in place, most demolition orders can be appealed to Israel's High Court, which halts or compensates for the destruction when it rules for the appellants.¹²</p>

Risking Israeli soldiers' lives to protect Palestinian civilians: the case of Jenin

"Had the Israelis chosen, they could have easily pummeled the camp [in the battle of Jenin in 2002] from afar and starved the terrorists out. Instead, they chose to do things the hard way, house to house—in part to avoid civilian casualties, not to inflict them. Were there civilian casualties? Almost certainly. But there is a world of difference between deliberately targeting civilians and the unintentional and inevitable casualties that were bound to occur in Jenin, where terrorists deliberately hid themselves among civilians."

—Senator Joseph R. Biden (D-Delaware), May 6, 2002¹³

"In battle, the Israeli army regularly accepted risks to its own men in order to reduce the risks that it posed on the civilian population."

—Professor Michael Walzer, Princeton University, 2002¹⁴

Seeing Israeli infantry "was like hunting, like being given a prize. I couldn't believe it when I saw the soldiers. The Israelis knew that any soldier who went into the camp like that was going to get killed. I've been waiting for a moment like that for years.... It was a very hard fight. We fought at close quarters, sometimes just a matter of a few meters between us, sometimes even in the same house."

—Thabet Mardawi, a senior Islamic Jihad terrorist, captured by Israeli soldiers in Jenin fighting¹⁵



Thabet Mardawi.

MEASURES

Legal and Punitive Measures: Prison and Exile

Prison and Exile: Israel has no death penalty except in very extreme cases, as with convicted Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. The strictest penalties are prison and exile, which apply to those directly involved in carrying out, planning, assisting, or supporting terrorists or terrorist activities.

Civil Defense in Israel

Israel requires that all homes and factories have bomb shelters. Bus stop shelters are made of reinforced concrete. Security guards are on all buses and at the entrances of public venues. Sirens warn of incoming rockets and citizens have gas masks. Special agencies are trained to ensure the supply of necessities and medical treatment during emergencies and conduct national emergency drills.

Protecting children: When Palestinian terrorists seized a school in Ma'alot in 1974, murdering 25 teachers and students and wounding 66, Israel passed new laws to increase the protection of all schoolchildren. They required a perimeter security fence with alarm systems around all schools. When Gaza terrorists launched thousands of rockets into southern Israel between 2005 and 2009, Israel upgraded its warning system, periodically closed schools, and built bomb shelters on playgrounds and schools to protect the targeted victims, ranging from preschoolers to college students.

Measuring the Success of Israel's Combined Defensive Operations¹⁶

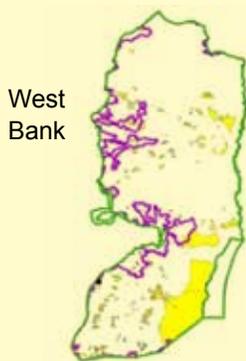
- Suicide bombings dropped from a high of 60 in 2002 to zero in 2009.
- Thwarted suicide bombing attempts rose from 36 percent in 2001 to 95 percent in 2006. Israel prevented 16 suicide bomb plots in 2016.
- Total Israeli fatalities dropped 98 percent, from a high of 451 in 2002 to six in 2013.
- Total Israelis wounded dropped from a high of 2,309 in 2002 to 30 in 2013. One hundred forty-nine Israelis were injured in 2016 during the "knife intifada."
- Total attacks dropped from a high of 5,633 in 2001 to 2,396 in 2015.
- When forced to fight, the IDF has avoided harming civilians with increasing success. From 2009 to 2012 roughly 28 percent of Palestinians killed were civilians. In contrast the UN reports that 75 percent of casualties in similar conflicts around the world were civilians.
- After Israel's operation against Hamas in 2014, the number of rockets and mortars fired from Gaza has dropped dramatically, from 4,632 in 2014 to 15 in 2016.
- Iron Dome, Israel's newest air defense system, has stopped hundreds of incoming rockets since its implementation in 2011.



Aboveground bomb shelter on a school playground in Sderot to protect children from the constant rocket attacks from Gaza.



Only approximately 3 percent of Israel's security barrier is a wall to protect against snipers.



Five to eight percent of West Bank land is located on the Israeli side of the fence (depicted in purple above). Sixty percent of the West Bank is virtually uninhabited.

The Future

Wars cause hardship and suffering. Every Israeli and Palestinian has been personally affected by the terrorist campaign. Israel's security concerns have forced Israel to employ counterterrorism initiatives that have impacted innocent Palestinians and Israelis. Both peoples dream of a time when incitement, terrorism, and military operations are a thing of the past.

¹Arab TV host touts Israel's humanity," *Times of Israel*, January 17, 2014; ²Uzi Mahnaimi, "Israel foils plot to kill Palestinian president," *The Sunday Times*, May 7, 2006. ³B'Tselem, "Statistics on checkpoints and roadblocks," September 25, 2006, B'Tselem website. ⁴Efraim Karsh, "European Misreading of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, July 12, 2005; Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, "Israel removes roadblocks across the West Bank," *Ha'aretz*, June 24, 2009. ⁵Don Morris, "Understanding Israeli Checkpoints," January 23, 2005. ⁶Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza and positive Israeli measures towards the PA," August 14, 2012. ⁷David Makovsky and Anna Hartman, "Israel's Newly Approved Security Fence Route: Geography and Demography," The Washington Institute, March 3, 2005. ⁸Summary of High Court of Justice Ruling on the Fence Surrounding Alfei Menashe," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), September 15, 2005. ⁹IDF Blog, "How Does the Israel Air Force Find its Targets and Minimize Civilian Casualties?" January 9, 2014; IDF Blog, "Rocket Attacks on Israel from Gaza," November 20, 2012. ¹⁰Martin Sieff, "Documenting the Myth—Jenin—Part I," UPI, May 20, 2002; "Why Europeans Bought the Myth—Jenin—Part II," UPI, May 21, 2002; "How Europe's Media Lost Out—Jenin—Part III," UPI, May 22, 2002. ¹¹Henry Chu, "Hamas Leaders Keep Low Profile," *Los Angeles Times*, October 9, 2003; Brett Stephens, "The Fear Factor," *Wall Street Journal*, March 23, 2004. ¹²MFA, "Weapon Smuggling Tunnels in Rafah—Operation Rainbow," May 14, 2004; Israel Defense Forces (IDF), "Decision of Defense Minister and Chief of Staff to Change Policy of demolition of terrorists' houses," IDF Website News, February 17, 2005. ¹³Senator Joseph R. Biden, "Floor Statement: The Jenin Investigation," May 1, 2002. ¹⁴Michael Walzer, "The Four Wars of Israel/Palestine," *Dissent*, Fall 2002. ¹⁵Quoted in "Palestinian fighter describes 'hard fight' in Jenin," CNN, April 23, 2002. ¹⁶"Four Years of Conflict: Israel's War against Terrorism," October 3, 2004; "Summary of Terrorist Activity 2004"; IDF website statistics; Israel Security Agency, "Monthly Reports," October 2013; StandWithUs, "Civilian Casualties In The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," 2013; On Iron Dome, IDF Live Blog, "Rocket Attacks from Gaza," November 20, 2012.

Though Israel faced ongoing terrorism and wars for survival, it concentrated on life and hope, on building a good society, and on making contributions to humanity.

"Do not forget what part they [Jews] have played in the intellectual, the artistic, the philosophic and scientific development of the world....They rowed all their weight in the boat of scientific, intellectual and artistic progress, and they are doing so to this day. You will find them...in every centre of learning; and at the very moment when they were being persecuted... their philosophers were developing thoughts which the great doctors of the Church embodied in their religious system. As it was in the Middle Ages, as it was in earlier times, so it is now." —Lord Arthur Balfour, 1922²



Israeli company ReWalk developed an exoskeleton to allow paraplegics to stand, walk, and climb stairs.



Pill-Cam™, the camera in a pill for diagnosing intestinal disease, invented by Israel's Given Imaging.



Israeli company Netafim invented drip irrigation.



Israel leads the world in water recycling. In addition, over 90 percent of Israel's water heaters are solar powered.

Israel is at the forefront of biomedical innovation and has developed:

- Advanced techniques for helping the paralyzed, from motorized robotic arms and legs that respond to brain commands to procedures for regenerating the spinal cord.
- Preliminary research for generating molecules that will kill cancer cells while preserving normal cells.
- Groundbreaking research for treatments or cures for type 1 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and emphysema.
- Safer methods for diagnosing diseases, from a mini-video camera that fits into an ingestible pill, which can be used for diagnosing intestinal diseases, to safer imaging techniques for diagnosing breast cancer.
- Numerous innovations to help fight COVID-19 and other pandemics.

Israel is at the forefront of environmental sustainability.

- Israel is the only country in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees.
- An Israeli scientist pioneered the use of bacteria to clean up oil pollution in oil tankers, in pipelines, and on beaches.
- Israelis developed a new technology that eliminates the need for chemicals, pesticides, and fungicides in hydroponic agriculture.
- Israelis developed drip irrigation systems that revolutionized agriculture and conserve water.
- An Israeli developed the sun-heated water tank, which converts solar energy into thermal energy.
- Israeli, American, and Canadian researchers formed the Nanotechnology Clean Water Initiative to work on a nanotech-based solution to water shortages in the Middle East and rest of the world.

Since its founding, Israel has been at the forefront of humanitarian programs around the world

- Israel conducts nearly 300 courses annually for emerging nations and has trained almost 260,000 participants in 140 countries, from Albania to Zimbabwe, in desert agriculture, water management, desertification prevention, emergency and disaster medicine, refugee absorption, and employment programs.³
- Israel's missions included the Ethiopian airlifts that rescued 28,000 African Jews; assistance to Turkey, Greece, Haiti, and Nepal after devastating earthquakes; and setting up first-class, complete field hospitals in war-torn Rwanda, flood-devastated Djibouti, post-tsunami Japan, and the post-typhoon Philippines.⁴
- Israel's Save a Child's Heart (SACH) is the largest program in the world for children from poor nations who need heart surgery. At no charge to its patients, SACH has treated over 5,000 children from around the world, including children from the West Bank, Gaza, Congo, Nigeria, China, and more.
- Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Israel has given medical aid to over 2,000 Syrians, aided refugees, and helped save children on the ground.



Turkey, 1999: Following a major earthquake, an Israeli rescue team saved this nine-year-old girl who was trapped under rubble for 98 hours.



Haiti: The Israeli medical team helped communities devastated by the 2010 earthquake.

¹Information compiled from Steve Bunstein, "Fascinating Facts about Israel," Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education, 2006; Invest in Israel website; Israel21c website. ²Lord Arthur Balfour, "Defense of the Palestine Mandate," 1922. ³Israel Foreign Relations: Israel among the Nations," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ⁴"Rescue Operation in Turkey" and "IDF Involvement in Major Humanitarian Operations," IDF website; "Magen David Adom During the Years," IsraAID website.

ISRAEL'S GOVERNMENT:

Despite constant threats and challenges, Israel is a democratic state that upholds the principles of justice, tolerance, and human rights for all citizens.

"ISRAEL...will be based on freedom, justice and peace...ensure complete equality of social and political rights...irrespective of religion, race or sex...guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture...[and] safeguard the Holy Places of all religions."

—Israel's Declaration of Statehood, May 14, 1948

Just as Japan, France, Sweden, and other democracies publicly acknowledge their national identities and cultures, so Israel's democracy publicly identifies with the Jewish people and their culture.



David Ben-Gurion declares Israel's statehood in Tel Aviv, May 14, 1948.

PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN ACTION HOW THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WORKS

Israel's government has features similar to those of the governments of Britain and the U.S. Like Britain, it does not yet have a constitution. Instead, its basic laws serve as its constitution. The government is a parliamentary democracy with separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.¹

Israeli Parliament (Knesset) in Jerusalem.



The President

Presidents are elected by the Knesset, serve for seven years, and cannot serve a second term. They appoint diplomats, justices, and judges based on Knesset recommendations and choose who gets the opportunity to become prime minister after elections.

Legislative Branch: The Knesset

Israel has a one-house Parliament, the Knesset, made up of 120 members from a variety of political parties. They serve a four-year term unless there is a call for earlier elections.

Executive Branch: Prime Minister

Usually, the leader of the party with the most Knesset members is given the opportunity to become prime minister. The cabinet of ministers must be approved by the Knesset and is usually composed of a coalition of political parties. The Knesset can bring down the government with a no-confidence vote that requires new, early elections.

Judicial Branch: The Courts

The judiciary is independent and serves as a watchdog for civil and human rights. Unlike most democracies, Israel's Supreme Court also has jurisdiction to review military actions and rule against military operations.

Marriage and divorce are not regulated by civil law. Instead, each religious group has its own "religious court" that adjudicates these issues. Many Jewish Israelis call for reforms that would make marriage regulated by civil law instead.

Democracy in Action

VOTING RIGHTS FOR ALL



- Every Israeli citizen has the right to vote.
- Israel's non-Jewish minorities were assured equal civil and political rights in its declaration of statehood, which included the right to vote.
- Election day is a national holiday.
- Voter turnout is regularly higher than in the U.S., sometimes reaching above 80 percent.

The Party System: Every Voice is Heard...

Some have quipped that Israel has “too much democracy” because it is a multiparty, not a two-party, system. Though right-wing Likud and left-wing Labor have traditionally been the largest parties, there are many that promote a broad range of communities, including Communist, religious, Arab, and secular constituents.

As many as 19 different parties have been in the Knesset at one time.

Israelis vote for a party rather than for an individual. Each party runs its own list of Knesset candidates. Knesset seats are then allotted according to the percentage of the popular vote that the party receives. For example, if a party wins five seats, the first five candidates on its list will become members of the Knesset (MKs).

Even the smallest parties have a voice because one party never gets a Knesset majority, and the largest political group has to form coalitions to function.



CIVIL LIBERTIES

Freedom of religion: Though Israel was established as a state for the Jewish people, it formally recognizes 15 religions, including Islam, the Bahá'í and Druze faiths, as well as Chaldaic and many other Christian denominations. Each religious community can freely exercise its faith, observe its own holy days and weekly day of rest, and administer its own internal affairs. Israel protects the holy sites of all religions.

- The Bahá'ís, a religious group persecuted in Muslim countries, built its world center in Haifa, Israel.
- Israel is the only region in the Middle East, including the region governed by the PA, where the Christian population is thriving instead of disappearing. Between 1948 and 2020 Israel's Christian community grew more than fourfold, from 34,000 to 180,000.²

Freedom of assembly, speech, press, and dissent: Israel is known for its freewheeling, self-critical, often blistering debates in which differing opinions are aired widely and loudly. For example, Israeli Arab politicians on occasion have vehemently criticized the Jewish state, even from the floor of the Knesset. Only hate speech and incitement to violence are illegal. Israel has nine Hebrew daily newspapers; several dailies in Russian, Arabic, French, and English; over 1,000 periodicals; multiple radio and TV stations; and easy access to the foreign press.

Civil Rights: Israel's progressive laws protect the rights of women, minorities, and the LGBTQ community.

MULTICULTURALISM

- Seventy-five percent of Israelis are Jews of different ethnicities and races. Many emigrated from the Middle East, Ethiopia, India, Russia, the U.S., and Europe. Refugees from the Middle East and North Africa make up over half the Jewish population.³
- Israel's minorities form 25 percent of the population and include Arab Muslims, Arab Christians, non-Arab Christians, Druze, Bedouins, Circassians, and Asians.⁴

ACCESS TO COURTS

Though Palestinians in the territories are not Israeli citizens, they have ready access to petition Israel's highest courts. The court judges by the merits of a case, and it frequently decides in favor of the Palestinians, as it did, for example, when Palestinians petitioned that the security fence be rerouted around Beit Sourik (June 30, 2004) and around Alfei Menashe (September 15, 2005).⁵

“One of the most unusual aspects of Israeli law is the rapid access that petitioners, including Palestinians, can gain to Israel's highest court. In April 2002, during the fiercest fighting of the current conflict...the high court was receiving and ruling on petitions almost daily.”—*New York Times*, May 5, 2003⁶

ISRAEL'S GOVERNMENT: Democracy in Action

FACTS ABOUT ARAB CITIZENS OF ISRAEL

- There are 1.9 million Arab citizens of Israel (including Muslim, Druze, Christian, and Bedouin Arabs), making up around 20 percent of the total population. Many are descendants of Palestinian Arabs who chose to remain in Israel in 1948.
- Just as the U.S. strives to be a more just society, Israel works to do the same for its Arab population through programs similar to affirmative action.
- There are four official Arab political parties in the Knesset.
- Arab citizens of Israel were elected to the first Knesset in 1949 and have continued to play an active role in political life. They have won as many as 17 of the 120 Knesset seats in a single election.⁷
- Twenty percent of Haifa University's student body and 10 percent of its faculty are Arab citizens.⁸
- All Arab municipalities receive government funding for education and infrastructure.
- **Arab citizens in high-level positions:**
 - Salim Joubran, permanent member of Israel's Supreme Court
 - Walid Mansour and Mohammed Masarwa, ambassadors
 - Major General Hussain Fares, commander of Israel's border police
 - Major General Yosef Mishleb, head of homeland security as Israel's Home Front commander
 - Raleb Majadele, Knesset member and cabinet minister
- **Arab citizens play prominent roles:**
 - Dr. Nof Atamna-Ismaeel, microbiologist and winner of the reality cooking show *Master Chef Israel*
 - Rana Raslan, Miss Israel
 - Dr. Rania Okby, Ben-Gurion University graduate, first female Bedouin physician in the world
 - Lucy Aharish, news anchor
 - Amal Ayoub, graduate of Ben-Gurion University, founder and CEO of Metallo-Therapy, which is developing a new method for cancer diagnosis

"We...call upon the [Palestinian] Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to return to the ways of peace and play their part in the development of the State, with full and equal citizenship and due representation in its bodies and institutions." —Israel Declaration of Statehood, 1948



"Israel has proved that for fifty years its real power is in its democracy, guarding the rights of its citizens, applying laws [equally] to the rich and poor, the big and small...and in the participation of the nation in the development of institutions according to ability and efficiency and not according to closeness to [the ruler]."

—Columnist Dr. Talal Al-Sharif, Palestinian newspaper *Al-Quds*, May 27, 1999⁹

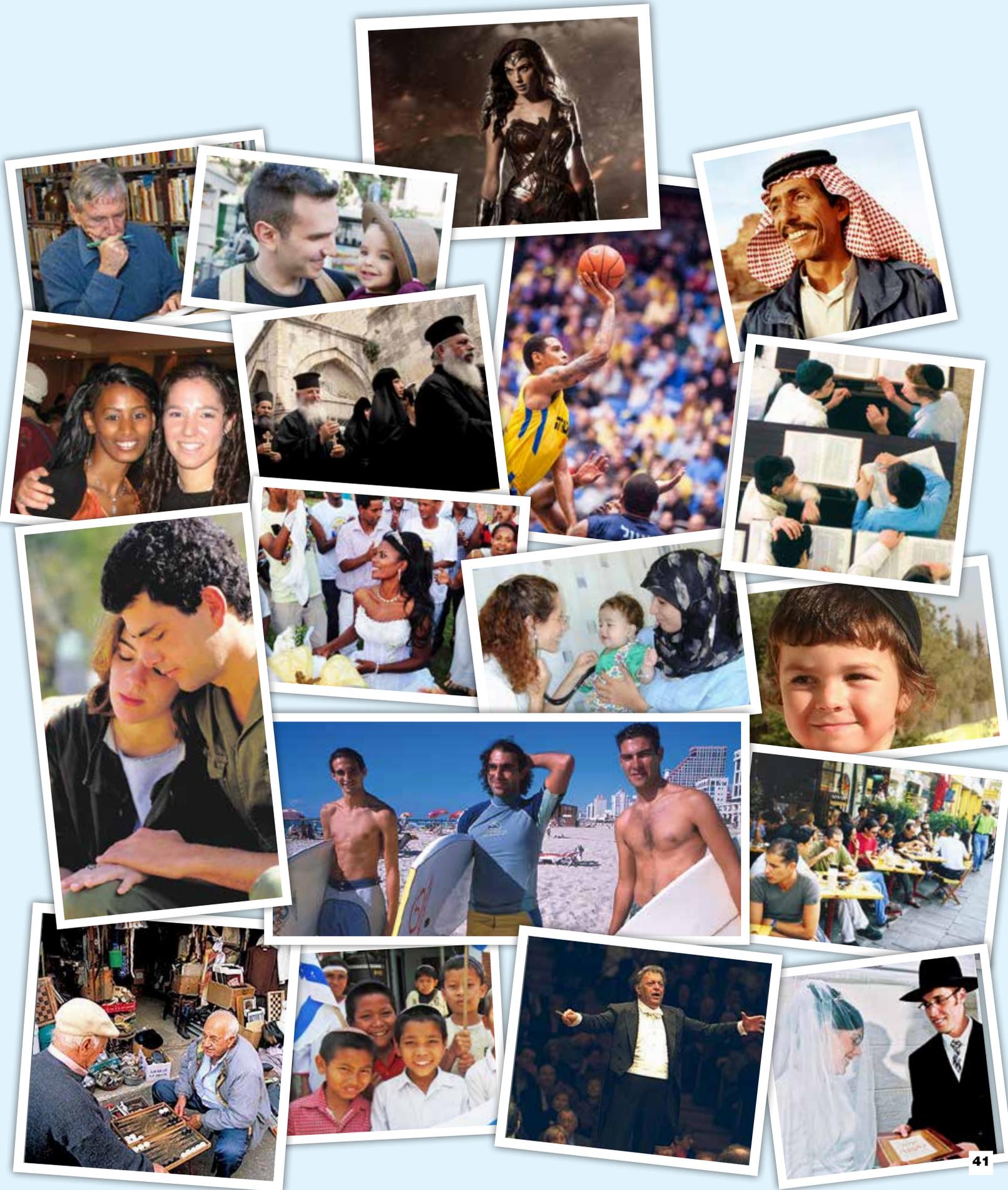
Palestinians have rated Israel's democracy as the one they admire most in the world.

"Every year Israel has been the top performer, at times receiving 80 percent approval. The American system has been the next best [67 percent in 1999], followed by the French." —Center for Palestine Research and Studies¹⁰

¹Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), "The State: The Political Structure," MFA website. ²Mitchell Bard, "Myth: Israel is persecuting Christians," Jewish Virtual Library; Central Bureau of Statistics, "Christmas 2020 — Christians in Israel," December 23, 2020, at www.cbs.gov.il/en/mediarelease/pages/2020/christmas-2020-christians-in-israel.aspx. ³Loolwa Khazoom, "Jews of the Middle East," MyJewishLearning.com; Howard Sachar, *A History of Israel*, 2000, pp. 515–517. ⁴MFA, "Minority Communities," MFA website. ⁵Heideman Lezell Nudelman & Kalik, P.C., "Background Briefing and Analysis of the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion..." July 23, 2004. ⁶Greg Myre, "Trial of Palestinian Leader Focuses Attention on Israeli Courts," *New York Times*, May 5, 2003. ⁷Information from Knesset website. ⁸"Israel and Apartheid: The Big Lie," Anti-Defamation League, August 29, 2005. ⁹MEMRI, "Palestinians Comment on Israeli Democracy," Special Dispatch Series No. 34, June 4, 1999. ¹⁰"The Peace Process..." Public Opinion Poll #38, CPRS Polls, January 7–9, 1999; Quote taken from James Bennet, "Letter from the Middle East," *New York Times*, April 2, 2003.

The Many Faces Of Israel

Despite the hardships the young state faced, Israelis have created a rich, diverse, vibrant, and multicultural society.



HOT TOPICS: Things You Should Know

Continuous Jewish Presence in the Land of Israel

Jews are indigenous to the land and maintained a continuous presence for over 3,000 years according to archeological and historical evidence.

Jewish civilization was already over 1,000 years old when Rome destroyed the Holy Temple and conquered the Jewish nation in the first century.

Rome exiled only a portion of the population. The remaining Jews, banned from Jerusalem, flourished for centuries in other Jewish towns, such as Yavne, Rafah, Gaza, Ashkelon, Jaffa, and Caesarea.

The Jewish population was decimated by the crusaders in the 12th century CE, but Jews returned in waves of immigration in subsequent centuries and settled in Safed, Jerusalem, Tiberius, and Hebron.

By the 1860s Jews once again were the majority religious group in Jerusalem. Early modern Zionists began purchasing land and establishing thriving communities like Tel Aviv (1909) even while the territory was still ruled by the Ottoman Empire.

Arab Citizens of Israel

- In 1948 almost all of the 160,000 Palestinian Arabs who remained within Israel's borders became citizens. Today, Arab citizens have civil and human rights equal to those of other Israeli citizens.
- There are 1.9 million Arab citizens now living in Israel, making up about 20 percent of the population.
- There are four official Arab political parties in the Knesset. Many Arab citizens are members of other Israeli parties.
- Three Arab citizens were elected to the first Knesset. Arab citizens have held as many as 17 of the 120 seats in the Israeli Parliament at one time.
- All Arab municipalities receive government funding for education and infrastructure.
- Many Arab citizens hold high-level positions, such as:
 - Salim Joubran, a permanent member of Israel's Supreme Court
 - Nawaf Massalha, deputy foreign minister
 - Ali Yahya, Walid Mansour, and Mohammed Masarwa, ambassadors
 - Major General Hussain Fares, commander of Israel's border police
 - Major General Yosef Mishleb, head of homeland security as Israel's Home Front commander
- Israel has enacted affirmative action policies to help its minority citizens achieve full social and economic equality.

Civil Liberties and Human Rights in Israel

Israelis enjoy civil liberties and human rights, much like citizens of America and other advanced, liberal democracies. The right to vote is universal. Israel has more political parties—there were 19 in 2004—than most other parliamentary democracies. They range from extreme left to extreme right and from religious to secular. Israel has one of the freest media in the world and is famous for its self-criticism and blistering debates. Israeli women and minorities are protected by laws that in some cases are more progressive than those of other democracies. There is legal protection against religious persecution. LGBTQ people are protected against discrimination and hate crimes. In 2019, Amir Ohana became the first openly gay man to become a minister in the Israeli government. Education is encouraged equally for both men and women. Fifty-three percent of women are in the workforce, a similar percentage as in the U.S. Women have reproductive rights. Israel is the only Middle Eastern country that has never required a woman to have a male guardian's permission to travel. Israel treats honor killings as harshly as other murder crimes.

War Crime: Using Human Shields

Israel uses rockets to protect its civilians. Hamas uses civilians to protect its rockets. Hamas' strategy of hiding among civilians, launching attacks from civilian centers such as schools and mosques, and deliberately endangering noncombatants violates the Fourth Geneva Convention and is a war crime according to international law.

*"The presence of a protected person may not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations."*¹
—Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, August 12, 1949, art. 28

*"The Parties to the conflict shall not direct the movement of the civilian population or individual civilians in order to attempt to shield military objectives from attacks or to shield military operations."*²—Protocol Additional to the Geneva Convention, Article 51 (7)

¹Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, August 12, 1949. ²Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions, Article 51 (7), June 8, 1977.

A Pluralistic Society

- Israel formally recognizes 15 religions, including Islam, the Bahá'í and Druze faiths, as well as Chaldaic and many other Christian denominations. Each religious community can freely exercise its faith, observe its own holy days and weekly day of rest, and administer its own internal affairs. Israel protects the holy sites of all religions.
- Israel is the only Middle Eastern country where the Christian population is thriving instead of disappearing. From 1948 to 2020, Israel's Christian population grew from 34,000 to 180,000.
- The Bahá'ís, a religious group persecuted in Muslim countries, built its world center in Haifa, Israel.
- Israel's non-Jewish minorities form about 25 percent of the population and include Arab Muslims, Arab Christians, non-Arab Christians, Druze, Bedouins, Circassians, Asians, and others.
- Seventy-five percent of Israelis are Jews of different backgrounds from Arab countries, Ethiopia, India, Russia, the former Soviet Union republics, Latin America, the U.S., and Europe. Refugees from Arab and Muslim Middle Eastern and North African countries and their descendants make up over half the Jewish population.

Apartheid

Apartheid was a legal system in South Africa under which a small minority of whites ruled over the black majority population. Apartheid subjected blacks to severe political, economic, and social discrimination and segregation. They could not be citizens, vote, participate in the government, or fraternize with whites.

Israel, a democracy like the U.S., established a legal system that gives equal rights, liberties, and protections to all its citizens. Israeli Arabs participate as full and equal members in Israeli society. While Israel, like all multiethnic democracies, struggles with the disadvantages that its minorities experience, its laws try to eradicate—not endorse—discrimination.

Israel never formally annexed the West Bank or Gaza. The Palestinians are not Israeli citizens, and most wish to have their own state. Today, Palestinians lack full rights, mainly because of their own governments: Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.

International Financial Support for Palestinians

The international community has provided welfare for Palestinian refugees and their descendants since 1949 through the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

- The U.S., the largest single donor, contributed \$10 billion between 1950 and 2017.
- In UNRWA's first 20 years, Israel contributed more than most Arab states to the program.
- Two percent of the UN's total budget goes to UNRWA, while 3 percent of the total goes to all other refugees in the world.

The Palestinians have received “the highest per capita aid transfer in the history of foreign aid anywhere,” reported World Bank official Nigel Roberts in February 2004.¹

Between 1993 (the Oslo Accords) and 2012, the international community donated approximately \$35 billion to the Palestinians. Today, much of that money is unaccounted for.

The PLO was “the richest of all terrorist organizations,” with \$8 billion to \$10 billion in assets and an annual income of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion, according to a 1993 British National Criminal Intelligence Service report. In 1999 England's *Daily Telegraph* reported the PLO had \$50 billion in secret investments around the world.²

¹Ross Dunn, “End sleaze or lose aid, Arafat told,” *Scotsman*, February 29, 2004. ²Rachel Ehrenfeld, “Intifada Gives Cover to Arafat Graft and Fraud,” *Insight Magazine*, June 22, 2001.

U.S. Aid to Israel and Arab States

U.S. policy has been to assist both Israel and Arab states. Between 1947 and 1971, U.S. annual aid to Israel was \$60 million, while the Arab states received \$170 million. After 1970 the U.S. regarded Israel as a valuable strategic ally and increased its aid. It also continued to aid and/or sell arms to Jordan, Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Yemen, and the Gulf states.

The U.S. committed \$2 billion per year to Egypt and \$3 billion per year to Israel after the Israel–Egypt peace treaty of 1979.

In comparison, the U.S. spends \$250 billion per year on maintaining its military presence around the world, in part to protect the security of its other allies. This aid is in the U.S. defense budget, not in the foreign aid budget, because U.S. troops are deployed in or near those countries. For example, the U.S. grants roughly the same amount of money to Israel each year as it spends for troops to protect South Korea.

The U.S. has never had to commit its own troops or risk American lives to protect Israel. Israel receives only military aid from the U.S. and is required to spend 100 percent of this money to purchase military equipment and other items from the U.S., creating jobs in America. Finally, by aiding in Israel's protection, the U.S. is helping maintain the thriving economic ties that exist between the two countries. U.S.–Israel partnerships have produced breakthroughs in technology and in biomedical, environmental, and agricultural research—saving the U.S. substantial funds in research and development. Israeli companies have created countless jobs in America, investing \$57 billion in the U.S. economy between 2000 and 2010. At the same time, Israelis bought \$180 billion worth of goods and services from U.S. companies, and many of the groundbreaking products sold by American tech companies were invented and designed in Israel. Considering all of these factors, aid to Israel is one of America's best investments.

Israel's Checkpoints and the Security Barrier

No natural barriers separated Israel and the West Bank between 1967 and 2000, and Palestinians and Israelis traveled freely between the two areas. But when the Palestinian terrorist campaign erupted in 2000, Israel had to find a way to prevent terrorists from easily entering Israeli communities. Checkpoints, similar to U.S. airport security procedures after 9/11, are meant to separate terrorists from their intended victims—Israelis of all religions and ethnicities. It is also true that Israeli safety measures create hardships for many ordinary Palestinians. This happens because terrorists forced Israel to make an awful choice: make life more difficult for Palestinians or allow more Israeli civilians to be murdered.

Israel did not begin building the barrier until 2002, when terrorism reached unprecedented levels.

- Israel's barrier is similar to barriers that other democracies have built to protect innocent civilians. There are barriers between India and Kashmir, Cyprus and Northern Cyprus, and North and South Korea. There are also walls within Belfast that separate Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods.
- Since construction of the barrier began in 2002, the number of successful terrorist attacks has dropped by close to 100 percent, and leaders of Palestinian terrorist groups have admitted that it prevents them from carrying out suicide bombings.
- Ninety-seven percent of the barrier is a chain-link fence; about 3 percent (10 miles) is a concrete wall, built to prevent sniper fire at Israeli civilians.
- Only 5 to 8 percent of the disputed West Bank land and less than 1 percent of Palestinians are on the Israeli side of the fence.¹
- Palestinians can bring their specific grievances about the barrier to Israel's Supreme Court, which has ruled in favor of the Palestinian claimants and rerouted the fence several times.²

Israelis do not want to live behind checkpoints and barriers. These measures exist only because there was no other way to prevent terrorists from murdering innocent men, women, and children. The only way forward is for Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate, make peace, and build a future in which these safety measures will no longer be necessary.

¹David Makovsky and Anna Hartman, “Israel's Newly Approved Security Fence Route: Geography and Demography,” *The Washington Institute*, March 3, 2005.

²Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Summary of High Court of Justice Ruling on the Fence Surrounding Alfei Menashe,” September 15, 2005.

Antisemitism and Antizionism

It is perfectly legitimate to criticize Israel's policies. Israelis do it all the time in blistering debates. But criticism crosses the line into classic antisemitism when it exhibits what Natan Sharansky called the “Three Ds.”

Delegitimization: Claims that the Jewish state has no right to exist, that Jews have no right to self-determination, and/or that Israelis do not belong in the Middle East.

Double Standards: Israel is condemned harshly for self-defense measures and social problems, while other nations are ignored even when they commit severe human rights violations.

Demonization: Through distortions and lies Israel is depicted as the world's most evil and dangerous country, and the claim is made that if the Jewish state ceased to exist, the Middle East's—and the world's—main problems would be solved.

The Link: Denying the Jewish people their ancestral homeland or the denial of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state includes demonizing and dehumanizing Jews as a group. This is why many people claim that antizionism is a modern variation of classical antisemitism. “Anti-Semitic bigotry is no less morally deplorable when camouflaged as anti-Israelism or anti-Zionism,” according to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.¹ People of goodwill must try to see through anti-Israel propaganda in order to foster reasonable dialogue.

¹“Findings and Recommendations of the United States Commission on Civil Rights Regarding Campus Anti-Semitism,” U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, April 3, 2006.

Divestment and Boycotts

Anti-Israel activists have launched an intense propaganda campaign to turn Israel into the pariah of nations. They make false accusations, then call for companies, churches, universities, and other institutions to divest—withdraw investments—from companies doing business with Israel and to boycott Israeli products, academics, and cultural events. While this movement sells itself as a champion of justice and human rights, its real agenda is to eliminate Israel and extinguish Jewish self-determination. They are “not really talking about rights. They're talking about [how] they want to destroy Israel,” according to notorious Israel critic Norman Finkelstein. Instead of joining the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement against Israel (BDS), people of conscience should support solutions that respect the collective rights of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Boycotts and divestment resolutions:

- Make false or disputed accusations to demonize Israel and its history and blame her for the ongoing conflict.
- Ignore context, including Palestinian incitement against Israel, terrorism, and the need for Israel's safety measures.
- Deny or ignore the steps that Israel has repeatedly taken to promote compromise and peace.
- Rarely condemn the role of Palestinian leaders in the conflict.

Imagine Peace



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Imagine peace in the Middle East where Israel and her neighbors join forces to become a major player on the global stage. With shared technology and resources, the possibilities are endless. We can create a future filled with peace and prosperity for our children and for generations to come.

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