

ISRAEL - PALESTINIANS -
TOGETHER
THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

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Title?



KING OF THE NORTH
Assyria and Remnant Kingdoms

KING OF THE SOUTH
Egypt and Allies

Israel in a crossfire

ARABIA

When, finally, in the twelfth century BCE the Jews settled in a country they could call their own, they used the worst possible judgment. They selected a strip of land that was a corridor for the armies of warring empires. Over and over again the Jews were to pay for this error of judgment by being decimated in battle, sold into slavery, or deported to alien lands. Yet they showed up persistently at the same old place, building anew their little strip of real estate which has been alternately called Canaan, Palestine, Israel, Judah, Judea, and now again, Israel.

(Max Dimont, 'Jews, God and History' p48)

Founded in 1948, Israel is the world's only Jewish State and is the Middle East's only liberal democracy. Today more than eight million citizens - Jews, Muslims and Christians - call Israel home.

THE MYSTERY OF THE JEWS

Who are the Jews? What impact have the Jews had on the world? A powerful short film that reveals the real story behind "The Mystery of the Jews". With remarkable insights by renowned historians, world leaders and perceptive authors.

"The Mystery of the Jews" challenges the normative conception of human history.

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOK

Faith, Fratricide
and the Power of Texts

UK Emeritus Rabbi
Jonathan Sacks

5 July 2015

In the first century the Romans abolished Judea and expelled the Jews except in a few small areas such as Tsfat. The seventh century saw the birth of Islam and its occupation of North Africa and parts of Spain for 700 years after the eighth century. The Jews became minorities throughout the world and developed Judaism

The nineteenth century saw the growth of Arab and Jewish nationalism to WW1 which lasted from 1914-1918. This saw the end of the Ottoman Empire whose territory divided into different states. Disputes between the Arabs and the Sykes-Picot agreement led Britain-France to split it between themselves and led to the northern French area in and the southern British southern area.

The story of what happened is told in our two websites. The first, jewishwikipedia.info covers 2000 years and the second jewishwikipedia.info/ottoman-palestine-israel.pdf covers the past 100+ years. England accepted the mandate coastal area to the south of Syria to be known as

Palestine and gave 80% of their territory to a new country that became known as Transjordan (later called Jordan).

After WW2 the UN split the British territory between the Jews and the Arabs. The Jews named their new country Israel. The Arabs refused to accept the division and invaded Israel. The armistice at the end of the war established the Jews in Israel. East Jerusalem and the WestBank became Jordanian and Gaza became Egyptian. Arabs who stayed in Israel became known as Arab Israelis and obtained Israeli citizenship. Those who left could become known as Palestinians and were refused citizenship in Israel.

Most of the Jews who had spent up to 2,000 years left Arab countries had to quit, or voluntarily left, their homes and went to Israel. The Arab League did not sign a peace treaty on the creation of Israel. Two decisions were to use the Arab Palestinians as a political weapon and for Arab countries to boycott Israel.

Warfare was frequent. and included the short 1967 Six Day War which finished with responsibility for Israel to take East Jerusalem and the WestBank, Gaza from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria (for more information go to [History of the Israel Defence Forces](#)).

The 1993 Oslo Accords were transitional agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to establish a partnership for negotiating border disputes, creating Palestinian self-governance and lead to a peaceful solution and creating a two-state solution.

While the talks resulted in two agreements (Oslo I in 1993, and Oslo II in 1995) the accords began to unravel, increased terror attacks and the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish extremist. This left the region in a continued state of hostility and distrust. After the breakdown in talks between Israelis and the PLO at Camp David in 2000, the Palestinians launched the Second Intifada.

The 1994, Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty is an agreement between Jordan and Israel that recognized each other's sovereignty, established their international boundary and promoted security and economic cooperation.

The agreement saw Jordan become the second Arab country after Egypt to normalize relations with Israel. While there only remains limited engagement between the peoples of both countries, the agreement led to significant regional ties between Israel and Jordan, especially in economic, resource, and security cooperation.

On November 4, 1995, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a longtime major political figure in Israeli politics and head of the left-wing Labor Party, was assassinated by an Israeli extremist, Yigal Amir, at a peace rally in Tel Aviv.

Rabin's death was a significant loss to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and it cast a long shadow over the process, raising questions about security and extremism within Israeli society. The assassination had lasting impacts on Israeli politics and society and remains a significant chapter in Israeli history, symbolizing the challenges of pursuing peace in the Middle East.

In 2005 Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip overcoming huge political pushback domestically and the terror onslaught during the Second Intifada, withdrew from the Gaza Strip, dismantling its settlements and military installations in the name of **peace**

After Israeli withdrawal in 2005, **the coastal territory has been under the control of the Iran-backed Hamas terrorist group**, which violently ousted the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority in 2007.

In 2007 Hamas took control of Gaza following violent clashes with its rival Palestinian faction, Fatah.

This led to the division of the Palestinian territories, with Fatah controlling the West Bank and Hamas becoming the defacto ruler in Gaza. Hamas has used Iranian support to launch several significant attacks against Israel from its base in Gaza, including in 2008, 2009, 2014, 2021, and

Most recently on October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists murdered over 1,400 Israelis, wounded over 3,200, taken over 200 hostages, and launched thousands of rockets.


Oct. 7 2023

HAMAS MASSACRE:


Documentation of Crimes Against Humanity

On the morning of October 7, 2023, Hamas invaded Israel from Gaza in a massive surprise terrorist attack against civilians by air, land and sea.


[Gallery](#)



More than 1000 innocent civilians massacred



Raped and slaughtered in their own homes



Over 200 people kidnapped into Gaza

Hamas' terrorists recorded their barbaric atrocities on body cameras and cell phones to proudly display their crimes and gloat about them. Many of these cameras were recovered from neutralized terrorists. Now the whole world can see Hamas' unfathomable savagery.

saturday-october-seven.com

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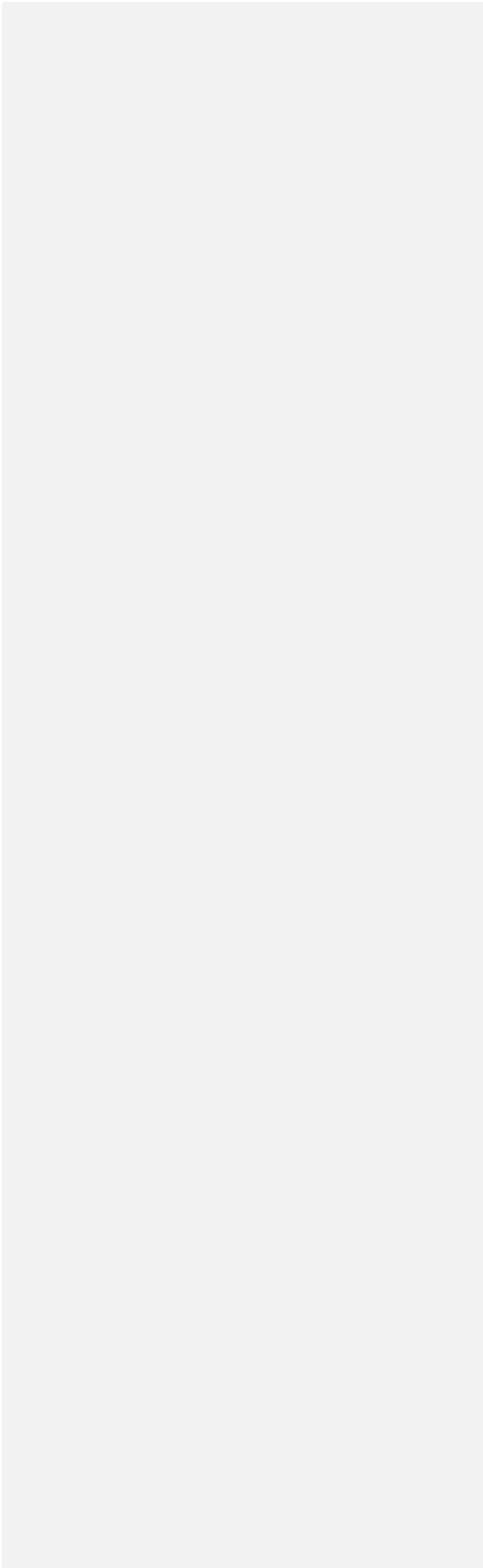
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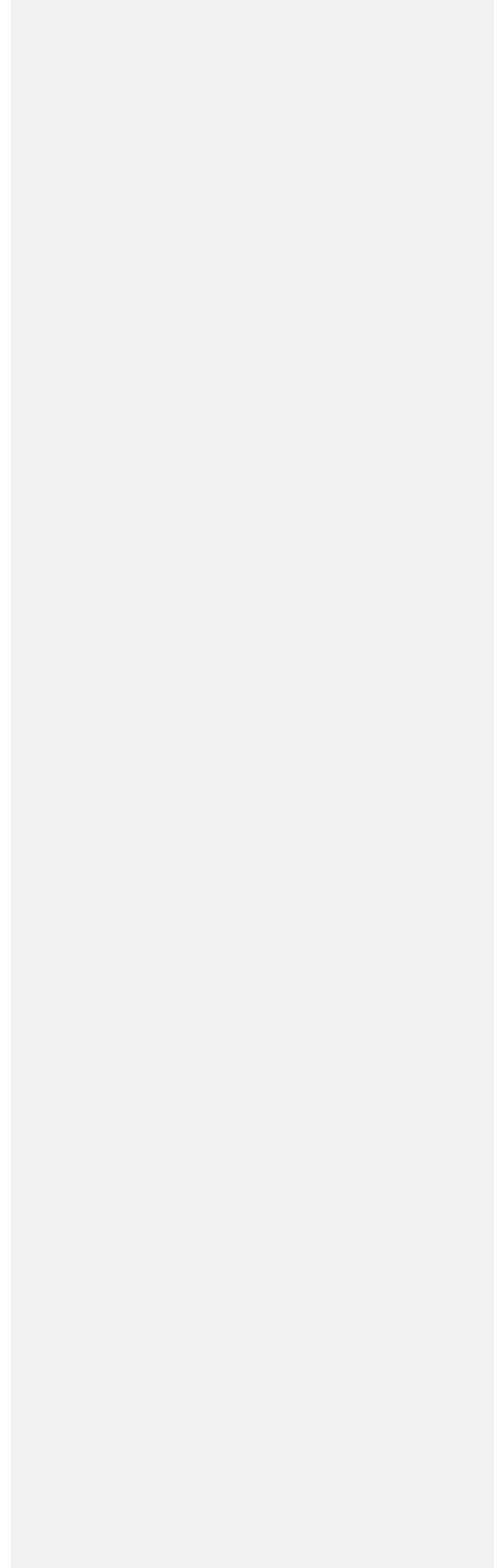
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PART A
INTRODUCTION



TIMELINE: KEY EVENTS IN THE ISRAEL-ARAB AND ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Conversations on social media, news media coverage, events on college campuses, and general public discourse related to the Israel-Hamas war demonstrate a dire need for accurate information about Israel, Zionism, and the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As the war continues to evolve, staying well-informed about the historical context and ongoing developments is crucial for fostering more understanding and informed opinions.

The timeline below aims to address frequently asked questions about Israel's history and to help dispel misinformation about the events leading up to this point.

Here is a timeline summarizing key events in both [Israel's history](#) within the broader context of the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

[1897-1947](#) | [1947-1979](#) | [1982-Present](#)

[AJC](#)

<p>1897-1947: PRE-STATE ISRAEL</p> <p>1897: First Zionist Congress</p>	<p>The Zionist movement, founded by Theodor Herzl and other leaders, advocated for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Widespread antisemitism and persecution of Jewish communities in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries served as a major catalyst for the Zionist movement. Jews faced discrimination, violence, and pogroms, a violent organized riot or attack directed at Jews, in many parts of Europe, which fueled the desire for a safe and secure homeland. The First Zionist Congress was held in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland, where Herzl and</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The Zionist movement under Theodor Herzl was historically significant because it marked the birth of modern political Zionism. Herzl advocated for a Jewish homeland, organized the First Zionist Congress, and played a central role in shaping the intellectual and political foundations of the movement. His vision influenced Jewish identity and led to diplomatic efforts that eventually contributed to the establishment of the State of Israel. Herzl's legacy as a visionary and advocate for Jewish self-determination remains a fundamental part of Israel's history and ideology.</p>
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	other prominent figures in the Zionist movement discussed and debated their vision for the establishment of a Jewish state.	
1917: The Balfour Declaration	The Balfour Declaration was a letter from British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Lord Walter Rothschild, expressing British support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>It was the first recognition by a major international power of Jewish national aspirations, which had a profound impact on international diplomacy, contributed to the end of Ottoman rule in the region, and shaped the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by laying the groundwork for competing national claims in Palestine. It remains a pivotal historical document in the context of the region's complex history and ongoing discussions about its future.</p>
1920: The League of Nations Mandate	The League of Nations granted Britain the mandate to administer Palestine following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The mandate includes a commitment to implementing the Balfour Declaration and facilitating Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. The mandate led to nearly 30 years of British control over the region, ending in 1948.</p>
1920: Creation of the Haganah	The Haganah was a Jewish paramilitary organization that played a significant role in the defense of Jewish communities in British Mandate Palestine.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>Initially formed to protect Jewish communities from local Arab attacks, the Haganah later evolved into one of the main military organizations in the Jewish community in the lead-up to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. After the establishment of the state, the Haganah became the foundation for the Israel Defense Forces.</p>

1929: Hebron Massacre	<p>The 1929 Hebron massacre was a violent event in the city of Hebron in British Mandate Palestine, occurring in August 1929. Arab residents attacked the Jewish community, resulting in the deaths of approximately 67 Jewish residents, including women and children, and injuries to many others.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The violence had its roots in long-standing tensions between Jewish and Arab communities and had a profound impact on the relations between the two communities in Palestine. The massacre led to the end of Jewish presence in Hebron, one of the holiest cities in Judaism that dated back thousands of years. The Jewish community did not return till after the 1967 Six-Day War.</p>
1930s: The Arab Revolt	<p>The 1930s Arab revolt was a period of intense Arab resistance and rebellion against British colonial rule and Jewish immigration in the Mandate of Palestine. It occurred from 1936 to 1939 and was triggered by several factors, including Arab frustrations over land dispossession, Jewish immigration, and economic disparities.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The 1930s Arab revolt was a period of intense Arab resistance and rebellion against British colonial rule and Jewish immigration in the Mandate of Palestine. It occurred from 1936 to 1939 and was triggered by several factors, including Arab frustrations over land dispossession, Jewish immigration, and economic disparities.</p>
1936: Peel Commission	<p>This was a British investigative commission formed to examine the causes of the 1936-1939 Arab revolt in Palestine</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>It resulted in the first recommendation to partition Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, offering one of the first official proposals for a two-state solution.</p>
1939: White Paper	<p>A British policy statement that limited Jewish immigration and land acquisition in Palestine.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>This had a significant impact by restricting the ability of Jews to escape</p>

		the Holocaust and return to their ancestral homeland to establish a Jewish state. It also contributed to tensions between Jewish and Arab communities in Palestine, furthering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
<p>1947-1979: ARAB- ISRAELI WARS AND PEACE ATTEMPTS</p> <p>1947: UN Resolution 181</p>	<p>This resolution recommended the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international administration. Jewish leaders accept the plan, while Arab states and Palestinians reject it.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>This resolution led to the establishment of Israel but was met with rejection by Arab states, sparking the Arab-Israeli War of 1948-1949.</p>
<p>1948: Israel's War of Independence</p>	<p>Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948. The declaration was followed by an invasion by neighboring Arab states, including Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. The war resulted in Israel's survival and expansion of territory.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The war led to the establishment of the State of Israel as it successfully defended itself from the invasion of the surrounding Arab countries. Upon its declaration, Israel gained international recognition from various countries, including the United States and the Soviet Union - the world's two major superpowers at the time. This lent it international support and legitimacy. It also marked the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict and resulted in the displacement of an estimated 700,000-800,000 Palestinian Arabs to many</p>

		<p>surrounding Arab countries. Many Palestinian Arabs also remained within Israel's newly formed borders, comprising over 20 percent of Israel's population today. The war defined the borders of Israel and had far-reaching consequences for regional politics, diplomacy, and future conflicts in the Middle East. It remains a pivotal event in the history of the region.</p>
<p>1956: Suez Crisis (Sinai War)</p>	<p>Israel, along with Britain and France, invaded Egypt in response to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal. International pressure, including from the United States and the Soviet Union, forced the withdrawal of the invading forces</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The war had far-reaching implications for global diplomacy, including the decline of traditional colonial powers - the UK and France. For the Middle East, it boosted Egyptian nationalism under President Gamal Nasser, who increased tensions with Israel, eventually leading to the 1967 Six-Day War.</p>
<p>1964: Creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization</p>	<p>The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded in 1964 during an Arab League Summit in Cairo, Egypt, to represent Palestinian aspirations for the destruction of Israel, self-determination, and a state. Initially led by Ahmed Shukeiri, the PLO later embraced armed struggle, terrorism, and later diplomacy as a means to achieve its goals. Yasser Arafat became a prominent leader and became the face of the PLO and the</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The beginning of the PLO signaled the creation and formalization of the Palestinian national movement. For decades, the PLO was dedicated to terrorism against Israelis. In a historic move, in 1988 the PLO accepted the notion of two states for two peoples which eventually helped pave the way for the 1993 Oslo peace process.</p>

	Palestinian movement until his death in 2004. Mahmoud Abbas succeeded him.	
1967: Six-Day War	The Six-Day War, which lasted from June 5 to June 10, 1967, was a brief but intense conflict in the Middle East. It was primarily between Israel and a coalition of Arab states, including Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. It resulted in an overwhelming victory for Israel, the capture of large swathes of territory from the surrounding Arab states creating an important defensive buffer for Israel, and the reunification of Jerusalem, which came under Jewish sovereignty for the first time in nearly 2,000 years.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The war was a watershed moment for the region. Israel's overwhelming victory vaulted it from a scrappy nation focused on its survival, to a major regional power. It also led to a significant deepening of relations with the United States. Additionally, it resulted in Israel's capture of key territories, including East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula. This had profound implications, including the establishment of Israeli settlements, the rise of Palestinian nationalism, heightened Arab rejection of Israel, and complex geopolitical dynamics in the region.</p>
1972: Munich Olympics Massacre	The first major Palestinian terrorist attack on Israel was carried out by the Palestinian terrorist group Black September, a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). During this attack, 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team competing in the 1972 Munich Olympics in Germany were taken hostage and eventually killed by the terrorists.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>While there were earlier instances of Palestinian terrorism and attacks against Israel, the Munich Olympics attack gained significant international attention and was a turning point in the history of terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It demonstrated the ability of Palestinian terrorist groups to carry out large-scale, high-profile attacks on Israeli targets outside of the Middle East. Additional major attacks throughout the 1970s and 80s included the 1974 Ma'alot school attack, the 1978 Coastal Road massacre, and the</p>

		1985 Achille Lauro hijacking, among others.
1973: Yom Kippur War (October War)	Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel during Yom Kippur, the holiest day in Judaism. The conflict resulted in a ceasefire, and Israel eventually withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula as part of the 1979 Camp David Accords.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The 1973 Yom Kippur War was significant because it began with a surprise attack by Egypt and Syria on Israel, challenging Israeli military dominance and reasserting Arab pride. The conflict led to superpower involvement, with the U.S. supporting Israel and the Soviet Union supporting Arab states. It ended in a ceasefire, triggering diplomatic efforts, oil embargoes, and changes in Israeli strategy and leadership. The war had a long-term impact on regional security and contributed to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and peace negotiations, such as the 1979 Camp David Accords.</p>
1979: Camp David Accords - Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel	Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty, leading to Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>Egypt became the first Arab country to recognize Israel formally. The peace realigned Egypt's position in the Middle East and established it as an important U.S. ally in the region - significantly undercutting Soviet influence in the region. The Accords also marked the end of a series of major Arab-Israeli Wars, which began in 1948.</p>
1982- PRESENT: PEACE PROCESS	The First Lebanon War, also known as the 1982 Lebanon War, was a military conflict in 1982 between Israel and	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The conflict evolved into a protracted and controversial involvement in Lebanon by Israel and the rise of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorist</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">AND TERRORISM</p> <p>1982: First Lebanon War</p>	<p>various Lebanese factions, mainly the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Israel's main objective was to remove PLO forces from southern Lebanon, which had been launching attacks against Israel.</p>	<p>group. Israel eventually withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000.</p>
<p>1987: First Intifada</p>	<p>The First Intifada was a period of widespread Palestinian protests, civil disobedience, and acts of violence and terrorism against Israelis that began in December 1987 and continued into the early 1990s. The intifada was sparked by a combination of factors, including frustrations with the Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, economic hardships, and a lack of political progress toward a Palestinian state.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The First Intifada had a significant impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, leading to international attention, changes in the political landscape, and the eventual start of peace negotiations, notably the Madrid Peace Process and the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s. The First Intifada also led to the creation of Hamas</p>
<p>1991: Madrid Peace Conference</p>	<p>The conference was a pivotal diplomatic effort co-sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union to address the Arab-Israeli conflict. It brought together representatives from Israel, Arab states, and the Palestinians to engage in both bilateral negotiations and multilateral discussions on regional issues.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The Madrid conference marked the first time they participated in peace talks with Israel, and it set the stage for subsequent peace efforts, including the Oslo Accords and the 1994 peace treaty between Israel and Jordan.</p>

<p>1993: Oslo Accords</p>	<p>The Oslo Accords were a pair of transitional agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) that were designed to establish a partnership for negotiating border disputes, creating Palestinian self-governance through the creation of the Palestinian Authority, and over time, the hope was this would lead to a peaceful solution to the conflict and a two-state solution.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>While the talks resulted in two agreements (Oslo I in 1993, and Oslo II in 1995) the accords began to unravel amid increasing terror attacks and the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish extremist. This left the region in a continued state of hostility and distrust. After the breakdown in talks between Israelis and the PLO at Camp David in 2000, the Palestinians launched the Second Intifada.</p>
<p>1994: Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty</p>	<p>1994, is an agreement between Jordan and Israel that recognizes each other's sovereignty, establishes their international boundary, and promotes security and economic cooperation.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The agreement saw Jordan become the second Arab country after Egypt to normalize relations with Israel. While there remains limited engagement between the peoples of both countries, the agreement has led to significant regional ties between Israel and Jordan, especially in economic, resource, and security cooperation.</p>
<p>1995: Assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin</p>	<p>On November 4, 1995, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a longtime major political figure in Israeli politics and head of the left-wing Labor Party, was assassinated by an Israeli extremist, Yigal Amir, at a peace rally in Tel Aviv.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>Rabin's death was a significant loss to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and it cast a long shadow over the process, raising questions about security and extremism within Israeli society. The assassination had lasting impacts on Israeli politics and society and remains a significant chapter in Israeli history, symbolizing the challenges of pursuing peace in the Middle East.</p>

<p>2000-2005: Second Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada)</p>	<p>The Second Intifada, also known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, was a period of intense conflict and Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule that began in late September 2000 and continued for several years. The intifada was characterized by widespread protests, demonstrations, suicide bombings, and armed confrontations between Israeli security forces and Palestinian terrorists.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The Second Intifada resulted in a high number of casualties on both sides, with close to 1,000 Israelis killed or injured by Palestinian terror attacks, including suicide bombings and bus bombings. It had a significant impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, leading to the construction of the West Bank barrier by Israel and influencing subsequent peace negotiations. It officially ended around 2005, but its consequences continue to shape the region's political landscape.</p>
<p>2005: Israel Withdraws from the Gaza Strip</p>	<p>In 2005, Israel, overcoming huge political pushback domestically and the terror onslaught during the Second Intifada, withdrew from the Gaza Strip, dismantling its settlements and military installations in the name of peace.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>After Israeli withdrawal in 2005, the coastal territory has been under the control of the Iran-backed Hamas terrorist group, which violently ousted the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority in 2007.</p>
<p>2006: Second Lebanon War</p>	<p>Conflict erupts between Israel and the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hezbollah in Lebanon following an ambush on Israeli soldiers along the border that killed three soldiers as well as led to two being taken hostage. The 50-day war ended with a ceasefire and a UN peacekeeping force deployed in</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The conflict had several significant impacts, including revealing Hezbollah's potent military capabilities, questions over Israel's military planning and leadership, and significant humanitarian impacts on Lebanon. It also had wide regional impacts, particularly with Iranian and Syrian support for Hezbollah. It resulted in the adoption of UN Resolution 1701,</p>

	southern Lebanon.	which called for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces, and the deployment of UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon. It also called for the disarming of Hezbollah, which has failed to happen. While no major conflicts between Israel and Hezbollah have occurred since tensions along the border are very high following the October 7 Hamas terror attack on Israel.
2007: Hamas Takes Control of Gaza	In June, Hamas, considered a terrorist organization by Israel, the U.S., U.K., EU, and others , took control of the Gaza Strip following violent clashes with its rival Palestinian faction, Fatah.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>This led to the division of the Palestinian territories, with Fatah controlling the West Bank and Hamas becoming the defacto ruler in Gaza. Hamas has used Iranian support to launch several significant attacks against Israel from its base in Gaza, including in 2008, 2009, 2014, 2021, and most recently on October 7, 2023, when Hamas terrorists murdered over 1,400 Israelis, wounded over 3,200, taken over 200 hostages, and launched thousands of rockets.</p>
2007: Annapolis Conference	In 2007, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, with the support of the U.S., launched the Annapolis Conference. The goal was to reach a peace agreement that would lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Hamas called for all parties to boycott	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>Olmert said that he gave Abbas an “unprecedented offer” based on a return to the pre-1967 borders, including land swaps and a division of Jerusalem. But Olmert never received a final response from the Palestinians on the offer. A Palestinian negotiator subsequently acknowledged in the media that the Israeli plan would have</p>

	the conference.	given his side the equivalent of 100 percent of the disputed lands under discussion.
2008-2009: Operation Cast Lead (Gaza War)	From December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009, Israel launched a military operation in response to rocket attacks from Gaza. Israeli forces conducted airstrikes, artillery shelling, and a ground invasion in response to the rocket attacks.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>This was the first major conflict between Israelis and Palestinians since the end of the Second Intifada in 2005. This also saw Israeli forces re-enter the Gaza Strip for the first time since its withdrawal in 2005 due to the terror threat posed by Hamas. The conflict resulted in significant casualties and destruction in Gaza, as well as international condemnation.</p>
2009-2010: Settlement Freeze	U.S. President Barack Obama attempted to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks shortly after taking office in 2009. At a speech at Cairo University that year, Obama reiterated his support for a two-state solution	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>As part of a good faith gesture, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu implemented a settlement freeze, a key Palestinian demand, that lasted 10 months. While talks briefly restarted, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas aborted the talks.</p>
2012: Operation Pillar of Defense	From November 14 to November 21, 2012, Israel launched an operation to target terrorists and rocket launchers in Gaza, in response to increased rocket attacks from Gaza into nearby Israeli communities.	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The operation resulted in a ceasefire agreement brokered by Egypt and other international mediators, which ended the hostilities. While a ceasefire was brokered, this conflict reaffirmed the threat that Hamas posed to Israel, especially after the much larger 2009 conflict. In particular, Hamas' firing of rockets into Israeli civilian areas led to more investment in Israel's Iron Dome</p>

		<p>missile defense system as well as bomb shelters and a civilian alert system in Israel. It also renewed international criticism of Israeli policies, including questions over disproportionate force by human rights groups.</p>
<p>2014: Operation Protective Edge</p>	<p>In June 2014, three Israeli teenagers - Naftali Fraenkel, Gilad Shaer, and Eyal Yifrah - were abducted and killed by Hamas terrorists while hitchhiking in the West Bank. Their murder by Hamas led to a widespread Israeli crackdown on Hamas terrorists in the West Bank as well as increasing tensions and rocket fire on Israel. This eventually escalated into Operation Protective Edge, which lasted from July 8 to August 26, 2014.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The operation aimed to uncover and neutralize a network of tunnels that extended from Gaza into Israeli territory as well as end Hamas rocket fire. These tunnels were viewed as a significant security risk, potentially allowing terrorists to infiltrate and carry out attacks in Israel. Hamas also has held the bodies of two Israeli soldiers - Hadar Goldin and Oron Shaul - leading to significant tension between Israel and Hamas. It was also the last time Israeli ground forces entered the Gaza Strip until the October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorist attack.</p>
<p>2020: Peace to Prosperity Plan</p>	<p>U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled the "Peace to Prosperity" plan in January 2020. The plan presented a vision for a two-state solution but with certain parameters, including Israeli sovereignty over some settlements in the West Bank and land swaps. The plan also included an economic component, which was unveiled</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The plan was largely rejected by the international community, although serious attention was given to the new opportunities for regional cooperation and investment built into the proposal. The Palestinians did not participate in the drafting of the plan and outright rejected it when it was released. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas had boycotted the Trump administration following its</p>

	in June 2019 at a conference in Bahrain, that promised \$50 billion in new investment for Palestinians.	decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017.
2020: Abraham Accords	The Abraham Accords, signed in 2020 , are a series of historic agreements that led to the normalization of diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations between Israel and Arab countries, including the UAE and Bahrain, and later the Joint Declaration with Morocco. Take our Abraham Accords quiz.	Why It Matters: The Accords marked a departure from decades of Arab-Israeli conflict, opened up economic opportunities, fostered regional stability, and represented a symbol of changing dynamics in the Middle East. They also served as a model for potential future agreements between Israel and other Arab and Muslim-majority countries.
2021: May Conflict in Gaza	An 11-day war erupted between Israel and Hamas. Hamas terrorists used tensions in Jerusalem, specifically over the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the eviction dispute in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, as a pretext to launch rockets at Israeli civilian areas and ignite hostilities. It resulted in intense rocket fire from Gaza and Israeli airstrikes. A ceasefire was brokered by Egypt and other mediators on May 21, 2021, ending the hostilities.	Why It Matters: Why It Matters: Prior to October 7, 2023, this was the most recent direct conflict between Israel and Hamas until October 2023. The conflict also led to a major spike in antisemitism globally targeting Jewish communities in the United States and Europe.

<p>2022: August Operation in Gaza</p>	<p>This three-day conflict resulted in over 1,000 rockets being fired at Israel by the Iranian-backed Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror group and the targeted killing of PIJ commander Tayseer al-Jabari.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>While the operation quickly ended in a ceasefire between Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, it was significant in that Hamas, the de facto ruler of Gaza, did not take part in the hostilities. The conflict was a setback for the Iranian-backed terror group, but tensions between Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad continued into 2023 in both Gaza and the West Bank</p>
<p>2023: Operation Shield and Arrow</p>	<p>Hamas, the Iran-backed terror group controlling Gaza, launched an unprovoked and vicious surprise attack on over 20 Israeli communities. Using rockets, paragliders, boats, motorcycles, and other vehicles, and whatever other means they could, terrorists infiltrated Israel with one goal—to murder and kidnap Israelis. Over 1,200 Israelis have been killed, thousands of rockets have been fired on Israel, and over 134 hostages are being held by Hamas.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>This was the largest terrorist attack in Israeli history and the worst attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. In order to protect itself, Israel is working to eliminate the threat that Hamas poses through an air, sea, and ground campaign against the terror group's operations.</p>

Everything You Need to Know About Rafah, Its Importance to Hamas, and Protecting Its Civilian Population

May 24, 2024

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared that Hamas terrorists remaining in the southern Gaza city of Rafah will be the next objective of the war. As long as Hamas operates from Rafah, Israelis are in danger of rocket fire and a reoccurrence of October 7.

The Latest Updates:

Following the May 5 Hamas attack that killed four Israeli soldiers located next to the humanitarian area of Kerem Shalom, Israel has ordered the evacuation of up to 100,000 Palestinian civilians, roughly 10 percent of the total civilian population in Rafah currently, from the eastern neighborhoods of Rafah in southern Gaza. On May 7, Israel Defense Forces took control of the Gazan side of the Rafah Crossing between Egypt and Gaza. Many hoped that this limited operation would pressure Hamas to accept a temporary ceasefire deal, which includes the release of hostages held by the terror group. Israeli forces have killed at least 50 terrorists in this limited operation and uncovered over 10 Hamas tunnels. On May 10, the Israeli security cabinet approved a measured expansion of the limited Rafah operation.

Israel has continued its targeted Rafah operations throughout May in phases. Some one million Palestinian civilians have heeded Israel's orders and evacuated from Rafah. The phased nature of the operation allows for it to be paused should a hostage deal be reached and for humanitarian evacuations.

Why is Israel carrying out a limited military operation that targets specific locations in Rafah?

To return the hostages kidnapped on 10/7, prevent Hamas from carrying out another 10/7-style massacre of Israelis, shut down the illegal weapons and people smuggling tunnels between Gaza and Egypt, end the Iran-backed terror group's influence over Gaza, and put pressure on Hamas to agree to a deal that will release Israeli hostages.

Every country has a moral obligation to not only protect the safety and security of its citizens but to rescue those taken hostage. It is believed that many of the more than 130 hostages, some of whom are feared to be already dead, are being held in Rafah. Many Israeli analysts believe that pressuring Hamas in Rafah could force the terror organization to get serious about negotiating with Israel and releasing its prisoners. In February, Israel carried out a successful and dramatic rescue operation in Rafah that freed two hostages, Fernando Simon Marman, 60, and Luis Har, 70, who were abducted from Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak on October 7.

In addition, Rafah is the last remaining stronghold for Hamas' military battalions and its leadership. Defeating Hamas' remaining battalions in Gaza is needed to ensure that the Iran-backed terror group no longer has the ability to murder Israelis. Hamas, which calls for Israel's destruction in its charter, has [repeatedly promised to carry out more 10/7-style massacres against Israel.](#)

Rafah is one of the last strongholds of Hamas, and it is believed that many of its senior commanders, including Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar, are possibly located there. With its leadership still largely intact in Rafah, Hamas could easily use Rafah as a base to reassert control over the entire Gaza Strip if the war were to end prematurely.

A campaign in Rafah is also essential to eliminate Hamas' and other terrorist groups' underground network of smuggling tunnels between Egypt and Gaza. Shortly after [Hamas gained control of the Gaza Strip](#), throwing out the Palestinian Authority in a bloody coup in 2007, a "tunnel industry" began to thrive under the border between Gaza and Egypt. Hamas has operated most of these tunnels, collecting tolls and trafficking explosives, guns, rockets, and drones. Terrorists also have used the tunnels to go to and from Gaza in order to train in Iran and other countries.

Egypt has previously worked to destroy the tunnels, but smuggling remains a concern. Ridding the area of Hamas and destroying the tunnels once and for all is an Israeli security priority.

How will Israel protect innocent Palestinian civilians in Rafah?

While Israel goes to extraordinary lengths to keep Palestinian civilians out of harm's way (more on that below), Hamas specifically puts Palestinian civilians in danger. A recent example includes the Iran-backed terror group's May 6 assault on the humanitarian aid crossing, Hamas launched rockets from a UNRWA school - a clear humanitarian safe zone. Time and again, Hamas uses Palestinians as human shields, purposely driving up the number of innocent Palestinians killed in the war while preserving the lives of the terrorist fighters.

"Israel has implemented more measures to prevent civilian casualties in urban warfare than any other military in the history of war. This includes many measures the U.S. has (or has not) taken in wars and battles but also many measures no military in the world has ever taken," asserts John Spencer, Chair of Urban Warfare Studies at the Modern War Institute at West Point, a research center dedicated to the study of war and warfare. [Read more of Spencer's expert analysis.](#)

As Israel conducts limited and targeted operations in specific parts of Rafah, it is once again deploying extraordinary steps to ensure Gazans are not in harm's way in Rafah. For instance, before Israel's targeted operation in eastern Rafah neighborhoods, hundreds of thousands of leaflets, phone calls, text messages, and social media posts in Arabic were disseminated to ensure the approximately 100,000 Palestinian civilians in these areas were evacuated out of harm's way to an expanded humanitarian zone in the al-Mawasi and Khan Younis areas of southern Gaza.

The IDF said that the expanded humanitarian zone includes field hospitals and tent camps for displaced Palestinians, while the IDF

noted that “there has been a surge of humanitarian aid going into Gaza.”

What You Need to Know About Israel’s Humanitarian Aid To Gaza

Previously, IDF spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said that moving the Palestinian civilians to designated areas, which would be done in coordination with international actors, was a key part of the IDF’s preparations for any Rafah operation.

What have U.S. leaders said about Israel’s efforts in Rafah?

For over a month, various U.S. government officials have expressed concern about a full-scale ground operation in Rafah, reiterating that there needs to be a credible plan to safeguard Palestinian civilians.

In a CNN interview on May 8, President Biden delineated his “red line” when it comes to Israel and Rafah, saying “I made it clear that if they [the IDF] go into Rafah—they haven’t gone in Rafah yet—if they go into Rafah, I’m not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah, to deal with the cities, that deal with that problem,” referring to his decision last week to pause the delivery of a shipment of a specific type of munition to Israel. In the interview, President Biden clearly said that Israel’s limited and targeted operations in Rafah to date have not crossed his red line. President Biden also added, “We’re going to continue to make sure Israel is secure in terms of Iron Dome and their ability to respond to attacks that came out of the Middle East recently.”

Biden’s comments on possibly not supplying weapons set off a flurry of concern and criticism from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle and from AJC:

AJC CEO Ted Deutch said that Israel’s ability to defeat Hamas - which has long called for Israel’s destruction, [which is enshrined in](#)

[its charter](#) and [vowed to carry out additional 10/7-like massacres](#) - should not be impaired.

“President Biden should not take steps that could impair Israel’s ability to prevent Hamas from attacking it again and again — as its leaders have promised,” he said. “The U.S. knows that defeating Hamas is critical to Israel’s long-term security and to defeating the global threat posed by the Iranian regime and its proxies.”

Recently, U.S. officials voiced their support for Israel’s limited Rafah operation, saying that Israel has “incorporated” many of the concerns the Biden administration has expressed.

U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, who visited Israel last week, called the IDF’s operations “more targeted and limited,” and said it has so far “not involved major military operations into the heart of dense urban areas.”

SUMMARY OF WHY THE ARABS AND JEWS HAVE BEEN IN CONFLICT FOR OVER 120 YEARS

"ISRAEL" AND "PALESTINE": WHERE SHOULD HISTORY BEGIN, AND SHOULD IT MATTER?

[Australian Institute of International Affairs](#) Dr Daniel Miller 6 Jan 2022

The geographic terms "Israel" and "Palestine" have a long history and specific connotations for Jews and Arabs with respect to their competing claims to the same land. The only way forward for Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Arabs is to cease looking backwards.

In her 14 [May "Looking Forward" newsletter](#), Jodi Rudoren, *New York Times* Jerusalem bureau chief during the last two Israel-Hamas wars in 2012 and 2014 (there have been four since 2008), wrote: "It does not, actually, help to examine what specifically started this conflagration, or the one before or the one before that, because it does, in so many ways, end up at 'Abraham had two sons: there was Isaac, and there was Ishmael'"—a reference to the Genesis account that the Patriarch Abraham engendered one son said to be the ancestor of Arabs ([Ishmael](#)) and another considered to be the ancestor of Jews ([Isaac](#)).

Sadly, Rudoren is correct: investigating [the particular events](#) that culminated in the latest Israel-Hamas war can provide only an imperfect, fragmentary understanding of a conflict that began well over a century ago and is rooted in issues of territory that predate the Common Era. Still, given that one side claims fervently that the land is "Israel" and the other equally passionately that it's "Palestine," a potentially worthwhile avenue of enquiry for understanding the conflict, at least to some degree, is to look at what each of those terms has historically denoted with respect to geography.

"Israel"

In the last decade of the 13th century BCE, Pharaoh Merneptah recorded that his military forces had decisively defeated [an entity called "Israel"](#) in the central highlands of what was then known as "Canaan." A few centuries later, that region would be the location for two kingdoms: "Israel" and a weaker sister kingdom called "Judah," the ultimate origin of the term ["Jew,"](#) to its south. The biblical tradition holds that there had previously been a united monarchy, apparently under the name "Israel." The kingdom of [Israel](#) [was overthrown](#) in ca. 722 BCE by the Neo-Assyrian empire, centred in what is now Iraq (ancient Mesopotamia), and "Israel" ceased to be a geographic entity of the ancient Middle East.

"Palestina"

In the sixth century BCE, Judah and its capital Jerusalem were [conquered by the Neo-Babylonians](#), another Mesopotamian empire. Following [the Babylonian Exile](#), the territory of the former kingdom would serve as the geographic centre of Jewish existence until 135 CE when, following a [disastrous Jewish](#)

[uprising](#), Roman emperor Hadrian expelled the Jews from Jerusalem and decreed that the territory surrounding the city be part of a larger entity called “Syria-Palestina.” Thenceforth, it would be primarily Jews in the [Diaspora](#) who would carry the traditions of Judaism forward. “[Palestina](#)” had as its ultimate referent the name and traditional territory of the Philistines, [mortal enemies of the Israelites](#) (forerunners of the Jews).

As part of the Islamic conquest of the Middle East in the seventh century, Arab peoples began to settle in significant numbers in the land. Apart from a relatively brief period of [Crusader](#) control, [Palestine](#) remained under Muslim control for just under 12 centuries, its population overwhelmingly Arab.

Zionism and Jewish return

In the second half of the 19th century, Jews’ yearning to return to their ancestral land was given concrete expression in the form of the Jewish nationalistic movement [Zionism](#). Zionism arose in response to mounting virulent Jew hatred in Europe and czarist Russia. As Jews began to trickle back into the land, they encountered a sizeable Arab population that had been there for centuries.

Under the [Turkish Ottoman empire](#), the land comprised three administrative regions, none of which bore the name “Palestine”. World War I saw the collapse of the Ottomans, and in 1917 the land fell under British rule. “[Mandatory Palestine](#)”—comprising also the current state of Jordan—came into existence in 1923. Until that time, the Arabs living there saw themselves primarily not as “Palestinians” in the sense of a nationhood but as Arabs living in Palestine (or to be precise, “[Greater Syria](#)”).

The founding of the modern state of Israel

During the era of Mandatory Palestine, the Zionist leadership in Palestine (the *Yishuv*) strove to increase Jewish numbers in the land to solidify Jewish claims to statehood, an initiative that was ultimately blocked by [British limits](#) placed upon Jewish immigration. It would be a horrified world reaction to the [Holocaust](#) that would push the Zionist project over the finish line. In November 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed [Resolution 181](#), partitioning the territory into “Independent Arab and Jewish States.” The Resolution received immediate Arab rejection, and Palestinian militias attacked Jewish settlements. On 14 May, 1948, the *Yishuv* declared the founding of the state of Israel, immediately recognised by the United States.

On the morrow of Israel’s founding, the new Jewish state was invaded by a military force comprising multiple Arab armies plus Palestinian militia forces. By the time the fighting ended in 1949, the Palestinians had lost 78 percent of what the UN had allotted to them, and 700,000 Palestinians had been uprooted from their homes with no right of return to the present day. For Israelis, it was the “[War of Independence](#).” For Palestinians, it’s [al-Nakba](#) — “the Catastrophe.”

Following decades of military and diplomatic setbacks, the Palestinian National Council issued a declaration of independence on 15 November, 1988, which was recognised a month later by the General Assembly as [Resolution 43/177](#). Currently, about three quarters of the UN’s membership [recognises](#) the statehood of Palestine, which has “[non-member observer status](#)” in the UN.

Since its founding and despite multiple wars with Arab states and non-state actors, Israel has flourished as a formidable Middle Eastern power. By contrast, the Palestinians have striven fruitlessly to establish a viable state and any real, sustained economic success.

The seizure by Israel of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza during its overwhelming victory in the [Six-Day War](#) of 1967—in which Israel faced a true existential threat to its existence from a combined Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian military force—has left the majority of Palestinians under various forms of Israeli occupation or control. Since the 1990s, there have been several unsuccessful attempts to achieve a [two-state solution](#). Under former prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, Jewish settlement in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, considered illegal by much of the world, increased dramatically. Those Arabs who do have Israeli citizenship, about a fifth of Israel's population, are far too often treated as [second-class citizens within Israel](#). The 13 June ouster of Netanyahu from power could alleviate this somewhat—for the first time, an [Arab Israeli party is part of a government coalition](#).

Jewish Israelis, meanwhile, have experienced the violent fury of [two Palestinian Intifadas](#) (1987–1993; 2001–2005), the second of which featured a wave of Palestinian suicide bombings and ambushes that [killed over 1,000 Israelis and wounded about 3,000](#). This was the catalyst for [Israel's Security Barrier](#), which has further exacerbated Palestinian distress.

Where should history begin, and should it matter?

"Israel" and "Palestine." One land, two names. Both Jews and Arabs have claimed it as theirs alone. From a purely historical perspective, "Israel" predates "Palestine" by more than a millennium. But, with the Jewish people then dispersed from their homeland, "Palestine" became home to a substantial Arab population, again for more than a millennium. From a perspective of justice and equity, both peoples have a legitimate claim to the land.

The wrongs and brutalities done by each side to the other have become too numerous to count. It does no good to try to assign blame for the latest war between Israel and Hamas. The war and the specific events that led up to it are just more entries in a ledger written in blood and tears. The stark fact is that there is now no act of vengeance or retribution that Jews and Arabs could do to the other party in the conflict that would allow them to say that accounts had been settled on their side.

The ledger must, therefore, be discarded. As [Jodi Rudoren](#) has written: "[A]ny hope of ending the conflict...requires Palestinians and Israeli Jews to either acknowledge each other's versions of history without trying to determine which is more legitimate, or to just ignore them. The only possible peace agreement is one that looks forward." In a reversal of the transformation of the Nile in [Exodus 7](#), the rivers of blood spilled must, somehow, become water under the bridge.

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WHY DID BRITISH DOUBLE DEALING CREATE DOUBLE DEALING BETWEEN THE ARABS AND JEWS IN PALESTINE?

Go to [Palestine vs Israel: What Ignited The Ongoing Conflict | Promises & Betrvals](#)

How British double-dealing during WW1 ignited the conflict between Arabs and Jews in the new British mandate of Palestine in the Middle East is told in the story of intrigue among rival empires; of misguided strategies; and of how conflicting promises to Palestine and Israel created a legacy of bloodshed which determined the fate of the Middle East. Avi Shlaim, Professor of International Relations at Oxford University, calls it 'one of the best historical documentaries on the Middle East I have ever seen'.

JEWS, MUSLIMS, AND AN "ORIGIN STORY" OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

The October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians, and the worldwide moral outrage that day's savagery generated were only paralleled by a gleeful *schadenfreude* that overtook many European capitals and other places around the globe, from the Arab world to the United States to [American university campuses](#) outright celebrating the greatest loss in Jewish life since the Holocaust.

[HOOVER INSTITUTION](#) November 16, 2023 [Franck Salameh](#)
Research Team: [Middle East and the Islamic World Working Group](#)

The October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israeli civilians, and the worldwide moral outrage that that day's savagery generated were only paralleled by a gleeful *schadenfreude* that overtook many European capitals and other places around the globe, from the Arab world to the United States to [American university campuses](#) outright celebrating the greatest loss in Jewish life since the Holocaust. What is the root cause of such stark, vile dichotomies when it comes to Israel, pitting on the one hand a camp of empathy and on the other one of resentment? How is it that alongside Western sympathizers there are always those depicting Israel as [the eternal offender](#), forbidden from defending itself, even at the risk of being depicted in the most hideous of [antisemitic tropes](#)? Conversely, why is it that among Arabs and Muslims, Palestinians are consistently, uncritically, portrayed as eternal victims, beatific casualties of [Israeli Apartheid](#) who can do no wrong, and whose own brutality is the justifiable result of grievances long unheeded and a righteous [legitimate expression](#) of self-defense?

What follows is an attempt to understand the intractable nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the divisiveness that it generates around the world. I will try to explain *not* by taking sides, not by passing a sentence on who is right and who is wrong, not by drawing Manichaeian fault lines between Good and Evil, and not by proceeding from the premise of the militant Zionist or the Arabist activist. In this, I shall assume the role of a historian recounting a complex story, probing its details, interrogating its players, exploring their languages and their languages' connotations, and interpreting the whole in an intelligible voice devoid of the prevailing Wokeist frills of our times. I shall do that while remaining mindful of this story's challenges, avoiding its ideological *partis pris*, and steering clear of the tendency to discard nuances and realities for the sake of soothing emotions and mythologies. In the end, there *are* "origin stories" to this conflict that ought to come to the fore, ones that are often scorned in favor of resentments, platitudes, political correctness, and the human condition's natural urge for settling scores.

One Origin Story

Let us begin with the lay of the land of today's theater of conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, a quick, oversimplified lesson, as it were, in the history, geography, and toponymy of what is commonly referred to as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

On the eve of the Great War, the Levantine political entities known today as Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Palestine did not exist as distinct geographic, national, or administrative units. All were territories of the Ottoman Empire (1516-1918); all had inhabitants who were subjects of that empire; all flaunted no distinct identities of their own besides being on the one hand privileged Muslim members of the *Umma* (the “nation of Islam”) and on the other hand underprivileged *Millets*, which is to say non-Muslim *Dhimmi* peoples or “lesser nations,” living on sufferance in the “the abode of Islam.” Those *Millets*, in the main Christians and Jews, were subject to the *Dhimma* system: an institutionalized complex of legal, social, political, and cultural handicaps—“institutional racism” in the language of today’s virtuous *bien-pensance*, a form of “legal discrimination”—that guaranteed the *Millets*’ physical safety and ability to keep pre-Muslim traditions in return for fealty and submission to an otherwise hostile, predominantly Muslim, universe. Under this *Dhimma* arrangement, a “system of protection” as it is often described in tidy academic terminologies, Christians and Jews in the world of Islam were “tolerated” peoples denied political and cultural rights, disenfranchised in their own homelands, lands from which they’d been dispossessed by seventh-century Muslim conquerors—“colonial settlers” in the normative language of our times. Describing this system in the late Ottoman period, Lebanese historian Zeine Zeine noted that Christians and Jews were “tributary people whose life and property were safe only by the good pleasure of the Turkish authorities”; that they lived in “an inferior and humiliating position compared with the Muslims”; that they were forbidden from bearing arms or entering civil service; and that they had to be “outwardly distinguished by the colors of [their] dress, [their] headwear and [their] shoes.”^[1] Zeine noted further that national identities as we understand them in the West did not exist in the Ottoman world:

All the ties, relationships, and loyalties were denominational and religious, primarily Muslim [Jewish] or Christian ... National unity was impossible under the circumstances ... The Arab Muslim, speaking of the Ottoman Empire, could say “it is also my Empire,” for it was a Muslim Empire and the Muslim felt at home in it. But the Christian [and the Jew] was conscious most of the time that he was only one of the *ra’iyyah*.^[2]

But this system of unequal relationships between Ottoman Muslims and non-Muslims would come to an end in the Great War’s aftermath. Alongside its tragedies and losses, the War’s conclusion would also conduce to the “emancipation” of non-Muslims in Muslim lands. Having chosen wartime’s “losing team,” the Ottoman Empire was dissolved in October 1918, leading to the abrogation of the *Millet* system and the redesigning of the eastern provinces of the former Empire by Britain and France, the war’s “winning team.” This task was guaranteed by a regime known as the League of Nations Mandate system, the purpose of which had been to shepherd the former Ottoman subjects into modern “citizenship” and shape their newly redesigned territories into modern states. Thus, based on this arrangement, and under the auspices of the League of Nations (predecessor of today’s United Nations), France was given “Mandate” over the former Ottoman Provinces (Vilayets) of Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, and the *Sanjak* of Mount-Lebanon, creating out of them what became known as Syria and Greater Lebanon (later *tout court* Lebanon). Concomitantly, Britain was assigned the former Ottoman Vilayets of Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul, stitching them together into today’s Iraq. Britain was likewise assigned the former Ottoman Sanjak of Jerusalem and the southern parts of the Vilayets of Beirut and Damascus, creating out of them what became known as Mandatory

Palestine. Mandatory Palestine would undergo an additional makeover in 1921, creating from its eastern flank the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan, today's Jordan.

Therefore, prior to this arrangement, none of the states mentioned above existed. There was no Syria nor a distinct Syrian national identity to speak of, no Palestine nor a Palestinian national consciousness among Arabs, and, as modern Iraq's travails keep reminding us, no distinct, unified Iraqi history, memory, or *esprit de corps*. What is more, most of these newly Mandated entities were assigned "national names" owed *not* to their own histories or languages, but to European (Anglo-French) toponymic and geographic habits, Western traditions not only reflecting a tenuous local authenticity but also affirming the origins of modern Middle Eastern states as Western spawns adhering to Western political models and national assumptions. There were of course notable exceptions. Egypt had always been Egypt. In Lebanon, or to be exact in Mount-Lebanon, there were Maronite Christians who had long viewed themselves as Lebanese with a separate non-Arab identity, members of a "Lebanese nation, distinguished by a ... culture dating back to the Phoenicians."¹³¹ Finally, in the Holy Land, there were also local Levantine Jews who dreamt of the redemption of the Jewish people and their restitution to their ancestral homeland in the former Ottoman Sanjak of Jerusalem and the southern Vilayets of Beirut and Damascus.¹⁴¹ But those were exceptions that confirmed the rule, the rule being that Palestine, among others, was a Western concept, a Western toponym, yielding a Western demonym that Europeans used in pre-modern times to mean "Jews," not Arabs, and to which Arabs themselves would remain indifferent until 1948 at the very earliest.

Onomastics of the Story

To the points above, Bernard Lewis reiterates that modern Near Eastern political entities like Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, and the rest *all* owe their names (and often their "national histories") to Classical Antiquity or Biblical tradition, *not* to Arab or Muslim tradition. In this sense, Jordan, Israel, and Lebanon are names issuing from the Bible; Syria is of classical Greek provenance; Palestine is a Roman term assigned to Roman Judea after the AD 70 destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. All five place names are spawns of Judeo-Christian historical memory and modern European political language; in their modern senses they would have been unknown, imperceptible, unintelligible to their Muslim inhabitants a hundred years ago.¹⁵¹

Thus, the demonym "Palestinian," for instance, before the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, would have meant something quite distinct and different from the term "Palestinian" post-1948 and certainly today. Indeed, after the Ottoman Empire's dismantlement and throughout the Mandate period, save among some Arabic-speaking Christians already imbued in the traditions, languages, and ideas of Europe who might have willingly adopted "Palestinian" as a demonym, the term referred almost exclusively to Jews and was accepted and widely used strictly speaking by Jews. The term was conversely rejected, or at best ignored, by Arabs—which is to say by Muslims—primarily because to them it was synonymous with "Jewish." But as mentioned earlier, "Palestinian" was also rejected because Muslims, members of an established *Umma*, already had time-honored identifiers of their own that did not need augmenting. Thus, identity markers among Mandatory Palestine's Muslims were primarily familial. They were Husseinis,

Nusseibehs, Khalidis, Sakakinis, Nashashibis, or some other variants of lesser branches of these larger notable families. Kinship was also tribal (*Hamula*). Mandatory Palestine's Arabs were thus Alamis, Dughmush, Adwan, Abu-Ghawsh, etc. Their attachments were also linked to distinct localities, villages, towns, yielding family names and lineages relating to place names such as Yafi (from Jaffa), Akkawi (from Akko), Khalili (from Hebron), Nabulsi (from Nablus), Masri (from Egypt), Makdisi (from Jerusalem), Shami (from Damascus), Beirut (from Beirut), etc.^[6]

But most importantly, before the establishment of the state of Israel, the Palestinians of today viewed themselves first and foremost as Muslims, as members of the *Umma*, and indeed they fought the Zionist national project *not* as Palestinians fighting Jews but as Muslims fighting Palestinians whom they viewed as Jewish intruders into the world of Islam. "There is no such thing as Palestine in [Arab] history," famously noted Lebanese-American historian Philip Hitti in 1946.^[7] The term was Arabized and came to refer to Arabs *only* when Jews relinquished it in the text of their 1948 [declaration of independence](#), opting instead for Israel. It is not a trivial matter that the Arabs of British Mandate Palestine fought the Zionist project throughout the early half of the twentieth century under bona fide Muslim, *not* national—and certainly not "Palestinian"—banners. Their revolt against the British Mandate between 1936 and 1939 was termed "The Arab Revolt," *not* "The Palestinian Revolt." Their main representative body in British Mandate Palestine was "The Higher Arab Committee," *not* "The Higher Palestinian Committee." And finally, their two most vocal "national" leaders were Muslim religious figures: Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini of Jerusalem, a [Nazi sympathizer](#) and propagandist who was all too happy entertaining with Hitler himself the prospects of a "Final Solution" for Palestinian and Arab Jewry; and the Damascene petty cleric Izzeddin al-Qassam, a fiery Islamist preacher who would come to bequeath his name onto two of this conflict's most recognizable actors, Hamas' military wing, the Izzeddin al-Qassam Brigades, and that organization's infamous "Qassam Rocket" artillery type.

The Arab-Israeli Conflict in Five Minutes

In a nutshell, and as alluded to earlier, the Arab-Israeli conflict, contrary to its normative nomenclatures in "consensus scholarship," is not (or not simply) a struggle between two national ideas, one Israeli and one Palestinian, both disputing the same piece of real estate. Instead, the Arab-Israeli conflict is, in origin, a battle pitting a coherent national idea represented by political Zionism against an ethno-religious ideology (Arab and Islamic), formed in reaction to Zionist encroachments on what were deemed Arab and Islamic lands, an ideology that has since been "nationalized" as "Palestinian." The Islamic component of Arab Palestinian national consciousness is not to be underrated; Arabism and Palestinianism are far more religious than they are made out to be ("the Prophet Muhammad was *ipso facto* the Prophet of Arabism," famously noted Arab nationalist ideologue Michel Aflaq). Likewise, Zionism is far more complex an historical phenomenon than to be dismissed as an alien body.

Modern political Zionism as the "national liberation movement of the Jewish people" is often attributed to Austrian journalist Theodor Herzl (1860-1904). That is of course not untrue. But it is also *only* partly true. Indeed, Zionism—as an emotive if not a political impulse for a "return" to Israel—is part and parcel of Jewish national history and memory, and in that sense is a millennial and *not* a modern phenomenon, and

certainly not an exclusively Herzlian one. Zionism is in fact an ancient Jewish concept, dating back to the 587 BC Babylonian Exile. The Lamentations of Jeremiah and Psalm 137 speak of the exiled Jews longing for Zion (one of the Biblical “nicknames” of Jerusalem). “By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion,” begins [Psalm 137](#), admonishing the Jewish exiles that “if I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill; may my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth ...” Likewise in their Passover traditions for almost 3000 years, Jews throughout the *Galut* (or Diaspora), have remembered and longed for Zion, concluding their Passover seder with the traditional toast, “here’s to next year in Jerusalem.” Jewish history is also replete with waves of *Aliyot* (Rising Up movements of return) to the Biblical Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel). And although Jewish political sovereignty over “Israel” had ended with the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70, Jewish presence never ceased in what the Romans had renamed “Palæstina” in circa AD 100. Indeed, subsequent to that trauma, native Jewish communities would remain on “the land,” getting augmented periodically by recurring waves of *Aliya* “returns.”^[8] But for all intents and purposes, and spanning two millennia of Roman, Byzantine, Arab, and Ottoman rule, what was left of local Jewish life would be reduced to sufferance, living at the pleasure of the hegemon of the day, and any hope for restored political sovereignty would not materialize before the end of the Great War.

And so, it was during the Mandate period that the Zionist movement, in its modern, organized, “Herzlian” secular iteration, would gain momentum, soliciting “guarantees” from the Mandatory power in support of the creation of a Jewish state in British Mandate Palestine. In reality, the much-maligned [Balfour Declaration](#), which Arabs held responsible for suppressing the creation of an Arab state and yielding the state of Israel, did nothing of the sort. Indeed, Balfour’s, like other “pledges” Britain had made to Arabs in its Mandated territories, was at best a diplomatic platitude, *not* a promise: It “viewed with favor” (it did not *commit* to) the “establishment of a Jewish home” (*not* a Jewish state nor even a homeland) “in Palestine” (*not* on the whole of it or instead of an Arab Palestine).^[9]

And so, Zionism’s pitfall appears to have been its keen understanding of the modern world, its ideas, its tools, while Arabism’s (or Islam’s) main failing was and remains its insistence on facing a new world with assumptions, belief systems, and notions of chivalry, manhood, and honor that no longer exist.^[10] Thus, Zionism during the Mandate period was socially, politically, organizationally, and intellectually sophisticated, building elaborate structures that would culminate in the attainment of Jewish statehood in 1948. By contrast, the Arabs’ response remained stalled in the emotive and religious realm. In other words, instead of responding to the Zionist national challenge with nation-building of their own, the Arabs of British Mandate Palestine countered with religious (Islamist) zeal, lashing out *not* at Zionist (secular) structures but at Jewish communities, meting out Pogroms reminiscent of Hamas’s on October 7, 2023.^[11]

By the summer of 1947, with growing Jewish-Muslim animosities and irruptions of violence in British Mandate Palestine becoming increasingly intractable, Britain resolved to disengage from its Mandate, transferring responsibility to the United Nations. In late November 1947, the UN General Assembly [voted for the partition of the Mandated territory](#) into an Arab state and a Jewish state with Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum* condominium under international protection.

Following the resolution, the Jews accepted the partition plan and announced the “rebirth” of Israel in the territories originally allotted by the UN. Conversely, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon (friends of “Arab Palestine”) rejected the UN resolution and proceeded to attack the newly established Jewish state in an attempt to stunt its emergence. It was an unequal struggle from a Jewish perspective—a David vs. Goliath battle as described in Israel’s national mythology—but a struggle in which Israel managed to prevail. And so, not only did it emerge triumphant, but Israel also acquired more territories, conquering some of what had initially been reserved for the (stillborn) Arab state projected by the UN Resolution. Israel also proceeded to expel Arab populations from newly added areas in accounts ranging from claims of “ethnic cleansing” to stories of villagers “leaving of their own volition,” who heeded calls by Arab leaders promising a “triumphal return” once the Jews are “thrown into the sea.”^[12] Needless to say, Israel was not thrown into the sea (although that remains an abiding goal of Hamas and fellow travelers), there have been no triumphal returns (not for lack of trying), and hundreds of thousands of Mizrahi Jewish refugees, banished from Arab lands in the aftermath of Israel’s rebirth, would come to cement the Jewish state as a regional fixture and indeed to define the “face” of modern Israel *not* as an Ashkenazi (European) Zionist interloper, but as a surviving local Mizrahi (Eastern) legacy.^[13]

And so, against great odds, Israel was reborn in its (expanded) 1948 borders; the birth of an Arab state alongside it was aborted; the West Bank and Gaza fell respectively under Jordanian and Egyptian rule (1948-1967), preventing an Arab state from taking shape on those territories; and the “Arab refugee problem” ensued. What is more, Israel sued for peace with the Arabs repeatedly since 1948, pursuing a “land for peace” approach that the Arabs refused at every turn,^[14] opting instead for more war (1967, 1973), more rejectionism (*the three noes of Khartoum*), more refugees, and more disorientation and loss of territory. Arabs viewed 1948 as the epitome of injustice: the dispossession of the Arabs and their exile, a *Nakba* (“catastrophe”) as the events are described in Arabic. Conversely, Israel viewed 1948 as the apotheosis of justice: the *summum bonum* of redemption, the answer to 2000 years of dispossession, exile, prayers, yearnings, and dreams of restitution to the Jews’ ancestral homeland.

This is, in a nutshell, an “origin story” of the Hamas-Israel predicament today. There may be others, but the one recounted here is one seldom pondered thoughtfully. It is the story of a *Dhimmi* people, a subject people who ought to have stayed within their bounds but who shook off the yoke of servitude, emerging triumphant as master of a sovereign non-Muslim state in the “Abode of Islam.”

Beyond the prevalent depictions of this conflict as a struggle between two nationalist ideas, one Jewish and one Arab, disputing the same territory, there lies an ignored, perhaps a more important, triumphalist eschatological dimension. Put in simple terms, traditional Islam divides the world between *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb*, literally the “Abode of Islam” and the “Abode of war,” which is to say on the one hand territories where Islam reigns supreme and where Muslims rule, and on the other hand lands of disbelief where infidels still rule and where Islam is destined to conquer and dominate.^[15] In this traditional conception of the world (which “is not irenic,” writes P.J. Vatikiotis),^[16] the struggle between those two abodes is continuous until one, presumably Islam, prevails over the other.^[17] What is more, territories that Islam has already conquered and claimed for Muslims should be clung to by any means, and should never

be ceded back to the world of disbelief,^[18] Israel, and for that matter a Lebanon of earlier times where Christians had sovereign prerogatives, both fall within that category: lands that have been conquered and Islamized beginning in the seventh century, that should never have been allowed to lapse into Jewish or Christian hands, and whose *Dhimmi* peoples should be prevented from exercising political or military authority over Muslims. Jews (and for that matter Lebanon's Christians) have committed a mortal sin on that account and deserve to be chastised for their temerity, the lands they have contaminated to be "cleansed of their sins and impurities."^[19] Indeed, Israel is part and parcel of that triumphalist schema, argues Franco-Algerian author Boualem Sansal: "it must once more be brought back within the confines of *Dar al-Islam*, and it must remain so forevermore."^[20]

That is the Hamas premise, clear, pellucid, honest. It is not the "liberation of Palestine" for the sake of a Palestinian cause or the Palestinian people. It is an apocalyptic struggle for the redemption of Muslim land (*Dar al-Islam*) fallen to the hands of disbelief. Article 8 of the [Hamas Charter](#) reveals that much: "Allah is our goal; the Prophet is our model; the Koran is our constitution; Jihad is our path; and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of our wishes." Those are not idle words or symbolic notions; they are foundational convictions that structure the life of a righteous Muslim.^[21] And lest the preceding be interpreted as the extreme view of religious zealots like Hamas, Mahmoud Abbas, the President of the Palestinian Authority, begs to differ. He affirmed in 2009 that the Palestinians' armed struggle was "a strategy, not [a] tactic ... in the battle for liberation and for the elimination of the Zionist presence; [a struggle that] will not stop until the Zionist entity is eliminated and Palestine is liberated."^[22]

Conclusion

In sum, the story of Israel as recounted here is the tale of a Jewish state that views its rebirth as restitution and justice. It is also the tale of an Arab (Muslim) state that never was, that ought to have been and still deserves to be, but that chose to self-immolate on the altar of preventing Israel's emergence and that views the Jewish state in its midst as an aberration and disruption of God's justice, the personification of injustice. Thus, justice from a Jewish perspective is "Israel reborn," while injustice in Arab (Muslim) eyes is *this* same "Israel reborn." How does one resolve such a dilemma when Israel having achieved "justice" seeks "recognition," when Arabs having been dealt an "injustice" seek its correction, and when "justice" for one means the "dissolution" of the other? For fans of "context"—from Hamas apologists, to honest human rights activists genuinely concerned for civilian lives, to infantilized pedestrians gorged on social media fallacies devoid of reflection, discernment, or critical analysis, to outright antisemites to whom Israel can't seem to do anything right *and* has no right to self-defense—*that* is the context of October 7, 2023.

Arabs won't "recognize," and Israel won't oblige by offering its "demise."

THE EXPULSION OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES AND IRAN - AN UNTOLD HISTORY

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS 2 Feb 2021 *This op-ed was written by WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps member Andrea Mifano, was originally published on the Brazilian Jewish news website [Kadima](#) in Portuguese on 31 December 2020*

Until the 1960s, approximately one million Jews lived in Iran and other Arab countries having arrived in the region more than 2,000 years before. Nowadays, it is estimated that only around 15,000 remain, as the majority of the Jewish population in Muslim lands were forced to flee their homes in the years following the establishment of the State of Israel. This mass expulsion and exodus is part of modern history, but inexplicably, it's neither taught at schools nor remembered within the context of the conflicts in the Middle East.

For over 2,500 years, Jews lived continuously in North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf region the first Jewish population had already settled there at least 1,000 years before the advent of Islam.

Throughout the generations, Jews in the region were often subjected to various forms of discrimination - and in many cases, ranked lower on the status of society than their Muslim compatriots -- but they were nevertheless loyal citizens who contributed significantly to the culture and development of their respective countries.

Despite the positive influence that Jews brought to the places where they lived, more than 850,000 Jews were forced to leave their homes in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Morocco, and several other Arab countries in the 20 years that followed the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. Another major forced migration took place from Iran in 1979–80, following the Iranian Revolution and the collapse of the shah's regime, adding 70,000 more Jewish refugees to this number.

There is ample evidence that this conduct against Jews was orchestrated in tandem as a joint effort of all the involved Arab countries. Among the events preceding the expulsion were: (a) The drafting of a Law by the Political Committee of the Arab League that recommended a coordinated strategy of repressive measures against Jews; (b) strikingly similar legislation and discriminatory decrees, enacted by numerous Arab governments, that violated the fundamental rights and freedoms of Jews resident in Arab countries; (c) statements made by delegates of Arab countries at the U.N. during the debate on the 'Partition Resolution', representing a pattern of ominous threats made against Jews in Arab countries; and (d) newspaper reports from that period.

In 1947, the Political Committee of the Arab League (League of Arab States) drafted a law that was to govern the legal status of Jewish residents in all of its member states. This Draft Law of the Arab League provided that "...all Jews – with the exception of citizens of non-Arab countries – were to be considered

members of the Jewish 'minority state of Palestine'; that their bank accounts would be frozen and used to finance resistance to 'Zionist ambitions in Palestine; Jews believed to be active Zionists would be interned as political prisoners and their assets confiscated; only Jews who accept active service in Arab armies or place themselves at the disposal of these armies would be considered 'Arabs."

In the international arena, Arab diplomats pretended to ignore the Arab League's collusion in encouraging state-sanctioned discrimination against Jews in all its member states, seeking publicly to attribute blame the Arab "masses" - and even the United Nations itself - for any danger facing the Jews across the region. This covert move was part of the Arab states' attempt to divert attention from the official discriminatory practices of their governments against the Jewish citizens.

In a key address to the Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly on the morning of November 24, 1947, just five days before that body voted on the partition plan for Palestine, Egyptian delegate Heykal Pasha declared: "The United Nations ... should not lose sight of the fact that the proposed solution might endanger a million Jews living in the Moslem countries. ... If the United Nations decided to partition Palestine they might be responsible for very grave disorders and for the massacre of a large number of Jews.

On 28 November 1947, at the 126th Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly, Iraq's Foreign Minister Fadil Jamali warned further: "Not only the uprising of the Arabs in Palestine is to be expected but the masses in the Arab world cannot be restrained. The Arab-Jewish relationship in the Arab world will greatly deteriorate."

On 16 May 1948, the New York Times ran an article headlined, "Jews in Grave Danger in all Muslim Lands: Nine Hundred Thousand in Africa and Asia face wrath of their foes."

As a Jew of Egyptian descent, this was the story of my family. My parents and grandparents were forced to flee Egypt in 1957, leaving everything they possessed behind, to start a new life in a country they didn't know - Brazil - with a language they didn't speak - Portuguese. All of their assets were plundered and as of today, nothing that remained of their lives in Cairo has ever been recovered. Still, from this expulsion emerged a new generation of Brazilian Jewish families that were raised in São Paulo and are very grateful to have been adopted by this diverse and welcoming country.

In spite of this history, the events of the past few months have brought about a new horizon of hope regarding this complicated relationship between Jews and Arab countries. With the recent news regarding the peace agreements between the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan* with the State of Israel, - known as the Abraham Accords - a new era of reconciliation appears to be rising for Muslims and Jews.

May this new era herald real peace between Arab countries and Israel. But at the same time, it is imperative that the preservation of the story of the Jews from Arab lands not be forgotten, and that the

citizens of those countries learn what happened in the lands where they live. In order to avoid history repeating itself, it is of utmost importance that we strive to learn and understand the past.

*Since this article was originally published the Kingdom of Morocco also joined the Abraham Accords.

The WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps is the flagship program of the World Jewish Congress, under the vision and leadership of WJC President Ronald S. Lauder. This program empowers the new generations of outstanding Jewish leaders. A selective worldwide network of over 300 Jewish young professionals from 50 countries receiving opportunities, experience, and skills to impact Jewish interests through diplomacy and public policy.

ARABS DON'T ALL STAND WITH HAMAS

Muslim nations in the Middle East don't agree on what should come after a cease-fire in Gaza if it happened

WORLD [Nick Eicher](#), [Mary Reichard](#) 21 Nov 2023

MARY REICHARD, HOST: Coming up next on The World and Everything in It: Arab views on the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

Earlier this month, the New York Times ran an article citing a Hamas media advisor who said the following: "I hope that the state of war with Israel will become permanent on all the borders, and that the Arab world will stand with us."

NICK EICHER, HOST: While Arab nations like Saudi-Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt have called on the United States to pressure Israel for a cease-fire in Gaza, they have largely stayed out of the conflict, apart from supplying humanitarian aid.

But so far, much of the Arab world is not standing with Hamas's mission to create permanent war for Gaza.

REICHARD: On Saturday, the Crown Prince of Bahrain stepped out as the first Arab leader to take Hamas to task for its brutal attack.

CROWN PRINCE OF BAHRAIN: I condemn Hamas unequivocally. This is so everybody in the room can understand that I stand on the side of civilians and innocents and not on the side of political posturing.

Is the Crown Prince alone in the Arab world, or the tip of an iceberg?

EICHER: Joining us now is Hussain Abdul-Hussain. He's an Arab journalist and a research fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

Hussain, good morning.

HUSSAIN ABDUL-HUSSAIN: Morning.

EICHER: Well let's start with the basics. Last Monday you published [an article in Newsweek](#) in which you say you can't understand why the world can't feel Israeli pain following Hamas's attacks, only Palestinian pain. Why is that the case, do you think? And maybe that plays into the larger issue of why the Palestinian cause is so important in the Arab world.

HUSSAIN: Well, the main reason is that we have at least 1 billion Muslims, and at most we have 20 million Jews. And no matter who's right and who's wrong, the voice of 1 billion is always much louder than the voice of 20 million, even if the other side is right, and even if the other side is still hurting from the massacre that Hamas committed against 1200 Israelis. So this is a case where the Israelis were clearly on the defensive. They were clearly the victims, and yet you have the majority of the Arabs still blaming Israel for whatever we see unfolding today.

REICHARD: What are Arab nations in the Middle East saying about the conflict? Are they all on one page, or are there differences you've noticed, country to country?

HUSSAIN: On the surface it may seem that they are on the same page asking for a ceasefire, but if you look deeper you will see great differences. You have the bloc that includes Qatar, Turkey, to an extent Iran,

and these guys when they call for a ceasefire, they want a ceasefire because they want to spare Hamas the bitter fate that Israel is going after this terrorist organization.

On the other hand, if you look at the moderate Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE and Jordan, these guys want a ceasefire because they believe that peace talks are the only alternative here, the only option and the only choice. So while both might be calling for a ceasefire, each one of them imagines what happens next differently. One wants it as a pitstop to more fighting, the other wants it as a full stop to have peace talks.

EICHER: Let's talk a little more about Qatar, you brought that up. The [New York Post](#) recently ran a story about top Hamas leaders living in luxury in Qatar while the Palestinian people of Gaza suffer as the result of Hamas's attacks on Israel. What do we know about the extent of Qatar's support for Hamas...and what can Israel and its allies do to persuade Qatar to end that support?

HUSSAIN: Well, we know for a fact that the Hamas leadership is corrupt and is wealthy compared to the rest of Gazans, and the two main leaders of Hamas, Khaled Mashal and Ismail Haniyeh, they do live in Qatar, enjoying a lot of luxury. There was a leak showing that Ismail Haniyeh spent over \$5,000 only going to spas and getting massages. So this is known even inside of the Gaza Strip itself. Gazans have often put out footage showing that the Hamas leadership inside the Strip lives in luxury, they drive luxury cars. In August there were protests, the Gazans took out to the streets to protest Hamas's corruption. They were saying, "We're hungry, we're impoverished, and you're just driving your luxury cars." Now the point here is that Qatar has two faces. On one side, they are an ally of the United States. They host our air base in Al Udeid. On the other hand, they're funding Hamas, they're funding Al-Jazeera, which to me now sounds like a mouthpiece of Hamas that instigates violence not only against Israelis but against everything that's Western at this point. What we can do is that we have a lot of leverage here in the United States. We can ask the Qataris to cut it out. We can just say, If you don't stop funding, your people will face sanctions, or your banking system will face sanctions. And I'm sure at this point the Qataris will not be willing to sacrifice their own wealth and banking system and their own connection to the global financial system only to support a bunch of terrorists that are called Hamas.

REICHARD: A part of the current conflict comes down to whether Hamas really has a system of tunnels and command centers underground in Gaza. Since Israeli forces took control of the Al-Shifa hospital last week, the IDF has been releasing footage of what it found inside the hospital complex. Some mainstream media aren't taking the Israelis' word for it and are demanding more concrete evidence.

Are the Israelis providing enough evidence and the mainstream just doesn't want to accept it, or is there more to the story?

HUSSAIN: Well, I think the Israelis have provided a lot of evidence that offers a strong case, and I think in this case, most of the Arab media just refuse to believe. Now, if we take the statements of Hamas officials themselves, they have talked about the tunnels that they are managing. Sometimes they use them to threaten Israel, to say that, "If you come into the Strip, you will not be able to beat us because we have the tunnels." So this is not a secret. Everyone knows that the Hamas fighters are hiding in these tunnels. Now the point is that no matter what amount of evidence Israel offers, even footage of brutal acts of violence that Hamas committed against Israeli citizens, even this footage is sometimes not being taken as solid

evidence. So I see bias in most of this. And I think if you get a neutral observer, they'll absolutely believe the evidence that Israel is putting out. And thankfully, Washington at this point and this administration, they believe what Israel is putting out.

EICHER: Hussain Abdul-Hussain is an Arab journalist and research fellow for the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies. Thank you for your time.

HUSSAIN: Thank you.

GENERATIONS OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES FACE PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT AND DISPOSSESSION

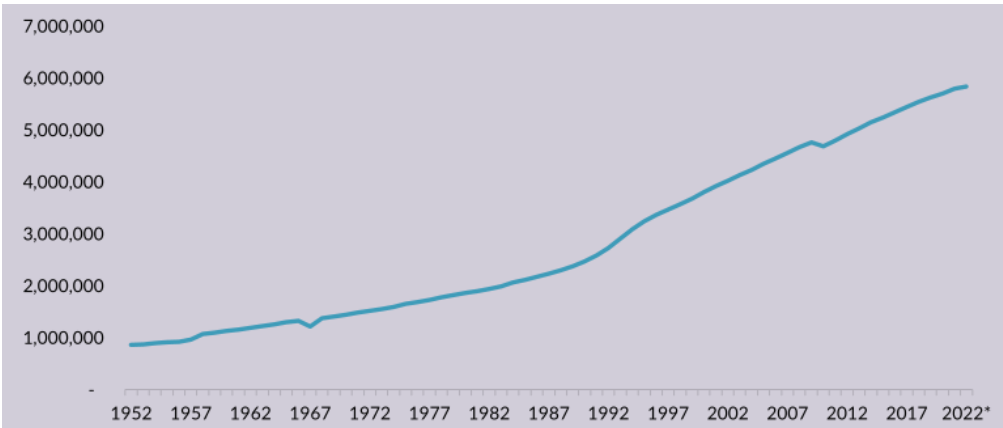
[MPI \(MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE\)](#), MAY 3, 2023 By Nathan Citino, Ana Martín Gil, and Kelsey P. Norman

Seventy-five years after the mass displacement of Palestinians began, approximately 5.9 million registered Palestinian refugees live across the Middle East. Palestinians comprise the largest stateless community worldwide. While they constitute the world's longest protracted refugee situation, their plight has been eclipsed by more recent displacement crises and dismissed as unsolvable.

Among refugees, this population is unique in several ways. For one, it includes people originally displaced from Palestine between 1946 and 1948, amid the creation of the state of Israel, as well as their children and other descendants; while these younger generations would not typically be considered refugees in other displacement situations, they are counted as such by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). So while the Palestinian refugee population has grown significantly over time, it has done so because of the descendants of people displaced decades ago, rather than new displacement. And unlike other refugees, Palestinians do not fall under the mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but instead are protected by UNRWA, which was established in December 1949 to provide them direct relief and other services. Unlike UNHCR, UNRWA cannot resettle refugees; it describes its mandate as to assist and protect Palestinians "pending a just and lasting solution to their plight." UNRWA acts solely as a service provider, primarily for education, health (including mental health), social services, emergency assistance, and microfinance. It does not administer the refugee camps where approximately one-third of all Palestinian refugees live, which are the responsibility of the host country or governing authority.

This article provides an overview of the historical circumstances that gave birth to the displacement and dispossession of Palestinian refugees and takes stock of their current situation in countries across the Middle East, especially in light of worsening regional economies. While many long-term challenges are rooted in ongoing conflict involving Israel, other factors have contributed to Palestinian refugees' situation, including the near impossibility of obtaining citizenship in many host countries and UNRWA's precarious funding.

Figure 1. Number of Palestinian Refugees, 1952-2022*



* Data for 2022 are as of the middle of the year.

Note: Figure refers to Palestinians under the mandate of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).

Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Refugee Data Finder," accessed April 27, 2023, [available online](#).

The Creation of a Refugee Population

Colonialism set the stage for Palestinians' dispossession. Following World War I, the League of Nations authorized the partition of the Ottoman Empire's Middle Eastern territories by the United Kingdom and France. In the Palestine mandate, the United Kingdom was to foster a national home for Jewish people consistent with its 1917 Balfour Declaration, a goal aligned with those of the broader settler-colonial project of Zionism and opposed by Palestinian Arabs. Jews remained a minority in mandate Palestine, but their numbers increased during the 1930s as many fled Nazi persecution. Palestinian Arabs, who lacked institutional power, revolted from 1936 until 1939, leading British authorities to kill, wound, jail, or exile around one-tenth of all adult men. Following the revolt, the British government also set a limit on Jewish migration to the territory.

World War II brought cataclysmic changes. The horrors committed by Nazis and their collaborators in the Holocaust created a large displaced population, increasing pressure on British leaders to lift restrictions on Jewish migration to Palestine. Meanwhile, Zionist leaders shifted the focus of their diplomacy to the United States, where they enjoyed political and organizational support. President Harry Truman prevailed on Britain to resettle 100,000 Jewish refugees in Palestine, a proposal adopted by an Anglo-American Commission. The United Kingdom subsequently turned the question of Palestine over to the United Nations, whose Special Committee on Palestine proposed partitioning the mandate into Jewish and Arab states, with the city of Jerusalem as a separate entity. Despite their minority status, Jews were granted 55 percent of the mandate's territory, including much of the productive agricultural land. With strong U.S. backing, the UN General Assembly adopted the partition measure on November 29, 1947.

In the civil war that erupted following the partition vote, Arab and Jewish forces clashed in anticipation of British withdrawal. Palestinian Arabs lacked the Zionists' unity and resources and were reliant on an undersupplied Arab Liberation Army backed by regional states. In anticipation of an invasion, Jewish leaders instructed brigade commanders to empty cities and towns of presumably hostile Arab residents. Historians differ over the degree to which Zionist forces pursued ethnic cleansing as official policy, but the result was hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs were expelled from their homes or fled. By the time David Ben-Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency Executive, proclaimed the establishment of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948, more than 300,000 Palestinian Arabs had been turned into refugees (although this predates the 1951 Refugee Convention, historical literature considers Palestinians who fled to have been refugees).

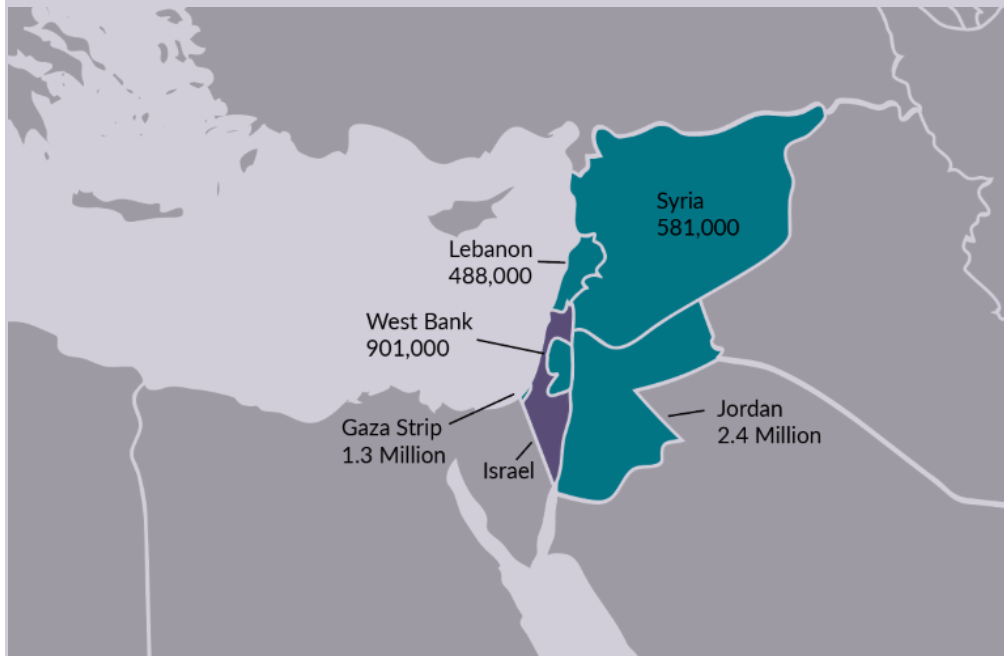
Israel's establishment led to a new phase of fighting and an invasion of Palestinian territory by Arab states. Israel benefited from lack of unity among Arab countries. For instance, Zionists had previously held secret talks with King Abdullah of Transjordan envisioning his kingdom's occupation of the geographically Arab portion of Palestine, a plan bitterly opposed by Abdullah's rivals in the Palestinian leadership and other Arab states such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Despite UN mediation efforts, Israeli forces secured not only the area designated for the Jewish state under the partition plan but also territories such as the western Galilee and west Jerusalem. Israeli forces depopulated multiple Arab towns and villages. In all, more than 400,000 additional Palestinian Arabs fled or were driven from their homes during the war that followed Israel's establishment.

Palestinians and other Arabs describe this dispossession as *al-Nakba* ("the disaster"). The term has come to refer not only to a discrete event, which is commemorated every year on May 15, but also to an ongoing process of dispossession. Despite UN General Assembly Resolution 194 calling for the right of refugees to return or be compensated for lost property, Israel prevented Palestinian refugees from returning and passed laws granting a state custodian authority over Palestinian lands. Hundreds of Palestinian villages were destroyed to prevent the return of their inhabitants and to facilitate Jewish immigration and settlement. The roughly 160,000 Arabs who remained in the territory that became Israel were citizens of the new country but nonetheless lived under a state of emergency and martial law until 1966.

Palestinian Displacement across the Middle East

Palestinian refugees scattered across the region, and their population has grown several times over. As of 2022, 40 percent of the nearly 5.9 million registered Palestinian refugees lived in Jordan; 10 percent in Syria, although approximately one-fifth of these are believed to have fled to other countries since the start of the Syrian civil war; and 8 percent in Lebanon, according to UNRWA (see Figure 2). The remainder were in the Israeli-occupied territories of Gaza (26 percent) and the West Bank (15 percent).

Figure 2. Map of Palestinian Refugees, by Country of Residence, 2022



Note: Figure refers to Palestinians under the mandate of UNRWA.

Source: UNRWA, "UNRWA Registered Population Dashboard," accessed April 14, 2023, [available online](#).

Jordan: Host to the Largest Number of Palestinian Refugees

In 1949, Jordan welcomed approximately 900,000 refugees by amending the country's 1928 Law of Nationality to grant equal citizenship to Palestinians; the 1954 Law of Jordanian Nationality later extended citizenship to Palestinians who arrived in Jordan after the 1949 addendum. Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950, but the war in 1967 led to its loss of this territory and displaced between 250,000 and 300,000 Palestinians to the East Bank. Like those who had fled in 1948, Palestinians from the West Bank retained their Jordanian citizenship. However, Palestinians from Gaza displaced to Jordan after 1967 were not able to become Jordanian citizens. After 1988, when Jordan relinquished claims to the West Bank, the government also took steps to distinguish between so-called Palestinian-Jordanians and Transjordanians (or non-Palestinian Jordanians), and to push back against the Israeli narrative that Jordan could serve as an alternative homeland for Palestinians.

Because about three-quarters of Palestinians in Jordan are Jordanian citizens, they are fairly integrated into its society and economy, though Palestinians from Gaza remain barred from citizenship and are excluded from most rights and services, forced to turn to UNRWA for education and health care. Gazans

also must renew their travel documents every two years, obtain special permits to work in the private sector, and pay double the tuition fees to access public schools and universities.

Palestinian refugees who had been living in Syria but later fled to Jordan after the Syrian civil war started in 2011—of whom there were more than 19,000 as of June 2022—also face challenges. Lacking Jordanian citizenship, they cannot work and access government services. And unlike other refugees from Syria, they are excluded from UNHCR assistance—which is more robust in acute displacement situations—and forced to instead turn to UNRWA. According to UNRWA, a trifecta of factors—the COVID-19 pandemic, increases in commodity prices, and the economic fallout of the Russia-Ukraine war—have recently exacerbated the impoverishment of Palestinian refugees from Syria, 80 percent of whom depended on UNRWA assistance as their main source of income as of 2022.

Lebanon: Life in Camps and Limited Rights

Unlike many of those in Jordan, the nearly 488,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon cannot become citizens and have very limited access to public health care, education, or the formal economy. While refugees' presence can be politically contentious everywhere, the permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon (known as *tawteen*) evokes fears about upending the delicate balance of Lebanon's confessional political system, which institutionalizes the division of power among religious communities. Historically, Lebanese politicians and many Palestinians have objected to anything thought to encourage *tawteen*. Until 2005, the Lebanese government prohibited Palestinian refugees from accessing the formal labor market, forcing them to work in the informal economy, where they received lower wages. Now, Palestinians born in Lebanon who have registered with UNRWA and the Ministry of Interior can obtain work permits and access 70 occupations.

Still, many challenges remain. Palestinians cannot access public health insurance and remain barred from numerous professions in the fields of law, engineering, and public health care. More alarmingly, approximately 210,000 Palestinians—close to 45 percent of the total Palestinian refugee population in the country—live in outdated camps where conditions tend to be poor.

In 1968, Palestinians obtained autonomous governance within camps in Lebanon under the Cairo Agreement. These camps had played a vital role as locations for political and military mobilization during Israel's invasion of Lebanon and throughout the Lebanese civil war, and so their independence was reined in with the 1991 Taif agreement. Simultaneously, new laws prohibited Palestinians from residing outside camps or owning land or housing. Since then, the population in Lebanon's Palestinian camps has grown, but the land allocated to them has remained practically the same, leading to overcrowding and unsafe construction. Recent economic and financial crises, impacts of the pandemic, and the Beirut Port explosion in August 2020 have fallen particularly hard on refugees in Lebanon; 93 percent of Palestinian refugees in the country lived in poverty as of 2022, according to UNRWA. The price of a food basket in refugee camps increased more than fivefold between October 2019 and July 2022, leaving many families unable to afford basic items.

Syria: New Displacement for Many amid Civil War and Natural Disaster

Syria meanwhile received a large number of Palestinian refugees in both the 1940s and the 1960s. Palestinians in Syria could not gain citizenship but otherwise could access employment, education, and health care on par with Syrian nationals. However, the civil war beginning in 2011 had a severe impact on Palestinian refugees. The camps of Dera'a, Yarmouk, and Ein el Tal—which combined hosted more than 30 percent of Palestinian refugees in the country—were nearly destroyed. About 120,000 Palestinians fled to other countries, meaning that about 438,000 of the 575,000 refugees who were registered with UNRWA remained in Syria as of 2022; of these, 40 percent were internally displaced.

Syria's civil war has become localized over time, but the humanitarian situation remains dire and has been exacerbated by the economic downturn, declining agricultural production due to climate change, and health issues. Two earthquakes also hit Turkey and northwest Syria in February 2023, leaving tens of thousands dead and affecting Palestinian refugees in Aleppo, Latakia, and Hama in northern Syria. Close to 47,000 Palestinian refugees were affected and thousands were again displaced.

Refugees in Gaza and the West Bank

In addition to the 3.4 million registered Palestinian refugees living in host countries, nearly 2.5 million Palestinians live in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank. Refugees comprise about 67 percent of Gaza's population. They live in difficult socioeconomic conditions stemming from the land, air, and sea blockade imposed by Israel since 2007, when Hamas took political control of Gaza, as well as violence and political instability. As a result, 80 percent of the population depended on humanitarian assistance as of 2021. Poverty rates are extremely high (nearly 82 percent) and the unemployment rate is among the highest in the world, at nearly 47 percent as of August 2022.

The humanitarian situation in the West Bank is less severe, but Palestinian refugees nonetheless face numerous challenges such as Israeli-imposed closures and movement restrictions as well as conflict-related violence. Checkpoints and the unreliability of access to permits to enter and to work in Israel prevent many from accessing jobs, education, and health care, and can seriously impact their mental health. Israeli security forces frequently raid refugee camps in the West Bank—an average of 14 times per week as of October 2022, according to UNRWA—during which they have used tear gas, destroyed property, and harassed residents. Palestinians continue to be expelled from their homes in the West Bank, leading to further displacement. In 2022, 953 Palestinian-owned structures were demolished or seized across the West Bank, the most since 2016, and 1,031 individuals were displaced as a result.

Challenges for UNRWA

The UN General Assembly's Resolution 194 (III) from 1948 set forth that Palestinians "wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their [neighbors] should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date," which has been interpreted in international law as the right of return. This principle has had profound implications for the operations of UNRWA, which is seen as a temporary custodian of Palestinians in exile, as well as possible solutions to Palestinians' 75-year plight.

UNRWA is often thought of as a quasi-state, since it provides state-like services to Palestinians such as education, health care, and other assistance. Yet unlike a state that can collect taxes, UNRWA is almost

entirely dependent on donor funding (which accounts for 93 percent of its budget), leading to chronic budget shortfalls and leaving it subject to political headwinds. Some argue that UNRWA's mandate has grown too significant over time, making the organization financially unsustainable. Yet the number of Palestinians has grown significantly as additional generations have been born into statelessness. The United States has historically been UNRWA's top donor, contributing between U.S. \$300-350 million per year, but under the Trump administration aid fell to U.S. \$60 million in 2018 and was eliminated in 2019, before a restoration to U.S. \$338 million in 2020. With the election of a Republican-controlled House of Representatives in 2022, UNRWA once again faces an uphill battle for funding, and agency staff fear that U.S. financial support could stop altogether if a Republican retakes the presidency in 2024.

The services and assistance UNRWA provides Palestinians are inextricably linked to the question of their return. Those arguing for defunding or dismantling the organization also often advocate for Palestinians to be absorbed into host societies. Yet most Palestinians lack full economic and social rights in these countries, and there is little appetite from either host-country politicians or Palestinians themselves to fully integrate, for fear that doing so means abandoning hope of return to their ancestral land. In addition to the repercussions for individual Palestinians, such a move would also be a profound shock to much of the Arab world, which has rallied around their cause for decades, despite a thaw in relations between some Arab governments and Israel via normalization agreements.

75 Years Gone, and What Next?

A resolution for Palestinian refugees would require a political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and refugees' return to their ancestral lands or restitution for lost property. Such a solution has been debated for decades but seems dimmer than ever after the election of Israel's far-right government in December 2022. Benjamin Netanyahu returned as prime minister after his party formed a coalition with parties regarded as extremist, generating the most right-wing government in the country's history. Several members of the cabinet committed to strengthening the Israeli settler movement across the West Bank, despite findings that these settlements are illegal under international law, violate Palestinians' human rights, and will lead to further Palestinian displacement. Minister of National Security Itamar Ben Gvir was previously convicted for inciting racism against Palestinians, and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has consistently called for expanding Israel's territory and further expulsions of Palestinians. Violence rapidly escalated between Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank in 2023, including at the Jenin refugee camp, which Israeli forces raided in January, killing 10 Palestinians and wounding 20 more, including both militants and civilians.

Still, other reforms might be more attainable and could improve Palestinians' access to services and increase opportunities for mobility. For one, although UNRWA does not have a mandate to resettle Palestinian refugees, the international community and receiving states could increase their use of complementary pathways such as existing work and study visa channels, in line with the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees. While historically many Palestinians—including political leaders—have feared resettlement would fragment and dilute their cause, Palestinians abroad can still retain their identity and

need not concede the right to return. Increased opportunities for mobility are especially important for refugees in Gaza and the West Bank who have faced stringent barriers to exit from Israeli authorities.

For host societies, the lack of citizenship for many Palestinian refugees and other integration challenges are continual obstacles. Even without citizenship, legal changes allowing Palestinians to own land or seek employment in certain professions in Lebanon, for instance, could ultimately benefit both Palestinians and host-state societies and economies.

Finally, UNRWA's dependence on individual donor countries is a major challenge. Some experts have suggested a shift to multiyear allocations rather than annual funding, which would allow UNRWA to better plan operations and reduce time spent on fundraising.

Seventy-five years into multigenerational and multicountry Palestinian displacement, soon no refugees will themselves have fled directly from their ancestral land before 1948. Instead, the international community has allowed generations of Palestinians to be born into refugee status, a fate shared by no other refugee group. This extraordinary position has transformed Palestinians into an emblem of wider geopolitical tensions but has failed to yield a meaningful resolution to their plight.

Creation of Zionism and Early Tensions

Zionism emerged in the late 19th century as a nationalist movement advocating the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. It was spread by the first Zionist Congress in 1897 which mobilized Jewish support and spread by Theodor Herzl's publication of "Der Judenstaat"

The conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine and Israel is driven by deep-rooted historical, religious, and political factors. Despite numerous efforts, including peace treaties and accords, a lasting resolution remains elusive, influenced by ongoing violence, territorial disputes, and shifting regional dynamics. Add Difference between revised UNWRA definition of refugee and UNHCR who are responsible for rest of world and use UN refugee definition Result number of UNWRA Palestinians expands due to heredity irrespective of obtaining alternative citizenship. while each UNHCR group shrinks due to mortality and obtaining citizenship. UNWRA education biased from an early age against Israel and Jews. .In Palestine Jews purchased land from Arab landowners usually based in Damascus thought by them to be non agricultural land and so not being farmed by Arabs

First Arab Riot Against Jews (1920)

In April 1920, the **Nebi Musa riots** marked the first significant outbreak of Arab-Jewish violence in Palestine. Arab crowds attacked Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem, resulting in several deaths and injuries. The violence was fueled by Arab opposition to increasing Jewish immigration and land purchases, as well as dissatisfaction with British rule.

ON OCTOBER 7TH 2023 HAMAS, WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR GAZA, LAUNCHED A DEVASTATING CROSS-BORDER ATTACK ON ISRAELI TERRITORY

(see [‘ Hamas’s October 7 Attack: Visualising the Data Six months after October 7, it still feels like Day 1 for hostage families](#))

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT?

In 1947, while Palestine was under British mandate rule, the United Nations General Assembly agreed a plan to partition it into Arab and Jewish states and for international rule over Jerusalem. Jewish leaders accepted the plan, giving them 56% of the land. The Arab League rejected the proposal.

Israel's founding father David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the modern state of Israel on May 14, 1948, a day before the scheduled end of British rule, establishing a safe haven for Jews fleeing persecution and seeking a national home on land to which they cite deep ties dating to antiquity.

In the war that followed, some 700,000 Palestinians fled or were driven from their homes, Palestinians describe this as the "Nakba" while Israel contests it forced them out while about 150,000 Palestinians remained in Israel where they became Israeli citizens. Those entering Gaza came under Egyptian control citizens while those going to the WestBank entered Jordanian territory and were given Jordanian passports.

Armistice agreements halted the fighting in 1949 but there was no formal peace. Palestinians who stayed put in the war and their descendants make up about 20% of Israel's population now.

WHAT MAJOR WARS HAVE BEEN FOUGHT SINCE THEN?

In 1967, Israel made a pre-emptive strike against Egypt and Syria, launching the Six-Day War. Israel captured the West Bank and Arab East Jerusalem from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria and the Gaza Strip from Egypt and occupied them.

An Israeli census that year put Gaza's population at 394,000, at least 60% of them Palestinian refugees and their descendants.

In 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israeli positions along the Suez Canal and Golan Heights, touching off the Yom Kippur War. Israel pushed both armies back within three weeks.

Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 and thousands of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters under Yasser Arafat were evacuated by sea after a 10-week siege. Israeli troops pulled out of Lebanon in 2000.

In 2005 Israel unilaterally withdrew settlers and soldiers from [Gaza](#). Hamas won parliamentary elections in 2006, and seized full control of Gaza in 2007. Gaza saw major flare-ups of fighting between Palestinian militants and Israel in 2006, 2008, 2012, 2014 and 2021.

In 2006, Lebanon's Iran-backed [Hezbollah](#) militants captured two Israeli soldiers in the volatile border region and Israel launched military action, triggering a six-week war.

Besides wars, there have been two Palestinian intifadas, or uprisings, from 1987 to 1993 and 2000 to 2005. During the second, Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups carried out suicide bombings against Israelis, and Israel carried out tank and airstrikes on Palestinian cities.

Since then there have been several rounds of hostilities between Israel and Hamas, which refuses to recognise Israel and is regarded as a terrorist organisation by Israel, the United States, the European Union and other countries. Hamas says its armed activities are resistance against Israeli occupation.

WHAT ATTEMPTS HAVE THERE BEEN TO MAKE PEACE?

In 1979, Egypt became the first Arab state to sign a peace treaty with Israel.

In 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Arafat shook hands on the Oslo Accords establishing limited Palestinian autonomy. In 1994, Israel signed a peace treaty with Jordan.

U.S. President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Arafat took part in the Camp David summit in 2000, but failed to reach a final peace deal.

In 2002, an Arab League plan offered Israel normal relations with all Arab countries in return for a full withdrawal from the lands it took in the 1967 Middle East war, the creation of a Palestinian state and a "just solution" for Palestinian refugees. The presentation of the plan was overshadowed by Hamas, which blew up an Israeli hotel full of Holocaust survivors during a Passover seder meal.

Further peace efforts have been stalled since 2014.

Palestinians stopped dealing with U.S. President Donald Trump's 2017-2019 administration after he broke with decades of U.S. policy by recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The Palestinians seek East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.

Qatar and Egypt have acted as mediators in the latest war, securing a truce that lasted seven days, during which hostages held by Hamas were exchanged for prisoners held by Israel, and more humanitarian aid flowed into Gaza.

WHERE DO PEACE EFFORTS STAND NOW?

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden has focused on trying to secure a "grand bargain" in the Middle East that includes normalisation of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, custodian of Islam's two holiest shrines.

The latest war is diplomatically awkward for Riyadh as well as for other Arab states, including some Gulf Arab states next to Saudi Arabia which have signed peace deals with Israel.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN ISSUES?

A two-state solution, Israeli settlements on occupied land, the status of Jerusalem, agreed borders, and the fate of Palestinian refugees.

Two-state solution: An agreement that would create a state for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip alongside Israel. Israel has said a Palestinian state must be demilitarised so as not to threaten its security.

Settlements: Most countries deem Jewish settlements built on land Israel occupied in 1967 as illegal. Israel disputes this and cites historical and biblical ties to the land. Continued settlement expansion is among the most contentious issues between Israel, the Palestinians and international community.

Jerusalem: Palestinians want East Jerusalem, which includes the walled Old City's sites sacred to Muslims, Jews and Christians alike, to be the capital of their state. Israel says Jerusalem should remain its "indivisible and eternal" capital.

Israel's claim to Jerusalem's eastern part is not recognised internationally. Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital, without specifying the extent of its jurisdiction in the disputed city, and moved the U.S. embassy there in 2018.

Refugees: Today about 5.6 million Palestinian refugees - mainly descendants of those who fled in 1948 - live in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza. About half of registered refugees remain stateless, according to the Palestinian foreign ministry, many living in crowded camps.

Palestinians have long demanded that refugees should be allowed to return, along with millions of their descendants. Israel says any resettlement of Palestinian refugees must occur outside its borders.

**READING 'THE HAJ' BY LEON URIS HELPS
TO UNDERSTAND CONFLICT. LAND LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT
IN PALESTINE BETWEEN THE JEWS, ARABS AND THE BRITISH
IN THE NEW STATE, PALESTINE AFTER WORLD WAR 1.**

**'Prelude'
Tells of the Appointment of a New 'Muktar' in 1922.**

Young Ibrahim quietly took his place at his father's bedside, watching the old man wheeze out his final scene.

The glazed eyes of the sheik gave his son an inkling of recognition and he rallied his remaining strength. Reaching beneath the pillow, he withdrew the jeweled dagger and, trembling, handed it to Ibrahim, enacting the ancient rite of the passage of power.

"This belongs to Farouk," Ibrahim said. "He is my elder."

"Your brother is a dog with no teeth," the father rasped. "Already the others are conspiring to select a new muktar. The power must remain with us, the Soukoris," he said and thrust the dagger into his son's hand. "It

is small, as weapons go," the sheik said, "but it is the weapon by which we rule our people. They know the meaning of the dagger and the courage of the man who can drive it in to the hilt."

The old sheik died and the village wailed, and true to his dying thoughts, the four other clans had selected a new muktar for Tabah, breaking the Soukori hold of a century. An hour after his father was buried, Ibrahim invited eight of the leading members of the other clans to his home. In the center of the room stood a crude wooden table. Ibrahim suddenly produced eight knives and stabbed them in a line into the planking, then pulled back his robes, revealing the jeweled dagger.

"I believe," he said, "it is time that we hold an election for the new muktar. If anyone disagrees with the continuity of the Soukori rule ..." He left the sentence unfinished and waved an open hand at the array of knives. Ordinarily the election of a new muktar would take a thousand hours of haggling before coming to the conclusion that Ibrahim had now presented to them. This election was over within a minute, with each of the eight adversaries stopping before him one at a time, bowing, kissing his hand, and declaring his loyalty.

Ibrahim al Soukori was in his midtwenties and Muktar of Tabah, and he knew the power of the dagger in Arab life.

"The Battle for Truth: Israel's History and the Struggle Against Unfair Perceptions"

*The Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the Oslo Accords to October 2023
and global and media perceptions*

ORIGINS OF THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT PART III: FROM OSLO TO OCTOBER 7 2023

[Henry Abramson](#) 3 Dec 2023 30min 59sec

NETANYAHU: ISRAEL WILL STAND ALONE IF U.S. WITHDRAWS AID JERUSALEM DATELINE - MAY 10, 2024

[CBN NEWS](#) 10 May 2024 24min 13sec

Netanyahu says Israel can fight with it's fingernails if Biden limits ammunition for deeper Rafah attack: Is Gaza death toll being used as propaganda? Some say yes. Suing advocacy groups for instigating university protests as second Hamas front.

ICC ARREST WARRANT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER MAY 21 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) 21 May 2024 30min 3 sec

Danny Seaman provides an update on the war and discusses the meaning of the ICC Arrest warrants for the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense sees the meaning of the ICC Arrest warrants for the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense

CAN ANTISEMITISM BE DEFEATED? MAY 22 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) 22 May 2024 30min 3 sec

Dr. Dan Diker discusses the success that Hamas and the PA have had in the international arena since October 7th, turning the villains into the victims, and frames the war into a much broader context.

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO WESTERN EUROPE? - MAY 29 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING

[IDSF Daily War Breeding](#) May 29 2024 28min 55sec

Ambassador Eli Yerushalmi discusses the recent decision of Spain, Norway, and Ireland to recognize a Palestinian State, and what is happening across Europe

**COGNITIVE WARFARE TO DELEGITIMIZE ISRAEL -
MAY 30 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING**

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) May 30 2024 25min 22sec

Danny Seaman provides a war update and also talks about cognitive warfare

**ISRAEL FACES IRANIAN-BACKED HAMAS TO THE SOUTH
AND HEZBOLLAH TO THE NORTH**

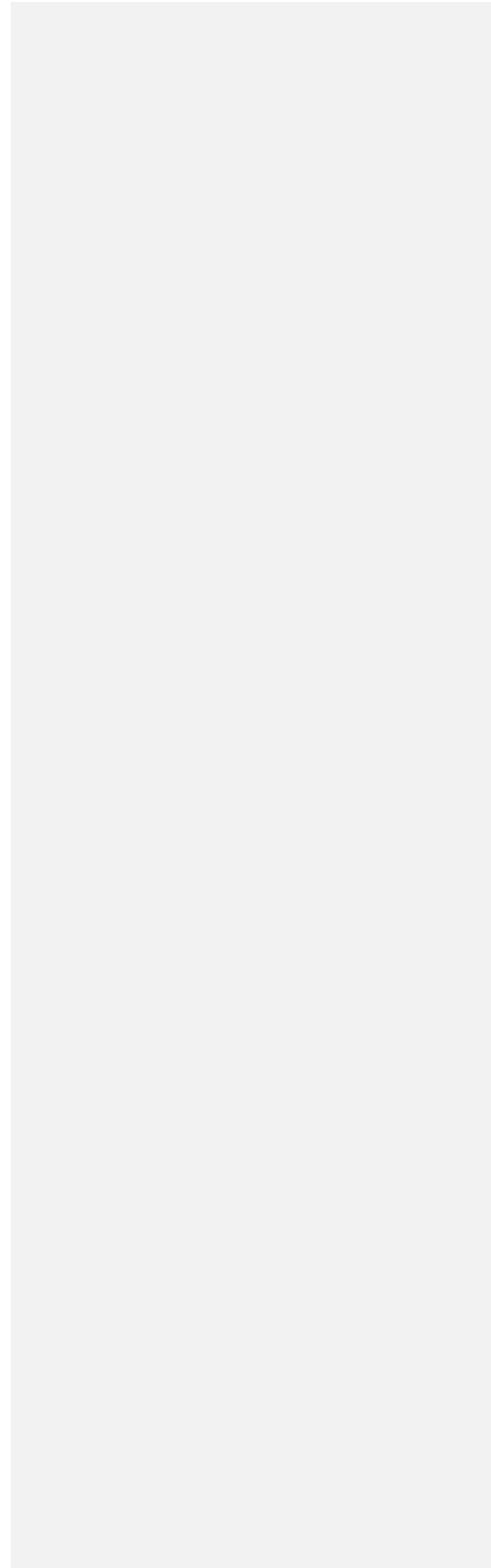
[60 Minutes](#) 13 May 2024 13min 56sec

Israel, preparing for a possible Rafah invasion, faces increased tension with the U.S. over the Gaza humanitarian crisis. To the north, it's also confronting Hezbollah attacks coming in from Lebanon.0020

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WHY BEING 'TOGETHER' IS SO IMPORTANT

**SIMPLY, 'TOGETHER' MEANS 'COUNTRIES – AND PEOPLE - WORKING TOGETHER
GIVE US A BETTER FUTURE'**

THE ANSWER BELOW IS FROM CLAUDE.AI

WHAT OUR FUTURE HOPE IS FOR ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a deeply complex and long-standing issue with no easy solutions. However, I think the hope for the future is that both sides can eventually reach a peaceful negotiated settlement that allows for two viable, independent states living side by side in peace and security.

Some key elements that could help achieve this include:

- A fair and agreed upon border between Israel and Palestinian countries
- a future Palestinian state, likely based on the pre-1967 borders, with mutually agreed land swaps.
- Sharing Jerusalem as the capital of both states in some form.
- A just resolution for Palestinian refugees consistent with UN resolutions.
- Ensure the security needs of both Israelis and Palestinians are met.
- An end to violence and incitement by both sides.
- Building mutual trust, respect and willingness to compromise through confidence-building measures.
- Outside support from the international community in facilitating and guaranteeing any negotiated peace agreements.

Ultimately, both peoples have legitimate national aspirations that need to be respected. Any lasting peace will require painful compromises on both sides. But peace would allow both Israelis and Palestinians to live in dignity and security, while opening up huge economic and social progress for the entire region. The hope of moving forward after so much conflict and suffering.

PEACE TREATY BY ISRAEL AFTER HAMAS SURRENDER

As of August 2023, no comprehensive peace treaty has been agreed between Israel and Hamas after a Hamas surrender. However, here is my perspective of what such a scenario could look like:

If Hamas were to surrender and renounce violence against Israel, it could potentially open the door for a peace deal wherein:

- Israel would likely demand Hamas fully disarms and dismantles its military wing and infrastructure.
- International monitors would verify Hamas's compliance.
- Palestinian Authority control would be re-established over Gaza.
- Israel demands Hamas recognizes Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.
- Gaza's borders, airspace, territorial waters would reopen under PA/international control.
- There would be security guarantees for Israel from Gaza, such as demilitarization.

- Whether Hamas political members can be integrated into a unity Palestinian government.
- Israel would demand a cessation of rocket fire/violence.
- There could be a negotiated return of some Palestinian refugees to Israel..
- The thorny issues of Jerusalem's status, Israeli settlements, and final borders requires resolution.

However, as any such deal would face immense opposition from Hamas hardliners and other Palestinian factions. It's highly uncertain if Hamas would ever actually surrender outright to Israel. But in theory, their capitulation could potentially facilitate a historic peace deal if both sides made major compromises.

Ongoing involvement of the international community would likely be required.

WHAT EFFECT WILL IT HAVE ON THE GAZANS ??

There would be a profound effect on the lives of Gazans if Hamas surrendered and a comprehensive peace treaty was reached with Israel.

Potential Positive Impacts:

1. **End of Blockades** - The easing of the Israeli blockade on Gaza would allow free movement of people, goods and materials, improving the collapsed Gazan economy.
2. **Reconstruction** - Billions in international aid and investment could flow in for rebuilding housing, infrastructure and industry destroyed by conflict.
3. **Employment** - New job opportunities from revived trade, construction projects and economic normalcy after years of deprivation would appear.
4. **Services** - Improved access to healthcare, education and utilities like reliable electricity and clean water.
5. **Security** - An end to Israeli military offensives and inter-Palestinian factional violence could bring stability.

Potential Negative Impacts:

1. **Loss of Power** - Hamas would likely have to disarm and cede control of Gaza to the Palestinian Authority, angering its supporters.
2. **Opposition Backlash** - Hard-line militant groups may violently oppose Hamas' concessions and any peace deal.
3. **Reconciliation Issues** - Overcoming societal divisions and resentments built up after years of conflict could be difficult.
4. **Dependence on Aid** - With a shattered economy, Gazans may remain heavily reliant on long-term foreign aid
5. **Adaptation Challenges** - Transitioning from being dominated by Hamas' ideology to a more open society could be socially disruptive.

Overall, most analysts believe that if implemented properly, a real peace deal would dramatically improve the desperate humanitarian conditions in Gaza. However, the path could be violence-prone and require a generational effort to heal and rebuild after so much conflict.

WHAT WILL BE THE EFFECT ON REPLACEMENT GOVERNMENT IN GAZA

If Hamas were to surrender and a peace treaty was reached with Israel, the replacement government in Gaza would face significant challenges and opportunities:

Challenges:

1. **Filling the power vacuum** - Hamas has deep roots and popularity among some Gazans. A new government would need to legitimize its authority.
2. **Disarming militants** - Demilitarizing Gaza by disarming not just Hamas but also other armed Palestinian factions opposed to the peace deal.
3. **Security vulnerabilities** - Policing Gaza initially without Hamas' forces could leave a potential security vacuum that militant groups may try to exploit.
4. **Ideological opposition** - Any Palestinian government seen as capitulating to Israel would face fierce opposition from hardliners.
5. **Economic rebuilding** - Taking over governance of Gaza's shattered economy and infrastructure would require immense financial resources.

Opportunities:

1. **Unity with West Bank** - A chance to reunify Gaza politically with the Palestinian Authority-ruled West Bank.
2. **International aid** - With a peace deal, an influx of humanitarian and development aid from global donors could assist rebuilding.
3. **Open borders** - The end of the Israeli blockade would reconnect Gaza to the outside world economically and socially.
4. **Democratic reforms** - A new civilian government could have the chance to install democratic institutions and civil liberties denied under Hamas' authoritarian rule.
5. **Economic integration** - Potential access to Israeli labor markets, trade, and economic cooperation could revive Gaza's moribund economy.

The replacement government would likely be a blend of Palestinian Authority forces and technocratic officials, under intense international oversight. While facing violent rejectionism, they could start rebuilding Gaza anew if the peace process moved forward successfully

POPULATION OF THE REGION OF PALESTINE

FROM THE EARLY OTTOMAN PERIOD [\(WIKIPEDIA\)](#)

Palestine demographics, 1st century through the Mandate.

Figures in thousands.

See also the [detailed timeline](#)

Year	Jews	Christians	Muslims	Total
1st c.	Majority	–	–	~1,250
4th c.	Majority	Minority	–	>1st c. ^{[1][2]}
5th c.	Minority	Majority	–	>1st c.
End 12th c.	Minority	Minority	Majority	>225
14th c.	Minority	Minority	Majority	150
1533–1539	5	6	145	156
1553–1554	7	9	188	205
1690–1691	2	11	219	232
1800	7	22	246	275
1890	43	57	432	532
1914	94	70	525	689
1922	84	71	589	752
1931	175	89	760	1,033
1947	630	143	1,181	1,970

Estimates by [Sergio DellaPergola](#) (2001), drawing on the work of [Bachi](#) (1975).
 Figures in thousands. ^[3]

of [Jerusalem](#), [Gaza](#), [Safed](#), [Nablus](#), [Ramle](#), and [Hebron](#). The remainder consisted mainly of peasants ([fellahin](#)), living in villages of varying size, and engaged in agriculture. Their main food-crops were wheat and barley in that order, supplemented by leguminous pulses, olives, fruit, and vegetables. In and around most of the towns there was a considerable number of vineyards, orchards, and vegetable gardens.

According to [Justin McCarthy](#), the population of Palestine throughout the 17th and 18th centuries (1601–1801) was likely not much smaller than when it in 1850 (~340,000), after which it started to increase. ^[85][\[page needed\]](#)

EARLY OTTOMAN PERIOD

The population of the [region of Palestine](#), which approximately corresponds to modern [Israel](#) and the [Palestinian territories](#), has varied in both size and ethnic composition throughout the [history of Palestine](#).

Studies of Palestine's demographic changes over the millennia have shown that a Jewish majority in the first century CE had changed to a Christian majority by the 3rd century CE,^[4] and later to a Muslim majority, which is thought to have existed in [Mandatory Palestine](#) (1920–1948) since at least the 12th century CE, during which the total shift to Arabic language was completed.^[5]

During the first century of the Ottoman rule, i.e., 1550, [Bernard Lewis](#) in a study of Ottoman registers of the early Ottoman Rule of Palestine reports a population of around 300,000:^{[83][84]}

From the mass of detail in the registers, it is possible to extract something like a general picture of the economic life of the country in that period. Out of a total population of about 300,000 souls, between a fifth and a quarter ived in the six towns

LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

Group	Population	Percentage
Muslim citizens	403,795	86–87%
Christian citizens	43,659	9%
Jewish citizens	15,011	3%
Jewish (foreign-born)	Est. 5–10,000	1–2%
Total	Up to 472,465	100.0%

In the late nineteenth century, prior to the rise of Zionism, Jews are thought to have comprised between 2% and 5% of the population of Palestine, although the precise population is not known.^[86]

Jewish immigration had begun following the 1839 [Tanzimat](#) reforms; between 1840 and 1880,

the Jewish population of Palestine rose from 9,000 to 23,000.^[87]

According to [Alexander Scholch](#), Palestine in 1850 had about 350,000 inhabitants, 30% of whom lived in 13 towns; roughly 85% were Muslims, 11% were Christians and 4% Jews.^[88]

The Ottoman census of 1878 indicated the following demographics for the three districts that best approximated what later became [Mandatory Palestine](#); that is, the [Mutasarrifate of Jerusalem](#), the [Nablus Sanjak](#), and the [Acre Sanjak](#).^[86] In addition, some scholars estimate approximately 5,000-10,000 additional foreign-born Jews at this time.^[89]

According to [Ottoman](#) statistics studied by [Justin McCarthy](#),^[90] the population of Palestine in the early 19th century was 350,000, in 1860 it was 411,000 and in 1900 about 600,000 of which 94% were [Arabs](#).

The estimated 24,000 Jews in Palestine in 1882 represented just 0.3% of the world's Jewish population.^[91]

BRITISH MANDATE PERIOD, 1919–1948

Population of Palestine, 1922–1945

Year	Muslims	Christians	Jews	Total
1922	589,177	73,024	83,790	757,182
1931	759,717	174,610	91,398	1,035,821
1945	1,061,270	135,550	553,600	1,764,520

According to [Roberto Bachi](#), head of the Israeli Institute of Statistics from 1949 onwards, between 1922 and 1945 there was a net Arab migration into Palestine of between 40,000 and 42,000, excluding 9,700 people who were incorporated after territorial

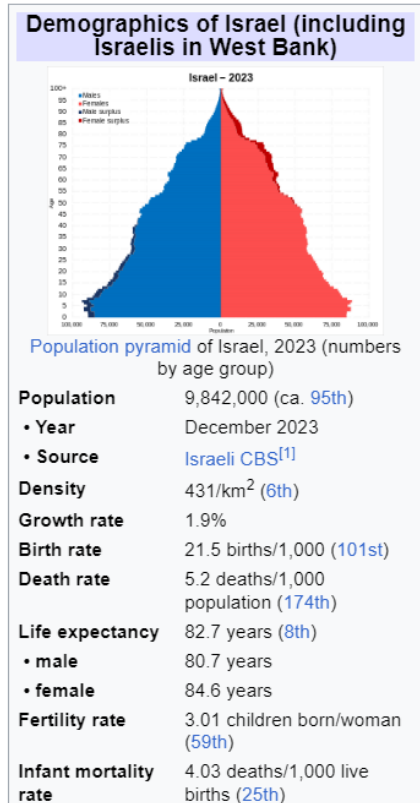
adjustments were made to the borders in the 1920s. Based on these figures, and including those netted by the border alterations, Joseph Melzer calculates an upper boundary of 8.5% for Arab growth in the two decades, and interprets it to mean the local Palestinian community's growth was generated primarily by natural increase in [birth rates](#), for both Muslims and Christians.^[108] According to [Roberto Bachi](#), head of the Israeli Institute of Statistics from 1949 onwards, between 1922 and 1945 there was a net Arab migration into Palestine of between 40,000 and 42,000, excluding 9,700 people who were incorporated after territorial adjustments were made to the borders in the 1920s. Based on these figures, and including those netted by the border alterations, Joseph Melzer calculates an upper boundary of 8.5% for Arab growth in the two decades, and interprets it to mean the local Palestinian community's growth was generated primarily by natural increase in [birth rates](#), for both Muslims and Christians.^[109]

According to a [Jewish Agency](#) survey, 77% of Palestinian population growth in Palestine between 1914 and 1938, during which the Palestinian population doubled, was due to natural increase, while 23% was due to immigration. Arab immigration was primarily from [Lebanon](#), [Syria](#), Transjordan, and Egypt (all countries that bordered Palestine).^[109]

The overall assessment of several British reports was that the increase in the Arab population was primarily due to natural increase.^{[110][111]} These included the [Hope Simpson Enquiry](#) (1930),^[112] the [Passfield White Paper](#) (1930),^[113] the [Peel Commission](#) report (1937),^[114] and the Survey of Palestine (1945).^[115] However, the Hope Simpson Enquiry did note that there was significant illegal immigration from the surrounding Arab territories,^[112] while the Peel Commission and Survey of Palestine claimed that immigration played only a minor role in the growth of the Arab population. The [1931 census of Palestine](#) considered the question of illegal immigration since the previous census in 1922.^[116] It estimated that unrecorded immigration during that period may have amounted to 9,000 Jews and 4,000 Arabs.^[116] It also gave the proportion of persons living in Palestine in 1931 who were born outside Palestine: Muslims, 2%; Christians, 20%; Jews, 58%.^[116] The statistical information for Arab immigration (and expulsions when the clandestine migrants were caught), with a contrast to the figures for Jewish immigration over the same period of 1936–1939, is given by [Henry Laurens](#) in the following terms^[117]

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF ISRAEL ([WIKIPEDIA](#))

Monitored by the [Israel Central Bureau of Statistics](#), encompass various attributes that define the nation's



populace. Since [its establishment in 1948](#), Israel has witnessed significant changes in its demographics. Formed as a [homeland for the Jewish people](#), Israel has attracted [Jewish immigrants](#) from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

The [Israel Central Bureau of Statistics](#) defines the population of Israel as including Jews living in all of the [West Bank](#) and Palestinians in [East Jerusalem](#) but excluding Palestinians anywhere in the rest of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and foreign workers anywhere in Israel. As of December 2023, this calculation stands at approximately 9,842,000 of whom:

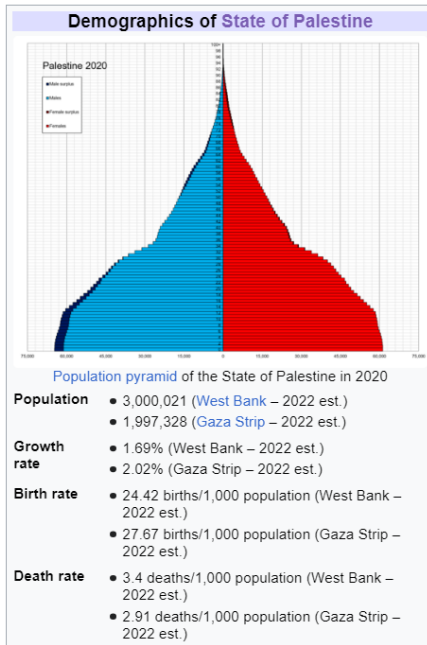
- 73.2% (about 7,208,000 people) are [Jews](#), including about 503,000 living outside the self-defined borders of the State of Israel in the [West Bank](#)
- 21.1% (around 2,080,000 people) are Israeli citizens classified as [Arab](#), some identifying as [Palestinian](#), and including [Druze](#), [Circassians](#), all other Muslims, [Christian Arabs](#), [Armenians](#) (which Israel considers "Arab")^[2]
- An additional 5.7% (roughly 554,000 people) are classified as "others". This diverse group comprises those

with Jewish ancestry but not recognized as Jewish by religious law, non-Jewish family members of Jewish immigrants, Christians other than Arabs and Armenians, and residents without a distinct ethnic or religious categorization.^{[2][1]}

Israel's annual population growth rate stood at 2.0% in 2015, more than three times faster than the [OECD](#) average of around 0.6%.^[3] With an average of three children per woman, Israel also has the highest [fertility rate](#) in the OECD by a considerable margin and much higher than the OECD average of 1.7.^[4]

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE

Go to [WIKIPEDIA](#) for more detail



[Demographic](#) features of the [population](#) of the area commonly described as [Palestinian territories](#) includes information on [ethnicity](#), education level, health of the populace, economic status, religious affiliations and other aspects of that population.

According to a commonly used definition as relating to an application of the [1949 Armistice Agreement green line](#), the [Palestinian territories](#) have contributory parts of the [West Bank](#) (including [East Jerusalem](#)) and the [Gaza Strip](#).

The [Palestinian National Authority](#), the [United Nations Security Council](#),^[1] the [United Nations General Assembly](#),^[2] the [European Union](#),^[3] the [International Court of Justice](#),^[4] and the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#)^[5] use the terminology "Palestinian territories" or "occupied Palestinian territories". [Israel](#) refers to the administrative division encompassing Israeli-controlled Jewish-majority civilian areas of [Area C](#) of the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, as [Judea and Samaria](#)

[Area](#) ([Hebrew](#): אזור יהודה ושומרון, *Ezor Yehuda VeShomron*).^[6]

Overview PALESTINE (REGION)

The demographic statistics of [The World Factbook](#) and the [Israel Central Bureau of Statistics](#) estimated that the collective Palestinian (including [Israeli Arabs](#)) population in the region of [Palestine](#), including Israel, the Golan Heights, the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, amounted to 5.79 million people in 2017.^{[7][8]} Of these, 2.16 million Palestinians lived in the West Bank, 1.84 million lived in Israel, and 1.79 million lived in the Gaza Strip.^{[7][8]}

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**JEWISH BIOGRAPHIES, BOOKS, PIRATES,
NAMES and OTHER LINKS**

GO TO JEWISHWIKIPEDIA.INFO/STORIES.HTML

WHY TEACH THE HOLOCAUST WHICH HAPPENED ABOUT 80 YEARS AGO?

[Jewish Wikipedia.info](#) for links

**The Holocaust is the most infamous genocide in history.
It came close to wiping out the entire Jewish population of Europe
But questions remain over who has a share in the responsibility for it.**

STUDENTS' TOUGHEST QUESTIONS

1	Why did Hitler choose the swastika to be the symbol of the Nazi Party?
2	Why didn't Germans speak out against laws that stripped Jews of their rights after the Nazis came to power?
3	Why didn't Jews leave Germany when they saw what was happening in the 1930s?
4	Why were so many countries, including the United States, unwilling to accept Jews who wanted to leave Germany?
5	Did people who lived near ghettos and camps know what was going on? Why didn't they do anything to stop what was happening, were they afraid?

Yes, many people knew what was happening, often in quite a bit of detail. Even after the Nazis and their collaborators implemented the "Final Solution" and tried to obscure their brutal activities, many people even far from the scene of murder still had access to quite a bit of information—through letters, soldiers home on leave, business people and others who had been to the areas where murder was happening, etc. It is true that some people made an effort not to understand and willingly chose to ignore what was happening. The frequently uttered mantra "we didn't know" by Germans and others after the war was more of an attempt to avoid responsibility than it was a statement of fact. The totalitarian nature of the Nazi regime meant that fear of punishment may have been a factor. However, it is important to remember that even in the most oppressive regimes, individuals retain the ability to make decisions about how they will behave.

There may not have been much that could have been done to stop the “Final Solution” as a phenomenon; however, it was still possible to help on an individual basis in certain situations. Nothing is a more striking example of this than those people across Europe who, at great peril, chose to risk their lives to aid Jews. To date, 27,921 of these individuals and groups have been recognized as “Righteous Among the Nations” for their efforts. Since each ghetto was different, the possibilities of giving help also varied. Help was much less possible for Jews already interned in labor or concentration camps, except by camp personnel.

6	When did the United States realize what was happening to Jews in Europe and what was the response?
7	What was the role of the Catholic Church during the Holocaust?
8	Why didn't the Jews fight back?
9	Why were Jews singled out for mass murder; why did people hate them so much?
10	How were the Nazis able to identify who was Jewish, especially in places where they were assimilated?
11	Did some Jews collaborate with the Nazis?

36 Questions and Answers About the Holocaust/ Victims of the Nazi Holocaust and Nazi Persecution

The Museum of Tolerance is located at 9786 West Pico Blvd,
Los Angeles, CA 90035.

you can call 310-772-2505 to reserve your tickets.

Yad Vashem in [Echoes and Reflections](#)

As students study the Holocaust, they will — and should — have lots of questions. Answering and engaging in discussion about these and other questions that arise in the classroom is a valuable opportunity to refute incorrect information, add additional content and context, and deepen learning.

Go to

[Students' Questions related to the Israel/Hamas War: Guidance for Holocaust Educators](#)

Introduction:

Echoes & Reflections is dedicated in purpose and program to ensuring that students learn about the Holocaust and its lessons for the world today. The brutal attacks in Israel on October 7th and the subsequent dramatic rise in antisemitism are profoundly unsettling, and reinforce the need for all people to understand, identify, and challenge antisemitism in our society and world.

Our pedagogy supports student learning to critically examine and make connections from history to today in appropriate, thoughtful, and accurate ways. The following information is intended to provide guidance and resources to help Holocaust educators address these current events with students specifically as they relate to identifying and understanding antisemitism and the use/abuse of Holocaust history in this moment.

Given the sensitivity and emotional toll of the current conflict on so many, the safety and well-being of students must remain at the forefront of teaching and classroom discussions. As such, we recommend that educators take the time to prepare themselves emotionally for discussing sensitive topics, fostering a trusting and calm environment, and responding respectfully to all questions.

Emphasize and acknowledge the complexity of incidents, avoid simplistic explanations, and exercise caution around unintentionally reinforcing stereotypes, bias, and antisemitism/anti-Muslim bigotry.

Consider these additional resources to help in classroom framing and productive dialogue:

- 10 Ways to Have Conscientious Conversations on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict - ADL •
- Helping Children Cope with Terrorism - National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) • -
- How to Talk to Kids About Violence, Crime, and War (Common Sense Media)

When working with students on topics such as these, it is imperative to use precise language when discussing current events that are difficult and often contentious. While the below provides guidance and suggested responses to specific queries related to antisemitism and the Holocaust, we encourage teachers to support students' critical thinking, encouraging them to research the history of the region and how that affects the current conflict, and to continue to learn more about what is happening in Israel and Gaza using reliable and trusted sources.

**[Go to 36 Questions and Answers About the Holocaust/
Victims of the Nazi Holocaust and Nazi Persecution](#)**

PALESTINIAN BIOGRAPHIES

AMIN AL-HUSSEINI, GRAND MUFTI OF JERUSALEM AFTER 1920

CLAUDE.AI

Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem from the 1920s to the 1940s, played a significant role in amplifying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through his militantly anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist stances.

Some of the key effects of al-Husseini's actions and influence include:

1. **Inciting anti-Jewish violence:** Al-Husseini actively incited violence against the Jewish population in Mandate Palestine, such as the 1920 Nebi Musa riots and the 1929 Hebron massacre of Jews. This established a pattern of violence.
2. **Rejecting Jewish immigration:** He vehemently opposed Jewish immigration and purchase of land, seeing it as an existential threat to the Arab population. This hardened attitudes against compromise.
3. **Allying with the Nazis:** During WWII, al-Husseini met with Hitler, actively supported Nazi policies, and assisted in the formation of Muslim SS divisions. This linked Palestinian nationalism with anti-Semitism.
4. **Opposing the partition plan:** His outright rejection of the 1947 UN Partition Plan and demands for a unitary Arab Palestinian state set the stage for the 1948 Arab-Israeli war after Israel declared independence.
5. **Fleeing and radicalizing refugees:** When he fled Palestine in 1937, his pro-Nazi and anti-Jewish messaging further radicalized Palestinian refugees in the diaspora against any negotiated settlement.
6. **Legitimizing rejectionism:** Al-Husseini provided religious/nationalist legitimacy to an uncompromising attitude that rejected any Jewish sovereign entity between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea.

While not the sole instigator, al-Husseini's inflammatory rhetoric, violence incitement, and ideological anti-Semitism helped transform the conflict into a zero-sum struggle over all of Mandate Palestine rather than a basis for compromise and peaceful resolution between Arabs and Jews. His legacy deeply impacted Palestinian rejectionism.



Haj Amin al-Husseini meets with Adolf Hitler, 1941. Photo: Bundesarchiv / Wikimedia

See also [Holocaust Encyclopedia](#)

YASSER ARAFAT

Yasser Arafat was chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization from 1969 until his death in 2004, a tumultuous period in which clashes with neighboring Israel were prevalent.

[BIOGRAPHY](#) Oct 11, 2023



YASSER ARAFAT

1929-2004

SYNOPSIS

Born in Cairo in 1929, Yasser Arafat was named chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization 40 years later. From this post, he was at the forefront of years of violence, border disputes and the Palestinian liberation movement, all centering on neighboring Israel. Arafat signed a self-governing pact with Israel in 1991, at the Madrid Conference, and together with Israeli leaders made several attempts at lasting peace soon after, notably through the Oslo Accords (1993) and the Camp David Summit of 2000. Stemming from the Oslo Accords, Arafat and Israel's Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres shared the Nobel Peace Prize, but the terms were never implemented. Arafat ceded his PLO chairman post in 2003, and died in Paris in 2004. In November 2013, Swiss researchers released a report containing evidence suggesting that his death was the result of poisoning.

EARLY YEARS

Born in Cairo, Egypt, in 1929, Yasser Arafat was sent to live with his mother's brother in Jerusalem when his mother died in 1933. After spending four years in Jerusalem, Arafat returned to Cairo to be with his father, with whom Arafat never had close ties. (Arafat did not attend his father's 1952 funeral.)

In Cairo, while still a teenager, Arafat began smuggling weapons to Palestine to be used against the Jews and British, the latter of which had an administrative role in the Palestinian lands. Playing a part that he

would inhabit his entire life, Arafat left the University of Faud I (later Cairo University) to fight against the Jews during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, which resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel when the Jews prevailed.

FATAH

In 1958, Arafat and some associates founded Al-Fatah, an underground network that advocated armed resistance against Israel. By the mid-1960s, the group had congealed enough that Arafat left Kuwait, becoming a full-time revolutionary and staging raids into Israel.

The year 1964 was seminal for Arafat, marking the founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which brought together a number of groups working toward a free Palestinian state. Three years later, the Six-Day War erupted, with Israel once again pitted against the Arab states. Once again, Israel prevailed, and in the aftermath Arafat's Fatah gained control of the PLO when he became the chairman of the PLO executive committee in 1969.

THE PLO

Moving operations to Jordan, Arafat continued to develop the PLO. Eventually expelled by King Hussein, however, Arafat moved the PLO to Lebanon, and PLO-driven bombings, shootings and assassinations against Israel and its concerns were commonplace events, both locally and regionally, notably with the 1972 murder of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games. The PLO was driven out of Lebanon in the early 1980s, and Arafat soon after launched the *intifada* ("tremor") protest movement against Israel occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The *intifada* was marked by continual violence in the streets with Israeli retaliation.

PEACE ON THE HORIZON?

The year 1988 marked a change for Arafat and the PLO, when Arafat gave a speech at the United Nations declaring that all involved parties could live together in peace. The resulting peace process led to the Oslo Accords of 1993, which allowed for Palestinian self-rule and elections in the Palestinian territory (in which Arafat was elected president). (Around this time, in 1990, Arafat, at 61 years of age, married a 27-year-old Palestinian Christian, remaining married until his dying day.)

In 1994, Arafat and Israel's Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin all received the Nobel Prize for Peace, and the following year they signed a new agreement, Oslo II, which laid the foundation for a string of peace treaties between the PLO and Israeli, including the Hebron Protocol (1997), the Wye River Memorandum (1998), the Camp David Accords (2000) and the "roadmap for peace" (2002).

LATER YEARS

Regardless of treaties and the best-laid plans between the two parties, peace was always elusive, and, after issuing a second intifada in 2000 and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Arafat was confined by Israel to his headquarters in Ramallah.

In October 2004, Arafat fell ill with flulike symptoms and, his situation worsening, was transported to Paris, France, for medical treatment. He died there the following month, on November 11.

In the years since his death, conspiracy theories regarding the true cause of Arafat's demise have abounded, many holding Israel responsible. In November 2013, researchers in Switzerland released a report revealing that tests conducted on Arafat's remains and some of his belongings support the theory that the late Egyptian leader was poisoned. Evidence from the report suggests that radioactive polonium—a highly toxic substance—had been used. Suha Arafat, Yasser Arafat's widow, supported the findings in media interviews as proof of Arafat's murder. Other authorities, including a Russian medical investigation team called to the case, have maintained that they believe Arafat died of natural causes.

ISMAIL HANIYEH

ISMAIL HANIYEH'S POLITICAL JOURNEY IS A TESTAMENT TO THE ENDURANCE OF THE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE. BORN IN A REFUGEE CAMP, HE ROSE TO BECOME A PROMINENT LEADER WITHIN HAMAS AND ASSUMED THE ROLE OF PRIME MINISTER DURING A TUMULTUOUS PERIOD IN PALESTINIAN POLITICS.

TODAY, HE ALSO LEADS A LAVISH LIFESTYLE WITH OTHER LEADERS IN QATAR

[THE ECONOMIC TIMES](#) Oct 12 2023

Ismail Haniyeh is a prominent Palestinian political figure who has played a pivotal role in the complex and tumultuous landscape of Middle East politics. With a career marked by highs and lows, Haniyeh's journey reflects the enduring struggle for Palestinian self-determination and statehood. He is a millionaire, stemming from the 20% tax charged on all items entering through tunnels from Egypt to the Gaza Strip. He ordered the recent attack on Israel over the weekend, which resulted in over 1,500 deaths on both sides. Haniyeh is currently leading a lavish lifestyle in Qatar and reportedly watched the attacks from the comfort of his office.

EARLY LIFE AND BACKGROUND

Ismail Haniyeh was born on January 29, 1962, in Shati refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip, a densely populated coastal enclave, has been a focal point of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for decades. Growing up in a refugee camp, Haniyeh experienced firsthand the hardships and challenges faced by Palestinians in their quest for statehood. He is married with 13 children.

EDUCATION

He received his primary education in institutions managed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). He studied Arabic literature at the Islamic University of Gaza and became involved with Hamas while at university. He has also been involved with the Muslim Brotherhood and was head of the students' council representing the Muslim Brotherhood while at university.

HAMAS AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM

Haniyeh's political journey is closely tied to the rise of Hamas, a Palestinian political and militant organization. Founded in the late 1980s, Hamas aimed to resist Israeli occupation and provide social services to Palestinians in need. Haniyeh's involvement with Hamas began in the early 1990s when he became associated with its charitable activities and later its political wing. He rose through the ranks of Hamas, and his commitment to the Palestinian cause and his leadership skills quickly became evident. Haniyeh's leadership during the Second Intifada, a period of intensified conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, catapulted him to the forefront of Palestinian politics.

PRIME MINISTER OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

In 2006, following democratic elections in the Palestinian territories, Ismail Haniyeh assumed the role of Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority. However, this period was marked by internal conflict between Hamas and its rival, Fatah, which controlled the West Bank. This internal strife escalated into a violent confrontation in 2007, leading to the expulsion of Fatah forces from Gaza.

The split between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with Fatah and the Palestinian Authority retaining control of the former and Hamas governing the latter, has endured for over a decade. Haniyeh's tenure as Prime Minister was marred by political and economic challenges, as well as international isolation of the Hamas government.

CHALLENGES AND CONTROVERSIES

Ismail Haniyeh's leadership has faced considerable scrutiny and controversy. Hamas's classification as a terrorist organization by some Western nations, including the United States and the European Union, has led to significant challenges for Haniyeh and the Gaza Strip. The region has grappled with a blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt, leading to economic hardships, humanitarian crises, and limited access to basic necessities.

Furthermore, Haniyeh and Hamas have been involved in conflicts with Israel, including multiple military confrontations that have resulted in loss of life and extensive destruction in the Gaza Strip. These conflicts have drawn both international condemnation and regional support. Haniyeh has been arrested by Israeli authorities multiple times for his involvement in the Palestinian uprising against Israel.

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MEDIATION EFFORTS AND RECONCILIATION

In recent years, Haniyeh has been involved in mediation efforts and reconciliation attempts between Hamas and Fatah, as well as between Palestinian factions in general. These efforts have aimed to address the political division that has hindered Palestinian aspirations for statehood.

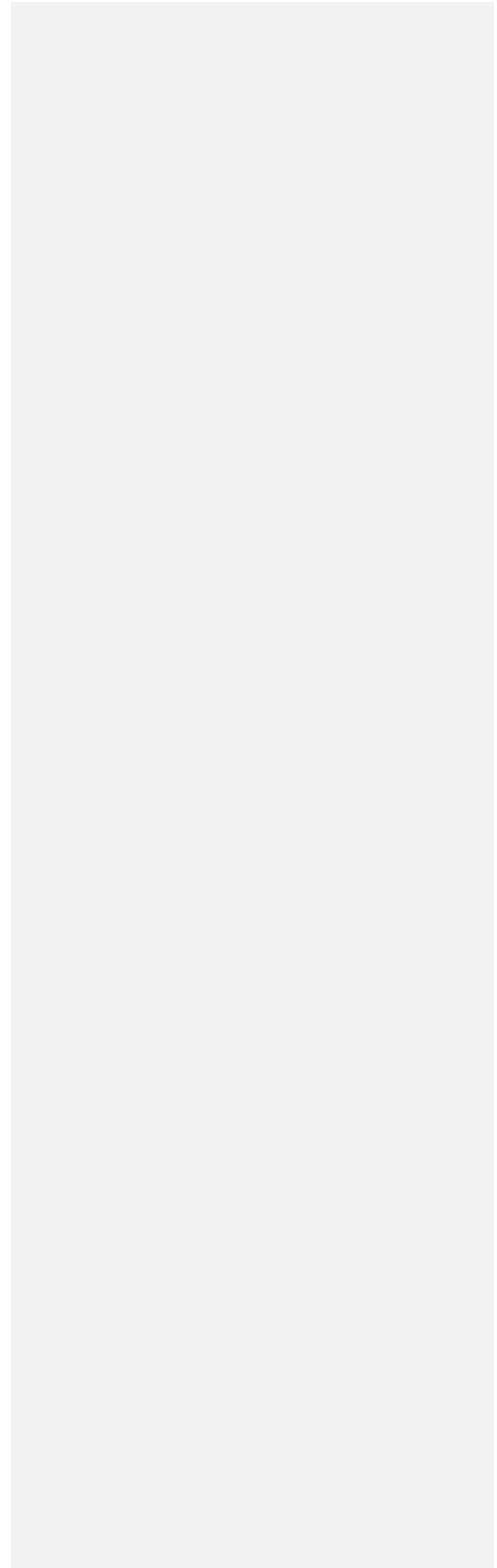
One of the significant developments was the signing of a reconciliation agreement between Hamas and Fatah in 2021. This agreement opened up possibilities for new Palestinian elections, which are seen as essential for reestablishing unified governance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ISMAIL HANIYEH

Ismail Haniyeh's political journey reflects the enduring complexities of Palestinian politics. He remains a symbol of resistance and determination in the face of adversity. Haniyeh's leadership within Hamas has both shaped and been shaped by the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, internal divisions, and international dynamics.

As the political landscape continues to evolve, Ismail Haniyeh's role in mediating reconciliation and pursuing the Palestinian cause will be closely watched. While his journey has been marked by challenges and controversies, he remains a significant figure in the quest for Palestinian self-determination and statehood.

Despite the challenges and controversies he has faced, Haniyeh's commitment to the Palestinian cause remains unwavering.



MAHMOUD ABBAS

[JEWISH STRATEGIC TRIBUNE](#) Ksenia Svetlova, August 2022



Mahmoud Abbas
President
of the Palestinian Authority

On July 15, 2022, Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority, was standing shoulder to shoulder with US President Joe Biden in Bethlehem. It was hard to hide the disappointment on Abbas's face. Since the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993 he has met five US presidents. The first two—Bill Clinton and George W. Bush—were eager to engage in Palestinian–Israeli negotiations, but the last three presidents—Obama, Trump and now Biden—showed moderate to low interest in the Palestinian plight, as other critical matters drew away their attention.

>> [A Profile in Policy: Read more from Ksenia Svetlova](#)

If there were any high hopes back in early 2021 when Biden became the US president, not many are left now. Biden brought with him some funding for Palestinian hospitals in East Jerusalem and some practical steps important for the daily life of Palestinians, such as the upgrading of the cellular networks, longer working hours of the border crossing at Allenby Bridge, and Palestinian family unification in the West Bank. Biden's political statements on Palestinian statehood, however, have been rather limited in scope, although they have repeated the trope of "two states based on the 1967 lines." The US Consulate General in East Jerusalem remains closed as does the PLO office in Washington. After more than six decades of fighting and negotiating with Israel, this was a disappointment.

U.S. President Biden meets Abbas in the West Bank, July 2022. Photo credit: REUTERS

Throughout a lengthy political career that started with co-founding Fatah (the Palestinian National Liberation Movement) in 1959, Mahmoud Abbas experienced endless ups and downs. Together with Arafat, he switched from armed struggle to negotiations and coexistence. Unlike Arafat, he more wholeheartedly chose the latter, and back in 2002, he offered the sad insight that the Palestinians have defeated themselves through "militarization of the uprising" (*askarat al-intifada*). He was praised by the international community and by Israeli leaders as being "moderate and pragmatic," invited to lead the Palestinian side in rounds of talks in 2007, 2010, and 2013–2014 but then was slammed as a "terrorist

supporter” by the Netanyahu-led government in 2015. He was finally castigated by many Palestinians as a corrupt and incompetent leader who serves the occupation by providing for security cooperation with Israeli authorities. Did Palestinians and Israelis ever have a real chance with Abbas, one of the “founding fathers” of the Oslo Accords, at the helm? And if so, why was this chance lost? How will Abbas (also known as Abu Mazen or father of Mazen, after the name of his eldest son) be remembered, and who might succeed him as the head (or heads) of the Palestinian Authority?

A PALESTINIAN REFUGEE, A QATARI STUDENT, A SOVIET PHD

Mahmoud Abbas was born in 1935 in the city of Safed in the Galilee. In 1948 his family joined hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who became refugees due to the war in Palestine. The family settled in Damascus, where he was admitted to university and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in law. In the late fifties he left for Qatar, where he became an official in the Ministry of Education and recruited teachers in the West Bank and Gaza to work in the Qatari education system. Had he not met a young civil engineer whose name was Mohammed Abdel Rahman Abdel Raouf al-Qudwa al-Husseini—i.e., Yasser Arafat—who at the time was living and working in Kuwait, Abbas might have continued his educational work in Qatar instead of becoming a senior Palestinian politician. The two men grew close, and soon Abbas became Arafat’s right hand man.

In the 1970s, Mahmoud Abbas became responsible for the financial affairs of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. In Israel there is a dispute as to whether he was a secret partner in the actions of the Black September group, which, among other atrocities, carried out the massacre of the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972. This is what Abu Daoud (Mohammed Daoud Odeh), one of the heads of Black September, claimed in his autobiography. Abbas has always denied his involvement.

In the late 1970s, Abbas was appointed PLO representative in Moscow, where he completed a doctorate at the Institute of Oriental Studies under the guidance of the head of the institute, Yevgeny Primakov, a close associate of the Communist Party Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev. The title of his doctoral thesis was “The connections between Zionism and Nazism between the years 1933–1945.” It stated that the two movements not only cooperated with each other during World War II but also had some common elements.



**Abbas in 1993 with
Yasser Arafat,
UN Secretary General
Boutros Boutros Ghali
and PLO spokeswoman
Hanan Ashrawi.
Photo credit: Reuters**

In 2001, when I was working at MEMRI (Middle East Media Research Institute), I went to Moscow to locate this work. After a quick search I found it in the archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies. The thesis was written in Russian, and every second sentence in it was some quote of Lenin. It was very much in line with the then official Soviet antisemitic claim that castigated Zionism as a “colonial vestige,” rather than as a genuine movement, and described it as a menace to the “indigenous Palestinian nation.” In 1984, Abbas’s book, based on his PhD, was published in Arabic in Syria, but it was very different in content and included denying the Holocaust. However, in his many TV appearances and interviews, including with me, he said that he never denied the Holocaust and believed that it was a heinous crime.

Indeed, what else did Abbas do while he was in Moscow? According to documents revealed by Vasili Mitrokhin, a former KGB man who defected to the West, Abbas’s name appeared on the list of KGB agents in Syria under the nickname “Krotov” (meaning “the mole”). The Palestinian Authority rejected this report in every way. Muhammed al-Madani, who is responsible for the Committee for Interaction with the Israeli Public, claimed that the ties between the Palestinians and the Soviet Union had always been close, and that there was no logic in this claim because Abbas was openly the head of Palestinian–Russian Friendship Association and never tried to hide this fact.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Mahmoud Abbas was always considered to be a moderate among senior PLO officials, in regard to the use of violence and the prospect of negotiations with Israel. Already in 1977, he declared that he was not opposed to contacts with Israel and to peaceful resolution of the conflict, breaking away from the official PLO line that insisted on Israel’s annihilation.

Fifteen years later, Abbas became a top negotiator in the later stages of the Oslo Accords (initially led by his perennial rival in the leadership ranks, Ahmed Qurei, known as Abu Alaa) and co-authored with Yossi Beilin the secretive “Beilin–Abu Mazen” document. During all this time, Abbas consistently rejected the use of violence as part of the struggle against Israel. He believed that by resorting to violence Palestinians were only harming their own chances, and that violence would not lead to a breakthrough. Later, he even hinted, during a televised interview on Israel’s Channel 12, that he would not demand his right to his parents’ house in Safed. His words were interpreted by his many critics in the Palestinian leadership and in refugee camps across the Middle East as a readiness to give up the “right of return”—one of the Palestinians’ most hallowed slogans.



**Abbas
with U.S. President
George W. Bush.
Photo credit: REUTERS**

On February 11, 2005, I stood in the pouring rain in the Muqata'a—a government compound—in Ramallah, covering, as a journalist, the inauguration ceremony of a new Palestinian president. An eternal number two, he suddenly became number one. The world, especially the Israelis, and the Palestinians, expected a miracle; after the hellish years of the Second Intifada, Abbas was supposed to stop the violence and dismantle Palestinian armed groups. He was expected to revive what was left of the Palestinian economy, promote peace agreements with Israel, and protect Palestinian interests at the same time. In 2002, President George W. Bush had called for a "new and different" Palestinian leadership; Abbas was expected to fulfill this vision. Palestinians, meanwhile, wanted him to express a willingness to make major concessions for the sake of peace but to not give up on the fundamental issues, such as the right of return. In just a few months after Abbas's inauguration as president, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon accomplished the unilateral disengagement from the Gaza Strip. It was a necessary, yet extremely controversial move that almost tore Israeli society apart and was presented by Hamas leaders in Gaza as a victory. Hamas's military parades and flags that colored Gaza in green that summer were a prelude to their landslide victory during the parliamentary elections in January 2006. Abbas, a pragmatic leader who wanted to avert violence, focus on reviving the Palestinian economy and on resuming negotiations, now had to rule over the Palestinian Authority with a Palestinian parliament dominated by a party that demanded Israel's destruction.

The parliamentary elections in 2006 were observed by international monitors and described as "clean and transparent" but had brought about an unexpected and grim result. Fifteen months later, after an unsuccessful attempt to handle a unity government, Abbas decided to fire his prime minister, Hamas leader Ismael Haniya. Soon Hamas fighters were busy shooting Fatah activists in their kneecaps and taking over government buildings and crossings in Gaza. Since 2006, Abbas has not set foot in Gaza. From that very moment, his authority was undermined and compromised in the eyes of both Israelis and Palestinians. The loss of Gaza in 2006 also provided the Israeli political establishment with a question still posed to its voters: Why should Israel negotiate with a leader who is unable to exercise authority over his own people?

BETWEEN CHRONIC WEAKNESS AND ABSOLUTE POWER

Despite the loss of Gaza, Abbas had successfully fulfilled the delicate and tricky task of dismantling the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade—the military wing of Fatah—and by 2007 his team was back at the negotiation table. At the other side of the table was ex-Likud and then Kadima Party leader, Ehud Olmert. Some dramatic progress was made in narrowing the gaps; however, there was ultimately no breakthrough to boast about, and each side was wary of making significant decisions at a time of political uncertainty. It is widely believed that Abbas had disappointed Olmert by his constant refusals and denials. No one knows, however, what the outcome of these negotiations would have been had Olmert not been under a legal cloud (he soon resigned and was tried and found guilty on counts of graft). Could Abbas have accepted and signed—on behalf of all Palestinians in the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian diaspora—an agreement that would terminate the conflict and establish a Palestinian state, giving up the right of return and claims of sovereignty over the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, if he knew that Olmert would still be prime minister? Was Olmert's offer, described by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as “amazing” really appealing to the Palestinians? Rice mentioned at the time that “Rabin had been killed for offering far less,” but perhaps it was Abbas who was worried that he would be killed for accepting an offer that in the eyes of many Palestinians was still far from sufficient.



**Abbas and Ehud Olmert
in Jerusalem, 2008.
Photo credit: REUTERS**

After Olmert left office, the negotiations stalled. Abbas tried fighting Israel in the UN and other international institutions—unsuccessfully. The lack of progress on the negotiations track, the divide between Gaza and West Bank, the Arab Spring, and the tremendous changes in intraregional relations, as well as growing authoritarianism in the Palestinian Authority, turned Abbas into an isolated, helpless leader, who exercises what is left of his power to prevent any reform and change in the West Bank. He had been weakened by 12 years of Netanyahu's rule, when even the simplest steps, such as enlarging a certain residential quarter in Qalqilya or extending the working hours of some border crossing were impossible. And yet nothing can justify the vast corruption and nepotism that became a distinctive feature of the Palestinian Authority. The bid to have elections by May 2021, the first in 15 years, was followed by the decision to postpone them indefinitely and resort to political repression. It was the last straw. The Palestinian street wants elections, political unity, and a firm position vis-à-vis Israel. In Abbas, who is keen to stick to the status quo, they see nothing other than weakness.

THE DAY AFTER ABBAS

For the last 17 years the Palestinian Authority, a ruling body that was meant to exist only for a few years and to serve as a bridge to Palestinian statehood, has been led by Abbas. His own people currently see him as an ailing autocratic leader who did not promote their dream of independence, did not curb Israeli settlement activity, and did not succeed in economic development; in practice, he became “an official who serves Israel.” In contrast, the Israelis blame him for not being bold and daring enough to stop the incitement and payments for terrorists and for not offering enough of a compromise. Many have forgotten that he dismantled the Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade and essentially stopped the violent Second Intifada, that he always advocated for nonviolence, and that during the 17 years of his rule, the West Bank did not pose a military threat to Israel.

Although no peace was achieved, no war or intifada erupted either. Is it enough of an achievement for a leader of a political entity that was never free to make his own choices? Time will tell. Just like former president Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Mahmoud Abbas has tried not to rock the boat too much. Just like Mubarak, he and his immediate environment are steeped in corruption and have become oblivious to the plight of the Palestinian people. After Abbas, some kind of a violent shake-up in the West Bank is seemingly inevitable. Just like other Arab leaders of his age, Abbas has not prepared an heir. He has meticulously destroyed and banned any cadre around him that seemed intelligent and ambitious. The battle for legacy and spheres of influence might be brutal and dangerous. Palestinian society will have to make some painful choices, and the Israelis will be faced with a new, post-Abbas reality.

When a brutal war is raging in Ukraine and the danger of famine is hanging over dozens of countries in Africa and the Middle East, it’s natural that the world is not focused on Israeli–Palestinian affairs. The only two parties that have to make sure that the nonviolent legacy of Abbas is not lost are the Palestinians and Israelis. They will have to work hard to prevent a violent outburst, to maintain the conditions that will still allow for a two-state reality, and to try to work out a solution. The last was, unfortunately, not accomplished during Abbas’s era.

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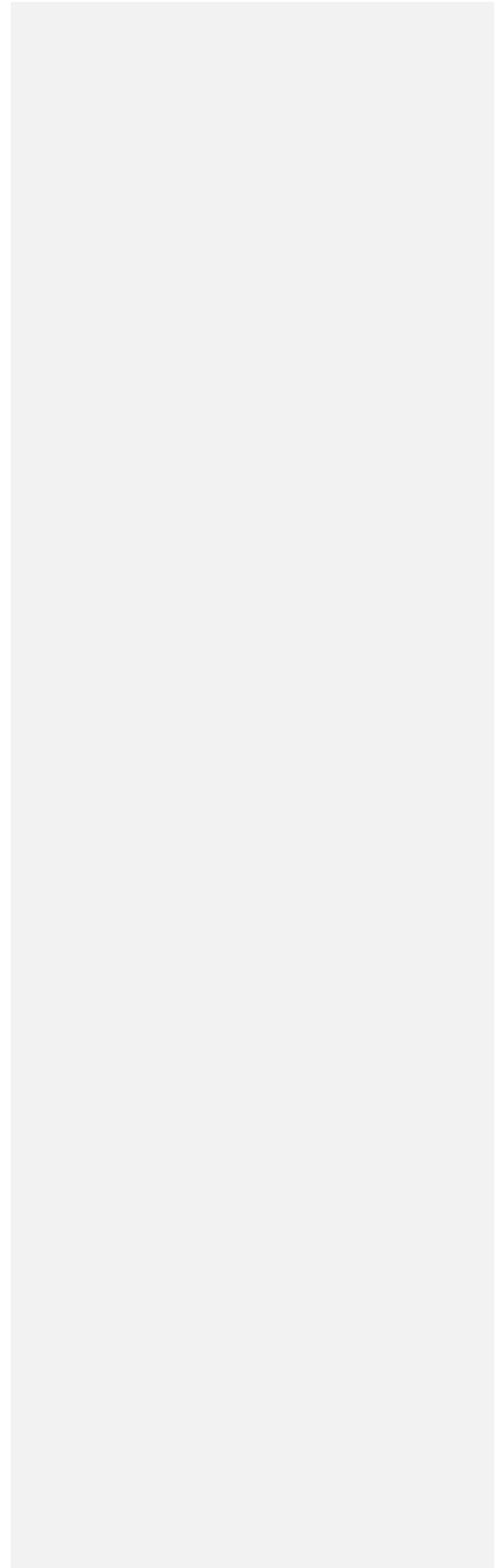
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Mark White
Project Leader

PART B

VIDEOS



Videos - Overview

PALESTINE VS ISRAEL: WHAT IGNITED THE ONGOING CONFLICT | PROMISES & BETRAYALS

Oct. 7 2023

DOCUMENTATION OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

On the morning of October 7, 2023, Hamas invaded Israel from Gaza in a massive surprise terrorist attack against civilians by air, land and sea.

Hamas' terrorists recorded their barbaric atrocities on body cameras and cell phones to proudly display their crimes and gloat about them. Many of these cameras were recovered from neutralized terrorists. Now the whole world can see Hamas' unfathomable savagery.

saturday-october-seven.com

Timeline – World History 9 Oct 2023 52min 11sec

This is how British double-dealing during WW1 ignited the conflict between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East. This is a story of intrigue among rival empires; of misguided strategies; and of how conflicting promises to Palestine and Israel created a legacy of bloodshed which determined the fate of the Middle East. Avi Shlaim, Professor of International Relations at Oxford University, calls it 'one of the best historical documentaries on the Middle East I have ever seen'.

THE GREAT MISINTERPRETATION: HOW PALESTINIANS VIEW ISRAEL

Shalem College Haviv Rettig Gur 14 Mar 2024 1hr 43min 54sec

This program was made possible by the Asper Center for Zionist Education at Shalem College which provides an academic platform for meaningful engagement with Zionist ideas and history. Learn more at:

<https://rb.gy/ly5cdr>

FROM THE SECOND INTIFADA TO OCTOBER 7TH (WITH DANIEL GORDIS)

[EconTalk](#) 1 Jan 2024 1hr 4min 8sec

Over the 25 years he's lived in Israel, author Daniel Gordis of Shalem College has seen many chapters of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, beginning with the Second Intifada that followed the Oslo Accords. Listen as he and EconTalk's Russ Roberts discuss why Hamas's massacre of October 7th is different and an existential threat to Israel. They also speak about why Israelis are demanding a different response to Hamas than they have in the past, and how and why this war will change Israel and the Jewish People.

FIVE REASONS WHY IRAN IS INVOLVED IN SO MANY GLOBAL CONFLICTS

[BBC World Service](#) 28 Mar 2024 15min 27sec

Iran is one country that always seems to be mentioned when it comes to ongoing deadly conflicts around the world, as well as the new flashpoints in the Middle East.

Click here to subscribe to our channel <https://bbc.in/3VyyriM>

From the war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas, to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as the civil war in Syria, Iran has played an indirect role in the fighting, even from afar.

The country's tensions with the US, which have gone on for decades and its defensive strategy all play a part but to understand more, here's an in-depth look at the five main reasons why Iran is involved in so many different conflicts.

THE REAL REASON BEHIND THE CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAN AND ISRAEL | MAPPED OUT

[DW News](#) 2 Dec 2023 13min 24 sec

Iran and Israel are bitter enemies. The attack by Iran-backed terror group Hamas has moved the conflict to a whole new level. In "Mapped Out" we look at what the Iranian-Israeli conflict in the Middle East is really about – and what role Israel's number one ally, the US, plays in it.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR: WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE OCTOBER (2023) ATTACK (PART 8)

[CNA](#) 29 Jan 2024 19min 3sec

THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM

[PragerU](#) 9 Years Ago 5min 39sec

The Middle East conflict is framed as one of the most complex problems in the world. But, in reality, it's very simple. Israelis want to live in peace and are willing to accept a neighboring Palestinian state. And most Palestinians do not want Israel to exist. As Dennis Prager explains, this is really all you need to know. In 5 minutes, understand how Israel was founded, and how, since that auspicious day in 1948, its neighbors have tried to destroy it, again and again⁵⁸

THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT PART 1 (MARATHON)

[PragerU](#) 10 Oct 2023 58min 58sec

There is a lot to learn about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—and that's why we have DOZENS of 5-Minute Videos devoted to the topic. We've split this playlist into two parts, and here is the first.

ORIGINS OF THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

PART I: TO 1949

[Henry Abramson](#) Dec 2023 29min 10sec

ORIGINS OF THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

PART II: 1949 – 1993

[Henry Abramson](#) Dec 2023 29min 10sec

ORIGINS OF THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

PART III: FROM OSLO TO OCTOBER 7 2023

[Henry Abramson](#) 3 Dec 2023 30min 59sec

EINAT WILF

[Einat Wilf](#) 18 Mar 2024 1hour 16min 50sec

Dan Senior hosts Dr. Einat Wilf on a journey into the history of the conflict from the end of the Ottoman Empire until October 7 while examining the trends in the conflict and the conflicting ideologies of the parties. The conversation ends with a discussion about the possibility of peace and the changes required to reach it.

HOW DOES THE PENTAGON VIEW IRAN?

MAY 16 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) 16 May 2024 28min 33 sec

Dr. Harold Rhode, a specialist in Arab culture and the Middle East, shares his experience of working for many years in the US Defense Establishment

ICC ARREST WARRANT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

MAY 21 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) 21 May 2024 30min 3 sec

Danny Seaman provides an update on the war and discusses the meaning of the ICC Arrest warrants for the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense sees the meaning of the ICC Arrest warrants for the Prime Minister and Minister of Defense

**CAN ANTISEMITISM BE DEFEATED?
MAY 22 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING**

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) 22 May 2024 30min 3 sec

Dr. Dan Diker discusses the success that Hamas and the PA have had in the international arena since October 7th, turning the villains into the victims, and frames the war into a much broader context.

IRAN IS THE PUPPET MASTER

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) 28 May 2024 25min 28 sec

Or Yissachar, head of the IDSF Research Department talks about how to reframe the conversation surrounding the war, and the role of Iran.

**WHAT IS HAPPENING TO WESTERN EUROPE? -
MAY 29 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING**

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) May 29 2024 28min 55sec

Ambassador Eli Yerushalmi discusses the recent decision of Spain, Norway, and Ireland to recognize a Palestinian State, and what is happening across Europe

**COGNITIVE WARFARE TO DELEGITIMIZE ISRAEL -
MAY 30 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING**

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) May 30 2024 25min 22sec

Danny Seaman provides a war update and also talks about cognitive warfare

**WHY THE CIVILIANS IN GAZA STILL SUPPORT GAZA
JUNE 18 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING**

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#) June 18 24min 15sec

Or Yissachar, head of the IDSF Research Department talks about what the population in Gaza thinks about Hamas and why

**HILLEL NEUER TESTIFIES BEFORE U.S. CONGRESS ON UNRWA
AND THE COLONNA REPORT**

[UN Watch](#) 11 June 2024 26min 46sec

Delivered, May 17, 2024, before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Global Human Rights and International Organizations, U.S. House of Representatives, Hearing on Eliminating U.S. Aid to Terrorists – New Policies for the U.S. Government and Its Partners.

COULD ISRAEL'S IRON BEAM REPLACE THE IRON DOME?

[The Military Show](#) 20 Dec 2023 23min 51sec

Israel's Iron Dome has been a game-changer in their conflict with Hamas, but an even more advanced defense system is on the horizon.

Enter the Iron Beam, a laser-based air defense network capable of neutralizing short-range rockets, mortar bombs, artillery, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). At just \$2,000 per shot, the Iron Beam is not only powerful but cost-effective. Many see it as a superior alternative to the iconic Iron Dome, with some even predicting it could entirely replace it.

The big question: Can the Iron Beam live up to the hype?

Watch this video to see what our military experts have to say on the matter, and make sure you subscribe to The Military Show for more great military-related content.

ANOTHER PRO-PALESTINIAN DESTRUCTION PROTEST BEGINS IN UK: COMPANIES DESTROYED BY ISLAMISTS

[Traveller](#) 12 June 2024 3min 36sec

Another Pro-Palestinian Destruction Protest Begins In UK: Companies Destroyed By Islamists: Dprt All

Join us as we cover the latest Pro-Palestinian destruction protest in the UK, where companies were destroyed by Islamists. Stay tuned for updates and analysis on the situation.

Videos - Gaza and Hamas

GAZA IN JEWISH HISTORY

[Henry Abramson](#) November 2023 16min 3 sec

A brief overview of Gaza in Jewish history, from the Bronze Age to the present day.

ISRAEL'S DISENGAGEMENT FROM GAZA

HISTORY OF ISRAEL EXPLAINED

[Unpacked](#) 2019 12min 09sec

This week, we're journeying to the Gaza Strip, a 25-mile long strip of land on Israel's southern border. Although Israel pulled out of Gaza almost 15 years ago, many people believe it still controls this small piece of land. Although some 8,800 Jews once lived in Gush Katif in the south of Gaza, Israeli life there ended there in 2005. During a long, hot summer, the country came to terms with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's unilateral decision to withdraw 100% of Israeli military forces and civilians from the territory.

So, why is Israel still embroiled with this tiny patch of land that it handed over a decade-and-a-half ago? How did the withdrawal take place? What has taken place since? And has the gamble to pull out of Gaza paid off? Let us know what you think in the comments below.

Chapters [00:00](#) Intro [01:13](#) History of the Gaza Strip [04:13](#) The 1993 Oslo Accords and the First Intifada [05:04](#) Camp David Accords and the Second Intifada [05:47](#) Sharon's decision of unilateral withdrawal from Gaza [06:39](#) State of Jewish communities in Gaza [07:26](#) A country divided [08:29](#) What happened to the Gush Katif refugees? [09:03](#) Election of Hamas in Gaza [09:29](#) Hamas rockets attacks on Israel [10:13](#) Israeli security measures and strict borders in Gaza [10:46](#) Was the Disengagement a failure? [11:49](#) Outr

ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN ISRAEL

[TVP World](#) (Maurice Hirsch) 13 Oct 2023 13min 47sec

What has happened in Israel over the weekend is difficult to fathom. Could this tragedy have been avoided? According to the recent statement by the IDF's spokesman there were some signals just a few hours prior to the attack. To discuss these topics we were joined this morning by Maurice Hirsch, Director of the Initiative for Accountability and Reform of the Palestinian Authority at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

FAILURE AT THE FENCE (FULL DOCUMENTARY)

[Frontline PBS](#) 20 Dec 2023 28min

A visual investigation in collaboration with [@WashingtonPost](#) provides a detailed examination of how Hamas was able to breach Israel's vaunted security barrier on Oct. 7, 2023, and carry out its attack.

HORRORS OF HAMAS ATTACK ON ISRAEL INVESTIGATED

[Channel4 News](#) 13 Dec 2023 8min 18sec

Israel is still a nation reeling from the trauma of the 7th October attacks, when around 1,200 people, mainly civilians, were killed by Hamas. Now more disturbing details are coming to the fore of horrific sexual violence perpetrated during the attacks.

The attacks began in the early morning with **A ROCKET BARRAGE** of at least 3,000 rockets launched against Israel and vehicle-transported and **POWERED PARAGLIDER** incursions into Israel.^{[24][25]} Hamas fighters breached the **GAZA-ISRAEL BARRIER**, seizing the military bases around the barrier then overrunning Israeli communities, including in **BE'ERI, KFAR AZA**, and **NIR OZ**, and at the **NOVA MUSIC FESTIVAL**.^{[26][27]} The attacks resulted in 1,139^[F] deaths—including the killing of 695 Israeli civilians (36 of whom are children), 71 foreign nationals, and 373 members of the **SECURITY FORCES**.^{[9][32]} Approximately 250 Israeli civilians and soldiers were **TAKEN AS HOSTAGES TO THE GAZA STRIP**, including 30 children, with the stated goal to force Israel to release **PALESTINIAN PRISONERS**.^{[33][34][35][36]} Numerous accounts of **RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT** by Hamas fighters have been reported, which Hamas has denied.^{[37][38][39][40]} (WIKIPEDIA)

SHOCKING VIDEO OF FAMILY HELD CAPTIVE BY HAMAS AFTER KILLING TEENAGE DAUGHTER –

[BBC News](#) Oct 7 2023 3min 36sec

More harrowing stories about how people were killed in the Hamas attacks in Israel are still emerging. One teenager who had just celebrated her 18th birthday died after being shot while trying to prevent the gunmen breaking into the safe room in her home in Nahal Oz, close to the border with Gaza. Her family were held captive in the house and her father was taken hostage. The mother has been speaking about her family's terrible ordeal. She's said she wants the world to see the reality of the atrocities that took place during the Hamas attacks. Reeta Chakrabarti presents BBC News at Ten reporting by Anna Foster in Israel.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR: HOUSE TO HOUSE FIGHTING IN GAZA AS DEAD NEAR '10,000'

[Channel 4 News](#) 5 Nov 2023 20min 1sec

Another large barrage of explosions has been reported in northern Gaza in the past hour, with reports communications and the internet have again been cut off. The Israeli army said today it had now struck "over two and a half thousand terror targets". More than 9,400 people have now been killed, according to figures from the Gaza health ministry - appointed by Hamas, which is designated a terrorist organisation by the UK.

VIDEO SHOWS ISRAELI MISSILES INTERCEPTING INCOMING ROCKETS NEAR GAZA

[CNN](#) Oct 2023 10min 56sec

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO GAZA AFTER THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR?

[The Wall Street Journal](#) Feb 2024 6min 27sec

Several proposals have been put forward to end the conflict between Israel and Hamas with the U.S., Egypt and Qatar pushing to de-escalate in phases. But major sticking points about who should govern Gaza are blocking progress as Israel doesn't want to govern and is against the top contender, the Palestinian Authority. So why is coming to a consensus for a ceasefire or peace deals so difficult?

WSJ looks at where the key players stand, and why they're having trouble finding common ground.

ISRAEL DAILY NEWS – WAR DAY 157, MARCH 11, 2024

[ILTV Israel News](#) 25min 27sec

Day 157 of the war in Gaza and still, no hostage deal has come through, despite the Ramadan holiday starting, and security is predicted to be unstable in the region. And much more.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR: DHAMAS EXPLAINED (Part 1/8)

[CNA](#) 29 Jan 2024 27min 47sec

How did Hamas journey from being an offshoot of a charity to being classified as a terrorist organisation by US authorities? Dive deep into the origins of Hamas, and trace its evolution, explore the factors contributing to its growth, and understand what Hamas means to the Palestinian people.

HOW HAMAS WAS FORMED AND WHICH NATIONS SUPPORT THE TERROR GROUP?

[Firstpost](#) 7 Oct 2023 7min 4sec

How Hamas Was Formed and Which Nations Support the Terror Group? | Vantage with Palki Sharma

Hamas launched large-scale attacks into Israel. What is Hamas, the terror organisation that governs Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

How was the group founded and which nations support the terror group? Will the actions of Hamas instigate an all-out war between Israelis and Palestinians. Palki Sharma tells you more.

'SON OF HAMAS' TACKLES UNIVERSITY ANTISEMITISM, EXPOSES HAMAS 'HOLY WAR' TO WIPE OUT JEWS

[CBN News](#) 9 Nov 2023 1:09:33

The son of a co-founder of Hamas is speaking out against the Palestinian terrorist group once again, this time to a pro-Israel, anti-disinformation group on the campus of the University of Michigan on Tuesday night.

As CBN News has reported, Mosab Hassan Yousef, the son of Hamas co-founder Sheikh Hassan Yousef, defected from the terrorist group in the late '90s and secretly worked with Israel's security services to expose and prevent several Hamas terrorist attacks. He wrote a 2010 autobiography titled Son of Hamas.

WHO IS HAMAS? | EXPLAINED

[Unpacked](#) 21 October 2023 15 min 22sec

On October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked Israeli civilians in southern towns and communities bordering the Gaza Strip, in what was the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. Israel quickly declared war against the Gaza-based terrorist organization. With wars between Hamas and Israel breaking out every few years, one has to wonder...what is Hamas and how did it arise as the sole power governing Gaza today?

OCT 7 2023: HAMAS MASSACRE DOCUMENTATION OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

[saturday-october-seven.com](#)

Hamas' terrorists recorded their barbaric atrocities on body cameras and cell phones to proudly display their crimes and gloat about them. Many of these cameras were recovered from neutralised terrorists. Now the whole world can see Hamas' unfathomable savagery.

HAMAS: THE TERROR GROUP BENT ON DESTROYING ISRAEL - AND THEMSELVES

[Daily Mail](#) October 2023 13min 02sec

They were one of the pioneers of the suicide bomb and have waged a decades-long campaign of terror against Israel. Hamas, founded as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, took control of Gaza after winning a shock election there in 2006 and now rules with an iron fist. On Saturday, they led an attack into Israel which killed at least 1,200 people - most of them civilians - with such brutality that the terror group is now being compared to ISIS. Their goal seems to have been to provoke Israel into a devastating ground war in Gaza in order to derail a new peace effort and send the Middle East spiralling back into conflict.

These are the deep contradictions at the heart of Sunni Hamas, their perhaps unlikely allies in Shia Iran, and how - together - they threaten to destabilise the world.

**GRAPHIC RAW FOOTAGE:
MASSACRE ACROSS ISRAEL FROM THE EYES OF HAMAS**

[Israel Defence Forces](#) 18 Oct 2023 10min 49sec

WARNING: This video contains extremely graphic footage recovered from the Hamas invasion and massacre in southern Israel on October 7th, 2023.

[0:05-3:08](#): Footage from car dashcams and security cameras showing Hamas entering Israeli communities, shooting civilians in their cars and as they were running away, and looting their bodies and vehicles. At [2:58](#), we see a Hamas terrorist throw a grenade into a bomb shelter; an Israeli runs out and the terrorist shoots him as he is running away

[3:12-8:10](#): Footage recovered from terrorists' cameras as they invaded the southern towns of Be'eri, Kfar Aza, Kissufim, and Re'em and broke into home after home. At [6:35](#), we see a terrorist shoot the wheels of a parked ambulance. At [8:04](#), we see terrorists standing still in the midst of a red alert siren ("tzeva adom"), due to their own rockets that they were firing into southern Israel at the same time as their invasion and massacre.

[8:13-10:49](#): Extremely graphic: the aftermath of the massacre in the Israeli southern towns. We see homes, including children's bedrooms, covered in blood; endless rubble; people burned alive in their cars; and a dog shot and disfigured.

**DID 67 WORDS SPARK THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT?
HAMAS EXPLAINED (PART 1/8)**

[CNA](#) 20 Jan 2024 23min 25 sec

In 1917, a controversial pledge was made. With just 67 words, the British promised to support the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Could this declaration have sparked the conflict?

Watch the full series: <https://cna.asia/israel-hamas-war>

**IF HAMAS SURRENDER, THE WAR WILL END TOMORROW':
ISRAELI GOVERNMENT**

[Sky News](#), Eylon Harvey 28 Dec 2023 10min 34sec

Israeli government spokesperson, Eylon Levy has told Sky News the war "will end tomorrow" if Hamas surrenders. Meanwhile Mr Levy said "a mistake was made" after "incorrect munition" was used in a strike on a refugee camp in central Gaza which killed at least 68 Palestinians.

HOW HAMAS FUNDS ITS \$1 BILLION WAR CHEST

[4 News](#) Helia Abrahami 24 Feb 2024

Iran is thought to support Hamas financially to the tune of 100 million dollars a year.

But most of the one billion dollar war chest the group is thought to have accumulated, comes from investments.

From tower blocks in Turkey to copper mines in Sudan, Hamas' financial network spreads far and wide, carefully constructed to avoid Western sanctions. And some of it could also be hiding in London.

WHO IS FUNDING HAMAS? | DW BUSINESS SPECIAL

DW News 14 October 2023 14min 58sec

The terror attacks against Israel have drawn new attention to the Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip – and its backers. Host Marie Sina is joined by Matthew Levitt, director of the Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. They discuss Hamas' main sources of funding, its ties to Iran and Russia, and the humanitarian situation for Palestinian civilians.

WHERE DOES HAMAS GET ITS MONEY?

A LOOK AT THE MILITANT GROUP'S FINANCIAL NETWORK

[CNA](#) 9 Nov 2023

As the Israel-Hamas war enters its second month, the militant group's sources of funding are coming under closer scrutiny. The United States has signalled its intent to issue fresh sanctions targeting not just members of Hamas, but also those affiliated to the group. However, crippling its funding network will not be easy. CNA's Steve Lai explains.

ISRAEL DAILY NEWS – WAR DAY 213 MAY 06, 2024

I24News English 6 May 2024 25min20sec

Day 213 of the war in Gaza and Israel commemorates victims of both the Holocaust and October 7th, in a heartbreaking memorial day. And much more.

CIVIL WAR IN GAZA: PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION DECLARES WAR ON HAMAS! PALESTINIANS JOIN ISRAEL

[DCM](#) 6 May 2024 8min34sec

Civil War in Gaza: Palestine Liberation Organization Declares war on Hamas! Palestinians Join Israel

SHOULD ISRAEL MAKE A DEAL WITH HAMAS

[Kosher Tube](#) 8 May 2024 25min 57sec

In this Video you will find out about Should Israel make a deal with Hamas May 8 IDSF Daily Briefing 1

Videos – Lebanon and Hezbollah

LEBANON CRISIS: THE LAST HOPE

[Best Document](#) 19 April 2024 42min 26sec

Long considered the Switzerland of the Middle East, Lebanon is now going through the worst economic crisis in its history. 80% of the population lives below the poverty line. In one year, food prices have jumped 500% due to galloping inflation.

For Riad, who runs a grocery store in the suburbs of Beirut, business has become hellish. Every morning, calculator in hand, he changes the labels of his products according to the day's exchange rate. An operation all the more complex as his store is plunged into darkness, due to lack of electricity. The Lebanese government no longer provides more than two hours of electricity per day in the country. It is impossible for the population to heat, light or use their refrigerator. Taking advantage of the situation, a network of private generators has emerged.

The Lebanese pound, the local currency, has lost 90% of its value. The only ones to get away with it are those who are paid in dollars. The greenback, which is exchanged for a fortune against the local currency, has given birth to a new privileged social class in the country. A salesman in an international pharmaceutical company, Joseph lives like a king in a ruined Lebanon. Thanks to his new purchasing power, he repaid his house loan in two months, instead of... twenty years!

In a bankrupt state, plagued by corruption, six out of ten Lebanese citizens now dream of leaving the country. In Tripoli, in northern Lebanon, Mohammed and his son left by sea to reach Germany. Although their trip was cut short off the Turkish coast, the young father is still ready to take all the risks to reach the European El Dorado.

How Powerful is Lebanon's Militant Force?

[Task...](#) 14 Nov 2023 233min 50sec

WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH?

[Unpacked](#) 21 Sept 2022 11min 06sec

When Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini took control of Iran in the Islamic Revolution of 1979, no one could have predicted that would be a catalyst for the formation of the terrorist organization Hezbollah, or "Party of God." Since its inception, Hezbollah has grown from a small militant group in Lebanon to a massively well-funded organization hell-bent on destroying Israel. Despite retaliation from the Israel Defense Forces, Hezbollah's power continues to grow and remains a serious threat to Israeli lives; a fact which will remain until true peace is found between Israel and Lebanon.

WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH AND HOW DIFFERENT ARE THEY FROM HAMAS?

[Firstpost](#) Unpacked 15 Oct 2023 6min 18sec

After Hamas launched its terror attacks on Israel, Hezbollah too opened fire on Israel in the North. Because of this, Israel has beefed up its security presence on the Northern border with Lebanon. What is the Hezbollah group and how are they different from Hamas. On what aspects are the two groups alike and how do world powers see them. Hezbollah has outrightly shown support for Hamas' terror attacks on Israel, the question is whether Hezbollah join forces with Hamas or not?

HEZBOLLAH'S VAST TERROR TUNNEL NETWORK EMERGES; THREATENS ISRAEL BORDER

[TBN Israel](#) Yair Pinto 27 April 2024 14min 24 sec

Join Yair Pinto as he travels to the Israel-Lebanon border to report on Hezbollah's vast underground tunnel system. Learn about North Korea's role in developing these tunnels, what the terrorist organization is hiding in them, and Israel's innovative solution to combat them. As tensions along the northern border continues to escalate, is all-out war with Hezbollah close? Don't miss this episode of My State on TBN Israel!

UNMASKING HEZBOLLAH - DRUG TRAFFICKING AND TERROR (1/3)

[DW Documentary](#) 18 May 2024 51min 55sec

In 2008, the United States launched "Project Cassandra". The aim was to uncover how Hezbollah uses drug trafficking and money laundering to finance its military and terrorist activities. The three-part series tells the story of the project.

By 2008, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration had gathered sufficient evidence to show that Hezbollah had transformed from a military and political organization into an international crime syndicate. They were making billions from drug and arms trafficking, money laundering and other criminal activities. "Project Cassandra" was the ambitious, top-secret project designed to stop them.

On 4 August 2020, the city of Beirut was devastated by the explosion of hundreds of tons of ammonium nitrate stored in the port. All eyes turned to Hezbollah, a Shiite party and militia linked to Iran that controls a large part of Lebanon. Despite pressure from both citizens and the international community, Hezbollah (literally: the "party of God") refused to allow any independent investigation into the causes of the explosion.

Hezbollah emerged in 1982 as a resistance organization against the Israeli occupation. Even then, it was supported by Iran. For 40 years, its fighters have infiltrated all areas of the Lebanese state and risen to become the country's dominant force.

In the mid-2000s, however, a handful of police officers from the American Drug Enforcement Agency (D.E.A.) attempted to bring down Hezbollah. They operated in the greatest secrecy. The code name of their operation: Cassandra. Their investigation begins in the United States, in the still-smoldering ruins of the World Trade Center.

The three-part series tells the story of "Project Cassandra," based on the testimony of DEA agents and other people involved. It also tells the story of the rise of Hezbollah and provides insights into complex geopolitical contexts.

Part 1:  [Unmasking Hezbollah - Drug traffickin...](#)

Part 2:  [Unmasking Hezbollah - Who was behind ...](#)

Part 3:  [Unmasking Hezbollah - Money launderin... :55](#)

IS ISRAEL ON THE BRINK OF WAR WITH LEBANON?

[The Newsmakers](#) 7 Jun 2024 25min 55sec

Benjamin Netanyahu has pledged an intense retaliation for Hezbollah's attacks, some of which have led to perilous wildfires. This comes in the wake of Iran's warning that Israel will suffer a significant defeat against Hezbollah. Can tensions be diffused, or will Israel's war on Gaza extend to Lebanon?

Videos – Islamic Jihad

WHAT IS THE PALESTINIAN ISLAMIC JIHAD, THE GROUP BLAMED BY ISRAEL FOR GAZA HOSPITAL BLAST?

[The Print](#) 22 November 2023 4min 39sec

In 1974, Fathi Al-Shiqaqi, a refugee born in Rafah in Gaza shifted to Egypt to study medicine. There he hosted study circles in his apartment in al-Zigazag, where Palestinian students would gather to discuss everything from politics, to religion, to philosophy. These are the individuals who first moved back to Gaza in 1981 and formed the Palestinian Islamic Jihad -- the organisation Israel blames for the blast at the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza, killing 500 people. What is this group, considered by many to be the second largest militant organisation operating in Gaza? Keshav Padmanabhan explains.

OPERATION SHIELD AND ARROW STRIKING ISLAMIC JIHAD SITES IN GAZA

[CBN News](#) 12 May 2023 22min 27sec

Operation Shield and Arrow intercepting rockets and striking Islamic Jihad sites, examining how Israeli Jews and Arabs feel about Biblical Judea and Samaria
Incursion into Israel from Lebanon:
Palestinian Islamic Jihad group claims responsibility

THE MOST DANGEROUS PALESTINIAN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION | EXPLAINED

[Unpacked](#)

Beneath the media spotlight on Hamas lies a lesser-known but fiercely radical group: Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). PIJ has honed the brutal art of terror to imperil the notion of peace in the Middle East. From its foundation by Dr. Fathi Shaqaqi, a nerdy, poetry-loving, Gaza-born pediatrician with a penchant for revolutionary thought, to its reputation for pioneering suicide attacks, the PIJ's tactics have fueled a generational war against compromise and coexistence.

Harboring a dualism of nationalism and radical Islamism, the last three decades have proven PIJ's unyielding resolve to destroy Israel.

INCURSION INTO ISRAEL FROM LEBANON: PALESTINIAN ISLAMIC JIHAD GROUP CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY

[Al Jazeera English](#) 9 Oct 2023 7min 33sec

Videos - Gaza Tunnels

WHY THE MAZE OF TUNNELS UNDER GAZA IS KEY TO THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

[The Wall Street Journal](#) 26 October 2023

Israel is gearing up for a possible ground offensive of Gaza. Underneath the Palestinian enclave sits a labyrinth of tunnels used by Hamas as a key military asset. These tunnels were used by Hamas militants in Israel's seven-week war on Gaza in 2014 allowing for Hamas to hide weapons, equipment and troops.

HAMAS TUNNEL NETWORK |

ISRAELI MILITARY IS REPORTEDLY FLOODING HAMAS TUNNELS IN GAZA

[CNN-News 18](#) 13 Dec 2023 4min 34sec

The Israel Defense Forces has begun flooding Hamas' extensive network of underground tunnels beneath the Gaza Strip.

The US officials cited in the report reveal that last month, the IDF installed five large water pumps near the al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza City, each capable of pumping thousands of cubic meters of seawater per hour, and recently added two additional pumps.

INSIDE HAMAS' TUNNELS UNDER AL SHIFA HOSPITAL IN GAZA

[shiezoli](#) 22 Nov 2023 15min 22sec

IDF releases footage from Hamas' expansive tunnel network under Gaza's primary medical center, revealing a series of well-appointed underground spaces

HOW DID HAMAS BUILD "HIGH-TECH" TUNNELS BELOW GAZA? VANTAGE WITH PALKI SHARMA

[Firstpost](#) Dec 2023 8min 17sec

Israel has uncovered a tunnel below the house of top Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. The tunnel had elevators, electricity shafts and storage spaces. How did Hamas build this vast network of tunnels? Palki Sharma tells you

HAMAS TUNNEL HOW IS IT MADE

AiTelly

ISRAELI SPECIAL FORCES FLOODS TUNNELS WITH SEAWATER! DOZENS OF MILITANTS DESPERATE

[24H World News](#) 30 May 2024 20min 19sec

Videos - Golan Heights

THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

ITS BIBLICAL, HISTORICAL, AND GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE

[FAI STUDIOS](#) 7 Jan 2020 9min 35sec

A video update from Dalton Thomas about the escalating conflict in the Middle East and why we are investing into the establishment of the Golan Heights Legacy Center on Israel's strategic borders or Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. In this dispatch Dalton explains why the Golan Biblically, historically, militarily, and geopolitically consequential.

HOW DO THE DRUZE RESIDENTS OF THE GOLAN HEIGHTS IDENTIFY AT THE BALLOT BOX?

[i24NEWS English](#) 22 Oct 2022 8min 4sec

We zoom in on the town of Majdal Shams on the Israel-Syria border, to find out how the growing number of Druze Israeli citizens may vote in the upcoming election.

Videos - West Bank

ISRAEL SETTLEMENTS PART 1

[Unpacked](#)

There are few words more divisive in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than “settlements.” Some people believe Israelis have every right to live in the West Bank / Judea and Samaria. Others believe Israel’s presence there is a key reason for the ongoing conflict.

And that’s not to mention the countless views of everyone in the middle of these two extremes.

Because the Israeli settlements are such a major issue, we’ve created a series of five videos to look at this controversial subject from every angle.

In the coming weeks, we will get stuck into this thorny topic. To start with, we’re going back to basics and looking at what the settlements are and how they came into being.

ISRAEL SETTLEMENTS PART 2

[Unpacked](#)

This week, we’re continuing our in-depth look at the Israeli settlements. To get a better understanding of the subject, we’re jumping back to biblical times to unpack the Jewish connection to Judea and Samaria (the West Bank).

As with everything Jewish, it all starts with Abraham. This was a man who spent much of his time on the move - much of it in what we now call the West Bank.

And it wasn’t just Abraham. His descendants (and later, generations of Jewish people) also spent a lot of time in Judea and Samaria, creating a long-lasting connection with places such as Hebron, Shechem (Nablus), Beit El, Gilgal and Gibeah.

A connection that couldn’t be broken through thousands of years of exile.

Fast forward to the 20th century where events in two separate communities - the ancient city of Hebron and the modern agricultural village of Kfar Etzion - took on a powerful symbolism for Jewish resettlement in the West Bank.

ISRAEL SETTLEMENTS PART 3

[Unpacked](#)

When you hear the words “Israeli settler,” you probably think religious, radical, living in the middle of nowhere. But the truth is there are all kinds of settlers and all kinds of settlements.

There are so many reasons people live in the settlements - and they’re not always what you think. Some settlers live in the West Bank for ideological reasons; others live there because it’s cheap.

Some settlers are religious; others are secular. Some settlers made a conscious decision to live in Judea and Samaria; others grew up there and want to be close to family.

This week we’re breaking through the stereotypes, shutting down the misconceptions and learning a thing or two about the settlers and the settler movement.

PALESTINIANS SETTLEMENTS PART 4

UNPACKED

This week, we're looking at the Israeli settlements from another angle: the Palestinian perspective.

We don't (and can't) speak for the Palestinians, and we're not trying to tell their story. However, to unpack the settlements, we have to consider the Palestinian viewpoint.

To do so, we're using facts compiled by various organizations and experts, along with first-hand accounts to get a better understanding.

PALESTINIANS SETTLEMENTS PART 5

UNPACKED

In the final episode of our Israeli settlements mini-series, we look at the six core issues at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and examine the different attempts at peace over the years.

Time and again solutions have been put forward, but so far they've come to nothing.

But it doesn't mean peace is impossible.

It's been 25 years since Israel and Jordan signed a peace deal and although things have been on the cold side lately, the peace is still holding. As is the peace agreement with Egypt, which was signed in 1979.

So, if these countries - once Israel's fiercest enemies - could put their differences aside and make peace, why can't the Palestinians?

Do you think there will ever be peace between Israel and the Palestinians? What do you believe are the main stumbling blocks?

WHY DID ISRAEL BUILD A WALL AROUND THE WEST BANK?

UNPACKED

[Note: This video was created before the horrific attack by Hamas on the people of southern Israel and the outbreak of the October 2023 war.

The separation barrier that divides the West Bank from western Israel, often referred to as the Apartheid Wall, is the source of much debate in both Israeli and Palestinian societies. For some, it serves to protect Israeli citizens. For others, it enforces an unequal system of oppression of Palestinians. And while for many it is simply a visual reminder of the continued failure of the peace process, Israel remains a land of hope.

Videos - Yemen

WHO ARE THE HOUTHIS ATTACKING RED SEA SHIPS?

[BBC News](#) 22 Dec 2023 6min 21sec

Global supply chains could face severe disruption as a result of the world's biggest shipping companies diverting journeys away from the Red Sea.

Attacks by Houthis in Yemen on commercial vessels in recent weeks have resulted in many firms deciding to avoid one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

The Houthi group has declared its support for Hamas and has said it is targeting ships travelling to Israel. But who are the Houthis? What are their motivations? And what are their links to Iran? The BBC's analysis editor Ros Atkins explains.

YEMEN'S HIDDEN AGONY

[Best Documentary](#) 11 Jan 2023 58min 48sec

Sanaa, in Yemen: this city is cut off from the world. In the last years, a terrible war has rendered it isolated. Millions of inhabitants are living under an embargo, in one of the most inaccessible places on the planet.

DIRTY WAR IN YEMEN: 7 YEARS OF CRUELTY, FAMINE AND SUFFERING | INVESTIGATIVE DOCUMENTARY

[Java Discover](#) 5 Sept 2023 58min 50sec

After seven years of war, there is no end in sight to the suffering in Yemen. In this exclusive film, we report on the situation in the north-west of Yemen, held by the Houthis. 21 million people live in this enclave. There, since 2015, out of sight, a dirty war has been going on. Sana'a, North of Yemen. One of the most inaccessible places on the planet. For the past six years, Ansar Allah, a political and military movement created by powerful families from the North, has seized control. But Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are determined to reinstall the ousted Yemeni president. They see the Houthi rebels, who belong to the Zaydist branch of Islam, as heretics who pose a threat to Wahhabism. Using weapons provided by the West, they relentlessly bombard the North in a dirty war. Over 230,000 Yemenis have already died. A strict, expertly maintained embargo is also starving the population. According to UN agencies, Yemen is facing one of the worst famines in the world with 400,000 children reportedly at risk of death. New diseases have appeared since the beginning of the war and there has been a sharp increase in babies born with abnormalities. But the war in Yemen is about more than just competing religious ideologies. Yemen owns substantial and underexploited oil reserves and controls roads leading to the Suez canal. This documentary was first released in 2021.

HOW YEMEN IS WRECKING THE ENTIRE GLOBAL ECONOMY

[RealLifeLore](#) Feb 2024 37min 27sec

JORDAN TO ISRAEL'S RESCUE? AMMAN SENDS GOODS TO TEL AVIV VIA LAND ROUTE EVADING RED SEA HOUTHIE SIEGE

[Times New World](#) 6 Feb 2024

Arab nations Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are reportedly helping Israel bypass the Houthi threat in the Red Sea as it wages war on Gaza. The UAE is transporting goods to Israel via Jordan on a new land route, as per a report by the Middle East Eye. Israel-linked ships have been targeted and attacked by the Yemeni Houthis in the Red Sea to pressurize Tel Aviv to end its deadly assault on Gaza since the Oct 7 Hamas attack. Angry Jordanians have held protests across the country denouncing the transportation of goods to Israel while demanding the government sever ties with Tel Aviv. Watch for details.

EGYPT & EAST AFRICAN SHIPPERS SUFFERS AS YEMEN'S HOUTHIE REBELS DISRUPT INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING

[The New Africa C](#) 25 Dec 2023

It is no secret that East Africa plays a pivotal role in the arteries of global trade, serving as a crucial link between the resource-rich continent and the bustling markets of Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Its strategic location on the Red Sea and Indian Ocean has attracted maritime activity for centuries, and today, its modern ports and vital waterways handle a significant portion of the world's goods. (Go to site for remainder of text)

PALESTINIANS ARE STILL REWARDING TERRORISTS WITH SHOCKING 'PAY TO SLAY' POLICY

[CBN News](#) 18 Dec 2021

After American student and veteran Taylor Force was murdered in a terror attack in Israel, his parents began a campaign to end the Palestinian government policy known as "pay to slay". They won a major victory in 2018 when the Taylor Force Act became law, but Stuart and Robby Force recently discovered their work isn't finished.

Now, they're back on Capitol Hill working to pass legislation that goes even further than the Taylor Force Act to close a loophole that's allowing banks to make payments to terrorists.

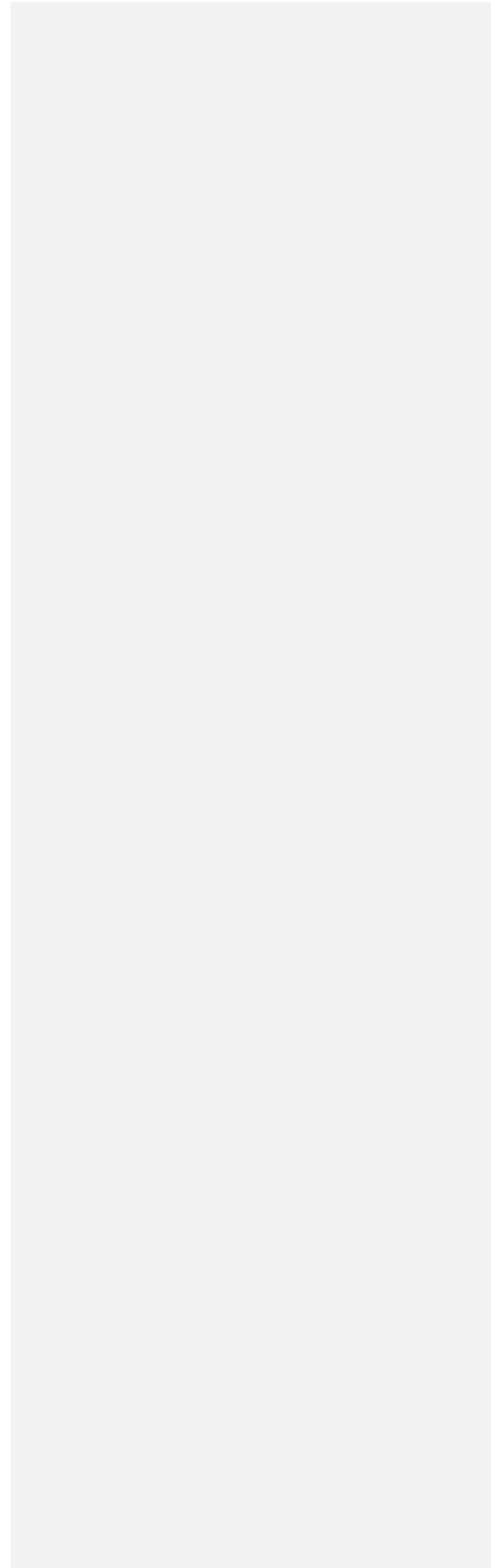
Read the full s

story from CBN's Abigail Robertson: <https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/israel/2...>

DOES THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY FUND TERRORISM? EXPLAINED

[Unpacked](#) 22 Feb 2024 12 min 36sec

The Palestinian Authority's "Martyr's Fund," also known as "Pay to Slay," pays the families of Palestinian terrorists who are imprisoned or killed for acts of terrorism against Israeli civilians. Despite attempts by Israel and other countries to both deter terrorism and incentivize the PA to end its "pay to slay" policy, the PA continues to find creative ways to successfully financially incentivize terrorism.



Videos - Teaching Palestinian Children

CHILLING FOOTAGE OF KINDERGARTNERS RE-ENACTING TERRORIST DRILLS IN GAZA

[New York Post](#) 8 Jun 2016 1min 3sec

Footage has surfaced of one of the most unsettling kindergarten graduation ceremonies ever. Young children in Gaza are shown re-enacting terrorist training activities, demonstrating how young people are being indoctrinated over there.

THE PALESTINIAN CURRICULUM: WHAT UNRWA HELPS TEACH CHILDREN IN GAZA

[AIPAC](#) 1 Feb 2024 19min 7 sec

Marcus Sheff is the CEO of Impact-SE, an international research, policy and advocacy organization that monitors and analyzes education around the world. Impact-SE uses internationally derived standards of peace and tolerance to examine curriculum. This includes looking at how textbooks teach respect for one another, peace making, historical accuracy and gender equality. If misused, textbooks are can be an authoritative tool that have the power to radicalize. UNRWA is a UN agency which is sworn to teach peace and tolerance, but instead teaches children about violence. UNRWA uses Palestinian Authority textbooks that teach Palestinian children antisemitism and that are absent of peaceful messaging. Curriculum that teaches extremism is a threat to Israel, the peace process and the United States and its interests and values. Sheff explains how change in curriculum in the Middle East is possible, seen through the UAE's complete transformation of education.

UNRWA HAVE CREATED A PALESTINIAN TERRORISM EDUCATION SYSTEM.

[AIJAC](#) 3 Dec 2023 7min 0sec

UNRWA have created a Palestinian terrorism education system.

WHAT ARE PALESTINIAN CHILDREN READING IN THEIR TEXTBOOKS?

[i24NEWS](#) English December 2023 5min 0 SEC

INSIDE THE GAZA SUMMER CAMPS TRAINING CHILDREN TO BE THE NEXT GENERATION OF TERRORISTS

[CBN News](#) 19 Jul 2021 3min 18sec

When summer camp for kids comes to mind you might think of swimming, boating and hiking. Summer camp in the Gaza Strip is more like a military boot camp.

'SON OF HAMAS' CO-FOUNDER DENOUNCES GROUP AT UN, EXPOSES SAVAGE' INDOCTRINATION OF PALESTINIAN KIDS

[CBN News](#) 21 Nov 2023 30min 12sec

The son of a co-founder of Hamas blasted the terror organization in a blistering half-hour speech at the United Nations on Monday.

Mosab Hassan Yousef, the son of Hamas co-founder Sheikh Hassan Yousef, defected from the terrorist group in the late '90s and secretly worked with Israel's security services to expose and prevent several Hamas terrorist attacks. He wrote a 2010 autobiography titled Son of Hamas.

Yousef, 45, now endeavours to expose the true face of Hamas' genocidal death cult.

Videos – IRAN

FIVE REASONS WHY IRAN IS INVOLVED IN SO MANY GLOBAL CONFLICTS –

[BBC World Service](#) 28 Mar 2024 15min 27sec

Iran is one country that always seems to be mentioned when it comes to ongoing deadly conflicts around the world, as well as the new flashpoints in the Middle East.

Click here to subscribe to our channel <https://bbc.in/3VyyriM>

From the war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas, to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as the civil war in Syria, Iran has played an indirect role in the fighting, even from afar.

The country's tensions with the US, which have gone on for decades and its defensive strategy all play a part but to understand more, here's an in-depth look at the five main reasons why Iran is involved in so many different conflicts.

INSIDE IRAN: WHAT HAPPENED TO IRAN'S WOMEN-LED UPRISING?

[VICE News](#) 23 Dec 2023 28min 39sec

VICE News gains exclusive access inside Iran, to find out what's happened in the country since Mahsa Amini's death. Since Iranian women led a nationwide uprising, Iran's security forces have cracked down with brute force. Isobel Yeung meets those brave enough to speak out and meets the authorities in charge.

WHY ISRAEL AND IRAN ARE ENEMIES | MAPPED OUT

[DW News](#) 1 Dec 2023 13min 24sec

On April 13, 2024, Iran launched missiles and drones toward Israel, vowing retaliation for a deadly strike on the Iranian consulate in Syria, reportedly by Israeli forces. It was the Islamic Republic's first direct attack on its bitter enemy. Prior to the strikes, Iran and Israel had been engaged in a years-long shadow war — and attacks by the Iran-backed militant Islamist group Hamas on Israel in October 2023 had moved the conflict to a whole new level. What are the roots of the Iranian-Israeli conflict? And what role does Israel's number one ally, the US, play in it?

ISRAEL IRAN MISSILES DRONE ATTACK EXPLAINED

[AiTelly](#) 26 April 2024 9min 28sec

Videos - UNWRA

HOW DOES UNRWA IMPACT PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS?

[Stand With Us](#) 12 Sept 2018

Millions around the world were made refugees in the 1940's. Over 70 years later, they are not refugees anymore. So why are Palestinian Arabs perpetually referred to that way? WATCH our new video on the controversy surrounding UNRWA - the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

EINAT WILF SPEAKS AT UN BRIEFING ON UNRWA

[Einat Wilf](#) 1 May 2024 33min10sec

Dr. Einat Wilf explains the essence of UNRWA at a briefing to UN delegations at the UN HQ in NYC hosted by Israel's Ambassador to the UN. This briefing provides a summary of UNRWA's history and how it became the ideological backbone of the Palestinian vision of violent "return" as manifested on October 7th, and how UNRWA has given birth to every terrorist organization from Black September to Hamas.

IDF STATEMENT ON UNRWA WORKERS INVOLVED IN THE OCT. 7 MASSACRE

[Israel Defence Forces](#) March 2024 8min 3 sec

HILLEL NEUER ON SKY NEWS SPECIAL REPORT: UNRWA EXPOSED

[UN Watch](#) 12 Feb 2024 24min 12 sec

THE INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT FOR A FUTURE BEYOND UNRWA (FULL EVENT)

[UN Watch](#) 26 Feb 2024 3hours 4 min 26 sec (broke into linkable chapters)

HAMAS TERROR TUNNEL FOUND UNDER GAZA CITY HEADQUARTERS OF UN AGENCY

[The Sun](#) 11 Feb 2024 9min 53sec

IDF FINDS EXPOSES HAMAS INFRASTRUCTURE BENEATH UNRWA HQ IN GAZA

[TBN Israel](#) February 9min 39sec

TBN Israel's Yair Pinto reports on the Israel-Hamas War. He explains how IDF's discovered a Hamas facility hidden beneath the UNRWA headquarters in Gaza City. This extensive tunnel network, equipped with sophisticated infrastructure, challenges UNRWA's claims of ignorance. With weapons, ammunition, and critical intelligence tools found within UNRWA's premises, this report questions the neutrality of international organizations in conflict zones. Stay up-to-date with the latest developments here on TBN Israel. Please join us in praying for the peace of Israel and Jerusalem.

**‘THEY CELEBRATED’: UNRWA STAFF CAUGHT PRAISING HAMAS
FOR OCTOBER 7 MASSACRE**

[Sky News Australia](#) 28 Jan 2024

Sky News host James Morrow says people knew UNRWA staff “celebrated” the October 7 attacks on Israeli people before the UK finally suspended its funds to the organisation.

The UK’s decision came after UNRWA staff were accused of participating in the massacre of October 7.

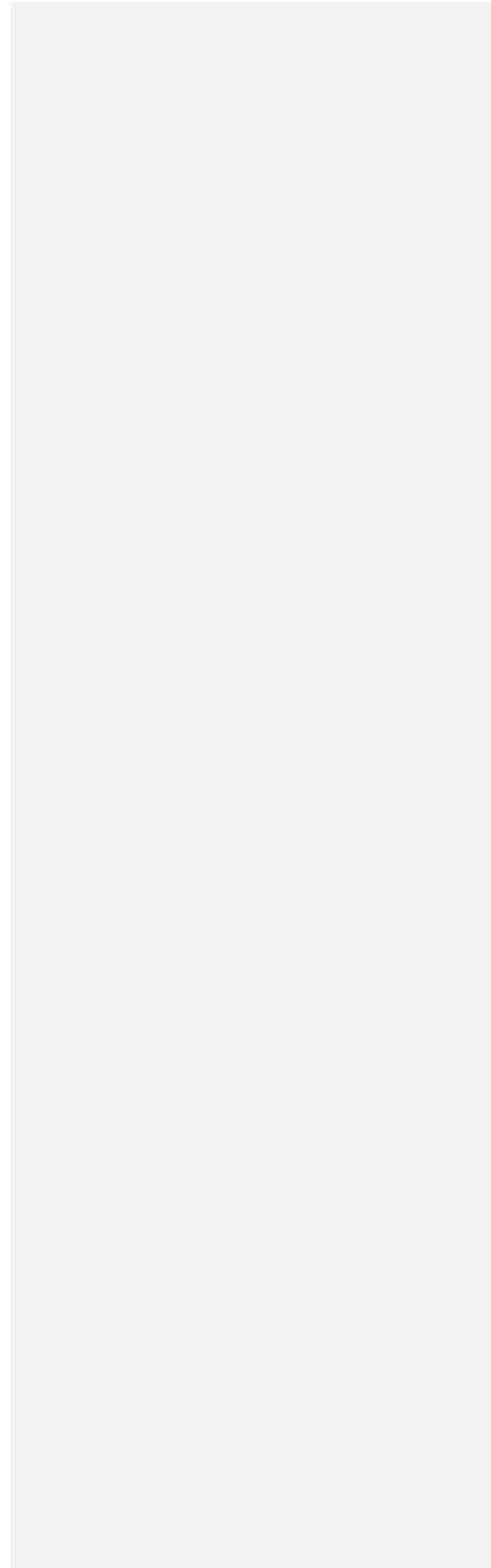
“Back in November I reported on this at The Daily Telegraph that many, many, many people who were teachers, officials, doctors, nurses with UNRWA, they were all on their social media ‘oh glorious day’ ‘how wonderful the rape and murder of all these Israeli citizens couldn’t come soon enough, thank Allah for that,’” Mr Morrow said.

“But there’s a broader point to this, when I went to Penny Wong’s office about that, they said they seemed quite concerned – it did seem at the time like they knew that there was a problem here.

“This whole idea of the UN refugee works agency, the whole point of that, that has created three or four generations of people who still consider themselves refugees.”

PART C

THE JEWISH/PALESTINIAN
STORY



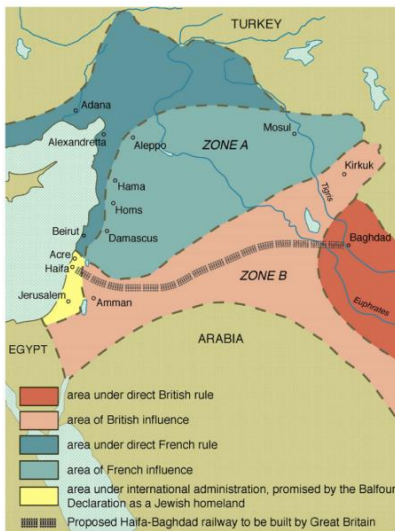
THE CREATION OF PALESTINE

An area of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century was to become Palestine in the twentieth century. It was largely Arabic where usable land was used for basic methods of agriculture with wealthy owners in areas such as Damascus in Syria. They saw other land as having little scope for development. The few Jews there lived in towns such as Safed and Tiberias. (see '*Famous Travellers to the Holy Land*')

The Russian Jews were concentrated in the Russian Pale were [Pogroms](#) (a violent [riot](#) incited with the aim of [massacring](#) or expelling an ethnic or religious group, particularly [Jews](#)^[1]). This gave rise to a group called **Zionists** and led to '**Aliyah**' (Jewish emigration) (see '*Herzl's Troubled Dream: The Origins of Zionism*', History Today)

The **Sykes–Picot Agreement** was a 1916 secret treaty between the United Kingdom and France, with assent from the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Italy, to define their mutually agreed spheres of influence and control in an eventual partition of the Ottoman Empire.

During the First World War England and France had decided how to share the land the Ottomans would



lose. This appeared as the Sykes-Picot Agreement for approval by the League of Nations.

The Arab hierarchy decided to join the Allies. The map shows that the north was to become a French mandate and the south a British mandate to be called 'Palestine'

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Balfour Declaration

Foreign Office,
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.



The original letter from Balfour to Rothschild; the declaration reads:

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

Created 2 November 1917
Location [British Library](#)
Author(s) [Walter Rothschild](#), [Arthur Balfour](#), [Leo Amery](#), [Lord Milner](#)
Signatories [Arthur James Balfour](#)
Purpose Confirming support from [the British government](#) for the establishment in Palestine of a "national home" for Jewish people, with two [conditi](#)

Full Text

 [Balfour Declaration at Wikisource](#)

The **Balfour Declaration** was a public statement issued by the [British Government](#) in 1917 during the [First World War](#) announcing its support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in [Palestine](#), then an [Ottoman](#) region with a small minority [Jewish](#) population. The declaration was contained in a letter dated 2 November 1917 from the United Kingdom's [Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour](#) to [Lord Rothschild](#), a leader of the [British Jewish community](#), for transmission to the [Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland](#). The text of the declaration was published in the press on 9 November 1917.

"This is a very carefully worded document and but for the somewhat vague phrase 'A National Home for the Jewish People' might be considered sufficiently unalarming ... But the vagueness of the phrase cited has been a cause of trouble from the commencement. Various persons in high positions have used language of the loosest kind calculated to convey a very different impression to the more moderate interpretation which can be put upon the words. President Wilson brushed away all doubts as to what was intended from his point of view when, in March 1919, he said to the Jewish leaders in America, 'I am moreover persuaded that the allied nations, with the fullest concurrence of our own Government and people are agreed that in Palestine shall be laid the foundations of a Jewish Commonwealth.'^[w] The late President Roosevelt declared that one of the Allies peace conditions should be that 'Palestine must be made a Jewish State.' Mr. Winston Churchill has spoken of a 'Jewish State' and Mr. Bonar Law has talked in Parliament of 'restoring Palestine to the Jew'."

Report of the Palin Commission, August 1920ⁱ

The **Balfour Declaration** was a public statement issued by the British Government in 1917 during the First World War announcing its support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, then an Ottoman region with a small minority Jewish population. The declaration was contained in a letter dated 2 November 1917 from the United Kingdom's **Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour** to **Lord Rothschild**, a leader of the British Jewish community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland. The text of the declaration was published in the press on 9 November 1917.

Commented [vw1]:



In 1922 the British gave 80% of their territory to the Arabs to a new country to be known as Transjordan (this was later changed to Jordan).

After World War I, religion played an important role for Arab and Jewish groups.

For Palestinian Arabs: Islam was central to Arab nationalist identity in opposing Zionism. Arabs felt the influx of European Jews infringed on the traditional status of Arab Muslims who had largely controlled the region for centuries, known as "Dar al-Islam" (house of Islam). They aimed to defend Islamic sacred sites and cultural legacy.

Under traditional Islamic law and practices, discriminatory status was accorded to "dhimmis" - non-Muslims such as Christians and Jews living under Islamic rule. They faced restrictions and extra taxation. After World War I, Zionist rhetoric of Jews as equals threatened the privileged position Arabs expected, creating tensions. Many local Arabs were incensed over Zionist Jews who refused second-class "dhimmi" treatment.

Key Arab figures like the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin al-Husseini framed the growing conflict as Muslims protecting their religious rights and way of life from encroaching Zionist Jews. He incited religious fervor during the 1920's and then around the 1929 riots by claiming the al-Aqsa mosque was threatened. Arab religious leaders issued fatwas against selling land to Zionists as they thought losing control over the land resonated as undermining Arab cultural identity and power.

A homeland for the Jewish people is an idea rooted in Jewish history, religion, and culture. Most had been expelled by the Romans in 70CE. Since then, Jews had told each other '*next year in Jerusalem*' but few went. Those who did could largely be found in Safed, Tiberius, Hebron and Jerusalem.

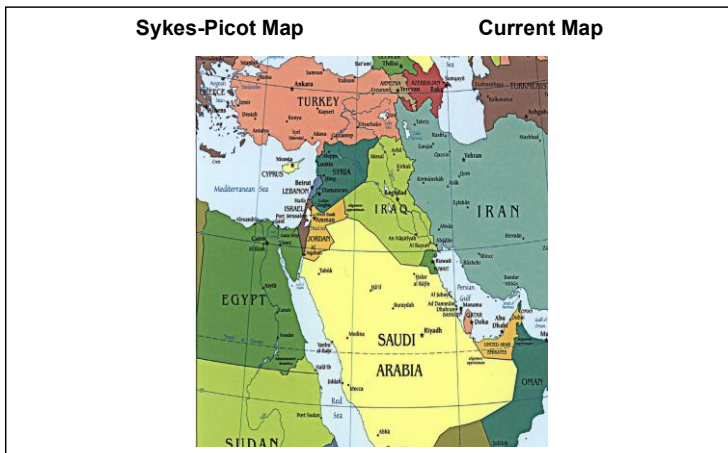
Modern legal attempts to establish a national homeland for the Jewish people began in 1839 with a petition by Moses Montefiore to Sa'id of Egypt for a Jewish homeland in the region of what is now Palestine.

ALIYAH AND EFFECT OF NAZI PERSECUTION ON THE JEWS

The first wave of modern Jewish migration is known as the First Aliyah, began in 1881, as Jews fled pogroms in Eastern Europe.[2] Theodor Herzl is credited with founding political Zionism, a movement aimed at establishing a Jewish state in the Land of Israel, so offering a solution to the Jewish question.

Jewish agriculture saw the creation of two new forms of economic organisation – the kibbutz and moshav.

The Arabs objected to the waves of Jews who came to settle in Palestine. Each was called 'Aliyah' (going



up) by the Jews and looked at in horror by the Arabs.

In September 1922 Britain gave 80% of their territory to the Arabs which became known as Transjordan (currently shortened to Jordan).

From the 1880s to the 1930s, most Jewish land purchases were made in the coastal plain, the [Jezree](#)

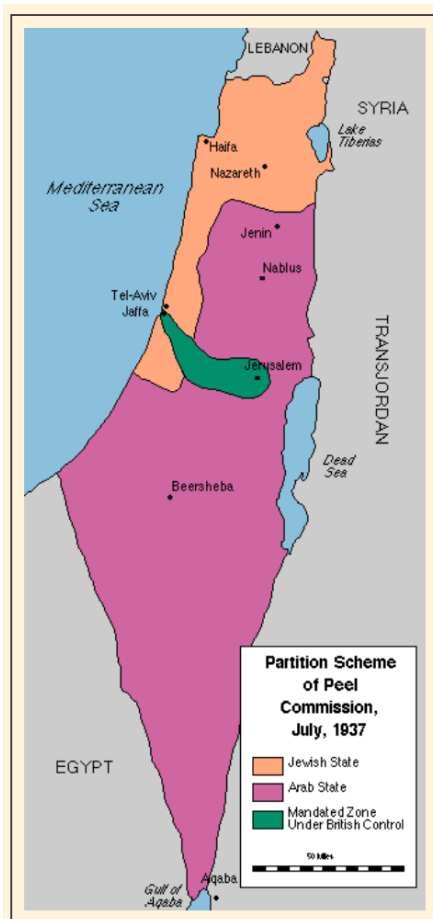
[Valley](#), the [Jordan Valley](#) and to a lesser extent the Galilee.^[12] due to a preference for land that was cheap, without tenants,^[12] and were sparsely populated. This was due to Ottoman power in rural areas which began to diminish in the seventeenth century. Many moved to more centralized areas to secure protection against the Bedouin tribes and because the soil was covered in a layer of sand, making it impossible to grow the staple crop of Palestine, corn. As a result, this area remained uncultivated and underpopulated.

The sparse Arab population meant that Jewish purchase was made without engendering a massive displacement and eviction of Arab tenants",^[12] Purchase was made from Arab landowners living in areas such as Damascus who were able to charge far more than if they had sold it to Arabs. Land improvement led to Arab annoyance at what the Jews had achieved.

The Arab attitude was reinforced by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem **Mohammad Amin al-Husayni** who was a strong antisemite eventually expelled by the British in 1937. He spent World War 2 in Nazi Germany where he created a deal with Hitler to expel the Jews from Palestine after its conquest by the Germans.

Arab nationalism after World War1 can be seen by the following events

1920 Nebi Musa Riots	1922 Boycotts of Israel
1929 Arab Revolt	1936-9 Arab Revolt



In 1936, in response to the Arab Revolt against the British mandatory government and repeated Arab violence against Jews, the British government appointed a commission of inquiry headed by Lord Peel to assess the cause of the Arab riots and the performance of the Mandate government. In July 1937, the Peel Commission recommended for the first time a partition of the land into a Jewish state and an Arab state alongside an international zone, stretching from Jerusalem to Jaffa, that would remain under British mandatory authority. The Commission also recommended an exchange of land and population between the two states.

(Map from Jewish Virtual Library)

The Peel partition plan was rejected by the Arabs, and was widely debated amongst the Jewish leadership. In 1938, the British declared the plan unimplementable.

Peel Proposal to Split Palestine Between the Jews and Arabs, while Maintaining an International Area

In 1937, the Peel Commission proposed dividing the British Mandate territory of Palestine between Jews and Arabs. This controversial plan sought to resolve growing violence, but failed as neither side was satisfied:

Key Points of the Peel Partition Proposal:

The British territory would be split into 3 entities: an Arab state, a Jewish state, and a neutral British zone around key cities and holy sites like Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

- The Arab state would incorporate central and western Palestine including Gaza, Jaffa, and other towns. It had an Arab majority and access to important ports.
- The Jewish state was allocated eastern Palestine including the Sea of Galilee and the Jezreel and Jordan river valleys. The semi-arid land was well suited for Zionist settlement and agriculture.
- The British zone was strategically located between the two proposed states, containing 400,000 Arabs and a minority Jewish population.

Jewish leaders accepted the plan as a basis for a homeland. Arab leaders entirely opposed the loss of any land or having 500,000 Jews in their midst as proposed.

As seen on the map, neither proposed state offered territorial continuity, interspersing settlement. Rejected by Arabs and abandoned by the British in 1939 on the eve of war, it nonetheless established partition as an option, and later influenced the 1947 UN partition plan.

During this period there had been

1882-1918 62,500 Jewish immigrants

1919-1948 482,857 Jewish immigrants

Between 1929 and 1939, with the rise of Nazism in Germany, a new wave of 250,000 immigrants arrived; the majority of these, 174,000, arrived between 1933 and 1936, after which increasing restrictions on immigration by the British made immigration clandestine and illegal, called *Aliyah Bet*. The Fifth Aliyah was again driven almost entirely from Europe, mostly from Central Europe (particularly from Poland, Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia), but also from Greece. Some Jewish immigrants also came from other countries such as Turkey, Iran, and Yemen.

A successful paramilitary campaign was carried out by [Zionist](#) underground groups against British rule in [Mandatory Palestine](#) from 1944 to 1948. The tensions between the Zionist underground and the British mandatory authorities rose from 1938 and intensified with the publication of the [White Paper of 1939](#). The Paper outlined new government policies to place further restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchases, and declared the intention of giving independence to Palestine, with an Arab majority, within ten years. Though [World War II](#) brought relative calm, tensions again escalated into an armed struggle towards the end of the war, when it became clear that the [Axis powers](#) were close to defeat.

The [Haganah](#), the largest of the Jewish underground [militias](#), which was under the control of the officially recognised Jewish leadership of Palestine, remained cooperative with the British. But in 1944 the [Irgun](#), an offshoot of the Haganah, launched a [rebellion](#) against British rule, thus joining [Lehi](#), which had been active against the authorities throughout the war. Both were small, dissident militias of the [right-wing Revisionist](#) movement. They attacked police and government targets in response to British immigration restrictions.

Commented [vw2]:

THE ARAB WORLD HAS FORSAKEN THE PALESTINE CAUSE

The Palestinians have lost their Arab allies
amid Arab regimes' increasing authoritarianism and dependence on the US.

ALJAZEERA Imad K Harb is Director of Research and Analysis at Arab Center Washington DC.
14 May 2023



Palestinian demonstrators carry a symbolic coffin reading: "the resolutions of the Arab League" during a protest against normalisation with Israel, in Ramallah, the occupied West Bank on June 24, 2019
[File: Reuters/Mohamad Torokman]

When Zionist forces embarked on the ethnic cleansing of Palestine to establish the state of Israel in 1948, the plight of the Palestinian people shocked the Arab world. It angered Arab nations who were amid their own anti-colonial struggles and elevated the liberation of Palestine to the status of a pan-Arab cause. But as Arab regimes, both republican and monarchical, became more established, the draw and the utility of the Palestinian cause for Arab leaders slowly began to fade.

The abandonment of the Palestinians is directly related to the undemocratic nature of Arab regimes and their continuing political dependence on the United States, the main supporter of Israel and its settler-colonial project.

Indeed, Palestine today appears like an afterthought in the Arab political order, with many states making peace and normalising relations with Israel, the only colonial state left in the Arab world, while blaming Palestinian political disunity for this sad state of affairs.

THE AUTOCRATIC CENSORSHIP OF PALESTINE

The Palestinian cause has always been, and indeed remains, a central issue in the Arab public's imagination and a symbol of the exercise of free expression. Regimes used to find it difficult to limit their people's desire to voice their solidarity with Palestinians living as second-class citizens inside Israel, under occupation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and in squalid conditions in refugee camps across the region.

But with Arab governments becoming more authoritarian and entrenched, the space for advocacy for the Palestinian cause has shrunk. Increasing control over public discourse, growing censorship and escalating political violence have silenced dissent across the Arab world.

Not only are calls for democratic change stymied in Arab countries, but expressions of solidarity with Palestinians are also being met with vicious repression, as regimes seek to control the narrative of the Palestinian cause.

The aim of this monopolisation of how the Palestinian struggle is addressed in public is to cover up the fact that Arab regimes have increasingly abandoned making any significant political effort to help the Palestinians. Instead, official support has been limited to deceptive rhetoric and symbolic gestures so as to avoid confrontation with Israel and its backer, the United States.

While this has been detrimental to the Palestinian struggle and popular Arab solidarity with it, it has enabled Arab governments to devote their energies to their own survival amid the myriad of political, economic, and social ailments they face.

SURRENDERING PALESTINE TO THE US

In 1977, a few months before his fateful trip to Israel, which paved the way for a US-brokered peace deal between Egypt and Israel, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat quipped that Washington held “99 percent of the cards” in the Middle East. The collapse of the Soviet Union 14 years later solidified that reality and Arab dependence on the US has only grown since then.

Seeking to maintain good relations with the superpower, Arab regimes allowed Washington – Israel’s main supplier of weapons and military support – to take control of peace efforts in the region. This left no space for Arab leaders to positively impact decision-making regarding the Palestinians.

Slowly but surely, the rights of the Palestinian people dropped down the priority list of Arab governments which saw the US as the main guarantor of their political survival and narrow economic interests.

The normalisation process between some Arab states and Israel that was shepherded by the Trump administration is just another iteration of the gradual Arab abandonment of the Palestine cause. It culminated in the so-called Abraham Accords, which despite all the promises of “benefits” for the Palestinians, held nothing of value for them or their national aspirations.

In fact, the Arab normalisation with Israel has only emboldened the Zionist state in its oppression of the Palestinians and paved the way for the de facto annexation of the occupied West Bank.

The escalating settler violence against the Palestinian people, including the recent [pogrom against the Palestinian village of Huwara](#), and the open calls by Israeli officials for ethnic cleansing are a reflection of how empowered and confident Israel feels that it can commit war crimes and crimes against humanity with complete impunity.

The most that Arab governments have done in response to Israeli aggression is issue futile condemnations and protests.

THE EXCUSE OF PALESTINIAN DISUNITY

Since 2007, when Hamas took over the government in the Gaza Strip from the Palestinian Authority (PA) controlled by Fatah, Palestine has not had a unified political leadership. Worse still, the PA, which is the internationally recognised body governing the occupied Palestinian territories, has lost almost all of its legitimacy in the eyes of the Palestinian population.

Palestinian political disunity has not only worked in Israel’s favour but has also become a convenient excuse for Arab regimes not to advance the Palestinian cause. They cynically reason that if Palestinians –

who have over the years demanded to be independent in deciding their own affairs – do not have a unified stance, why and how could the Arab world work on their behalf?

At the same time, most Arab regimes have thrown their weight behind the PA, which has become an extension of the authoritarian Arab political order. It refuses to make itself accountable to the Palestinian people and at the same time does almost nothing to advocate for the Palestinians' national and human rights.

By blaming Palestinian disunity and pretending to support Palestinians through the PA, Arab regimes have essentially abdicated their responsibility towards them.

Abandoned by Arab leaders, the Palestinians find themselves with no apparent allies in their struggle against an increasingly brutal occupation and apartheid. The US-brokered "peace process" is clearly a farce and international institutions, such as the United Nations, remain too weak – or rather intentionally weakened by the US – to take any meaningful action on their behalf.

And yet, the status quo of Palestinian dispossession, life under a brutal occupation, and Israeli apartheid is not sustainable. The Palestinian question continues to be the open wound of the Arab world.

Today, it appears that only the Palestinians can lead their own struggle for liberation – one that is based on a national project that includes all sectors of Palestinian society inside Palestine and in the diaspora and that is based on the ideas of inclusion, pluralism, and democracy.

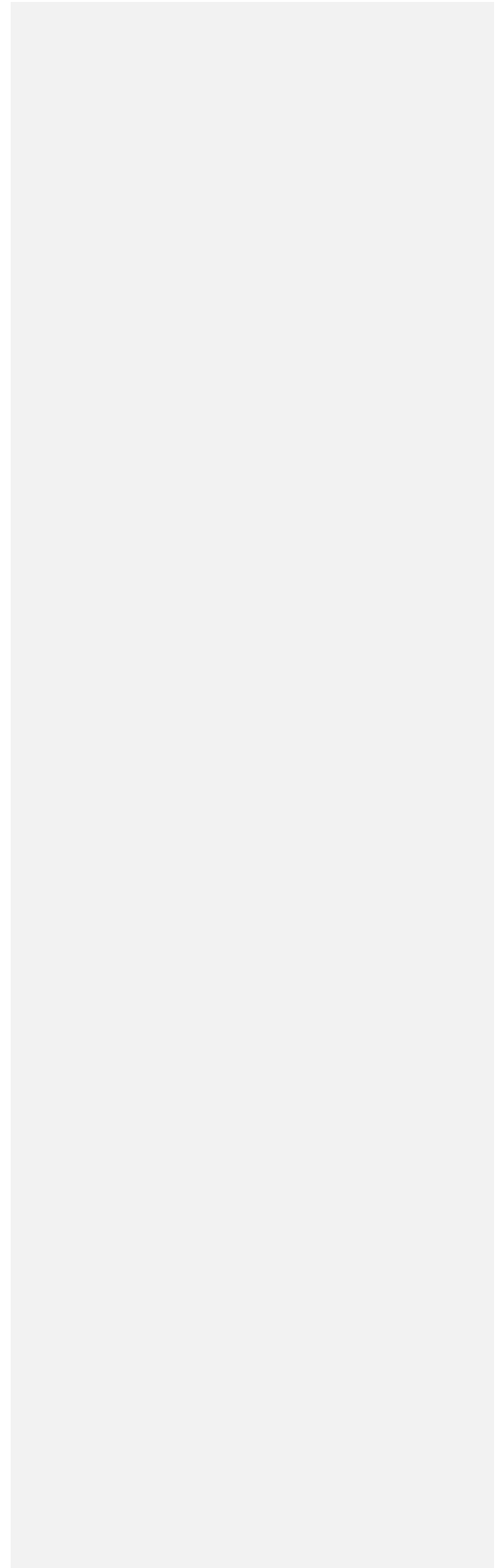
The ossified Palestinian national institutions must be renewed through open democratic processes, including the election of new leadership that could take over from old and failed elites. The Palestinian civil society, educational and social institutions, the youth movement, and other organisations must also be involved in developing this national project.

As for the Arab political order, it has shown that it is unreliable, so long as it is authoritarian and dependent on the very power that sustains Israel and supports its policies. Indeed, the Arab world may one day be capable of playing a positive role in helping Palestinians; but that will only be possible after it undergoes its own process of democratisation and renewal.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial stance.

PART D

THE CREATION OF ISRAEL



UN PARTITION OF PALESTINE, 1947



A United Nations investigative committee in Palestine proposed that a UN Partition Vote should be held. After the UN Partition Plan resolution was passed on 29 November 1947, the civil war between Palestinian Jews and Arabs eclipsed the previous tensions of both with the British. However, British and Zionist forces continued to clash throughout the period of the civil war up to the termination of the British Mandate for Palestine and the Israeli Declaration of Independence on 14 May 1948.

On 3 September 1947 the United Nations Partition Plan was accepted with 33 votes For, 13 Against and 10 Abstained. This was accepted by the Jews who created their portion as

Israel and was rejected by the Arabs who invaded Israel the following day.

The final stage of the 1948 Palestine war formally began following the end of the British Mandate for Palestine at midnight on 14 May 1948; the Israeli Declaration of Independence had been issued earlier that day, and a military coalition of Arab states entered the territory of British Palestine in the morning of 15 May.

After the war the country fought over was split into Israel, Gaza under the Egyptians (this is where the Egyptian army was based at the end of the war) and Jordan who had occupied the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

The War created about 750,000 Palestinian Refugees. Most of those going north settled in what had become Jordanian territory, those going south in Gaza in Egyptian territory.

The definition of what is meant by 'Palestinian Refugee' can be found in the original UN definition of Part J6 of "*persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict.*"

In the 1960's this was modified to **UNRWA services are available to all those living in its area of operations who meet this definition, who are registered with the Agency and who need assistance. The descendants of Palestine refugee males, including adopted children, are also eligible for registration. When the Agency began operations in 1950, it was responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees. Today, some 5.9 million Palestine refugees are eligible for UNRWA services.**

Refugees from the rest of the world are the responsibility of the UNHCR, created the year after UNWRA, but excludes the area for which UNWRA is responsible.

After a short period all Palestinian Jews and the million exiled Jews from Arab countries never immediately asked for reparations. This occurred 50 years later due to the pressure exerted by Arab refugees. The problem could have been solved as 'population transfer' as happened in India.

Camps are set up by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to accommodate Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA, who fled or were expelled during the 1948 Palestinian exodus after the 1948 Arab–Israeli War or in the aftermath of the Six-Day War in 1967, and their patrilineal descendants.^[4] There are **68 Palestinian refugee camps**, 58 official and 10 unofficial, ten of which were established after the Six-Day War while the others were established in 1948 to 1950s.

JEWISH EXILES FROM ARAB COUNTRIES TO ISRAEL

The Arab League decided that Palestinian refugees, after the Arab Nakba/Jewish Creation of Israel to use them to make forceful demands from Israel for what they had lost. Jewish exiles from the Arab countries made no conflicting demands.

70 years later, after 18 months of research, first claims on behalf of Jewish exiles, were made in 2019, of \$35b from Tunisia, \$15b from Libya, for Jewish assets

It was virtually ignored by Arab countries to whom it was sent and was not followed up by the Israeli government

The Israel government were primarily 'Ashkenazi' Jews from Europe while the exiles were 'Sefardim', Jews primarily from North Africa, who were primarily concerned with starting new lives in Israel.

The result that there were immediate demand for reparations by Arab Refugees, but action by the Jews only started fifty years later.

"JEWISH NAKBA" NARRATIVE *From [Wikipedia](#)

Comparison with the Palestinians' Nakba

In response to the Palestinian Nakba narrative, the term "Jewish Nakba" is sometimes used to refer to the exodus of Jews from Arab countries in the years and decades following the creation of the State of Israel.

Israeli columnist [Ben Dror Yemini](#), himself a Mizrahi Jew, wrote:^[307]

However, there is another Nakba: the Jewish Nakba. During those same years [the 1940s], there was a long line of slaughters, of pogroms, of property confiscation and of deportations against Jews in Islamic countries. This chapter of history has been left in the shadows. The Jewish Nakba was worse than the Palestinian Nakba. The only difference is that the Jews did not turn that Nakba into their founding ethos. To the contrary.

Professor [Ada Aharoni](#), chairman of The World Congress of the Jews from Egypt, argues in an article entitled

"What about the Jewish Nakba?" that exposing the truth about the exodus of the Jews from Arab states could facilitate a genuine peace process, since it would enable Palestinians to realize they were not the only ones who suffered, and thus their sense of "victimization and rejectionism" will decline.^[308]

Additionally, Canadian MP and international human rights lawyer [Irwin Cotler](#)

has referred to the "double Nakba". He criticizes the Arab states' rejectionism of the Jewish state, their subsequent invasion to destroy the newly formed nation, and the punishment meted out against their local Jewish populations:^[309]

The result was, therefore, a double Nakba: not only of Palestinian-Arab suffering and the creation of a Palestinian refugee problem, but also, with the assault on Israel and on Jews in Arab countries, the creation of a second, much less known, group of refugees—Jewish refugees from Arab countries.


DISPLACEMENT OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES 1948-2012

For Detail go to

[OVERVIEW – JEWISH EXILES FROM ARAB COUNTRIES](#)

World Jewish Congress

Displacement of Jews from Arab Countries 1948-2012							
	1948	1958 ¹	1968 ²	1976 ³	2001 ⁴	2005 ⁵	2012 (est.)
Aden	8,000	800	0	0	0	0	0
Algeria	140,000	130,000	3,000	1,000	0	0	0
Egypt	75,000	40,000	2,500	400	100	100	75
Iraq	135,000	6,000	2,500	350	100	50 ⁶	50
Lebanon	5,000	6,000	3,000	400	100	~50 ⁷	40
Libya	38,000	3,750	500	40	0	0	0
Morocco	265,000	200,000	50,000	18,000	5,700	3,500	3,000
Syria	30,000	5,000	4,000	4,500	100	100	50
Tunisia	105,000	80,000	10,000	7,000	1,500	1,100	1,000
Yemen	55,000	3,500	500	500	200 ⁸	200	100
TOTAL	856,000⁹	475,050	76,000	32,190	7,800	5,110	4,315

+ Iran from 150,000 to 10,000 (Fronsdorff)	TOTAL (app) 1,600,000
Prepared for Use by the 	September 10, 2012

¹ American Jewish Yearbook (AJY) v.58 American Jewish Committee.
² AJY v.58; AJY v.71
³ AJY v.78
⁴ AJY v.101
⁵ AJY v.105
⁶ Saad Jawad Qindici, head of the political bureau of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, as reported in *The Jerusalem Post*, July 18, 2005
⁷ *Time Magazine*, February 27, 2007.
⁸ AJY v.102
⁹ Roumani, *The Case 2: BGCJCS Force* Vol.1, No.1

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THE ARAB CITIZENS OF ISRAEL

Arabs represent one-fifth of Israel's population. Systemic discrimination, outbreaks of communal violence, and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict continue to strain their ties with Israel's Jewish majority.

[COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS](#) Kali Robinson Oct 26 2023

Summary

- Arabs comprise just over 20 percent of Israel's population. The vast majority are citizens, while those in Jerusalem, which Israel claims as its capital, are considered "permanent residents."
- Arab citizens have the same legal rights as Jewish Israelis, but they tend to live in poorer cities, have less formal education, and face other challenges that some experts attribute to structural discrimination.
- Arab political parties have long struggled to gain representation in Israel's government, and many Arabs have expressed alarm at the leadership of right-wing Jewish politicians, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

INTRODUCTION

Israel was founded as a homeland for the Jewish people seventy-five years ago, but a significant portion of its population has always been Arab. Today, Arab citizens of Israel—distinct from Arabs living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip—remain the country's largest minority group. They have the same legal rights as Jewish citizens, but many continue to face discrimination and socioeconomic disadvantages. Meanwhile, the two communities are divided by the long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as religious and cultural differences. A flare-up of intercommunal violence in 2021 highlighted that the simmering tensions can sometimes boil over.

WHO ARE THE ARAB CITIZENS OF ISRAEL?

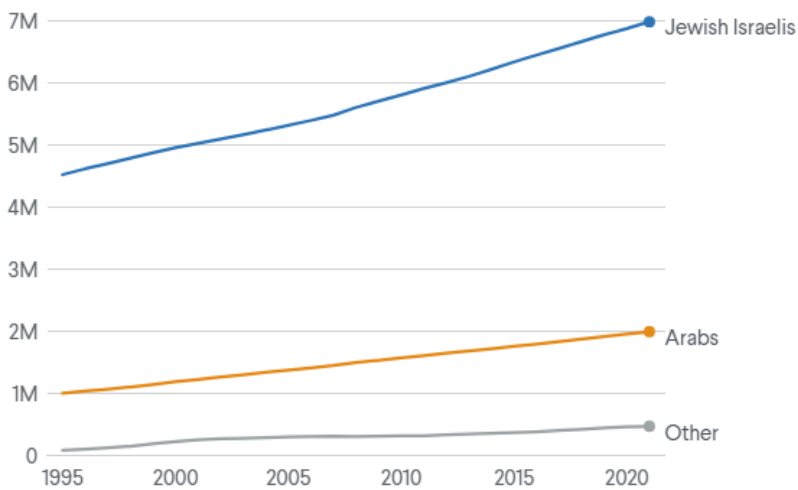
The overwhelming majority are the remnants and descendants of the Arabs who stayed within the borders Israel declared after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. The state of Israel was created out of the British Mandate of Palestine, then home to about [1.2 million Arabs](#). After more than 700,000 of them were expelled or departed in what Arabs call the *nakba*, or catastrophe, about [150,000 remained](#) [PDF] within the portion of mandatory Palestine that would become the state of Israel, and they automatically became citizens,

forming about half of Israel's population.* Unlike Jewish citizens, Arab citizens of Israel were subjected to [military rule](#) until 1966.

A year later, Israel annexed East Jerusalem and offered the hundreds of thousands of Arabs living there Israeli citizenship, but most of them declined. The [United Nations considers](#) [PDF] the land occupied Palestinian territory. Arabs who live there today are counted in both Israeli and Palestinian censuses, and few are Israeli citizens.

Today, about 21 percent of Israel's population is Arab, totaling some two million people. All are citizens of Israel except the few hundred thousand in East Jerusalem, who are permanent residents, a designation that affords them fewer rights. The majority of Arab citizens are Sunni Muslims, though there are many Christians and [also Druze](#), who more often embrace Israeli identity. They share history, culture, and family ties with Palestinian Arabs living in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, as well as Palestinian diaspora populations in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and other countries.

Jewish Israelis Make Up Larger Portion of Israel's Population



Source: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics.

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Israeli government documents and media refer to Arab citizens as “Arabs” or “Israeli Arabs,” and some Arabs use those terms themselves. Global news media usually use similar phrasing to distinguish these residents from Arabs who live in the Palestinian territories. Most members of this community self-identify as [“Palestinian citizens of Israel,”](#) and some identify just as “Palestinian” to indicate their rejection of Israeli identity. Others prefer to be referred to as Arab citizens of Israel for various reasons. The phrase is used in this Backgrounder, as it represents the current political and legal reality.

WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

Most Israeli cities have either majority Jewish or Arab populations. Towns in the Galilee, in the north; in the so-called Little Triangle, along the 1949 Armistice Line that delineated Israel's border with the West Bank; and in the southern Negev region have mostly Arab populations. About one-tenth of Arabs live in the seven "mixed" cities where populations are more intermingled, such as Haifa and Lod (the Hebrew name for the city Arabs call al-Lyd). Still, even these areas often have mostly Jewish or Arab neighborhoods. This geographic separation persists for multiple reasons, including the legacy of restrictions imposed at the time of Israel's founding, which outlined where non-Jewish Israelis could live and work; a split education system in which most schools teach according to either Arab or Jewish language and cultural norms; and prevailing prejudices against integrating neighborhoods.

Today, nearly all Arab towns and cities have lower standards of living than those that are predominantly Jewish. This separation and socioeconomic disparity fuel intense debate. Some analysts argue that Israel has effectively established an unjust, segregated society. "Technically you don't have redlining, technically you don't have formal, Jim Crow-type segregation. In practice you do," says Palestinian American historian Rashid Khalidi. Conversely, Arik Rudnitzky of the Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) tells CFR that terms such as "segregation," "de facto separation," or the more conservative "voluntary separation" reflect individual worldviews, but that there is no expert consensus on how to characterize this separation. Experts such as Nachum Blass of the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel say many in both communities prefer separation, though Arabs are increasingly [moving to Jewish areas](#) to improve their standards of living, as well as to work and attend school.

Where Jewish and Arab Citizens of Israel Live

Populations of census regions as defined by the Israeli government, 2020

Where Jewish and Arab Citizens of Israel Live

Populations of census regions as defined by the Israeli government, 2020

(Editors Note go to [Council on Foreign Relations](#) for a map)

DO THEY HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES AS OTHER ISRAELIS?

Israel's declaration of independence recognizes the equality of all the country's residents, Arabs included, but equality is not explicitly enshrined in [Israel's Basic Laws](#), the closest thing it has to a constitution. Some rights groups argue that dozens of laws [indirectly or directly discriminate](#) against Arabs.

Israel's establishment as an explicitly Jewish state is a primary point of contention, with many of the state's critics arguing that this by nature casts non-Jews as second-class citizens with fewer rights. The 1950 [Law of Return](#), for example, grants all Jews, as well as their children, grandchildren, and spouses, the right to move to Israel and automatically gain citizenship. Non-Jews do not have these rights. Palestinians and their descendants have no legal right to return to the lands their families held before being displaced in 1948 or 1967.

Another major difference is that, unlike the vast majority of Jewish Israelis, Arab citizens do not have to serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the country's military. They can still enlist, and some do,

especially Druze and Circassians, but some are stigmatized in their communities as a result. Yet, not enlisting can significantly disadvantage them both socially and economically. For instance, many Israelis make important and lasting personal connections with their fellow citizens through the IDF, and they also receive many financial benefits, such as education assistance and discounted permits for building homes and owning land.

Statistics [from IDI show](#) that Arab citizens of Israel continue to face structural disadvantages. For example, poorly funded schools in their localities contribute to their attaining lower levels of education and their reduced employment prospects and earning power compared to Israeli Jews. [More than half](#) of the country's Arab families were considered poor in 2020, compared to 40 percent of Jewish families. Socioeconomic disparities between Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens are [less pronounced](#) in mixed cities, though a government audit in July 2022 [found Arabs had less access](#) to municipal services in those cities.

Disparities Between Israel's Jewish and Arab Households in 2019

	Jewish Israelis	Arab citizens of Israel
Median monthly income (U.S. dollars)	\$4,652	\$3,048
Average years of schooling of economic head of household (years)	14.4	11.7
Average age of economic head of household	50	42
Average number of people per household	3.1	4.4

Source: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics.

COUNCIL on
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RELATIONS

Arab citizens' concerns about inequality mounted after Israel passed its [nation-state law](#) in 2018. Among other provisions, the law removed Arabic as an official language but gave it a "special status," declared Israel the nation-state of the Jewish people, and said the Jewish people have a unique "right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel." The language left many Arabs feeling that their rights as citizens were being undermined.

To address disparities in the so-called Arab sector, in 2021, the government approved a \$9 billion, five-year plan to boost employment, improve health-care services and housing, and develop infrastructure, among other goals. It followed a similar initiative by the previous prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who [designated more funding](#) for the sector than any of his predecessors, even as he frequently incited anger toward the Arab community.

WHAT ABOUT PALESTINIANS IN EAST JERUSALEM?

Israel claims all of Jerusalem as its capital and includes all of the city's residents in its censuses, though this territorial claim is not recognized by the United Nations and is disputed by Palestinians, who view East Jerusalem as the future capital of their independent state.

A preponderance of the Arabs living in East Jerusalem identify as Palestinian and [are not citizens](#) of any country. Most Arabs there declined Israel's offer of citizenship after the 1967 Six Day War and were instead given permanent resident status. Today, about [362,000 Palestinians](#) in East Jerusalem hold this status. Permanent residency grants them many of the same rights as Israeli citizenship, including the ability to live, work, and travel freely within Israel, as well as access to health insurance and social services. However, they do not get Israeli passports (many have Jordanian ones) and cannot vote in national elections. They can lose their residency status and be deported if the Israeli government determines that East Jerusalem is no longer their primary residence or that they or a family member engage in anti-Israel or terrorist activities. Likewise, as of February 2023, Israel can [deport and revoke the citizenship](#) of Arabs who are convicted of terrorism and receive financial aid from the Palestinian Authority. Since 1967, more than [fourteen thousand East Jerusalem Palestinians](#) have had their residency revoked, according to a compilation of data from several government agencies by Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem. Some international and Palestinian rights groups argue that the revocations count as forcible transfers, which are illegal under international law.

HOW ARE ISRAEL'S ARABS REPRESENTED IN POLITICS?

Arab citizens of Israel have historically [distrusted Israeli elections](#), a sentiment that has limited their voter turnout and resulted in their never having held more than fifteen seats in the 120-seat Knesset, Israel's parliament. At first, their main representation in the Knesset came from the Arab-Jewish Communist Party. Independent Arab parties failed to gain traction for decades and were often banned or shut down for refusing to recognize the state of Israel. Although there are still efforts to [limit their political power](#), such as right-wing lawmakers' attempts to ban Arab parties from elections, Arab parties currently hold ten seats in the Knesset.

Arabs have sat on the Supreme Court and worked in the [foreign service](#), with a handful serving as ambassadors since 1995. Many have served as mayors, judges in lower courts, and in civil service positions.

Historically, Arab citizens have had little influence on Israeli policy. Their grievances about problems in their municipalities, such as rampant crime and a lack of building permits, have often been ignored, and until mid-2021, their independent parties were never welcomed into a governing coalition. This changed when the United Arab List (UAL), also known as Ra'am, joined an ideologically diverse mix of parties that unseated Prime Minister Netanyahu in a narrow vote. Its inclusion highlighted the growing power of the Arab vote, as both Netanyahu and his opponents had courted the UAL and its supporters despite its Islamist ideology. However, no ministers in the new government were from the UAL, a concession the party reportedly made in exchange for [several reforms](#) benefiting Arab communities.

For several years, the main Arab parties—Balad, Hadash, Ta'al, and the UAL—united to form a coalition called the Joint List. But the UAL split off in 2021 and Balad the following year, just before the general elections.

In late 2022, Netanyahu returned to power and formed what many observers characterized as the most right-wing government in Israel's history, to the alarm of many of the country's Arabs. Only Hadash-Ta'al and the UAL won enough votes in that year's election to enter the Knesset, with five seats each. Netanyahu

brought several ultraconservative, formerly fringe politicians into his cabinet, including new National Security Minister [Itamar Ben Gvir](#), who was previously convicted of inciting racism against Arabs and supporting a terrorist organization. However, Netanyahu has sought to downplay concerns that his government will infringe on minorities' rights.

WHAT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH JEWISH ISRAELIS?

Despite a long history of mistrust rooted in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel's Arab and Jewish citizens work and live together peaceably in many areas. For example, Israel's health-care system has [long employed](#) Arab and Jewish medical professionals side by side. Their cooperation was especially visible when the country confronted the COVID-19 pandemic, as health workers treated patients from each other's communities.

Some far-right Jewish leaders have gained influence in recent years and tried to portray Arab citizens of Israel as [a security threat](#), linking them to extremist groups, such as [Hamas](#), that reject Israel's legitimacy. Tensions boiled over into a surge of sectarian violence in 2021 that included [efforts to evict](#) Palestinians in East Jerusalem, police raids at Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the outbreak of a days-long war between Hamas and Israel, and violent mob attacks against both communities. The discord quickly reverberated across Israel, particularly [in Lod](#) and other mixed cities. Three months later, an [IDI survey](#) [PDF] of Arab and Jewish citizens found that the damage to intercommunal relations was "less significant than might be expected." Still, only about half of Jewish Israelis thought it was better for the two communities to live together, compared to around 80 percent of Arab citizens, and the underlying tensions that sparked the 2021 conflict remain unresolved. "Clearly the combination of [events in Jerusalem](#) stirred [Arab citizens of Israel] to reassert who they are against the power of a state and society whose very existence denies them their reality," [CFR Middle East expert Steven A. Cook wrote](#) amid the upheaval. "On the other side, of course, are Israelis who are deeply committed to the historical connection between Jews and the land...[Jewish] Israelis will neither give up nor apologize for who they are, which is how [surges in Arab-Jewish violence] become possible."

Recommended Resources

The Israel Democracy Institute [assesses the damage](#) [PDF] from the 2021 outbreak in violence between Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens.

On *The President's Inbox* podcast, CFR's Steven A. Cook and James M. Lindsay discuss the causes of the 2021 [turmoil in Jerusalem](#).

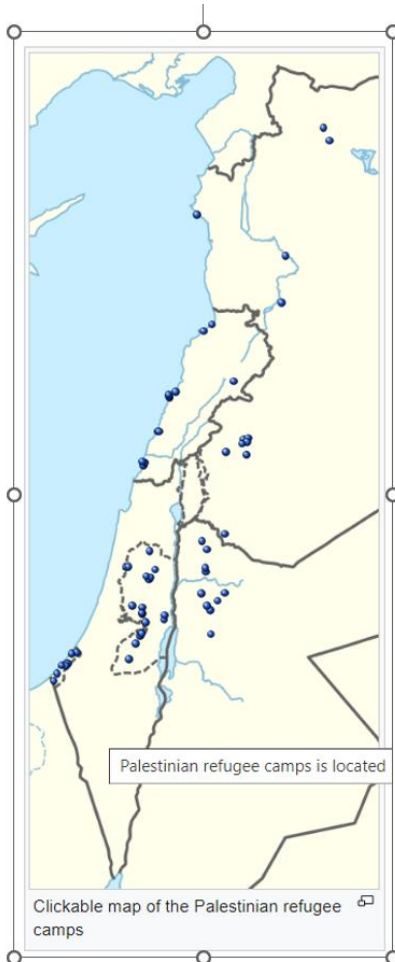
This Backgrounder explains [U.S. policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict](#).

The Jewish Telegraph Agency's Ben Sales looks at the de facto [segregation of Jews and Arabs](#) in Israel.

In this article for Bloomberg, the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington's Hussein Ibish argues that [marginalizing Arab citizens of Israel](#) will push them toward the Palestinian national movement.

PALESTINE REFUGEE CAMPS

Whilst only a third of registered Palestinian refugees live within the boundaries of the refugee



camps.^[3] Palestinian refugees "show extraordinary social and economic integration outside the camps and informal gatherings".^[4] Many Palestinian refugees live in adjacent or nearby "gatherings", defined as "the geographic area, outside the official camps, which is home to a minimum 15 Palestinian households."^[5]

The total number of registered Palestine refugees has grown from 750,000 in 1950 to around 5 million in 2013.^[6]

Camps are set up by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to accommodate Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA, who fled or were expelled during the 1948 Palestinian exodus after the 1948 Arab–Israeli War or in the aftermath of the Six-Day War in 1967, and their patrilineal descendants.^[1] There are 68 **Palestinian refugee camps**, 58 official and 10 unofficial,^[2] ten of which were established after the Six-Day War while the others were established in 1948 to 1950s.

Whilst only a third of registered Palestinian refugees live within the boundaries of the refugee camps,^[3] Palestinian refugees "show extraordinary social and economic integration outside the camps and informal gatherings".^[4] Many Palestinian refugees live in adjacent or nearby "gatherings", defined as "the geographic area, outside the official camps, which is home to a minimum 15 Palestinian households."^[5]

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ARAB LEAGUE BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

- (For full article go [Arab League Boycott of Israel](#)
see also
[Antisemitic boycotts](#)
 - [Boycotts of Israel](#)
 - [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions](#)

The **Arab League boycott of Israel** is strategy adopted by the Arab League and its member states to boycott economic and other relations between Arabs and the Arab states and [Israel](#) and specifically stopping all trade with Israel which adds to that country's economic and military strength.^[1] A secondary boycott was later imposed, to boycott non-Israeli companies that do business with Israel, and later a tertiary boycott involved the blacklisting of firms that do business with other companies that do business with Israel.

An official organized boycott of the [Yishuv](#) (pre-state Jewish community in Palestine) was adopted by the Arab League in December 1945, and persisted against Israel after [its establishment in 1948](#).^[2] The boycott was designed to weaken Jewish industry in Palestine and to deter [Jewish immigration to the region](#).^[3]

[Egypt](#) (1979), the [Palestinian Authority](#) (1993), [Jordan](#) (1994), [Bahrain](#) (2020), [UAE](#) (2020), [Sudan](#) (2020) and [Morocco](#) (2020), signed peace treaties or agreements that ended their participation in the boycott of Israel. [Mauritania](#), which never applied the boycott, established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1999. [Algeria](#) and [Tunisia](#) do not enforce the boycott.^[4] In 1994, following the [Oslo Peace Accords](#), the [Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf](#) (GCC) states, ended their participation in the Arab boycott against Israel.^[5] The move prompted a surge of investment in Israel, and resulted in the initiation of joint cooperation projects between Israel and Arab countries.^[5] In 1996, the GCC states recognized that total elimination of the boycott is a necessary step for peace and economic development in the region.^[4] There are still residual laws banning relations with Israel. For example, until 2021 [Sudan](#) had a law, dating back to 1958, that forbade establishing relations with Israel, and outlawed business with citizens of Israel as well as business relationships with Israeli companies or companies with Israeli interests. The law also forbade the direct or indirect import of any Israeli goods.^{[6][7]}

While in its heyday, the Arab boycott had a moderate negative impact on Israel's economy and development, but also had significant negative effect on economic welfare in participating Arab countries, as the result of a deterioration in the foreign direct investment climate in the Arab world, and reduction in the volume of trade.^[5] In present days, the boycott is sporadically applied and ambiguously enforced, and therefore, no longer has significant effect on the Israeli or Arab economies.^[4]

Today, [Syria](#) and [Lebanon](#) are the only Arab states which actively enforce the primary boycott, although [Iran](#) (which is not a member of the Arab League) also enforces it as a member of the [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation](#). Syria is the only country to continue to enforce the secondary and tertiary boycotts.^[citation needed]

Boycotts in Mandatory Palestine

As part of the Arab opposition to the increasing Jewish presence in Mandatory Palestine, some Arab leaders sought to orchestrate [anti-Jewish boycotts](#) from 1922.^[8] The original boycott forswore any dealings with any Jewish-owned business operating in Mandatory Palestine. Palestinian Arabs "who were found to have broken the boycott ... were physically attacked by their brethren and their merchandise damaged" when [Palestinian Arabs rioted in Jerusalem](#) in 1929.^[9] Another, stricter boycott was imposed on Jewish businesses following the riots that called on all of Arabs in the region to abide by its terms. The Arab Executive Committee of the [Syrian-Palestinian Congress](#) called for a boycott of Jewish businesses in 1933, and in 1934 the Arab Labor Federation conducted a boycott as well as an organized picketing of Jewish businesses. In 1936, the Palestinian Arab leadership called on another boycott and threatened those who did not respect the boycott with violence. However, this boycott was unsuccessful as Jewish lawyers, physicians, and hospitals were too heavily integrated into Palestinian society.^[8]

First Arab League Boycott

On 2 December 1945, the newly formed Arab League, then comprising six members, issued its first call for an economic boycott of the Jewish community of Palestine. The declaration urged all Arab states (not just members) to prohibit the products and usage of the products of Jewish industry in Palestine. The declaration read:

Products of Palestinian Jews are to be considered undesirable in Arab countries. They should be prohibited and refused as long as their production in Palestine might lead to the realization of Zionist political aims.^[10]

In 1946, the Arab League established the Permanent Boycott Committee, based in Cairo, Egypt. After the [Partition Plan of Palestine](#) into Arab and Jewish states was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 29 November 1947, efforts to apply the boycott were intensified. However, the boycott was unsuccessful, as noted in the first annual report of the Boycott Committee, and trade between Palestine (the vast majority by Jews) and Arab states neighboring Palestine continued to thrive.

Following the [Israeli declaration of independence](#) on 14 May 1948, the Permanent Boycott Committee ceased to function upon the outbreak of war between Israel and surrounding Arab States on 15 May 1948, and the Arab League repeated its calls for a ban on all financial and commercial transactions with Palestinian Jews, boycotting the newly formed State of Israel. The Arab League cut off postal, telegraphic, and radio communications with Israel, and Arab states imposed a land, sea, and air [blockade](#) on the fledgling state.

The Boycott Committee moved to Damascus, Syria in 1949, and called upon Arab states to set up national boycott offices. Later measures adopted by the Committee included requiring those selling goods to Arab states to provide a certificate of origin to prove the goods were not manufactured by Palestinian Jews, the allocation of 50% of the value of goods confiscated in this manner to customs officials, the prohibition by Arabs of the use of Jewish banks, insurance companies, contractors, and transport in Palestine. Member states of the Arab League began implementing these resolutions through legal and administrative measures.

ZIONISM AND JUDAISM: ARE THEY INTERDEPENDENT?

Judaism needs Zionism because it enabled Jews to return and to establish a state; this allows Jews to have a national identity and engage in fulfilling commandments that can only be done in

[THE JERUSALEM POST](#) Moshe Dann June 5 2021

Although some people – such as those in the Reform and Reconstruction movements, “Progressives,” and some left-wing Israelis – claim to support Judaism and Zionism, in fact, they do not. For example, on May 15, 2021, a large group of students, mostly from Reform and Reconstructionist colleges, published a letter condemning Israel for “apartheid” and for “violating human rights” in its war against Hamas terrorists in the Gaza Strip. This explains why some [Jews in America have turned their backs on Zionism](#), Israel and Judaism.

Zionism is connected to Judaism because it provides a text, the Jewish Bible, or *Tanach* (The Five Books of Moses, Prophets, and other writings), as well as libraries of theological and philosophical writing that define and mandate the Land of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people.

Judaism needs Zionism because it enabled Jews to return and to establish a state; this allows Jews to have a national identity and engage in fulfilling *mitzvot* (commandments) that can only be done in Eretz Yisrael. This is the basis for creating the Third Jewish Commonwealth/Civilization.

Although they need each other to become fulfilled, Zionism and Judaism can and do exist separately and independently in the Diaspora. One can practice Judaism without being a Zionist, just as one can be secular or a non-Jewish Zionist.

Without Judaism, however, Zionism is limited to its existence as a state; without Zionism, Judaism is a religion like many others in nation-states throughout the world. Although valid and important identity markers, they miss two essential ingredients: revelation and redemption. This is what defines the difference between *galut* (exile) and *geulah* (salvation) – the parameters of Jewish historical consciousness.

Although the concept of God is central to Judaism, the interaction with human input is essential. This dynamic is in the everyday life of a Jew: prayer, Shabbat, celebrating the New Moon and holidays, especially Shavuot, which has no specific date and is totally dependent on human calculation.

Judaism and Zionism are not only rooted in commitment and continuity, they are also expressions of human creativity.

Among [Jews who reject authentic Judaism](#) and Zionism (as the legal and historic right of the Jewish people to their homeland in Eretz Yisrael), many are opposed to the right of Jews to live in Judea and Samaria and eastern Jerusalem. Some support a terrorist-led Palestinian state in the name of “social justice,” “ending the occupation” or “battling colonialism and apartheid.”

Concerned with “human rights” and “injustices to Palestinians,” they support anti-Israeli and antisemitic organizations such as the Jewish Voice for Peace, J Street, Human Rights Watch, and B’Tselem, oblivious to the dangers of a Palestinian state and Palestinianism that call for Israel’s destruction.

The vital link between Judaism and Zionism, therefore, represents the essence of the Jewish people. That is what is at stake.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANTI-SEMITISM AND ANTI-ZIONISM?

[BBC NEWS](#) 29 April 2016

The UK Labour Party has been at the centre of a row over anti-Semitism, including its relationship to anti-Zionism. What do these terms actually mean?

- Anti-Semitism is "hostility and prejudice directed against Jewish people" (OED).
- Zionism refers to the movement to create a Jewish state in the Middle East, roughly corresponding to the historical land of Israel, and thus support for the modern state of Israel. Anti-Zionism opposes that.
- But some say "Zionist" can be used as a coded attack on Jews, while others say the Israeli government and its supporters are deliberately confusing anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism to avoid criticism.

Former London Mayor Ken Livingstone was suspended from Labour following a series of remarks about Israel, including the suggestion that Hitler supported Zionism before the Holocaust.

It follows the suspension of Bradford West MP Naz Shah after it emerged she had once suggested, among other things, that Israel should be moved to the United States. The new president of the National Union of Students, Malia Bouattia, has also been heavily criticised for remarks she made about Zionists.

Many in the Jewish community say the use of "Zionist" as a term of abuse reflects a rising tide of bigotry and racism directed at Jews. Image caption,

The Labour peer Lord Levy **told** the BBC's Newsnight: "There can be criticism of the state of Israel, but anti-Semitism - using the word 'Zionist' as another form of anti-Semitism - frankly can no longer be tolerated."

Others - including Livingstone - argue anti-Zionism is not the same as anti-Semitism, and that it's wrong to mix up anti-Jewish prejudice with legitimate disagreement with the actions of the Israeli state.

However, critics of anti-Zionists point out that sometimes particularly harsh criticism of Israel goes further than disagreement with policies, but rather denies the right of the Jewish state to exist.

Speaking on The Daily Politics, the former London Mayor said: "Don't confuse anti-Semitism with criticism of the Israeli government policy and treatment of the Palestinians."

It's a debate around which emotions run high. It's also obviously true that being a Zionist and being Jewish are not the same thing.



Neturei Karta believes
the true Jewish state will be
established with the coming
of the Messiah

Getty Images

There are Zionist critics of Israeli government policies, such as the occupation of the West Bank, the route of the separation barrier (which Israel is building in and around the West Bank and which it says is for security against Palestinian attackers, though Palestinian supporters see it as a device to grab land) and the building of settlements.

Equally, there was Jewish opposition to the Zionist movement, which sought to establish a Jewish homeland, long before the state of Israel was declared in 1948. Today fringe ultra-Orthodox groups such as Neturei Karta oppose the state of Israel because they believe the true Jewish state will only be established with the coming of the Messiah.

Likewise, some **make the point** that Zionism is a political project supported by plenty of non-Jews, including Western governments and many US evangelical Christians.

But it's been widely argued that the term "Zionist" has, in some circles, become a code word for "Jew" and that bigotry against Jewish people has been expressed using the language of anti-Zionism.

WHAT IS ZIONISM?

- Political movement which emerged in 19th Century Europe aimed at countering anti-Semitism, and establishing a Jewish homeland
- In the Hebrew Bible the word "Zion" refers to Jerusalem, hence the movement's identification with the city and the land that surrounds it
- Balfour Declaration of 1917 gave British support to the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine
- Chaim Weizmann, the president of the Zionist Organisation, was elected the first president of Israel in 1949

Khadim Hussain, a former Lord Mayor of Bradford, was suspended from Labour after he shared a Facebook post that **referred to** "the six million Zionists that were killed by Hitler". Alex Chalmers, a former co-chair of Oxford University Labour Club, **said** some members regularly used the word "zio" - despite it being regarded as an ethnic slur.

Bouattia was attacked after it emerged that in 2011, she **co-wrote a blog** for a Friends of Palestine campaign group saying that "the University of Birmingham is something of a Zionist outpost in British Higher Education". She has also attacked "Zionist-led media outlets" - which critics said reflects anti-Semitic myths about Jewish conspiracies to control the media.

On the other hand, it's regularly claimed that accusations of anti-Semitism are deployed to silence criticism of the Israeli government or to further other political ends.

Pia Feig, of Manchester Jews for Justice for Palestinians, told BBC Radio 2's Jeremy Vine programme that "anti-Semitism has been used to quieten down and suppress my concern and the concern of other people for Palestinians".

In a statement after Livingstone's suspension, the Jewish Socialists' Group **said** accusations of anti-Semitism were being "weaponised" to attack the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn.

On the other hand, supporters of Israel ask why it's the Jewish state that is so widely singled out for criticism and not Iran, Russia, China or any other state attacked for their human rights record.

Baroness Julia Neuberger told the BBC's Jeremy Vine show that anti-Zionism implies "Jews have no right to self-determination, unlike other people". Mark Wallace, **writing for Conservative Home**, said in practice it would mean either allowing Israel to be wiped out by its enemies or "denying millions of Israeli Jews their home and deporting them".

Some anti-Zionists say Zionism itself is a racist ideology, because of how, in their view, the Palestinian people have been treated by the Israeli state. The Palestine Solidarity Campaign **says** it opposes all racism, including anti-Jewish prejudice and the "the apartheid and Zionist nature of the Israeli state" - although the PSC has itself been accused of racism for its anti-Zionist stance.

Bouattia said she rejected claims of prejudice, adding that "for me to take issue with Zionist politics is not me taking issue with being Jewish" and that "Zionist politics are held by people from a variety of different faiths, as are anti-Zionist politics".

Media caption,

Labour MP John Mann confronts Ken Livingstone as tensions rise over anti-Semitic claims.

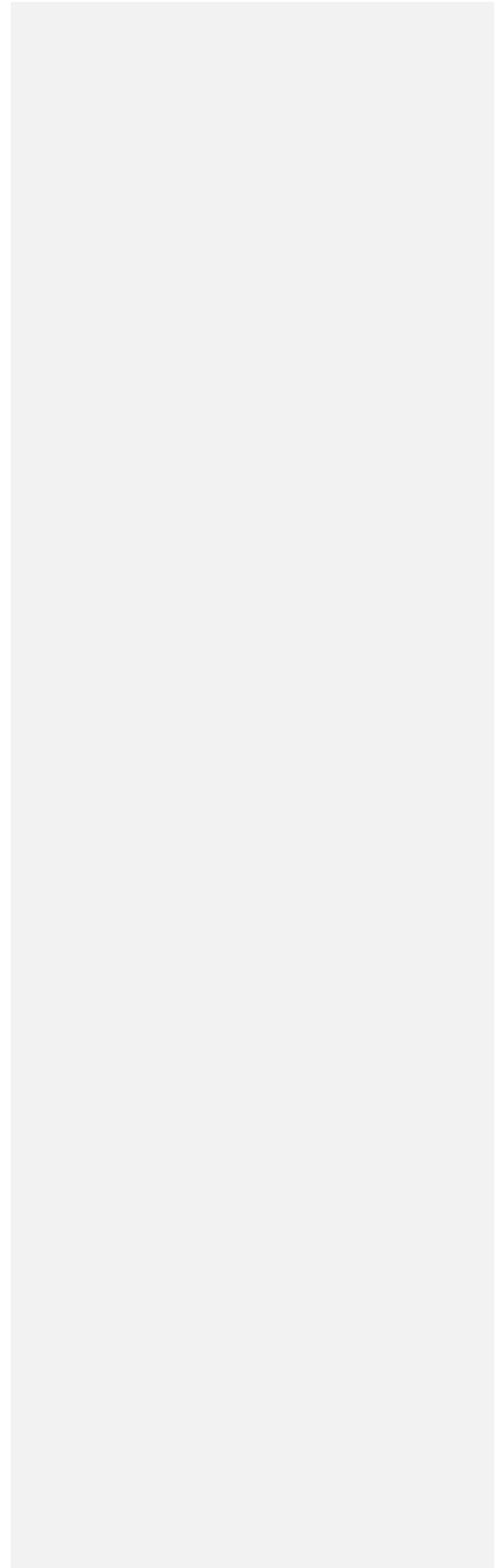
Accusations of anti-Semitism continue to dog Labour. Vicki Kirby was forced to stand down as a parliamentary candidate after tweeting that Hitler was a "Zionist God". She was re-instated and then suspended again. Gerry Downing, who was expelled from the party, **described** "Zionist politicians within the ruling classes of America and Europe".

Livingstone was accused of "rewriting history" over his remarks about Hitler supporting Zionism by Labour MP John Mann, chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group against Anti-Semitism.

Few would deny there are anti-Semites who call themselves anti-Zionists, or that it's possible to criticise Israel without being a racist or a bigot. But agreement on how exactly the two relate appears elusive.

PART E

STATE OF PALESTINE



STATE OF PALESTINE

WIKIPEDIA

	green).
Status	UN observer state under Israeli occupation Recognized by 143 UN member states
Proclaimed capital	Jerusalem (limited recognition) ^[a]
Administrative center	Ramallah
Largest city	Rafah ^b ^[3]
Official languages	Arabic
Demonym(s)	Palestinian
Government	Unitary semi-presidential republic ^[4] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Mahmoud Abbas^[c] • Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa • Speaker of the Parliament Aziz Dweik
Legislature	National Council
Formation	
• Declaration of Independence	15 November 1988
• UNGA observer state resolution	29 November 2012
• Sovereignty dispute with Israel	Ongoing ^d ^[5] ^[6]
Area	
• Total	6,020 ^[7] km ² (2,320 sq mi) (163rd)
• Water (%)	3.5 ^[8]
• West Bank	5,655 km ²
• Gaza Strip	365 km ² ^[9]
Population	
• 2023 estimate	5,483,450 ^[10] (121st)
• Density	731/km ² (1,893.3/sq mi)

Palestine (*Arabic:* فلسطين, *romanized:* *Filasṭīn*^[a]), officially the **State of Palestine** (*دولة فلسطين*, *Dawlat Filasṭīn*),^[a] is a country in the [southern Levant](#) region of West Asia. It encompasses two disconnected territories — the [West Bank](#) and the [Gaza Strip](#), collectively known as the [Palestinian territories](#) — within the larger [region of Palestine](#). The country shares its borders with Israel to north, west and south, Jordan to the east and Egypt to the southwest. It has a combined land area of 6,020 square kilometres (2,320 sq mi) while [its population](#) exceeds five million people. Its [proclaimed capital](#) is [Jerusalem](#) while [Ramallah](#) serves as its administrative center and [Rafah](#) is currently its largest city. [Arabic](#) is the official language. The majority of Palestinians [practice Islam](#) while Christianity also has a [significant presence](#).

The [region of Palestine](#) has played an important part in world history.

[Canaanites](#), [Israelites](#), [Assyrians](#), [Babylonians](#), [Persians](#), [Greeks](#), [Romans](#) and [Byzantines](#) all left their mark on the land. In addition to its historical significance, Palestine holds profound religious importance for [Judaism](#), [Christianity](#) and [Islam](#). Throughout history the region has experienced periods of coexistence and conflict between different religious and ethnic groups. Notably, during the Middle Ages, when Jewish communities faced [persecution](#), they found refuge and protection under [Muslim rule](#) and the wider [Islamic world](#). The [Ottoman Empire](#), which [controlled Palestine](#) from the 16th century until its [collapse](#) at the end of [World War I](#), provided a sanctuary for Jews fleeing persecution in Europe. The end of the Ottoman rule

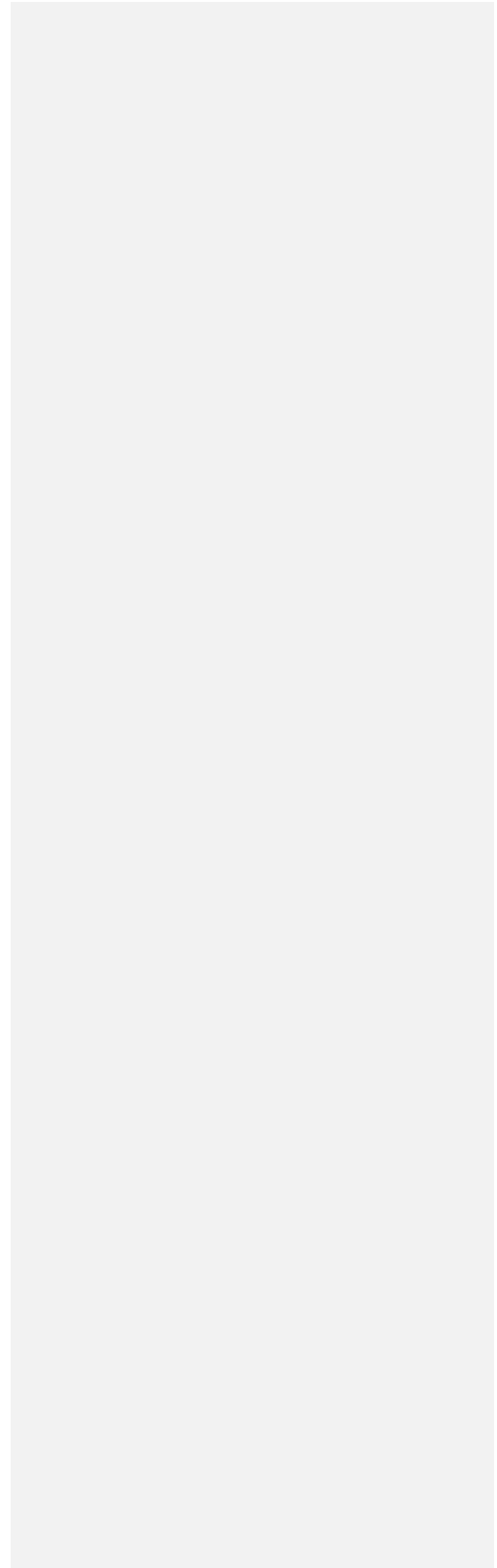
marked a new chapter in Palestine's history. Following World War I, the British Empire assumed control of the region under the [League of Nations](#) mandate. The [British Mandate for Palestine](#), established in 1920, brought significant changes to the political and social landscape of the area, setting the stage for [the conflicts and struggles that would follow](#).

The establishment of the [State of Israel](#) in 1948 was accompanied by a [war](#) which led to the [forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians](#) and created a large [refugee population](#).^[18] Subsequent [Arab–Israeli wars](#), including the [Six-Day War](#) in 1967, resulted in the Israeli [occupation of the West Bank](#) and the [Gaza Strip](#). On 15th November 1988, [Palestinian National Council](#), the legislative body of the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO) led by [Yasser Arafat](#), declared the establishment of Palestine. Signing of the [Oslo Accords](#) in the 1990s, negotiated between Israel and the PLO, created the [Palestinian Authority](#) (PA) to exercise partial control over parts of Palestine. In 2007, [internal divisions](#) between Palestinian political factions led to a [takeover of the Gaza Strip](#) by [Hamas](#). Since then, the West Bank has been governed in part by the Palestinian Authority, led by [Fatah](#), while the Gaza Strip has remained under the [control of Hamas](#). Israel has built [settlements](#) in both of the Palestinian territories since the start of the occupation. The settlements in the Gaza Strip were dismantled in Israel's [unilateral disengagement](#) in 2005, and approximately 670,000 [Israeli settlers](#) live in settlements in the West Bank. The international community considers Israeli settlements in Palestine [illegal under international law](#), but the Israeli government disputes this.

Currently, the biggest challenges to the country include the Israeli occupation, partial [blockade](#), [restrictions on movement](#), [expansion of Israeli settlements](#) and [settler violence](#), as well as an overall poor security situation. Unsolved remain the question of [Palestine's borders](#), the [legal and diplomatic status of Jerusalem](#), and the [return of Palestinian refugees](#). Despite these challenges, the country remains one of the most highly-educated countries in the [Arab world](#), maintains an emerging [economy](#), and sees frequent [tourism](#). As of May 2024, Palestine is [recognized as a sovereign state](#) by 143 out of 193 [member states of the United Nations](#). It is also a member of several [international organizations](#), including the [Arab League](#) and the [Organization of Islamic Cooperation](#). It has been a [non-member observer state of the United Nations](#) since 2012.^[19]

PART F

WARFARE AFFECTING
ISRAEL BEFORE GAZA



JUDEA AND ISRAEL MAJOR WARS AND OTHER CONFLICTS AFTER THEIR DESTRUCTION AND RESURECTION AFTER 2000 YEARS

During the 1st and 2nd centuries, Judaea became the epicenter of a series of unsuccessful large-scale Jewish rebellions against Rome, known as the Jewish-Roman Wars. The Roman suppression of these revolts led to wide-scale destruction, a very high toll of life and enslavement. The First Jewish-Roman War (66-73) resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple. Two generations later, the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-136) erupted. Judea's countryside was devastated, and many were killed, displaced or sold into slavery. Jewish presence in the region significantly dwindled after the failure of the Bar Kokhba revolt.^[13] Following the suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt, Jerusalem was rebuilt as a Roman colony under the name of [Aelia Capitolina](#), and the province of Judea was renamed Syria Palaestina.

On 14 May 1948—the day the last British forces left Haifa—the People's Council gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum and proclaimed the establishment of a Jewish state to be known as the State of Israel

The following day Israel was invaded by the Arabs

- The creation of Israel [1948 Arab–Israeli War \(November 1947 – July 1949\)](#) – Started as [6 months of civil war](#) between Jewish and Arab militias when the [mandate period in Palestine](#) was ending and turned into a [regular war](#) after the establishment of Israel and the intervention of several Arab armies. In its conclusion, a set of agreements were signed between Israel, [Egypt](#), [Jordan](#), [Lebanon](#), and [Syria](#), called the [1949 Armistice Agreements](#), which established the [armistice](#) lines between Israel and its neighbours, also known as the [Green Line](#).
- [Palestinian Fedayeen insurgency \(1950s–1960s\)](#) – Palestinian attacks and [reprisal operations](#) carried out by the [Israel Defense Forces](#) during the 1950s and 1960s. These actions were in response to constant [fedayeen](#) incursions during which Arab guerrillas infiltrated from [Syria](#), [Egypt](#), and [Jordan](#) into Israel to carry out [attacks](#) against [Israeli civilians and soldiers](#). The policy of the reprisal operations was exceptional due to Israel's declared aim of getting a high 'blood cost' among the enemy side which was believed to be necessary in order to deter them from committing future attacks.
- [Suez Crisis \(October 1956\)](#) – A military attack on Egypt by Britain, France, and Israel, beginning on 29 October 1956, with the intention to occupy the [Sinai Peninsula](#) and to take over the [Suez Canal](#). The attack followed Egypt's decision of 26 July 1956 to nationalize the [Suez Canal](#) after the withdrawal of an offer by Britain and the United States to fund the building of the [Aswan Dam](#). Although the Israeli invasion of the Sinai was successful, the United States and USSR forced it to retreat. Even so, Israel managed to re-open the [Straits of Tiran](#) and pacified its southern border.
- [Six-Day War \(June 1967\)](#) – Fought between Israel and Arab neighbors [Egypt](#), [Jordan](#), and [Syria](#). The nations of [Iraq](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Kuwait](#), [Algeria](#), and others also contributed troops and arms to the Arab forces. Following the war, the territory held by Israel expanded significantly ("[The Purple Line](#)") : The [West Bank](#) (including [East Jerusalem](#)) from Jordan, [Golan Heights](#) from Syria, [Sinai](#) and [Gaza](#) from Egypt. (See also [Six Day War](#))

- **War of Attrition (1967–1970)** – A [limited war](#) fought between the Israeli military and forces of the [Egyptian Republic](#), the USSR, [Jordan](#), [Syria](#), and the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) from 1967 to 1970. It was initiated by the Egyptians as a way of recapturing the [Sinai](#) from the Israelis, who had been in control of the territory since the mid-1967 Six-Day War. The hostilities ended with a ceasefire signed between the countries in 1970 with frontiers remaining in the same place as when the war began.
- **Yom Kippur War (October 1973)** – Fought from 6 to 26 October 1973 by a coalition of Arab states led by [Egypt](#) and [Syria](#) against Israel as a way of recapturing part of the territories which they lost to the Israelis back in the Six-Day War. The war began with a surprise joint attack by Egypt and Syria on the Jewish holiday of [Yom Kippur](#). Egypt and Syria crossed the cease-fire lines in the [Sinai](#) and [Golan Heights](#), respectively. Eventually Arab forces were defeated by Israel and there were no significant territorial changes.
- **Palestinian insurgency in South Lebanon (1971–1982)** – PLO relocate to South Lebanon from Jordan and stage attacks on the Galilee and as a base for international operations. In 1978, Israel launches [Operation Litani](#) – the first Israeli large-scale invasion of Lebanon, which was carried out by the Israel Defense Forces in order to expel [PLO](#) forces from the territory. Continuing ground and rocket attacks, and Israeli retaliations, eventually escalate into the 1982 War.
 - **1982 Lebanon War (1982)** – Began on 6 June 1982, when the [Israel Defense Forces](#) invaded [southern Lebanon](#) to expel the PLO from the territory. The [Government of Israel](#) ordered the invasion as a response to the assassination attempt against Israel's ambassador to the United Kingdom, [Shlomo Argov](#), by the [Abu Nidal Organization](#) and due to the constant terror attacks on northern Israel made by the Palestinian guerrilla organizations which resided in Lebanon. The war resulted in the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon and created an [Israeli Security Zone](#) in southern Lebanon.
- **South Lebanon conflict (1985–2000)** – Nearly 15 years of warfare between the [Israel Defense Forces](#) and its Lebanese Christian [proxy militias](#) against Lebanese Muslim [guerrilla](#), led by Iranian-backed [Hezbollah](#), within what was defined by Israelis as the ["Security Zone" in South Lebanon](#).
- **First Intifada (1987–1993)** – First large-scale [Palestinian uprising](#) against Israel in the [West Bank](#) and the [Gaza Strip](#).
- **Second Intifada (2000–2005)** – Second [Palestinian](#) uprising, a period of intensified violence, which began in late September 2000.
- **2006 Lebanon War (summer 2006)** – Began as a military operation in response to the abduction of two Israeli reserve soldiers by the [Hezbollah](#). The operation gradually strengthened, to become a wider confrontation. The principal participants were Hezbollah paramilitary forces and the [Israeli military](#). The conflict started on 12 July 2006 and continued until a [United Nations-](#) brokered [ceasefire](#) went into effect on 14 August 2006, though it formally ended on 8 September 2006, when Israel lifted its naval [blockade](#) of Lebanon. The war resulted in a stalemate.
- **Gaza War or Operation Cast Lead (December 2008 – January 2009)** – Three-week armed conflict between Israel and [Hamas](#) during the winter of 2008–2009. In an escalation of the ongoing [Israeli–Palestinian conflict](#), Israel responded to ongoing rocket fire from the Gaza Strip with military force in an action titled "Operation Cast Lead". Israel opened the attack with a surprise air strike on 27

December 2008. Israel's stated aim was to stop such rocket fire from and the import of arms into Gaza. Israeli forces attacked military and civilian targets, police stations, and government buildings in the opening assault. Israel declared an end to the conflict on 18 January and completed its withdrawal on 21 January 2009.

- [2012 Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip](#) or **Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012)** – Military offensive on the Gaza Strip.^[1]
- [2014 Gaza War](#) or **Operation Protective Edge (July–August 2014)** – Military offensive on the Gaza Strip as a response to the collapse of American-sponsored peace talks, attempts by rival Palestinian factions to form a coalition government, the [kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers](#), the subsequent [kidnapping and murder of a Palestinian teenager](#), and increased rocket attacks on Israel by [Hamas](#) militants.^[2]
- [Syrian Civil War](#) and the [Iran–Israel conflict during the Syrian civil war](#).
- [2021 Israel–Palestine crisis](#) or **Operation Guardian of the Walls (May 2021)** – There were riots between Jews and Arabs in Israeli cities. Also Hamas in Gaza sent military rockets into Israel and [Iron Dome](#) intercepted most dangerous rockets. Israel attacked targets in Gaza.
- [2023 Hamas Led Attack on Israel](#)

THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION (PLO)

The Arab League established the PLO in 1964 in an effort to control Palestinian nationalism while appearing to champion their cause. Although it was supposed to represent the Palestinians, the PLO really represented the views of President Nasser of Egypt. Some major PLO attacks and actions against Israel include:

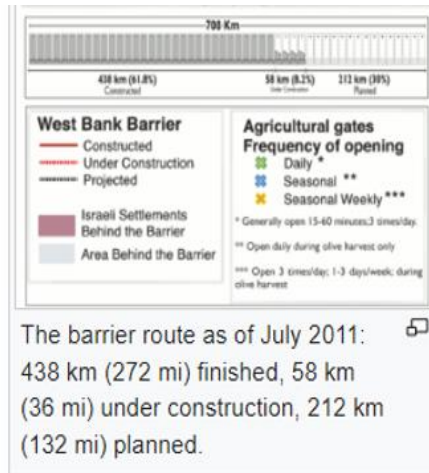
- 1968 hijacking of El Al flight 426 from Rome to Tel Aviv - PLO militants diverted the plane to Algiers. One Israeli was killed.
- 1970 Avivim school bus massacre - PLO militants killed 9 schoolchildren and 3 adults in a school bus with a roadside bomb near Avivim, Israel.
- 1972 Munich Olympics massacre - Black September (PLO faction) took 11 Israeli Olympic team members hostage, killing 2 immediately and then 9 more died during a failed rescue attempt.
- 1974 Kiryat Shmona massacre - PLO militants infiltrated Israel from Lebanon, killed 18 people (including 8 children) and injured over 30 in an apartment building.
- 1978 Coastal Road massacre - Fatah (PLO faction) hijacked a bus, killing 38 civilian passengers including 13 children and wounding over 70.
- Numerous plane hijackings in the 1960s-80s - Dozens of civilian airliners were hijacked by PLO and other Palestinian militants during this time frame.
- Ongoing terror attacks during the First and Second Intifadas from 1987-2005 which killed over 1,000 Israelis. Much of the violence was attributed to or praised by the PLO and affiliated groups like Fatah, PFLP, etc.

In summary, the PLO has carried out plane hijackings, school and residential massacres, international terror attacks like Munich, and endorsed or coordinated violent attacks against Israeli civilians over decades.

Black September also known as the **Jordanian Civil War**, was an armed conflict between Jordan, led by **King Hussein**, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), led by chairman **Yasser Arafat**. The main phase of fighting took place between 16 and 27 September 1970, aspects of the conflict continued until 17 July 1971 when they went to Lebanon.

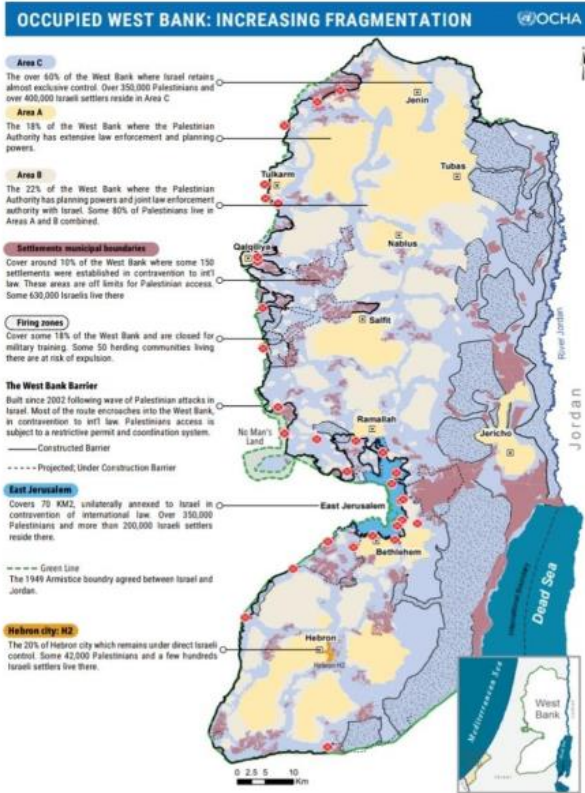
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THE SIX DAY WAR LED JERUSALEM AND THE WEST BANK TO BECOMING OCCUPIED BY ISRAEL



The **West Bank Wall** and the **West Bank fence**, is a [separation barrier](#) built by [Israel](#) along the [Green Line](#) and inside parts of the [West Bank](#). It is a contentious element of the [Israeli–Palestinian conflict](#): Israel describes the wall as a necessary security barrier against [Palestinian political violence](#), whereas [Palestinians](#) describe it as an element of [racial segregation](#) and a representation of [Israeli apartheid](#).^{[3][4][5]} At a total length of 708 kilometres (440 mi) upon completion, the route traced by the barrier is more than double the length of the Green Line, with 15% of its length running along the Green Line or inside Israel, and the remaining 85% running as much as 18 kilometres (11 mi) inside the West Bank, effectively isolating about 9% of the land and approximately 25,000 Palestinians from the rest of the [Palestinian territory](#).

THE OSLO ACCORDS



It clarifies the divisions of the West Bank according to the Oslo Accords, as well as the route of the separation barrier, and other things (Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)).

The Oslo Accords are a pair of agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): the Oslo I Accord, signed in Washington, D.C., in 1993;^[1] and the Oslo II Accord, signed in Taba, Egypt, in 1995.^[2] They marked the start of the **Oslo process**, a peace process aimed at achieving a peace treaty based on Resolution 242 and Resolution 338 of the United Nations Security Council, and at fulfilling the "right of the Palestinian people to self-determination". The Oslo process began after secret negotiations in Oslo, Norway, resulting in both the recognition of Israel by the PLO and the recognition by Israel of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and as a partner in bilateral negotiations. **Among the notable outcomes of the Oslo Accords was the creation of the [Palestinian National Authority](#),**

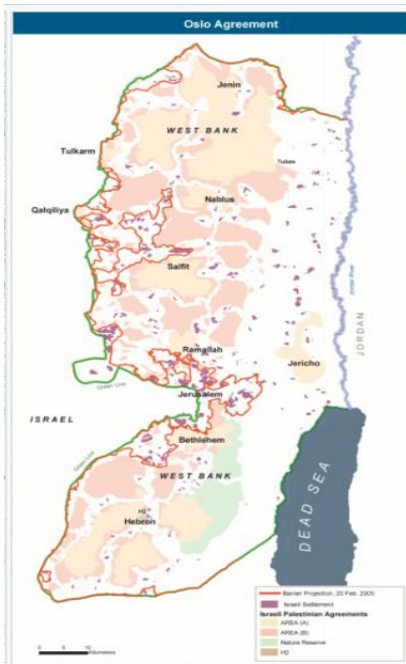
which was tasked with the responsibility of conducting limited Palestinian self-governance over parts of the [West Bank](#) and the [Gaza Strip](#); and the international acknowledgement of the PLO as Israel's partner in permanent-status negotiations about any remaining issues revolving around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Bilateral dialogue stems from questions related to the international border between Israel and a future [Palestinian state](#): negotiations for this subject are centred around [Israeli settlements](#), the [status of Jerusalem](#), Israel's maintenance of control over security following the establishment of Palestinian autonomy, and the [Palestinian right of return](#). **The Oslo Accords did not create a definite Palestinian state.**

A large portion of the Palestinian population, including various [Palestinian militant groups](#), staunchly opposed the Oslo Accords; Palestinian-American philosopher Edward Said described them as a "Palestinian [Versailles](#)".^[4] Oslo II created the **Areas A, B and C** in the West Bank. **The Palestinian Authority was given some limited powers and responsibilities in the Areas A and B and a prospect**

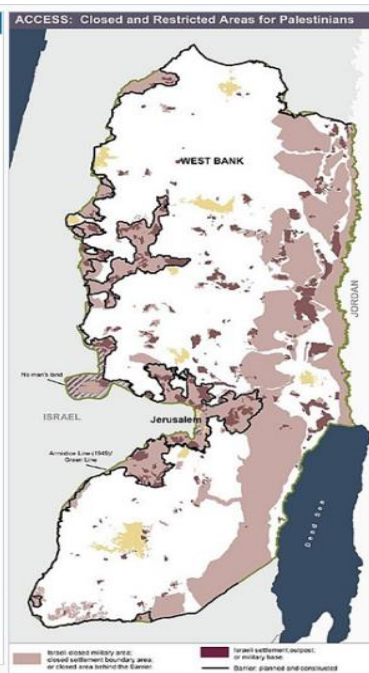
of negotiations on a final settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The Accord was officially signed on 28 September 1995.

Oslo II created the Areas A, B and C in the West Bank. The Palestinian Authority was given some limited powers and responsibilities in the Areas A and B and a prospect of negotiations on a final settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The Accord was officially signed on 28 September 1995.

Unfortunately Oslo III never happened and the West Bank could have been divided into a more logical split.

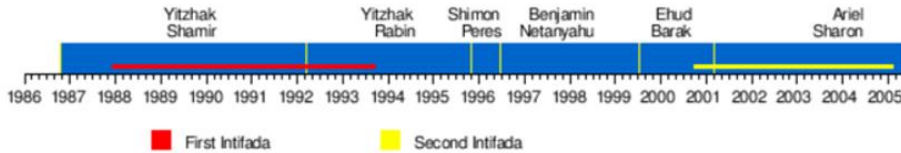


2005 map showing areas A and B along with nature reserves and Israeli settlements. The red line is a projected route of the [West Bank Barrier](#)



Map highlighting Area C where the access is closed and restricted to Palestinians. Darker areas are Israeli settlements and military posts within Area C.

THE INTAFADA, 1987-1993



The First Intifada or **First Palestinian Intifada**, also known simply as **the intifada** or **the intifadah**, was a sustained series of protests and violent riots carried out by [Palestinians](#) in the [Palestinian Territories](#) and [Israel](#). It was motivated by collective Palestinian frustration over Israel's military occupation of the [West Bank](#) and the [Gaza Strip](#), as it approached a twenty-year mark, having begun after Israel's victory in the [1967 Arab–Israeli War](#).^[9] The uprising lasted from December 1987 until the [Madrid Conference of 1991](#), though some date its conclusion to 1993, with the signing of the [Oslo Accords](#).^[5] **The Second Intifada**

The **Second Intifada** was a major [Palestinian](#) uprising against [Israel](#). The general triggers for the unrest are speculated to have been centred on the failure of the [2000 Camp David Summit](#), which was expected to reach a final agreement on the [Israeli–Palestinian peace process](#) in July 2000.^[13] Outbreaks of violence began in September 2000, after [Ariel Sharon](#), then the [Israeli opposition leader](#), made a provocative visit to the [Temple Mount](#) in [Jerusalem](#);^{[14][13]} the visit itself was peaceful, but, as anticipated, sparked protests and riots that Israeli police put down with rubber bullets and tear gas.^[15]

High numbers of casualties were caused among civilians as well as combatants. Israeli forces engaged in gunfire, [targeted killings](#), and tank and aerial attacks, while the Palestinians engaged in [suicide bombings](#), gunfire, [stone-throwing](#), and [rocket attacks](#).^{[16][17]} Palestinian suicide bombings were a prominent feature of the fighting and mainly targeted Israeli civilians, contrasting with the relatively less violent nature of the [First Intifada](#).^{[18][19][20][21][22]} With a combined casualty figure for combatants and civilians, the violence is estimated to have resulted in the deaths of approximately 3,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis, as well as 64 foreigners.^[23]

Many consider the [Sharm el-Sheikh Summit of 2005](#) to have marked the end of the Second Intifada.^[24] Palestinian president [Mahmoud Abbas](#) and Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon agreed that all [Palestinian factions](#) would stop all acts of violence against all Israelis everywhere, while Israel would likewise cease all of its military activity against all Palestinians everywhere. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the "[roadmap for peace](#)" process. Sharon agreed to release 900 of the 7,500 [Palestinian prisoners of Israel](#) at the time,^[27] and further agreed to withdraw from towns in the [West Bank](#) that had been re-occupied by Israeli forces during the Second Intifada.

PART G

**EFFECT ON ISRAEL AND
GAZA OF WARFARE AFTER
HAMAS' ELECTION IN 2006**

BRITISH CONTROL OF GAZA

Palestine	
1920–1948	
	
Flag	Public Seal
	
Mandatory Palestine in 1946	

Go to the source document which is

[Mandatory Palestine](#)

to use the links in the frames below.

Mandatory Palestine in 1946	
Status	Mandate of the United Kingdom
Capital	Jerusalem
Common languages	English, Arabic, Hebrew
Religion	Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Bahá'í Faith, Druze faith
Demonym(s)	Palestinian
High Commissioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1920–1925 (first) Sir Herbert L. Samuel • 1945–1948 (last) Sir Alan Cunningham
Legislature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary body of the Muslim community Supreme Muslim Council • Parliamentary body of the Jewish community Assembly of Representatives
Historical era	Interwar period Second World War Cold War
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandate assigned 25 April 1920 • Britain officially assumes control 29 September 1923 • Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel 14 May 1948 	
Area	
• Total	25,585.3 km ² (9,878.5 sq mi) ^[1]
Currency	Egyptian pound (until 1927) Palestine pound (from 1927)
ISO 3166 code	PS
Preceded by	Succeeded by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupied Enemy Territory Administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Israel  Jordanian annexation of the West Bank All-Palestine Protectorate 
Today part of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Israel  Palestine 

Gaza Strip قطاع غزة <i>Qitā' Ghazza</i>	
1959–1967	
 Flag	 Coat of arms
 <p style="text-align: center;">Gaza Strip after the 1949 Armistice.</p>	
Status	Area occupied by the United Arab Republic (UAR)/Arab Republic of Egypt
Capital	Gaza
Common languages	Arabic
Religion	Sunni Islam
Government	Military occupation
Historical era	Cold War
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established • Disestablished • Egyptian claim relinquished 	1959 1967 17 September 1978
Currency	Egyptian pound

Egypt, Israel. And Gaza

GAZA, DISPUTE FOR CONTROL BETWEEN FATAH AND HAMAS

V · T · E	Gaza–Israel conflict	[hide]
	Timeline · Palestinian rocket attacks (Lists)	
	Gaza cross-border raid · Summer Rains · Autumn Clouds · Gaza–Egypt border breach · Hot Winter · 2008–2009 Gaza War · March 2010 clashes · Southern Israel cross-border attacks · March 2012 clashes · Pillar of Defense · 2014 war (Shuja'iyya · Beach bombing incidents) · 2018 border protests · November 2018 clashes · May 2019 clashes · November 2019 clashes · 2021 Israel–Palestine crisis · 2022 clashes · 2023 clashes	

Politics of the Gaza Strip	
	
Covenant	[show]
Government	[show]
National symbols	[show]
Legislative Council	[show]
Elections	[show]
Administrative divisions	[show]
Foreign relations	[show]
	V · T · E

Go to the source document which is

[Mandatory Palestine](#)

to use the links in these frames



The **Gaza Strip**, or simply **Gaza**, is a political entity and the smaller of the two [Palestinian territories](#) (the other being the West Bank). On the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, Gaza is bordered by Egypt on the southwest and Israel on the east and north.

The British Empire relinquished its control of Palestine during the 1948 Palestine war (the first of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict) and was captured by Egypt during the war. when Gaza became a refuge for many Arabs. During the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel occupied the Gaza strip and the Sinai from Egypt imitating a decades-long military occupation of the Palestinian territories. The mid-1990s Oslo Accords established the Palestinian Authority to govern both territories, which it did under Palestinian nationalist party Fatah until that party's electoral defeat in 2006 to militant [Sunni Islamic](#) organization [Hamas](#). That group took over the [governance of Gaza](#) in [a battle the next year](#), subsequently warring with Israel.

Israel [unilaterally withdrew its military forces](#) from Gaza and dismantled [its settlements](#) in 2005 and implemented a temporary [blockade of Gaza](#) that same year; the blockade, supported by Egypt through restrictions on its land border with Gaza, became indefinite after the 2007 [Hamas takeover of the governance of Gaza](#). Despite the

Israeli disengagement, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and many

human-rights organizations continue to consider Gaza to be held under Israeli military occupation, due to what they consider Israel's effective military control over the territory; Israel disputes that it occupies the territory and the [Israeli Supreme Court](#) has found that since the disengagement Israel no longer occupies Gaza.^{[13][14][15]} The land, sea, and air blockade prevents people and goods from freely entering or leaving the territory, resulting in a \$17 million loss in exports and leading to Gaza often being called an "open-air prison".^{[16][17]} The UN, as well as at least 19 human-rights organizations, have urged Israel to lift the blockade.^[18]

The Gaza Strip is 41 kilometres (25 miles) long, from 6 to 12 km (3.7 to 7.5 mi) wide, and has a total area of 365 km² (141 sq mi).^{[19][20]} With around 2 million [Palestinians](#)^[21] on approximately 365 km² (141 sq mi) of land, Gaza has a high [population density](#) (comparable to that of [Hong Kong](#)).^{[22][23]} The majority of Palestinians in Gaza, which contains eight refugee camps, are descendants of refugees who [fled or were expelled](#) from the area that became Israel after the [1948 Arab–Israeli War](#).^[24] Sunni Muslims make up most of Gaza's population, with a [Palestinian Christian](#) minority. Gaza has an annual population growth rate of 1.99% (2023 est.), the [39th-highest](#) in the world.^[25] Gaza's unemployment rate is among the highest in the world, with an overall unemployment rate of 46% and a youth unemployment rate of ~70%, according to the [Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics](#), while the population has one of the highest literacy rates in the world.^{[26][27][28]}

FATAH-HAMAS CONFLICT

The **Fatah–Hamás conflict** (*Arabic*: النزاع بين فتح وحماس *an-Nizā' bayna Fataḥ wa-Ḥamās*) is an ongoing political and strategic conflict between [Fatah](#) and [Hamás](#), the two main Palestinian political parties in the Palestinian territories, leading to the [Hamás takeover of the Gaza Strip](#) in June 2007. The [reconciliation process](#) and unification of Hamas and Fatah administrations remains unfinalized and the situation is deemed a [frozen conflict](#).

The Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights has found that over 600 Palestinians were killed in the fighting from January 2006 to May 2007.^[14] Dozens more were killed or executed in the following years as part of the conflict.

Hamas was founded in 1987,^{[15][16]} soon after the [First Intifada](#) broke out, as an offshoot of the Egyptian [Muslim Brotherhood](#).^[17] It is a [Palestinian Sunni-Islamist](#) fundamentalist organization,^{[18][19]} which is regarded, either in whole or in part, as a [terrorist organization](#) by [several countries and international organizations](#), most notably by [Israel](#), the [United States](#) and the [European Union](#).^{[20][21][22]}

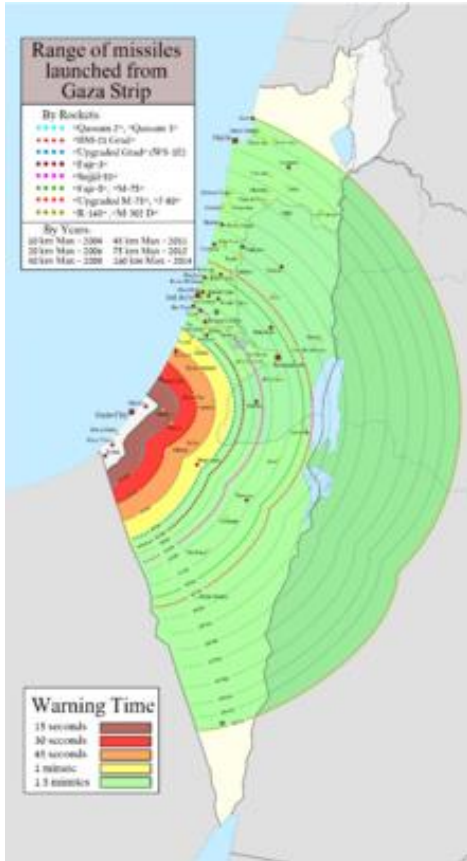
Tensions between Fatah and Hamas began to rise in 2005 after the death of [Yasser Arafat](#) in November 2004. After the [legislative election on 25 January 2006](#), which resulted in a Hamas victory, relations were marked by sporadic factional fighting. This became more intense after the two parties repeatedly failed to reach a deal to share government power, escalating in June 2007 and resulting in [Hamás' takeover of Gaza](#).^[23] A major issue was control over the border crossings, especially the [Rafah Border Crossing](#).

Hamas leader [Ismail Haniya](#) formed a [new PA government](#) on 29 March 2006 comprising mostly Hamas members. Fatah and other factions had refused to join, especially as Hamas refused to accept the Quartet's conditions, such as recognition of Israel and earlier agreements. As a result, a substantial part of the international community, especially Israel, the United States and European Union countries, refused to deal with the Hamas government and imposed sanctions. Following the abduction by Hamas militants of [Gilad Shalit](#) on 25 June 2006 in a cross-border raid via a tunnel out of Gaza, Israel detained nearly a quarter of PLC members and ministers on the West Bank during **August 2006**, intensified the boycott of Gaza and took other punitive measures.^{[24][25][26]}

PALESTINIAN ROCKET ATTACKS ON ISRAEL FROM 2000

[WIKIPEDIA](#)

OVERVIEW



RANGE OF MISSILES LAUNCHED FROM GAZA STRIP (10-160 KM).

In the cycle of violence, rocket attacks alternate with Israeli military actions. From the outbreak of the [Al Aqsa Intifada](#) (30 September 2000) through March 2013, 8,749 rockets and 5,047 mortar shells were fired on Israel,^[34] while Israel has conducted several military operations in the Gaza Strip, among them [Operation Rainbow](#) (2004), [Operation Days of Penitence](#) (2004), [Operation Summer Rains](#) (2006), [Operation Autumn Clouds](#) (2006), [Operation Hot Winter](#) (2008), [Operation Cast Lead](#) (2009), [Operation Pillar of Defense](#) (2012), [Operation Protective Edge](#) (2014), [Operation Guardian of the Walls](#) (2021) and [Operation Swords of Iron](#) (2023).

OVERVIEW

Attacks began in 2001. Since then (August 2014 data), almost 20,000 rockets have hit southern Israel,^{[35][36]} all but a few thousand of them since [Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip](#) in August 2005. Hamas justified these as

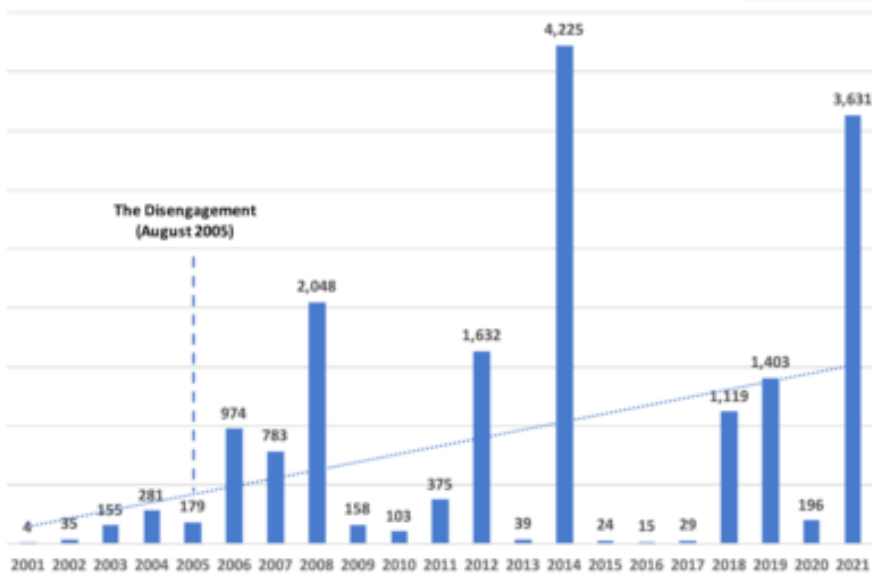


Figure 2. Number of rockets fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip by year.
 Sources: Ben Sasson-Gordis (2016) and Meir Amit Terrorism and Information Center (2017–2022).

Rocket attacks fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip, 2001-2021^[48]

counter-attacks to the [Israeli blockade of Gaza](#). The rockets have killed 28 people and injured hundreds more. The range of the rockets has increased over time. The original Qassam rocket has a range of about 10 km (6.2 mi) but more advanced rockets, including versions of the old Soviet Grad or Katyusha have hit Israeli targets 40 km (25 mi) from Gaza.^[37]

Some analysts see the attacks as a shift away from reliance on [suicide bombing](#), which was previously Hamas's main method of attacking Israel, as an adoption of the rocket tactics used by the Lebanese group [Hezbollah](#).^[38]

Participating Groups

All the Palestinian armed groups carry out rocket and mortar attacks, with varying frequency.^[28] The main groups are [Hamas](#), [Islamic Jihad](#),^[39] the [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#),^[40] the [Popular Resistance Committees](#),^[41] [Fatah](#),^[42] and the [Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine](#).^[28] In June 2007, Hamas took over from Fatah as the de facto governing authority in the Gaza Strip,^[43] while Fatah holds the presidency of the [Palestinian National Authority](#).

Islamic Jihad has involved other Palestinians in the activities, running summer camps where children were taught how to hold a Qassam rocket launcher.^[44] One Islamic Jihad rocket maker, [Awad al-Qig](#), was a science teacher and headmaster at a United Nations school. Christopher Guinness, a UNRWA spokesman,

said the UN had "zero-tolerance policy towards politics and militant activities in our schools", but that they "cannot police people's minds."^[45]

A 2007 report by [Human Rights Watch](#) found "little evidence that Palestinian security forces were making efforts to prevent rocket attacks or to hold responsible the militants who launch them." In some cases, "Palestinian security officials themselves acknowledged they were not acting to stop the attacks."^[46]

The Israeli [Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center](#) estimated that in 2007^[47] the proportions of rockets fired from the Gaza Strip were:

34% – [Palestinian Islamic Jihad \(Al Quds\)](#)

22% – [Hamas \(Qassam\)](#)

8% – [Fatah \(Kafah\)](#)

6% – [Popular Resistance Committees \(al Nasser\)](#)

30% – unknown

Statistics

Precisely counting the number of rockets fired is impossible, and differing estimates have been given. The injury figures and attack counts below are attributed to the [Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).^[192] Prior to 4 September 2005, the majority of attacks were against Israeli targets within the Gaza Strip.^[192]

Annual number of attacks and casualties ^{[182][193][194][195][196]}						
Year	Dead	Injured	Rocket attacks	Mortar attacks	Total attacks	Total attacks % change
2001	0		4		4+	
2002	0		35		35+	▲ 775%
2003	0		155		155+	▲ 343%
2004	4		281		281+	▲ 81%
2005	2		401	854	1,255	▲ 346%
2006	2	371	1,722	55	1,777	▲ 42%
2007	2	578	1,276	1,531	2,807	▲ 58%

Annual number of attacks and casualties ^{[162][193][194][195][196]}

Year	Dead	Injured	Rocket attacks	Mortar attacks	Total attacks	Total attacks % change
2008	8	611	2,048	1,668	3,716	▲ 32%
Israeli and Egyptian blockade of Gaza after Operation Cast Lead to stop missile fire into Israel ^[197] and arms import into Gaza. ^{[198][199]}						
2009	0	11	569	289	858	▼ 77%
2010	1	35	150	215	365	▼ 57%
2011	2	81	419	261	680 ^[200]	▲ 86%
2012	6 ^{[180][201]}	284+	2,256 ^[202]	17	2,273+ ^{[203][204]}	▲ 234%
2013	0		32	12	44	▼ 98%
2014	6	80	2,800	1,700	4,500 ^[205]	▲ 9000%
2015*	0	0	3 ^[206]	0	0	▼ 9000%
Total*	33	1971+	12,338	6,500	18,928	

2008–9 GAZA WAR,

WIKIPEDIA

The **Gaza War**, also known as **Operation Cast Lead** (Hebrew: מבצע עופרת יצוקה),^[39] also known as the **Gaza Massacre** (Arabic: مجزرة غزة),^{[40][41][42]} and referred to as the **Battle of al-Furqan** (معركة الفرقان) by Hamas,^{[43][44]} was a three-week armed conflict between **Gaza Strip** Palestinian paramilitary groups and the **Israel Defense Forces** (IDF) that began on 27 December 2008 and ended on 18 January 2009 with a unilateral ceasefire. The conflict resulted in 1,166–1,417 Palestinian and 13 Israeli deaths (including 4 from **friendly fire**).^[45]

2012 ISRAELI OPERATION IN THE GAZA STRIP

WIKIPEDIA

In November 2012, the **Israel Defense Forces** (IDF) launched **Operation Pillar of Defense** (Hebrew: עמוד ענן, *ʿAmúd ʿAnán*, literally: "**Pillar of Cloud**")^[23] which was an eight-day campaign in the **Hamas-governed Gaza Strip**, which began on 14 November 2012 with the killing of **Ahmed Jabari**, chief of the Gaza military wing of **Hamas** by an Israeli airstrike.^{[24][25][26][27]}

2014 GAZA WAR

WIKIPEDIA

The **2014 Gaza War**, also known as **Operation Protective Edge** (Hebrew: מבצע צוק איתן, *romanized*: *Miv'tza Tzук Eitan*, lit. 'Operation Strong Cliff'),^{[note 3][28][27][28]} and **Battle of the Withered Grain** (Arabic: معركة العصف المائکول, *romanized*: *M'a-rakkat Al-'asf Al-Ma'kool*)^{[29][30]} was a military operation launched by **Israel** on 8 July 2014 in the **Gaza Strip**, a **Palestinian territory** that has been **governed by Hamas since 2007**.^[note 4] Following the **kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers** in the **West Bank** by **Hamas**-affiliated **Palestinian** militants, the **Israel Defense Forces** (IDF) initiated *Operation Brother's Keeper*, in which some 350 Palestinians, including nearly all of the active Hamas militants in the West Bank, were arrested.^{[31][32][33]} Hamas **subsequently fired a greater number of rockets into Israel** from the Gaza Strip, triggering a seven-week-long conflict between the two sides. It was one of the deadliest outbreaks of **open conflict between Israel and the Palestinians** in decades. The combination of **Palestinian rocket attacks** and **Israeli airstrikes** resulted in over two thousand deaths, the vast majority of which were Gazan Palestinians.^[34]

2021 ISRAEL–PALESTINE CRISIS

WIKIPEDIA

A major outbreak of violence in the ongoing **Israeli–Palestinian conflict** commenced on 10 May 2021, though disturbances took place earlier, and continued until a ceasefire came into effect on 21 May. It was marked by protests and police riot control, **rocket attacks on Israel** by **Hamas** and **Palestinian Islamic Jihad** (PIJ), and Israeli airstrikes in the **Gaza Strip**. The crisis was triggered^[34] on 6 May, when **Palestinians** in **East Jerusalem** began protesting over an anticipated decision of the **Supreme Court of Israel** on the **eviction of six Palestinian families** in the **East Jerusalem** neighborhood of **Sheikh Jarrah**.^[35] Under international law, the area, **effectively annexed by Israel in 1980**, is a part of the **Israeli-occupied West Bank**.^{[36][37]} On 7 May, according to Israel's **Channel 12**, **Palestinians threw stones** at **Israeli police forces**,^[38] who then stormed the **Al-Aqsa Mosque**

[compound](#)^[39] using tear gas, rubber bullets, and stun grenades.^{[40][39][41]} The crisis prompted [protests](#)
[around](#)^[35] Under international law, the area, [effectively annexed by Israel in 1980](#), is a part of the [Israeli-occupied West Bank](#);^{[36][37]} On 7 May, according to Israel's [Channel 12](#), [Palestinians threw stones](#) at [Israeli police forces](#),^[38] who then stormed the [Al-Aqsa Mosque compound](#)^[39] using tear gas, rubber bullets, and stun grenades.^[40] [d the world](#) as well as [official reactions from world leaders](#).

2023 HAMAS-LED ATTACK ON ISRAEL

EDITORS NOTE Israel was fighting Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in the Northern Lebanese border and Palestinians in the West Bank. Each of these are separate issues and. **Hopefully this task represents a balloon so that peace can be achieved and the Gaza and West Bank walls removed,**

WIKIPEDIA

On 7 October 2023, the paramilitary wings of [Hamas](#), the [Palestinian Islamic Jihad](#), the [PFLP](#), and the [DFLP](#) launched a series of coordinated armed incursions into the [Gaza envelope](#) of neighboring [Israeli](#) territory, the first invasion of Israel since the [1948 Arab–Israeli War](#). This incursion fell on the Jewish holiday of [Simchat Torah](#), right after the festival of [Sukkot](#), a [Sabbath](#) day. The attacks initiated the [2023 Israel–Hamas war](#), almost exactly 50 years after [Operation Badr](#) and the greater [Yom Kippur War](#) of 6 October 1973. Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups named the attacks **Operation Al-Aqsa Flood** (or **Deluge**; [Arabic](#): عملية طوفان الأقصى, [romanized](#): *ʿamaliyyat ṭūfān al-ʿAqṣā*),^[1] while in Israel they are referred to as **Black Saturday** ([Hebrew](#): השבת השחורה)^[20] or the **Simchat Torah Massacre** (הטבח בשמחת תורה),^[21] and internationally as the **7 October attack**.^{[22][23][24]}

The attacks began in the early morning with [a rocket barrage](#) of at least 3,000 rockets launched against Israel and vehicle-transported and [powered paraglider](#) incursions into its territory.^{[25][26]} Hamas fighters breached the [Gaza–Israel barrier](#), attacking Israeli civilian communities and [military bases](#) as well as [a music festival](#) near [Re'im](#),^{[27][28]} resulting in 1,139 deaths – 695 Israeli civilians (including 36 children), 71 foreign nationals, and 373 members of the [security forces](#).^[29] Approximately 250 Israeli civilians and soldiers were [taken as hostages to the Gaza Strip](#), including 30 children, with the stated goal to force Israel to release [Palestinian prisoners](#).^{[30][31][32][33]} Israel and international media have reported [rape and sexual assault](#) by Hamas fighters with documentary footage and photographs, which Hamas has denied.^{[34][35][36][37]}

Hamas said its attack was in response to the continued [Israeli occupation](#) of the [Palestinian territories](#), the [blockade of the Gaza Strip](#), the expansion of [illegal Israeli settlements](#), rising [Israeli settler violence](#), and recent escalations.^{[38][39][40]}

At least 44 nations denounced the attack as [terrorism](#), while some Arab and Muslim countries blamed the [Israeli occupation](#) of the [Palestinian territories](#) as the root cause of the attack.^{[41][42][43]} The day was labeled the bloodiest in [Israel's history](#) and the deadliest for [Jews](#) since [the Holocaust](#).^{[44][45][46][47]}

HAMAS LEADERS WORTH STAGGERING \$11BILLION REVEL IN LUXURY — WHILE GAZA'S PEOPLE SUFFER

[NEW YORK POST](#) Nov7 2023 [Isabel Vincent](#) and Benjamin Weinthal

While their people languish in poverty and are treated as human shields, the leaders of Hamas live billionaire lifestyles.

The terror group's three top leaders alone are worth a staggering total of \$11 billion and enjoy a life of luxury in the sanctuary of the emirate of Qatar.

The emirate has long welcomed the leaders of the terror group and installed them in its luxury hotels and villas at the same time as it hosts a vast American military presence.

Now US Rep. Andy Ogles (R-Tenn.) is sponsoring a bill that would strip Qatar of its status as a key US ally, The Post has learned, unless it kicks out the Hamas leadership.

The terrorist group, which is responsible for the antisemitic [Oct. 7 massacre](#) of more than 1,400 innocent civilians and soldiers in southern Israel, continues to hold over 200 hostages in Gaza.

Hamas runs an office in Qatar's capital, Doha, and leaders Ismail Haniyeh, Moussa Abu Marzuk and Khaled Mashal maintain a luxurious lifestyle.



**One of the sons of Hamas leader
Ismail Haniyeh
lounges in a luxury hotel suite in
Qatar. Haniyeh is worth more
than \$4 billion.**

Ofir Gendelman/ Twitter



**Hamas leaders live the high life while many of the more than 2 million residents of Gaza City live in abject poverty.
EPA**



Three of the terror group's top leaders enjoy a life of luxury in the sanctuary of the emirate of Qatar. Mapcreator.io/OSM.org; AW3D30 (JAXA)

They have been seen at its diplomatic club, photographed on private jets, and traveled widely.

The leadership would have been there for the 2022 soccer World Cup.

In contrast, most of the population of more than 2 million in the Gaza Strip, which Hamas has ruled since 2007, live in abject poverty.

Haniyeh, 61, the head of Hamas' politburo, was prime minister of all Palestinian territory following elections in 2006, although he was booted from office a year later.

Last month, US Rep. Mike Waltz (R-Fla.) called on Bill Gates to ban Hamas from staying at any Four Seasons Hotel, including the one in Doha. AFP via Getty Images



13

Doha, with its five-star hotels, lavish shopping, arts facilities, and last year the soccer World Cup, offers a lifestyle for Hamas chiefs far removed from the reality of Gaza. moofushi – stock.adobe.com

He continued to rule the Gaza Strip until 2017 before ending up in Qatar.

Haniyeh, a father of 13 who presides over one of the world's wealthiest terrorist groups, is worth more than \$4 billion.



[Hamas official vows to repeat Israel attacks 'again and again' until it's destroyed](#)

He has been photographed with his two adult sons, Maaz and Abdel Salam, living the high life in luxury hotels in Qatar and Turkey, according to a recent social media post from the [Embassy of Israel in the US](#).

Last week, Haniyeh travelled to Iran to meet with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Iran is a longtime sponsor of Hamas.

Last month, the Four Seasons hotel in Doha said he was not one of its guests after calls for Bill Gates, who owns a controlling stake in the chain, to kick him out.

It did not address whether he had previously stayed there.

Among its high-end offerings are suites with sea views starting at \$900 a night.

The Hamas leader's son Maaz Haniyeh is known as "the father of real estate" in Gaza for his collection of villas and buildings.

He lives a playboy lifestyle in Turkey, and this year obtained a Turkish passport, according to [Israel Today](#).

Haniyeh Sr. also has Turkish citizenship, according to reports.

Abu Marzuk, 72, a senior Hamas political leader who heads its "international relations office," is estimated by the Israeli government to be worth \$3 billion.

He has a master's degree in construction management from Colorado State University and was detained in New York when US immigration authorities found his name on a terrorist watch list in 1995.

And Mashal, 67, who issued a global threat against Jews after the Oct. 7 atrocities, is worth more than \$4 billion, according to the Israeli government.

Abu Marzuk, who is widely considered the second in command of Hamas, was arrested by US immigration authorities in 1995 and held at the Manhattan Correctional Center. REUTERS

Khaled Mashal, one of the leaders of Hamas, is worth more than \$4 billion, according to reports. AP

The presence of the Hamas leaders in Qatar has long been justified by the emirate as part of its support for turning the terror group into "a responsible governing power," according to a report from the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

The country provides Hamas with between \$120 million and \$480 million per year, according to the October report by the Washington, DC-based nonprofit that studies foreign policy.

"These funds benefit Hamas leaders directly through payroll and kickback schemes and indirectly through social services and government operations that help Hamas maintain political control over Gaza," the report said.

Billionaire Hamas leaders travel by private jet and enjoy five-star hotels and mansions in Qatar.

Qatar is also home to the Al Jazeera news channel, which the report alleges "spreads antisemitism, anti-Americanism and incitement to violence throughout the Arab world."

“Qatar is Hamas and Hamas is Qatar,” Yigal Carmon, president of the Washington, DC-based Middle East Media Research Institute, said in an interview with The Post in Israel.

But moves to force action on Hamas are ramping up in DC.

Hamas leader Khaled Mashal enjoys a luxury lifestyle, dining at some of the Middle East’s best restaurants while in Qatar.

Ogles’ bill would strip Qatar of its special status in the top tier of America’s non-NATO allies alongside Israel, Taiwan, South Korea, Australia and Japan.

Ogles told The Post Tuesday, “As Hamas terrorists continue to wreak havoc on the lives of innocent Israeli civilians, the United States must ensure there is no ally supporting them. Sadly, the State of Qatar is still funding and supporting Hamas as its leadership enjoys political refuge in Doha.” The country has had the special status since last year, but Ogles’ move would make it conditional on removing Hamas.

The importance of Qatar is regularly underlined, such as this visit by US Central Command commander Gen. Erik Kurilla to the Qatari armed forces chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Salem Bin Hamad Al-Nabit, last year. U.S. Central Command

Along with hosting Hamas, Qatar is also one of the most important military bases for the US in the Middle East.

It is home to US Central Command’s forward base in the Middle East at the giant Al Udeid air base, which itself is vital to Air Force operations in the Gulf.

Qatar is not the only source of Hamas’ cash. The group also took in nearly \$400 million in the last two years from the UN, which does not recognize Hamas as a terrorist organization.

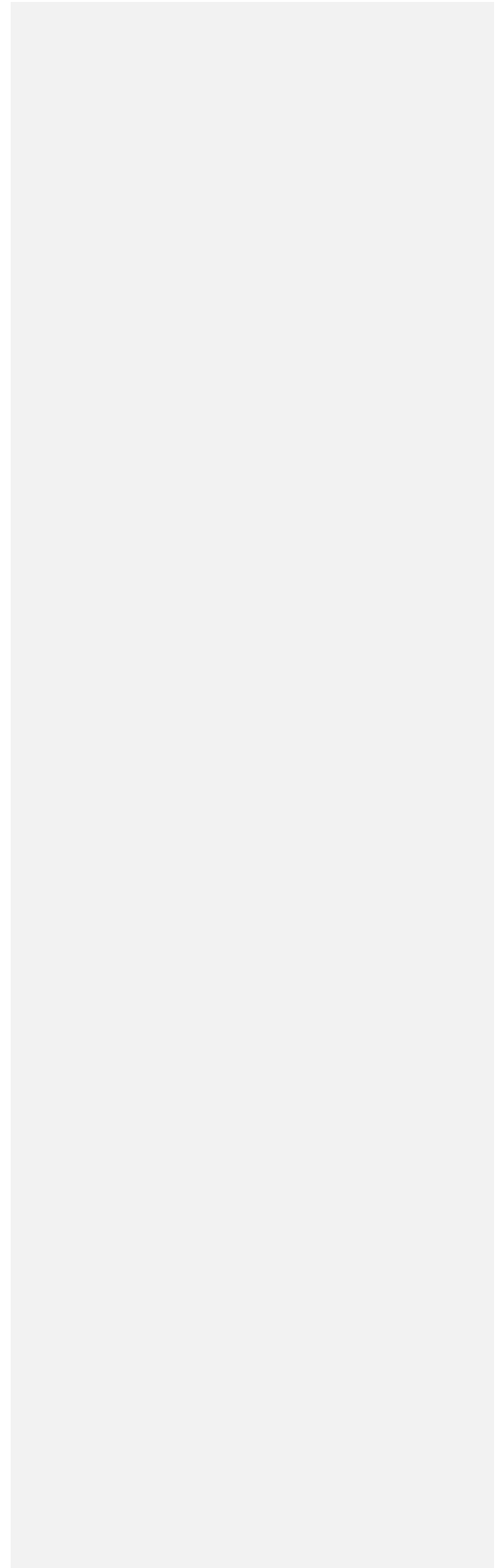
At Al Udeid air base, the US has one of its most important presences in the Middle East. Visitors have included Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in 2021.^{AP}

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency provided Hamas with \$380 million since 2021, according to the FDD.

Much of that cash came from the Biden administration, which has provided \$1 billion to the UNRWA since 2021.

PART H

HAMAS



INTRODUCTION

Hamas is an Islamist militant movement and one of the Palestinian territories' two major political parties. It governs more than two million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, but the group is best known for its armed resistance to Israel. In October 2023, Hamas launched a massive surprise attack on southern Israel, killing more than 1,400 people and taking dozens more as hostages. Israel has declared war on the group in response and indicated its military is planning for a long campaign to wipe it out entirely.

Dozens of countries have designated Hamas a terrorist organization, though some apply this label only to its military wing. Iran provides it with material and financial support, and Turkey reportedly harbors some of its top leaders. Its rival party, Fatah, which dominates the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and rules in the West Bank, has formally renounced violence, though it has not always upheld that vow in times of high Israeli-Palestinian tensions. The split in Palestinian leadership and Hamas's unwavering hostility toward Israel have diminished prospects for stability in Gaza.

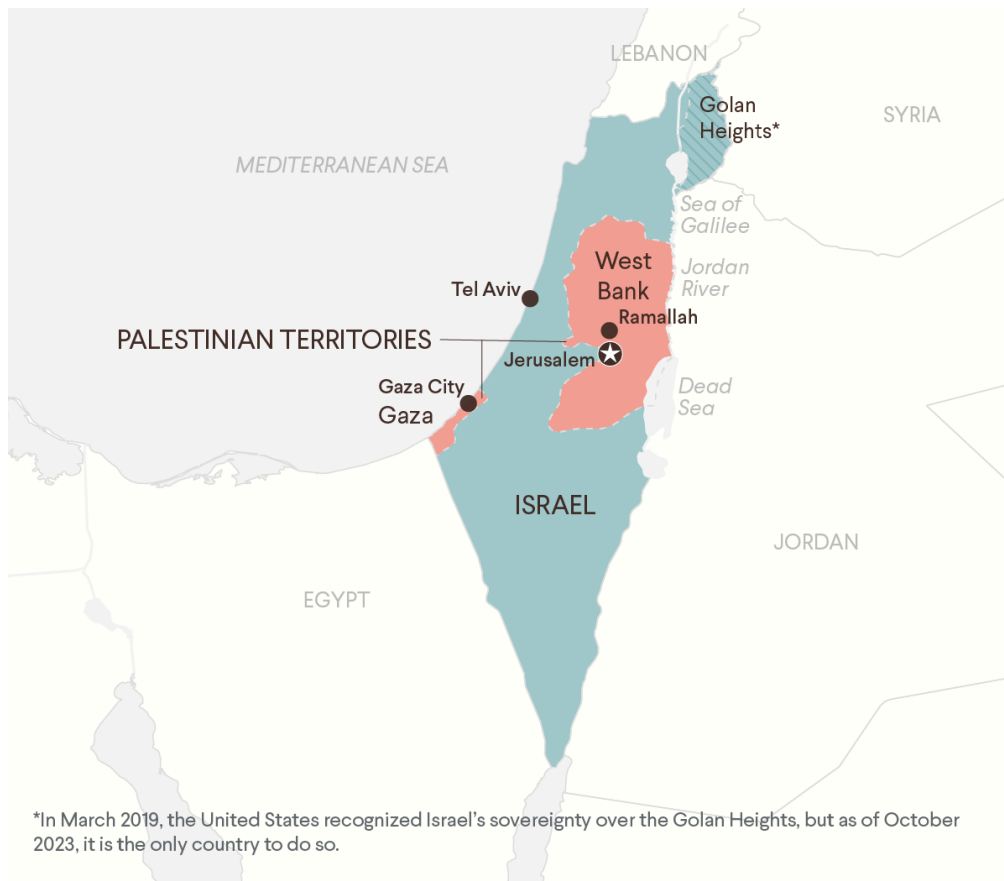
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[Israel's War on Hamas: What to Know](#) *by* Bruce Hoffman

[What Is U.S. Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict?](#) *by* Kali Robinson

WHAT ARE THE GROUP'S ORIGINS?

Hamas, an acronym for Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya ("Islamic Resistance Movement"), was founded by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a Palestinian cleric who became an activist in local branches of the Muslim Brotherhood after dedicating his early life to Islamic scholarship in Cairo. Beginning in the late 1960s, Yassin preached and performed charitable work in the West Bank and Gaza, both of which Israel occupied following the 1967 Six-Day War.



Yassin established Hamas as the Brotherhood's political arm in Gaza in December 1987, following the outbreak of the first intifada, a Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. At the time, Hamas's purpose was to counter Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), another organization whose commitment to violently resisting Israel threatened to draw Palestinians' support away from the Brotherhood. In 1988, Hamas **published its charter**, calling for the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic society in historic Palestine. In what observers called an attempt to moderate its image, Hamas **presented a new document** [PDF] in 2017 that accepted an interim Palestinian state along the "Green Line" border established before the Six-Day War but that still refused to recognize Israel.

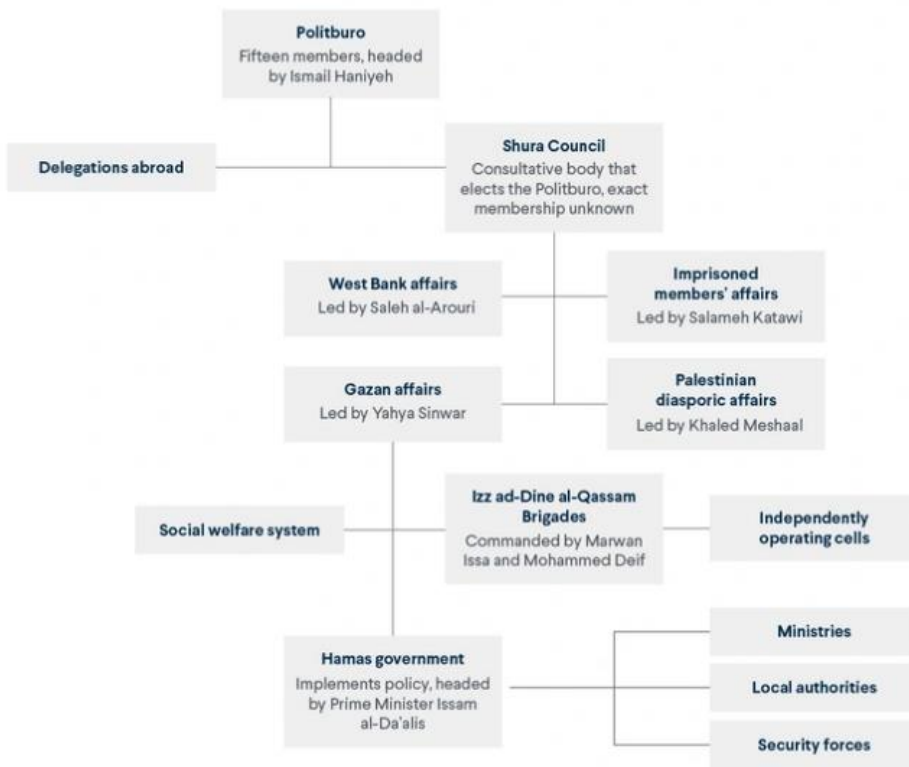
Hamas first employed suicide bombing in April 1993, five months before PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed the Oslo Accords. The historic pact established limited self-government for parts of the West Bank and Gaza under a newly created entity called the Palestinian Authority (PA). Hamas condemned the accords, as well as the PLO's and Israel's recognition of each other, which Arafat and Rabin officially agreed to in letters sent days before Oslo.

In 1997, the United States designated Hamas a foreign terrorist organization. The movement went on to spearhead violent resistance during the second intifada, in the early 2000s, though PIJ and Fatah's Tanzim militia were also responsible for violence against Israelis.

WHO ARE ITS LEADERS?

Hamas has a host of leadership bodies that perform various political, military, and social functions. General policy is set by an overarching consultative body, often called the politburo, which operates in exile. Local committees manage grassroots issues in Gaza and the West Bank.

Hamas's Governing Structure



Sources: Counter Extremism Project; European Council on Foreign Relations; Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center; Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs.

Ismail Haniyeh currently serves as political chief, having replaced longtime leader Khaled Meshaal in 2017. Haniyeh has operated from Doha, Qatar, since 2020, reportedly because Egypt restricts his movement into and out of Gaza. Hamas leaders established a presence in Qatar after falling out with their previous host, Syria, when Palestinian refugees participated in the 2011 uprising that preceded

the **Syrian Civil War**. Some senior Hamas figures **reportedly operate** out of the group's offices in Turkey.

Day-to-day affairs in Gaza are overseen by Yahya Sinwar, who previously headed Hamas's military wing and served twenty-two years in an Israeli prison for masterminding the abduction and killing of two Israeli soldiers. He was among the more than one thousand Palestinian prisoners freed in 2011 in exchange for an Israeli soldier held by Hamas. As of June 2021, Gaza's de facto prime minister is Issam al-Da'alis.

Marwan Issa and Mohammed Deif command Hamas's military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades. Israeli forces assassinated the militia's founder, Salah Shehadeh, in a 2002 air strike. Fifteen civilians were killed in the attack, focusing **Israeli and international scrutiny** on such tactics. Israeli forces killed Yassin, Hamas's founder, in 2004.

Saleh al-Arouri reportedly heads Hamas's Lebanon branch. He also took over the group's West Bank leadership following **internal elections** that concluded in 2021, while Meshaal was chosen to lead the diaspora office and Salameh Katawi was elected to manage the affairs of imprisoned Hamas members.

HOW IS HAMAS FUNDED?

As a designated terrorist entity, Hamas is cut off from official assistance that the United States and European Union (EU) provide to the PLO in the West Bank. Historically, Palestinian expatriates and private donors in the Persian Gulf provided much of the movement's funding. In addition, some Islamic charities in the West have channeled money to Hamas-backed social service groups, prompting asset freezes by the U.S. Treasury.

Gaza's economic situation was already dire before Hamas's 2023 assault on Israel, and the ensuing war is already exacerbating the **extreme poverty** of its residents. Egypt and Israel largely **closed their borders** with Gaza in 2006–07, restricting the movement of goods and people into and out of the territory. The two countries have maintained their blockade, cutting off the territory from most of the world and forcing more than **one million** Gazan Palestinians to rely on international aid. Israel has allowed Qatar to provide **hundreds of millions of dollars** in assistance through Hamas. Other foreign aid generally reaches Gaza via the PA and UN agencies.

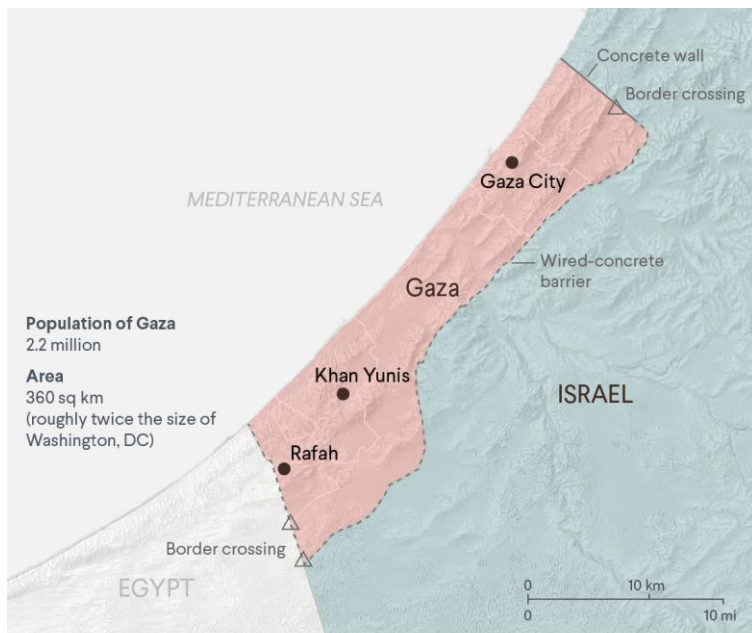
For years after the blockade began, Hamas collected revenue by taxing goods moving through a sophisticated network of tunnels that circumvented the Egyptian crossing into Gaza; this brought staples such as food, medicine, and cheap gas for electricity production into the territory, as well as construction materials, cash, and arms. After Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi took power in 2013, Cairo became hostile toward Hamas, which it saw as an extension of its chief domestic rival, the Muslim Brotherhood. The Egyptian army shut down most of the tunnels breaching its territory while it waged a counterterrorism campaign against a branch of the self-proclaimed Islamic State on its side of the border, on the Sinai Peninsula. Egypt began to allow some commercial goods to enter Gaza through its Salah al-Din border crossing in 2018. As of 2021, Hamas reportedly **collected upward of \$12 million per month** from taxes on Egyptian goods imported into Gaza.

Today, Iran is one of Hamas's biggest benefactors, contributing funds, weapons, and training. Though Iran and Hamas briefly fell out after backing opposing sides in [Syria's civil war](#), Iran currently [provides some \\$100 million annually](#) [PDF] to Hamas, PIJ, and other Palestinian groups designated as terrorist organizations by the United States. Iran was quick to [praise Hamas's assault](#) on Israel in late 2023 and pledge its continuing support for the Palestinian group.

Turkey has been another stalwart backer of Hamas—and a critic of Israel—following President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's [rise to power](#) in 2002. Though Ankara insists it only supports Hamas politically, it has been accused of [funding Hamas's terrorism](#), including through aid diverted from the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency.

HOW DOES IT GOVERN GAZA?

Hamas has been the de facto authority in Gaza since shortly after Israel withdrew from the territory in 2005. The following year, Hamas won a majority of seats in the PA's legislature and formed a government. It earned votes for the social services it provided and as a rejection of the incumbent Fatah, which many voters perceived as having grown corrupt at the helm of the PLO and delivering little to Palestinians through its negotiations with Israel. The outcome was [unacceptable to Fatah](#) and its Western backers, and the party ousted Hamas from power in the West Bank. In Gaza, Hamas routed Fatah's militias in a week of fighting, resulting in a political schism between the two Palestinian territories. Palestinians have not voted for a legislature since 2006, nor a president since 2008.



Sources: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

COUNCIL OF
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

"The Hamas-controlled government has no effective or independent mechanisms for ensuring transparency in its funding, procurements, or operations." Freedom House

As Hamas took over the remnants of PA institutions in the strip, it established a judiciary and put in place authoritarian institutions. In theory, Hamas governs in accordance with the **sharia-based** Palestinian Basic Law, as does the PA; but it has generally been **more restrictive** than the law requires, including by controlling how women dress and enforcing gender segregation in public during the early years of its rule. The watchdog group Freedom House **found in 2020** that the “Hamas-controlled government has no effective or independent mechanisms for ensuring transparency in its funding, procurements, or operations.” Hamas also represses the Gazan media, civilian activism on social media, the political opposition, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), leaving it without mechanisms for accountability.

HOW DO PALESTINIANS VIEW HAMAS?

The political bifurcation of the West Bank and Gaza is widely unpopular: a **June 2023 poll** [PDF] by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) showed that one-third of Palestinians consider it the most damaging development for their people since the state of Israel’s 1948 creation. The same poll found that more than half of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank would vote for Hamas’s Haniyeh over PA President Mahmoud Abbas in a presidential election, while just one-third of Palestinians would choose Abbas. Additionally, Abbas indefinitely postponed national elections scheduled for 2021, citing Israel’s alleged refusal to let Palestinians in East Jerusalem vote, though observers suspect that Abbas aimed to **prevent a likely Hamas victory**.

HOW HAS HAMAS CHALLENGED ISRAEL?

Hamas has fired rockets and mortars into Israel since the group took over the Gaza Strip in the mid 2000s. Iranian security officials have said that Tehran provided some of these weapons, but that Hamas gained the ability to build its own missiles after training with Iran’s **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps** (IRGC) and proxies. In recent years, Israel estimated that Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in Gaza had about **thirty thousand rockets and mortars** in their arsenal. Hamas militants have **flown balloons** carrying incendiary devices toward Israel, which have sometimes caused fires. The group has also carried out incursions into Israeli territory, killing and kidnapping soldiers and civilians.

Prior to the 2023 conflict, Hamas and Israel had their deadliest fighting in years in 2021, when Hamas fired rockets into Israel following **weeks of tensions** between Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem. Some analysts say that Hamas wanted to bolster its reputation as the **defender of the Palestinian cause** after the PA postponed the 2021 elections. During the eleven-day conflict, Hamas and PIJ fired more than four thousand rockets from Gaza, killing ten Israeli civilians and injuring more than three hundred others. Hamas **reportedly coordinated** with the IRGC and Lebanon’s Hezbollah during the fighting, and **used so-called suicide drones** along with its usual arsenal of less precise missiles. The United States and Egypt brokered a cease-fire to the conflict.

HOW IS HAMAS'S ATTACK ON ISRAEL IN 2023 DIFFERENT?

Hamas's **assault on southern Israel** this year, which the group's leaders have called "Operation Al-Aqsa Storm," was extraordinary in its strategy, scale, and secrecy, analysts say. It began early in the morning on October 7, the Jewish Sabbath and an important Jewish holiday, with Hamas launching several thousand rockets into southern and central Israel, hitting cities as far north as Tel Aviv. Hamas militants also breached the heavily fortified Gaza border and infiltrated many southern Israeli towns and villages, killing some 1,400 people and wounding and kidnapping scores more.

Hamas's military leader, Mohammed Deif, said the group **undertook its assault** because of Israel's long-running blockade of Gaza, its occupation of Palestinian lands, and its alleged crimes against Muslims, including the desecration of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

The October 7 attack is the deadliest in Israel's seventy-five-year history and has inflicted a deep psychological trauma on its people, with some analysts drawing comparisons to the surprise Pearl Harbor and September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. Israeli and U.S. intelligence agencies reportedly had no indications that Hamas was planning an assault of this nature. "It is completely unprecedented that a terrorist organization would have the capacity or the wherewithal to mount coordinated, simultaneous assaults from the air, sea, and land," **writes CFR Senior Fellow Bruce Hoffman.**

Israel has declared war on Hamas, mounting a **campaign intended to eradicate the group** and free around two hundred hostages. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has warned of a "long and difficult war" against Hamas. Israel and Hamas have traded fire every day since October 7, and Israel has imposed a complete siege of Gaza, cutting off an **already deprived population**. In the first three weeks of Israel's offensive, its forces had killed more than eight thousand Palestinians in the enclave, **around 40 percent** of them children, according to Gaza's Hamas-controlled health ministry. More than **three hundred Israeli troops** have also been killed in the fighting, the Israeli health ministry said.

Experts fear that a full Israeli invasion of Gaza could provoke a significant attack against Israel by **Hezbollah**, an Iran-backed militant group and political party in Lebanon, risking a wider conflagration in the region. "Iran is, of course, a patron of Hezbollah [as well as of Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups] and there is an ever-present danger of a two-front conflict, which would devastate parts of Israel and much of Lebanon, where Hezbollah is based. There is a risk of escalation," **says CFR Senior Fellow Steven A. Cook.**

But some observers **are questioning** whether Israel will attempt a full-scale invasion and reoccupation of Gaza, and whether it has a plan for governing the territory post-Hamas. "If Israel simply attacks Hamas and then leaves—as it has done in the past—the terrorist organization will be able to regenerate itself. But Israel has had little desire to reoccupy the Gaza Strip after exiting in 2005, and the Palestinian Authority seems to lack the capabilities and will to govern in place of Hamas," **writes CFR Senior Fellow Max Boot.** "Trying to establish a Palestinian Authority government in Gaza, with help from Arab states, is probably the least-bad option. But if that fails, Israel may have no choice but to occupy Gaza itself."

HAMAS: WORDS AND DEEDS...

[WILSON CENTER](#) By Ambassador [Mark A. Green](#) on *October 24, 2023*

In its original 1988 charter, Hamas states that “There is no solution for the Palestinian problem except by Jihad.” In a 2017 version of its charter, Hamas claimed to reject the “persecution of any human being or the undermining of his or her rights on nationalist, religious or sectarian grounds.”

On October 7, 2023, it launched a terrorist attack that killed more than 1,300 people in Israel.

Hamas was established in Gaza at the end of 1987 as both an arm of the Muslim Brotherhood and a rival to another designated terrorist group: the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. In line with its belief that “**The day that enemies usurp part of Muslim land, Jihad becomes the individual duty of every Muslim,**” Hamas not only **condemned the historic Oslo Accords** but declares that international peace proposals and conferences are “**but a waste of time, and vain endeavors.**”

Such pronouncements and a string of violent acts made it easy for the US State Department to **designate** Hamas a “foreign terrorist organization.” Others like the European Union, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom have taken similar steps.

By 2017, it appeared that Hamas wanted to reshape, or at least clarify, its public image in some quarters. It took steps to soften some of the most extreme language of its **1988 charter** by issuing new statements and declarations that, while not repealing or superseding the original document, supplemented it with more ambiguous terms and rhetoric. For example, the original charter called it “**compulsory that the banner of Jihad be raised.**” In 2017, Hamas portrayed itself as a resistance movement aiming to “**liberate Palestine and confront the Zionist project.**” In 1988, Hamas explicitly acknowledged its links to the Muslim Brotherhood, but the **2017 Hamas Charter** is devoid of references to the Brotherhood. In 1988, Hamas declared that the “Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight Jews and kill them.” By 2017, Hamas claimed its mission wasn’t “a struggle against Jews or Judaism,” but a “struggle...against the Zionist occupation....”

While the tone and terms of the 2017 charter may be different from the extremist provisions of its 1988 predecessor, the newer document still hints at the violence and hatred at the organization’s core. Article 25 provides that “Resisting the occupation with all means and methods is a legitimate right guaranteed by divine laws and by international norms and laws. At the heart of these lies armed resistance...”

On October 7, Hamas terrorist forces attacked Israel by land, sea, and air, killing at least 1,300 people—including at least 31 Americans, most of whom were unarmed civilians—injuring thousands more, and taking over 150 civilians and soldiers hostage.

In 2017, Hamas dressed up their terrorist objectives in more ambiguous, less violent terms. But in 2023, they made clear what they really stood for—in President Biden’s words, “the destruction of the State of Israel and the murder of Jewish people.”

Little has changed since their anti-Semitic, anti-human, jihadist beginnings.

This blog was researched with the assistance of Caroline Moody.

THERE ARE NO CIVILIANS IN GAZA

In a culture where terrorists in the field don't wear uniforms, where large families have sizable stocks of weapons, and where children are taught to kill and die, the externals don't matter.

[JNS](#) June 13 2024 Daniel Greenfield

Americans expected Osama bin Laden to be found in a cave in Afghanistan. In reality, he was living comfortably in a military town in Pakistan under the protection of local authorities. Similarly, Israeli hostages, including the four who were rescued last Saturday, have come home telling stories of being kept captive in "civilian" households.

Many in the West fundamentally misunderstand what Islamic terrorism is. It's not a "fringe group of extremists," as politicians and the media describe it, but an ethnic and religious movement. The religious values of Islamic terrorists are universally shared by the vast majority of Muslims, while the ethnic ones ground Islamic warfare in the interests of specific clans and families.

Hamas is an arm of the Muslim Brotherhood and has a widespread base of support across the Muslim world, which is dotted with branches of the Brotherhood. But its ethnic power base is also grounded in the key clans and families that control Gaza. That is why Hamas still retains the support of the majority of the Muslim colonists currently occupying Gaza. It's also why those same "civilians" held Israeli hostages prisoner and could be trusted not to inform on them.

The latest Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research poll shows that 71% of Gazans support the Hamas atrocities of Oct. 7, and 56% expect Hamas to win the war. Some 62% in Gaza are happy Hamas's performance during the war, and 59% want Hamas to stay in power.

That's because they are Hamas and the terror group is also them.

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The "Palestinian" myth is that the Muslim colonists occupying parts of Israel are the "indigenous" people.

The reality is that they were Arab settlers who arrived with and after the Islamic conquest of Israel. Some, like the notorious Hussein clan, which produced Hitler's mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, were relatively recent arrivals. The most powerful and wealthiest of these large families took control of urban areas, as the Husseinis tried to do in Jerusalem, and became a vital part of the Ottoman feudal order, serving as mayors and muftis. When the Ottomans were defeated, the clans fought to reclaim their power with movements like the [Muslim Brotherhood](#), also known as Hamas.

Hamas is an ideological Islamist movement, but its control over Gaza depends on these large families.

That's why the idea that most people have that Hamas is a fanatical movement that exists apart from ordinary people and can be fought and defeated apart from them is wrong.

That's also why so few of the hostages have been rescued. Like the recently rescued four, the hostages are largely dispersed among "civilian" clan families across neighborhoods controlled by them. These

families are formally civilian households, but many of their members are affiliated with Hamas. Rather than being an army whose members belong foremost to Hamas, they are more like the mafia and belong foremost to their extended clan, and choose to lend their support to Hamas.

It's not just that Hamas uses human shields, which it certainly does, it's that its infrastructure depends on clans whose adults provide fighters, and whose women and children act as human shields for the greater glory of the clan and Islam. The same clans that will kill teenage girls for violating family honor will also serve up even younger children as human shields for honor.

There is no way for Israel to rescue its hostages without going into dense neighborhoods under the control of the clans to get them out. And that will lead to firefights and "Black Hawk Down" moments. Clan members, who never identify themselves as such, will cry that they were massacred. And foreign leaders and the media will condemn the deaths of "civilians."

Defeating Hamas without civilian casualties is impossible because the Islamic terrorist group not only operates among civilians but is rooted in the society of Gaza. The clans that run Gaza, that provide the manpower that controls UNRWA institutions, and that are the mainstays of Hamas are also the large families that dominate the businesses, cultural and religious life in Gaza.

There's no meaningful distinction between civilians and Hamas. Some clans reject Hamas authority and Israel has tried to solicit some of them to run Gaza. For now, with few results. The U.S. strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq had similarly depended on swaying certain clans, elders and warlords into abandoning Al-Qaeda or the Taliban, with very temporary success.

Eventually the Taliban or Al-Qaeda, rebranded as the Islamic State, returned. And some of the same men we had armed and trained turned their guns on us. It is an almost inevitable outcome of counterinsurgency (COIN). When bringing democracy to the Muslim world fails, Westerners begin competing with jihadists for the support of the clans, only to be stabbed in the back.

The jihadists have the Quran on their side. To Muslims, their terrorism will always be more righteous than our fumbling efforts to avoid civilian casualties and collateral damage. Appealing to moderates or promising a better life will not win their support. On the contrary, it only infuriates the imams in their mosques and the influential clan leaders into opposing us.

Instead, we must reckon with the reality that there are few civilians in Gaza or the Muslim world generally. And those who legitimately are civilians should be measured by their deeds, not their clothing. In a culture where terrorists in the field don't wear uniforms, where large families have sizable stocks of weapons, and where children are taught to kill and die, the externals don't matter.

There are no civilians in Gaza. The vast majority of the population supports Hamas or some Islamic terrorist movement. Only a tiny minority opposes Islamic terrorism and wants peace.

The distinction is not between soldiers, terrorists and civilians, but enemies and non-combatants. Israel and Western nations should stop thinking about civilians, a concept that does not apply in a battlespace where terrorists wear street clothes and entire neighborhoods are controlled by clans that hide hostages in plain sight, and think about enemies and neutrals.

An enemy is anyone, regardless of clothing or sex, who is aligned with Islamic terrorists.

Every poll continues to show that the vast majority of those in Gaza are aligned with the enemy. And if that were not the case, the war would have long since ended once locals informed the authorities of where the hostages are and where the remaining Hamas terrorists are set up.

Israel is not just at war with an organization, but with an enemy culture. As is most of the world, whether it chooses to admit it or not. The war is not defined by what they wear, but by what they think. As long as human shields, female suicide bombers and child soldiers abound, the war cannot be fought by treating civilians as noncombatants while hunting elusive terrorists.

The only way to defeat an enemy is to fight him as he is, not as we would like him to be.

It would be a far cleaner and neater war if Islamic terrorists fought like conventional armies. They do not.

And it is time to fight them on their own terms instead.

Hamas can't be defeated by waiting until its terrorists take off their civilian clothes and put on uniforms.

Hamas are the civilians. They are the ones holding the hostages. The only way to free the hostages and defeat the terrorists is to destroy the terror culture in whatever form it takes.

The opinions and facts presented in this article are those of the author, and neither JNS nor its partners assume any responsibility for them.

WHY IS HAMAS CLASSIFIED AS A TERRORIST GROUP? (This is the AI response from claude.ai)

Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist group, has been designated as a terrorist organization by several countries and international organizations due to its history of violent attacks targeting Israeli civilians. Here are some of the key reasons why Hamas is classified as a terrorist group:

Suicide bombings and other attacks against civilians: Hamas has claimed responsibility for numerous suicide bombings, shootings, and other attacks that have targeted Israeli civilians, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people. This deliberate targeting of non-combatants is a defining characteristic of terrorism.

Use of indiscriminate rocket attacks: Hamas has fired thousands of rockets and mortars into Israeli civilian areas, often from densely populated areas in Gaza, putting Palestinian civilians at risk as well. The indiscriminate nature of these attacks is considered a terrorist tactic.

Call for the destruction of Israel: Hamas' founding charter and public statements have expressed a goal of eliminating the state of Israel and replacing it with an Islamic state. This rejectionist stance and refusal to accept Israel's right to exist is a key factor in its designation as a terrorist organization.

Ties to violence and extremism: Hamas has close ties to other designated terrorist groups, such as Hezbollah, and has received support and training from state sponsors of terrorism, including Iran. Its willingness to use violence and its relationships with other extremist groups contribute to its terrorist classification.

It's important to note that the designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization is a matter of ongoing debate, with some arguing that it oversimplifies a complex political conflict. However, the majority of Western nations and international bodies have maintained this classification based on Hamas' history of violence and its unwillingness to renounce terrorism as a tactic.

GAZA'S UNDERGROUND: HAMAS'S ENTIRE POLITICO-MILITARY STRATEGY RESTS ON ITS TUNNELS

[MODERN WAR INSTITUTE AT WEST POINT](#) John Spencer 18 Jan 2024

The use of tunnels in wars is not new. Seeking advantages by using either natural or man-made spaces underground is as ancient as warfare itself—from stories of tunnels being used to win massive battles [in the bible](#) to underground spaces becoming key factors to urban battles, like [Mariupol](#) and [Bakhmut](#), in the ongoing war in Ukraine. Modern nations including the United States, China, and North Korea invest billions in deep-buried military bunkers and tunnel complexes. But what Israel has faced in Gaza represents a unique first in war—namely, a case in which tunnels form one of two pillars, along with time, of a combatant's political-military strategy.

Before the Israel-Hamas war, both the presence of Hamas tunnel networks and their growth over the years were very well known. The network was referred to as Gaza's "[Metro](#)" or "[lower Gaza](#)." The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and scholars [estimated before the war](#) that there were three hundred miles of tunnels ranging from [fifteen feet to over two hundred feet](#) below the surface. The estimates were wrong.

After three months of close combat and discovering [over 1,500 tunnel shafts and underground passages](#), the IDF has learned enough to require the estimates to be revised. Israeli forces have unearthed massive invasion tunnels [two and a half miles long](#), underground manufacturing plants, luxury tunnels with painted walls, tile floors, ceiling fans, and air conditioning, and a complex, layered, labyrinth underneath all areas of Gaza. The [new estimates](#) say the network may include between 350 and 450 miles of tunnels, with close to 5,700 separate shafts descending into hell.

New estimates also indicate the construction of this subterranean network could have cost Hamas as much as [a billion dollars](#). The group has poured resources over fifteen years not just into constructing tunnel passages, but for blast doors, workshops, sleeping quarters, toilets, kitchens, and all the ventilation, electricity, and phone lines to support what amount to underground cities. As much as 6,000 tons of concrete and 1,800 tons of metals have been used in this subterranean construction.

The sheer size of Hamas's underground networks may, once fully discovered, be beyond anything a modern military has ever faced. One of the last conflicts that involved a large amount of tunnel complexes was the Vietnam War. American forces and others faced some [tunnel complexes](#) that ranged up to forty miles in length and one of the most concentrated places of tunnels, near Saigon at Cu Chi, contained 130 miles of passageways.

There are larger military tunnel complexes in the world. China is believed to have three thousand miles of tunnels and bunkers capable of withstanding nuclear attacks in a network that has been called the "[Underground Great Wall](#)." Some estimates show North Korea has over [five thousand tunnels](#) and infrastructure that includes [multiple underground air bases](#) with runways, radar sites, and submarine ports inside mountains.

But more importantly than the scale of the tunnels in Gaza, the Israel-Hamas war is the first war in which a combatant has made its vast underground network a defining centerpiece of its overall political-military strategy.

In the past, and even in most cases today, military tunnels and bunkers have been built specifically to gain a *military* advantage. They are used for smuggling, kidnapping, and invading or defending territory. Underground spaces enable militaries to conserve capabilities by avoiding detection and strike, to hold terrain by using the tunnels for mobile defense tactics, or even offensively to use guerrilla tactics to attrit the attacking force.

For the first time in the history of tunnel warfare, however, Hamas has built a tunnel network to gain not just a military advantage, but a *political* advantage, as well. Its underground world serves all of the military functions described above, but also an entirely different one. Hamas weaved its vast tunnel networks into the society on the surface. Destroying the tunnels is virtually impossible without adversely impacting the population living in Gaza. Consequently, they put the modern laws of war at the center of the conflict's conduct. These laws restrict the use of military force and methods or tactics that a military can use against [protected populations and sites](#) such as hospitals, churches, schools, and United Nations facilities. Almost all of Hamas's tunnels are built into civilian and protected sites in densely populated urban areas. Much of the infrastructure providing access to the tunnels is in protected sites. This complicates discriminating between military targets and civilian locations—if not rendering it entirely impossible—because Hamas does not have military sites separate from civilian sites.

Hamas's strategy is also not to hold terrain or defeat an attacking force. Its strategy is about time. It is about creating time for international pressure on Israel to stop its military operation to mount.

Hamas is globally known for using [human shields](#), which is the practice of using civilians to restrict the attacker in a military operation. The group wants as many civilians as possible to be harmed by Israeli military action—as one of its officials put it, "[We are proud to sacrifice martyrs](#)." It wants the world's attention on the question of whether the IDF campaign is violating the laws of war in attacking Hamas tunnels that are tightly connected to civilian and protected sites. It wants to buy as much time as is needed to cause the international community to stop Israel. Its entire strategy is built on tunnels.

The tactical challenges Hamas tunnels present to Israel are thereby compounded by strategic challenges. To deal with tunnels at the tactical level, Israel has demonstrated some of the world's [most advanced units](#), methods, and capabilities to find, exploit, and destroy tunnels. From specialized engineer capabilities and [canine units](#) to the [use of robots](#), [flooding to clear tunnels](#), and both aerial-delivered and ground-emplaced explosives, to include [liquid explosives](#), to destroy them. Arguably, no military in the world is as well prepared for subterranean tactical challenges as the IDF. But the strategic challenge is entirely different. To destroy many of the deep-buried tunnels, the IDF has required bunker-busting bombs, which Israel is [criticized for using](#). And most importantly it has required time to find and destroy the tunnels in a conflict in which Hamas's strategy is aimed at limiting the time available to Israel to conduct its campaign. Hamas's strategy, then, is founded on tunnels and time. This war, more so than any other, is about the underground and not the surface. It is time based rather than terrain or enemy based. Hamas is in the tunnels. Its leaders and weapons are in the tunnels. The Israeli hostages are in the tunnels. And Hamas's strategy is founded on its conviction that, for Israel, the critical resource of time will run out in the tunnels.

John Spencer is chair of urban warfare studies at the Modern War Institute, codirector of MWI's Urban Warfare Project, and host of the [Urban Warfare Project Podcast](#). He is also a founding member of the [International Working Group on Subterranean Warfare](#). He served twenty-five years as an infantry soldier, which included two combat tours in Iraq. He is the author of the book [Connected Soldiers: Life, Leadership, and Social Connection in Modern War](#) and coauthor of [Understanding Urban Warfare](#).

The views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the official position of the United States Military Academy, Department of the Army, or Department of Defense.

ISRAEL TARGETS HAMAS'S LABYRINTH OF TUNNELS UNDER GAZA

[BBC News](#) David Gritten 13 Oct 2023

Israel says it is striking parts of a secret labyrinth of tunnels built underneath the Gaza Strip by Hamas, as it continues to retaliate for the Palestinian Islamist militant group's unprecedented cross-border attack on Saturday.

"Think of the Gaza Strip as one layer for civilians and then another layer for Hamas. We are trying to get to that second layer that Hamas has built," an [Israel Defense Forces \(IDF\) spokesperson said in a video on Thursday](#).

"These aren't bunkers for Gazan civilians. It's only for Hamas and other terrorists so that they can continue to fire rockets at Israel, to plan operations, to launch terrorists into Israel," they claimed.

It is very difficult to assess the size of the network, which Israel has dubbed the "Gaza Metro" because it is believed to stretch beneath a territory that is only 41km (25 miles) long and 10km wide.

Following a conflict in 2021, the IDF said it had destroyed more than 100km of tunnels in air strikes. Hamas meanwhile claimed that its tunnels stretched 500km and that only 5% were hit. To put those figures into perspective, the London Underground is 400km long and is mostly above ground.

Hamas's 'Gaza Metro' tunnel system in 2021

Israeli map showing tunnels allegedly destroyed in air strikes



Tunnel construction began in Gaza before Israel withdrew its troops and settlers in 2005.

But it was ramped up after Hamas took control of the Strip two years later, which prompted Israel and Egypt to begin restricting the movement of goods and people in and out for security reasons.

At its peak, **almost 2,500 tunnels running underneath the Egyptian border were used to smuggle in commercial goods, fuel and weapons** by Hamas and other militant groups.

The smuggling became less important to Gaza after 2010, when Israel began allowing more goods to be imported through its crossings. Egypt later shut the smuggling down by flooding or destroying the tunnels.



SOURCE, GETTY IMAGES

Tunnels were dug under the Egyptian border to bring in all kinds of goods and weapons

Hamas and other factions also started digging tunnels to attack Israeli forces.

In 2006, militants used one underneath the border with Israel to kill two Israeli soldiers and seize a third, Gilad Shalit, who they held captive for five years.

In 2013, the IDF discovered a 1.6km-long, 18m-deep tunnel lined with a concrete roof and walls leading from the Strip to land near an Israeli kibbutz after residents heard strange sounds.

The following year, Israel cited the need to eradicate the threat of attacks by militants using such "terror tunnels" under the frontier for a major air and ground offensive in Gaza.

The IDF said its forces destroyed more than 30 tunnels during the war. But a group of militants were also able to use one to mount an attack in which four Israeli soldiers were killed.

Gaza tunnels identified by Israel in 2014

Israeli military destroyed more than 30 tunnels out of Gaza



"The cross-border tunnels tend to be rudimentary, meaning they have barely any fortification. They are dug for a one-time purpose - invading Israeli territory," says Dr Daphné Richemond-Barak, an expert on underground warfare who teaches at Reichman University in Israel.

"The tunnels inside Gaza are different because Hamas is using them on a regular basis. They are probably more comfortable to be in for longer periods of time. They are definitely equipped for a longer, sustained presence."

"The leaders are hiding there, they have command-and-control centres, they use them for transport and lines of communication. They are equipped with electricity, lighting and rail tracks. You can move around more and stand."

She says Hamas appears to have "perfected the art" of tunnel building and warfare in recent years, having learned a huge amount by observing the tactics of Syrian rebel fighters in Aleppo and jihadist militants from the Islamic State (IS) group in Mosul.



WEB SITE News report, February 2015: Quentin Sommerville was blindfolded before gaining access to a Palestinian Islamic Jihad tunnel

The tunnels inside Gaza are believed to be as much as 30m (100ft) below the surface and have entrances located on the bottom floors of houses, mosques, schools and other public buildings to allow militants to evade detection.

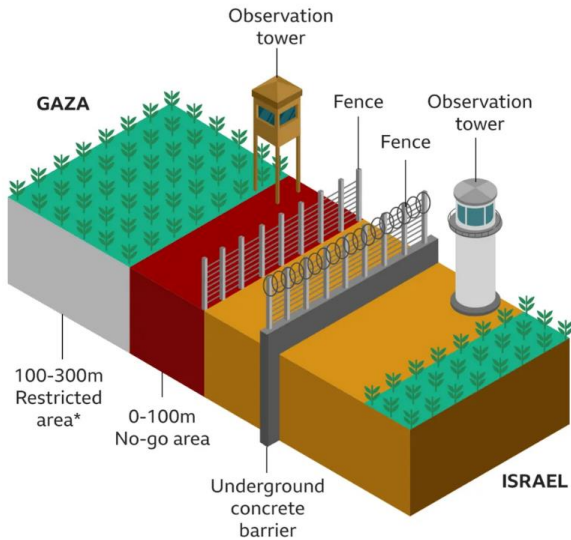
Building the network has also come at a cost to the local population. The IDF has accused Hamas of diverting millions of dollars given to Gaza in aid to pay for the tunnels as well as tens of thousands of tons of cement intended for rebuilding homes destroyed in previous wars.

It is possible that a cross-border tunnel was used by Hamas militants during last weekend's attacks in Israel, in which at least 1,300 people were killed, most of them civilians, and more than 150 others were taken as hostages. There were reports that a tunnel exit was discovered near the kibbutz of Kfar Aza, where dozens of civilians were massacred.

If that is confirmed, the tunnel would have been built beneath the underground concrete barrier studded with sophisticated anti-tunnel detection sensors which **Israel finished installing at the end of 2021.**

Dr Richemond-Barak says it would be a shock, but stresses that no tunnel detection system is fool-proof. "This is why tunnels have been used for time immemorial in war, because is there no way to prevent them."

Israel's border fence with Gaza



*Access only for farmers and on foot

Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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She also cautions that it is unrealistic for the Israeli establishment and general public to believe it will be possible for the IDF to destroy Hamas's entire network of tunnels in Gaza, as hundreds of thousands of troops mass nearby for a possible ground operation.

"There will be parts of the network where civilians, for whatever reason, will not evacuate... Some parts of the underground network are unknown. And for some of them the collateral damage will be too high."

Destroying the tunnels will also lead to a significant loss of life - among Israeli forces on the ground, Palestinian civilians and the hostages, she warns.

More than 1,500 Palestinians in Gaza, many of them civilians, have already been killed in retaliatory Israeli air strikes since Saturday.

"Hamas is very good at using human shields. Once a strike is imminent and they know it, they will put innocent civilians on top of buildings. That has forced Israel to cancel strikes many times," Dr Richemond-Barak says.

"Having mastered the technique, Hamas could easily use it in the context of the tunnels and simply put Israeli, American and other hostages inside them."

During the 2021 conflict, a series of devastating air strikes in Gaza City brought three residential buildings crashing to the ground, killing 42 people. The IDF said it targeted underground tunnels, but that when they collapsed the building's foundations collapsed too.



Three Buildings collapsed in Gaza City in 2021 after tunnels nearby were hit in an Israeli air strike

The tunnel network will also negate the advantages that the IDF has in terms of technology and intelligence, magnify the difficulties of urban warfare, and pose a lethal threat to Israeli troops, according to Dr Richemond-Barak.

"First of all, Hamas has had plenty of time to booby-trap the entire network," she says. "They could just let the soldiers enter into the tunnel network and then eventually blow the whole thing up."

"They could kidnap [the soldiers in surprise attacks]. And then you have all the other risks - running out of oxygen, fighting the enemy in one-on-one combat, and rescuing wounded soldiers becomes virtually impossible."

She adds: "Even if you don't go inside the tunnel, to secure an area where you suspect that tunnels might be present is very different from just securing an area in general. Here, you have to secure something that is invisible."

The Israeli forces will, however, have some ways to mitigate the risks.

According to Colin Clarke, director of research at the Soufan Group security consultancy, these might include sending drones and unmanned vehicles into tunnels to map them and identify booby traps before soldiers clear them.

Warplanes could also drop "bunker busting" bombs, which penetrate deep into the ground before detonating. However, they would pose a risk of collateral damage due to the dense urban terrain.

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[Modern War Institute](#) John Spencer, 18 Jan 2024

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There are larger military tunnel complexes in the world. China is believed to have three thousand miles of tunnels and bunkers capable of withstanding nuclear attacks in a network that has been called the "[Underground Great Wall](#)." Some estimates show North Korea has over [five thousand tunnels](#) and

infrastructure that includes [multiple underground air bases](#) with runways, radar sites, and submarine ports inside mountains.

But more importantly than the scale of the tunnels in Gaza, the Israel-Hamas war is the first war in which a combatant has made its vast underground network a defining centerpiece of its overall political-military strategy.

In the past, and even in most cases today, military tunnels and bunkers have been built specifically to gain a *military* advantage. They are used for smuggling, kidnapping, and invading or defending territory. Underground spaces enable militaries to conserve capabilities by avoiding detection and strike, to hold terrain by using the tunnels for mobile defense tactics, or even offensively to use guerrilla tactics to attrit the attacking force.

For the first time in the history of tunnel warfare, however, Hamas has built a tunnel network to gain not just a military advantage, but a *political* advantage, as well. Its underground world serves all of the military functions described above, but also an entirely different one. Hamas weaved its vast tunnel networks into the society on the surface. Destroying the tunnels is virtually impossible without adversely impacting the population living in Gaza. Consequently, they put the modern laws of war at the center of the conflict's conduct. These laws restrict the use of military force and methods or tactics that a military can use against [protected populations and sites](#) such as hospitals, churches, schools, and United Nations facilities. Almost all of Hamas's tunnels are built into civilian and protected sites in densely populated urban areas.

Much of the infrastructure providing access to the tunnels is in protected sites. This complicates discriminating between military targets and civilian locations—if not rendering it entirely impossible—because Hamas does not have military sites separate from civilian sites.

Hamas's strategy is also not to hold terrain or defeat an attacking force. Its strategy is about time. It is about creating time for international pressure on Israel to stop its military operation to mount.

Hamas is globally known for using [human shields](#), which is the practice of using civilians to restrict the attacker in a military operation. The group wants as many civilians as possible to be harmed by Israeli military action—as one of its officials put it, "[We are proud to sacrifice martyrs.](#)" It wants the world's attention on the question of whether the IDF campaign is violating the laws of war in attacking Hamas tunnels that are tightly connected to civilian and protected sites. It wants to buy as much time as is needed to cause the international community to stop Israel. Its entire strategy is built on tunnels.

The tactical challenges Hamas tunnels present to Israel are thereby compounded by strategic challenges. To deal with tunnels at the tactical level, Israel has demonstrated some of the world's [most advanced units](#), methods, and capabilities to find, exploit, and destroy tunnels. From specialized engineer capabilities and [canine units](#) to the [use of robots, flooding to clear tunnels](#), and both aerial-delivered and ground-emplaced explosives, to include [liquid explosives](#), to destroy them. Arguably, no military in the world is as well prepared for subterranean tactical challenges as the IDF. But the strategic challenge is entirely

different. To destroy many of the deep-buried tunnels, the IDF has required bunker-busting bombs, which Israel is [criticized for using](#). And most importantly it has required time to find and destroy the tunnels in a conflict in which Hamas's strategy is aimed at limiting the time available to Israel to conduct its campaign.

Hamas's strategy, then, is founded on tunnels and time. This war, more so than any other, is about the underground and not the surface. It is time based rather than terrain or enemy based. Hamas is in the tunnels. Its leaders and weapons are in the tunnels. The Israeli hostages are in the tunnels. And Hamas's strategy is founded on its conviction that, for Israel, the critical resource of time will run out in the tunnels.

John Spencer is chair of urban warfare studies at the Modern War Institute, codirector of MWI's Urban Warfare Project, and host of the [Urban Warfare Project Podcast](#). He is also a founding member of the [International Working Group on Subterranean Warfare](#). He served twenty-five years as an infantry soldier, which included two combat tours in Iraq. He is the author of the book [Connected Soldiers: Life, Leadership, and Social Connection in Modern War](#) and coauthor of [Understanding Urban Warfare](#).

The views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the official position of the United States Military Academy, Department of the Army, or Department of Defense.

USE OF HUMAN SHIELDS BY HAMAS

[WIKIPEDIA](#)

[Israel](#) has accused [Hamis](#) of using [human shields](#) in the [Gaza Strip](#), saying that Hamas has purposely attempted to shield itself from Israeli attacks by storing weapons in civilian infrastructure, launching rockets from residential areas, and telling residents to ignore Israeli warnings to flee. Israel has also accused Hamas of maintaining command and control bunkers and [tunnel infrastructure](#) below hospitals. Hamas has denied using hospitals to shield any command center,^[1] while it has previously made remarks expressing support for Palestinians refusing to flee areas Israel has targeted.^[2]

According to a paper published by [NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence](#), the strategic use of human shields by groups like Hamas hinges on exploiting Israel's aim to minimize [civilian casualties](#) and the sensitivity of Western public opinion. This tactic allows Hamas to either [accuse Israel of war crimes](#) if civilian casualties occur or to protect its assets and continue operations if the IDF limits its military response. This approach is an example of 'lawfare', using legal and public platforms to challenge an adversary.^{[3][4]} Israel has said that Hamas's actions have been responsible for civilian casualties in Gaza,^{[5][6]} Human rights groups have said that even if Hamas were using human shields, Israel must still abide by international law to protect civilians.^{[7][8]}

[“Compelling Evidence Of Human Shield Tactics” British Colonel Analyses Latest Hamas Footage \(You Tube\)](#)

A series of videos released by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have provided compelling evidence that Hamas fighters are operating in hospitals in Gaza, using civilians as human shields, says former British Army Colonel Hamish de Bretton-Gordon.

The videos show well-constructed tunnels underneath the hospitals, with armed Hamas fighters and hostages being taken into these underground networks. This evidence supports the Israeli claims that Hamas has been hiding underground in key areas, including hospitals and schools, to protect themselves and launch attacks on Israel. The discovery of these tunnels raises concerns about the safety of civilians and the potential for further violence in the region.

Since the beginning of the conflict, the Israeli government has accused Hamas of using hospitals and other civilian structures to shield their fighters and store weapons. While Hamas vehemently denies these claims, the videos released by the IDF provide strong evidence to the contrary. The tunnels discovered under the hospitals are well-constructed and designed to protect those inside from direct attacks. The tunnels go as deep as 10 meters, beyond the range of precision deep-penetrating missiles, indicating their purpose as defensive structures.

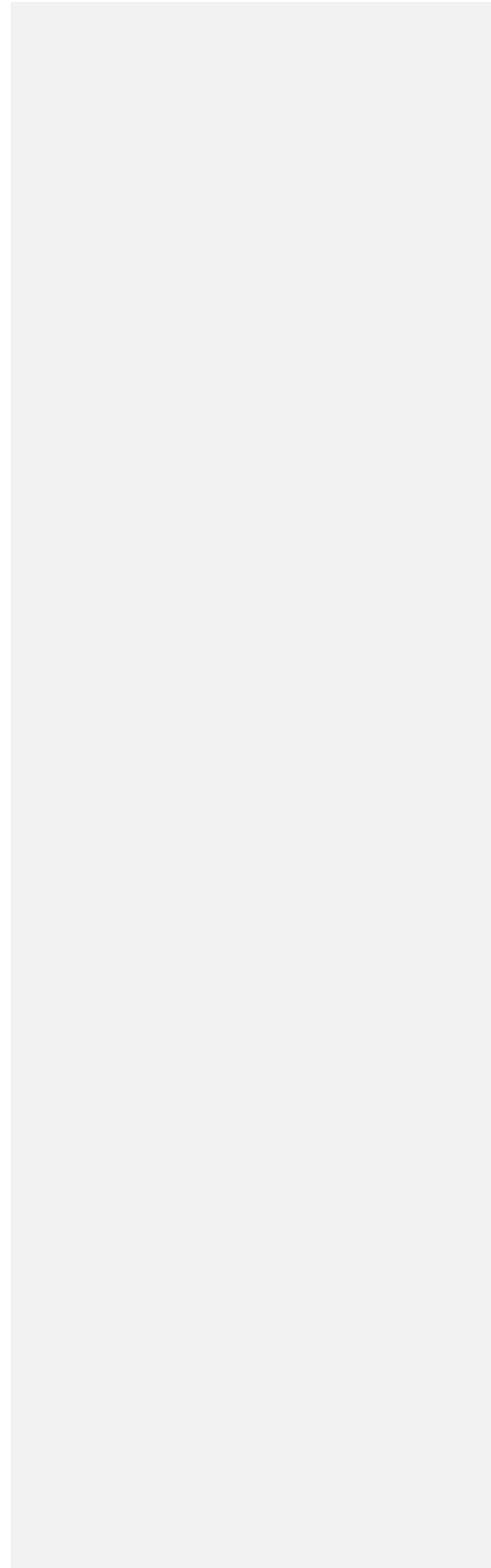
The existence of these tunnels and the presence of armed Hamas fighters in hospitals raise serious concerns about the safety of civilians. The videos show hostages being led into the hospital and down into the tunnels, potentially putting their lives at risk. The medics and doctors in the hospitals appear exasperated by the presence of Hamas fighters, as they understand the danger they pose to everyone in the facility. This use of civilians as human shields is a violation of international humanitarian law and further highlights the disregard for innocent lives displayed by Hamas.

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ISRAELI FORCES SEIZE RAFAH BORDER CROSSING IN GAZA, PUTTING CEASE-FIRE TALKS ON KNIFE'S EDGE

**Israeli tanks have seized control of Gaza's vital Rafah border crossing
as Israel brushed off urgent warnings from close allies and moved into the southern city**

[abc NEWS](#) SAMY MAGDY Associated Press, MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press, and LEE KEATH Associated Press May 7, 2024

CAIRO -- Israeli tanks seized control of Gaza's vital Rafah border crossing on Tuesday as Israel brushed off urgent warnings from close allies and moved into the southern city even as cease-fire negotiations with Hamas remained on a knife's edge.

The foray came after hours of whiplash in the Israel-Hamas war, with the militant group on Monday saying it accepted an Egyptian-Qatari mediated cease-fire proposal. Israel, however, insisted the deal did not meet its core demands.

The high-stakes diplomatic moves and military brinkmanship left a glimmer of hope alive — if only barely — for an accord that could bring at least a pause in the 7-month-old war that has devastated the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli incursion overnight appeared to be short of the full-fledged offensive into Rafah that Israel has planned, and it was not immediately known if it would be expanded. The looming operation has raised global alarm over the fate of around 1.3 million Palestinians crammed into the city — and threatened to widen a rift between Israel and its main backer, the United States.

U.S. President Joe Biden warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu again on Monday against launching an invasion of the city after Israel ordered 100,000 Palestinians to evacuate from eastern parts of Rafah.

The Israeli 401st Brigade entered the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing early Tuesday, the Israeli military said, taking "operational control" of the crucial border point. Footage released by the military showed Israeli flags flying from tanks that seized the area. Details of the video matched known features of the crossing. Both the Rafah crossing and the Kerem Shalom crossing between Israel and Gaza — the two main routes for entry points for aid to the beleaguered territory — have been closed for at least the past two days.

Though smaller entry points still operate, the closure is a blow to efforts to maintain the flow of food, medicine and other supplies that are keeping Gaza's population alive at a time when officials say the northern part of the enclave is already experiencing "full-blown famine."

Jens Laerke, a spokesman for the U.N. humanitarian affairs office known as OCHA, said Israeli authorities have denied it access to the Rafah crossing. He warned that disruption at Rafah could break the fragile aid operation, saying all the fuel keeping the humanitarian work moving comes through the crossing.

"It will plunge this crisis into unprecedented levels of need, including the very real possibility of a famine," he said. The Israeli military "is ignoring all warnings about what this could mean for civilians and for the humanitarian operation across the Gaza Strip."

The military also carried out a flurry of strikes and bombardment across Rafah overnight, killing at least 23 Palestinians, including at least six women and five children, according to hospital records seen by The Associated Press.

Mohamed Abu Amra said his wife, two brothers, sister and niece were killed when a strike flattened their home as they slept. "We did nothing. ... We don't have Hamas," he said. "We found fire devouring us. The house was turned upside down."

The Israeli military claimed it seized the Rafah crossing after receiving intelligence it was "being used for terrorist purposes." The military did not provide evidence to immediately support the assertion, though it said Hamas fighters near the crossing launched a mortar attack that killed four Israeli troops and wounded others near Kerem Shalom on Sunday.

The military also said that ground troops and airstrikes targeted suspected Hamas positions in Rafah. An Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesperson declined to immediately comment on the Israeli seizure of the crossing.

Egypt has previously warned that any seizure of Rafah — which is supposed to be part of a demilitarized border zone — or an attack that forces Palestinians to flee over the border into Egypt would threaten the 1979 peace treaty with Israel that's been a linchpin for regional security.

Israel's plans to attack Rafah have also raised fears of a dramatic surge in civilian deaths in a campaign of bombardments and offensives that has killed more than 34,700 Palestinians, according to Gaza health officials. The assault has leveled large swaths of the territory and left people scrambling for food, water and medicine.

The Rafah operation has also deepened the divide between Netanyahu and Biden over the conduct of the war. Netanyahu says attacking Rafah — which Israel says is Hamas' last major stronghold in the territory — is crucial to the goal of destroying Hamas after its Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel.

In that unprecedented Hamas raid, militants killed some 1,200 people and took around 250 others as hostages back to Gaza. Israeli critics say Netanyahu is concerned about his government's survival, since hard-line partners in his coalition could bolt if he signs onto a deal before a Rafah invasion.

In their call Monday, Biden told Netanyahu that a cease-fire deal was the best way to win the return of the hostages still held by Hamas and believed to number around 100, along with the bodies of around 30 others.

As Israel announced it would push ahead with operations in Rafah, it said the cease-fire proposal that Hamas agreed to did not meet its "core demands." But it said it would send a delegation to Egypt to continue negotiations.

An Egyptian official and a Western diplomat said the draft Hamas accepted had only minor changes in wording from a version the U.S. had earlier pushed for with Israeli approval. The changes were made in consultation with CIA chief William Burns, who embraced the draft before sending it to the Palestinian group, the diplomat and official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the internal deliberations.

The White House said Burns was discussing the Hamas response with the Israelis and other regional officials.

According to a copy released by Hamas after its acceptance, the proposal outlines a phased release of the hostages alongside the gradual withdrawal of Israeli troops from the entire enclave and ending with a “sustainable calm,” defined as a “permanent cessation of military and hostile operations.”

In the first, 42-day stage of the cease-fire, Hamas would release 33 hostages — including women, children, older adults and the ill — in return for the release of hundreds of Palestinians in Israeli prisons, and Israeli forces would withdraw from parts of Gaza. The parties would then negotiate the terms of the next stage, under which the remaining civilian men and soldiers would be released, while Israeli forces would withdraw from the rest of Gaza.

Hamas has demanded an end to the war and complete Israeli withdrawal in return for the release of all hostages. Publicly, Israeli leaders reject that trade-off, vowing the war will continue until the hostages are all released — and Hamas is destroyed.

THE IDF HAS TAKEN OVER THE RAFAH CROSSING ON THE GAZA SIDE AND IS MOUNTING TARGETED OPERATIONS AGAINST TERRORISTS IN EASTERN RAFAH.

[ISRAEL AM](#) May 7 2024

The IDF has taken over the Rafah crossing on the Gaza side and is mounting targeted operations against terrorists in eastern Rafah.

The international media reported that Hamas accepted a ceasefire proposal and that Israel subsequently rejected it. In truth, Hamas accepted their own version of a proposal that was totally unacceptable to Israel and the U.S. They did not accept the deal proposed by Israel and supported by the U.S., that would release 33 Israeli hostages in exchange for a 6 week ceasefire and the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. The result of the Hamas "acceptance" and the media coverage was that Israel comes out looking like the bad guy -- just like Hamas planned.

[Hamas clearly fired those rockets at the Kerem Shalom crossing on Sunday to draw Israel into mounting a full scale invasion of Rafah. By doing so they made it clear that they are not interested in a ceasefire or in releasing hostages. All they are interested in is to harm Israel by isolating it in the international community and making it into a pariah state -- and the easiest and quickest way for them to accomplish that is through an Israeli invasion of Rafah that leads to the deaths of thousands of civilians.

Israel has not launched a full scale invasion of Rafah. The IDF is currently just operating in a very limited and targeted manner, in order to be able to stop in the event that Hamas accepts a reasonable ceasefire proposal. Israel also wants to respect the demands of the Biden administration not to invade Rafah. But if Hamas continues to reject proposals and attack Israeli forces, Israel might have to move forward with a full push into Rafah to finish the job it started on October 8 -- the destruction of Hamas as a viable fighting force.]

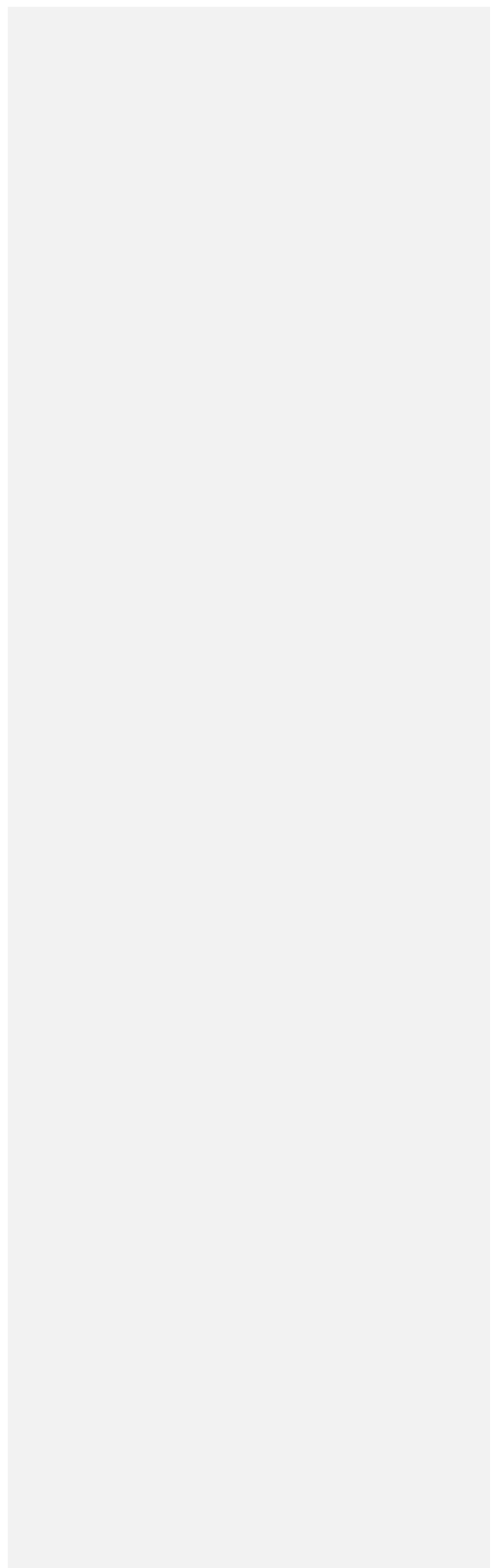
The Biden administration is reportedly delaying a shipment of thousands of weapons to Israel. For more, [click here](#).

Drone attacks and racket barrages against Israel continue in the north. The air force is responding.

The IDF announced the names of 2 soldiers killed in a drone attack on Metula on Sunday:

- Major (res.) Dan Kamkagi, 31 years old, from Kfar Oranim, a fighter in patrol battalion 6551, half-fire formation (551).
- Major (res.) Nahman Natan Hertz, 31 years old, from Elazar, a fighter in patrol battalion 6551, half-fire formation (551).

PART I
HEZBOLLAH



ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH CONFLICT (2023–PRESENT)

[WIKIPEDIA](#)

On 8 October 2023, the Lebanese militant group [Hezbollah](#) fired guided rockets and artillery shells at Israeli positions in the disputed [Shebaa Farms](#) one day into the [2023 Israel– Hamas war](#). Israel retaliated by launching drone strikes and artillery shells at Hezbollah positions near Lebanon's boundary with the [Israeli-occupied Golan Heights](#). The outbreak of the conflict had followed Hezbollah's declaration of support and praise for the [Hamas attack on Israel](#), which took place on 7 October.^{[[28\]](#)^[29] Clashes subsequently escalated to reach other parts of the [Israel-Lebanon border](#). It is currently the largest escalation of the [Hezbollah–Israel conflict](#) to have occurred since the [2006 Lebanon War](#).}

THE COMING CONFLICT WITH HEZBOLLAH

[CSIS](#) March 21, 2024 [Seth G. Jones](#), [Daniel Byman](#), [Alexander Palmer](#), and [Riley McCabe](#)

[Audio Brief](#)

THE ISSUE

Although the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza has captured the world's attention, there is a serious risk of war between Israel and Hezbollah, according to a new assessment by CSIS. Since October 7, 2023, there have been over 4,400 rocket, missile, and other stand-off attacks by Israel and Hezbollah combined. Hezbollah has also repeatedly violated UN Security Council Resolution 1701 by deploying forces and firing anti-tank guided missiles and other stand-off weapons against Israel from the zone between the Blue Line and the Litani River, according to CSIS geolocation analysis. The United States needs to increase its diplomatic engagement to prevent what could become a much wider and more violent war in the Middle East.

Introduction

Shortly after Hamas's brutal terrorist attacks in southern Israel on October 7, 2023, Israel nearly launched a preventive war against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. Israeli intelligence assessed that Hezbollah fighters were on the verge of crossing the border into northern Israel as part of a multi-pronged attack. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) deployed fighter aircraft that awaited orders to strike targets in Lebanon. Israeli officials apparently notified the White House around 6:30 a.m. on October 11, 2023, that they were considering preventive strikes and requested U.S. support. But senior U.S. officials, including President Joe Biden, pushed back. According to CSIS interviews with U.S. officials, they were worried that Israeli strikes in Lebanon would unnecessarily trigger a regional war and were skeptical of Israel's intelligence that an attack was imminent.[1]

Although Israel did not launch a preventive war, the possibility of an Israel-Hezbollah conflict looms over the region. Israel faces a dilemma. It can risk war with Hezbollah, but in the process, a war would broaden the fighting in a way that makes the current war in Gaza look like a minor dust-up. Israel could also wait, which would avoid war now with Hezbollah, but this could risk a more serious conflict in the future with a foe that is better armed and capable and that could control the timing of a war to its advantage.

To better understand the prospects of war, this brief asks several questions. What factors shape the possibility of war? What are Hezbollah's capabilities today? What are Israel's options? What options does the United States have to mitigate or prevent a war?

To answer these questions, this analysis includes a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative information.

It compiles data on Israeli and Hezbollah strikes along the Israel-Lebanon-Syria border, geolocates Hezbollah attacks against Israel in the zone between the Blue Line and the Litani River, and examines satellite imagery of Israeli strikes against Hezbollah targets. It also assesses Hezbollah's military capabilities, including compiling data on Hezbollah's stockpile of 120,000 to 200,000 short-range guided ballistic missiles, short- and intermediate-range unguided ballistic missiles, and short- and long-range unguided rockets. Finally, it draws on interviews the authors conducted with U.S. and Israeli officials on a trip to Israel.

The analysis makes three main arguments. First, the security situation has dramatically worsened in recent months for several reasons: the October 7 attacks profoundly increased Israeli insecurity; the displacement of over 150,000 civilians on both sides of the Israel-Lebanon border has created growing pressure, particularly in Israel, to alter the security situation so that civilians can return; Hezbollah and Iranian-linked groups in Lebanon and Syria continue to stockpile stand-off weapons that can hit Israel; and Hezbollah continues to violate UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1701. Taken together, these factors have created a volatile situation in an already tense Middle East.

Second, violence between Israel and Hezbollah has already started to climb after nearly two decades of low-level conflict. Since October 7, there have been more than 4,400 violent incidents concentrated around the Blue Line and the Golan Heights involving Israel and Hezbollah, according to CSIS analysis. In addition, CSIS analysis indicates that Hezbollah's anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) have struck Israeli forces from concealed launch sites less than three kilometers from the Blue Line on at least 17 occasions since October 7, a clear violation of UNSCR 1701.

Third, the United States needs to increase diplomatic efforts to prevent an all-out war, which would be devastating for both Lebanon and Israel and ignite a broader conflagration in an already combustible region, including triggering more attacks on U.S. forces.

The rest of this brief is divided into four sections. The first examines the evolving security landscape. The second section assesses Hezbollah's capabilities and force disposition, particularly along the Israel-Lebanon border. The third section analyzes Israel's objectives and options. The fourth section explores U.S. policy options.

THE CHANGING SECURITY LANDSCAPE

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HEZBOLLAH'S STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAEL

CSIS Nicholas Blanford May 14 2024

Jon Alterman: Nicholas Blanford is a Beirut based security consultant. He's also a non-resident Senior Fellow with the Atlantic Council. He's the author of, *Killing Mr. Lebanon: The Assassination of Rafik Hariri and Its Impact on the Middle East* and *Warriors of God: Inside Hezbollah's Thirty-Year Struggle Against Israel*. Nicholas Blanford, welcome to Babel.

Nicholas Blanford: Thank you, Jon.

Jon Alterman: As you've written for many years, there are a range of Lebanese attitudes toward Hezbollah. In general, in Lebanon, have the last six months been good for Hezbollah or bad for Hezbollah?

Nicholas Blanford: To be honest, it's probably the same. The division in Lebanon has been so strong and divisive over Hezbollah's weapons and its military aspirations, that what has happened in the last six months is a continuation of the political divisions of Hezbollah's intervention in Syria, Hezbollah's alleged role in the assassination of Rafik Hariri, and so on. What has been going on for the last six months is an expansion of the tensions and schisms between Hezbollah, its supporters, and other components in Lebanon that we've been seeing since at least 2005.

Jon Alterman: Lebanese have complicated and often hostile attitudes toward Palestinians in Lebanon. What is Hezbollah's attitude toward Palestinians in general and toward Hamas in particular?

Nicholas Blanford: Well, of course the Palestinian cause has been right at the forefront of Hezbollah's ideology, right from the very beginning. In their "Open Letter Manifesto" in 1985, they called for the obliteration of Israel and the liberation of Holy Jerusalem as one of their central ideological pillars. During the Al-Aqsa Intifada over 20 years ago now, they were very supportive of the various Palestinian factions providing training, financing to an extent, weapons manufacturing skills, and so on and so forth to help the various Palestinian groups in the West Bank and Gaza.

So obviously that's playing out now with what Hezbollah calls its support front along the blue line, along the Lebanon-Israel border, to try and somewhat divert Israeli war efforts from Gaza toward Israel's northern border. The relationship with Hamas is a bit more complicated. The relationship began in the early 1990s after the Israelis expelled around 400 Hamas militants into Lebanon. This is where Hezbollah reached out to Hamas and the relationship developed from there. Ideologically, they're fairly different. Obviously, Hamas is part of the Muslim Brotherhood, a Sunni organization, and Hezbollah is a Shia organization that looks to Iran for its doctrinal and ideological goals.

But nonetheless, they have this relationship. It went under some strains back in 2012-2013 at the beginning of the conflict in Syria. Hamas was headquartered in Damascus at the time and essentially switched sides. They went with the mainly Sunni opposition against the rule of President Assad and broke away from the so-called axis of resistance, which groups Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and so on. But Hamas eventually came

cap in hand back to the Iranians and back to Hezbollah, when it became clear, around 2018, that President Assad was not going anywhere.

So, there's a more complicated relationship between Hezbollah and Hamas. On a grassroots level, there's not much love for Hamas amongst Hezbollah fighters. They quietly call Hamas the back stabbers for switching sides in Syria. So, it's fairly ironic that what is happening in South Lebanon over the last six months, with more than 300 people dead and a lot of destruction and damage to Lebanese border villages, is essentially for the sake of coming to the support of Hamas and Gaza.

Jon Alterman: Are you surprised there's not more of an effort to assist Hamas, or do you think there was more effort than you would've expected to assist Hamas as this battle rages in Gaza?

Nicholas Blanford: Well, I think it was clear that Hezbollah was going to do something. They did it on October 8th. They did a very pro-forma shelling of Israeli positions in the Shebaa farms. This was standard, it was understood, but of course, the fighting continued. Initially in fact, on October 9th, the fighting began with Palestinian Islamic Jihad staging an incursion across the border into Israel from South Lebanon. There was a heavy clash, an Israeli colonel was killed, the Israeli retaliatory shelling was heavier than one would expect, it killed a bunch of Hezbollah guys, and then we had the tit-for-tat that really got underway from that point on.

The bottom line here is that the Iranians do not want Hezbollah to get involved in full scale war with Israel for the sake of Hamas. Hezbollah is far too important for Iran. It's a key component of Iran's deterrence architecture. So, while the fighting along the Lebanon-Israel border has gone on for much, much longer than Hezbollah was expecting, it has more or less stayed at a fairly persistent level. It's well below the threshold that would see both Hezbollah and Israel escalate into a larger conflict, either a limited one confined to South Lebanon or a full-scale conflict which would probably go regional.

Jon Alterman: You understand more about Hezbollah's decision-making process than anybody I know. How would you describe it as it relates to regional conflict or as it relates to Iran? Ambassador Jeff Feltman, the former U.S. ambassador to Lebanon said, "Hezbollah's Lebanese role is secondary to its ties with Iran. If Hezbollah ever has to choose between Iran and Lebanon, Lebanon becomes roadkill." Does he have it right?

Nicholas Blanford: I think he's correct, yes, because of the ideological links between the leadership of Iran and Hezbollah. At the end of the day, Hezbollah plays a key role as a deterrence asset for the Iranians. If one day the Americans, the Israelis, or a combination of the two and more perhaps, decide it's time to go after Iran's nuclear facilities or try to decapitate the regime, then this is when Hezbollah could get that phone call from Iran who says, "Right, it's payback time. We need you to go into action."

Now, that would probably necessitate a full-scale war with Israel, a war that the Lebanese definitely don't want, but this is the discipline. This is the link between Hezbollah and Iran. Hezbollah would have no choice

but to push ahead with it. And Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah of course, would have to try to justify this to an angry and skeptical domestic audience in Lebanon.

Jon Alterman: You've lived in Lebanon for decades. You wrote this book about Hezbollah more than a decade ago. What do you think the major inflection points in Hezbollah's evolution have been? What are the things that shifted Hezbollah's direction?

Nicholas Blanford: When you're analyzing Hezbollah's actions and the choices that it makes, for me, the key component of all this is that Hezbollah wants to maintain, sustain, and nurture what it calls its "resistance priority." The resistance priority is essentially its right to bear arms and to act independently, if necessary, of the Lebanese state. Every action that they've taken when there's been a sudden shift in behavior has been because of a change of circumstances in Lebanon and potentially a threat to Hezbollah. In the 1980s, we had a chaotic situation in Lebanon during the country's civil war. You have this zealous new organization backed by the Iranians emerging. It was the era of suicide bombing against the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Marine barracks, and the kidnapping of Westerners.

But in 1990, the civil war comes to an end and there's suddenly a new reality. The Syrians are now calling the shots in Lebanon, and Hezbollah had to accept that if it wanted to continue pursuing its resistance priority of fighting the Israeli occupation in South Lebanon. During the 1990s, they were beginning to win plaudits, praise, and respect from Lebanese of all confessions for the prowess they were demonstrating in South Lebanon. That, of course, culminated with the Israeli withdrawal in May 2000. So suddenly we have another inflection point. How do you continue to justify resistance when there's no occupation left to resist?

There were gradually more calls in Lebanon saying, "Hezbollah you did a great job kicking the Israelis out of Lebanon, but you should really think about putting down your weapons and going into politics." Then in 2005, Rafik Hariri was assassinated. The country politically split into two camps, one headed by Hezbollah and the other headed by factions backed by the West. Then you had for the next decade this massive polarizing effect in the country, augmented by the 2006 war, where Hezbollah, for the first time after the Hariri assassination, joined government. This was in July of 2005. The Syrians had gone after Hariri's assassination, so Hezbollah no longer had that kind of protective fig leaf. They had to take a step deeper into Lebanese politics to defend that resistance priority.

This has continued. The intervention in Syria was highly controversial at the time. They took about a year and a half to go from outright denying any involvement in Syria to justifying why they were in Syria. This has continued to the extent now that we saw in the Thawrat, the popular uprising in October of 2019 when Lebanon went into this massive economic collapse. And you had people of all different backgrounds and sects coming into the center of Beirut and protesting against the political elite. It was actually Hezbollah's supporters that were coming up and defending the oligarchs, if you like.

They've undergone these various inflection points. They've evolved in their discourse and in their behavior, but the bottom line is it's all about protecting that resistance priority.

Jon Alterman: Is this because Hassan Nasrallah is shrewd? Is it because he's agile? Is it because he's deeply strategic? To what extent does this reflect Nasrallah's vision, his skill? Or is Nasrallah just a figurehead and other people or other groups are calling the shots?

Nicholas Blanford: Well, Nasrallah has developed this aura over the 30 years that he's been Secretary General. When his predecessor and mentor Abbas al-Musawi was killed in February 1992 in a helicopter attack on his motorcade, there was a kind of collective shock within Hezbollah because al-Musawi was a revered figure. He was the head of the resistance in the 1980s. And people were wondering, "How on earth are we going to be able to continue without him?"

Well, two days later the Shura Council met, and they elected Hassan Nasrallah as the new Secretary General. People knew of him because he was the protégé of al-Musawi, but he was relatively young and inexperienced. However, he very much grew into the role. Back then, the Secretary General could serve two consecutive three-year terms, but after his two terms were up, they recognized this guy was the leader for good. So, he is a smart guy. He's got a lot of very good advisors. This is definitely not a one man show. Hezbollah is very much kind of an institution.

Nasrallah is extremely good with the media. He's extremely good with messaging, with information operations, and propaganda. He is very, very effective. One day, I guess we're going to have a situation where Nasrallah is no longer on the scene, and one can imagine that there's going to be another collective intake of breath amongst Hezbollah's cadres about who's going to take over and how effective the new leader is going to be.

Jon Alterman: You wrote a couple of months ago now that Israelis and Hezbollah are probably ready to be led to an off ramp that leads to a cessation of hostilities. Do you think they're still waiting at that off ramp? Has anything changed or are they just all waiting?

Nicholas Blanford: I think they're waiting. The war, the fighting in South Lebanon has continued for far longer than they were expecting. And that was actually admitted in an interview by NBC with Sheikh Naim Qassem, who's the number two of Hezbollah.

But it's very important for Hezbollah to come across that it won, that it prevailed. So it has to save face. I think even more so than two months ago, Hezbollah's ready to be led to the off ramp, but somebody needs to hold their hand and guide them to the off ramp. And I think it's the same with the Israelis. I think the Israelis want this to end. The Israelis have got about 80,000 people who have been evacuated from their homes in the North, and they need to get them back.

Tactically at the moment, I think the Israelis have the upper hand on the day-to-day fighting. They're not really losing any soldiers. They're using their technology and air power, especially to locate and target senior Hezbollah field commanders, which is causing Hezbollah a certain amount of headache. So this

could continue, although the Israeli government does have the pressure of the 80,000 folks that need to get back to their homes.

Jon Alterman: And how many Lebanese have been pushed out of the South in the context of this conflict?

Nicholas Blanford: In northern Israel, it was a kind of a mandatory evacuation. In Lebanon, it's more voluntary. The Lebanese in the border district have been doing this for decades. When things get too difficult, they've got the bags packed by the front door, and they're in the car and heading north. So the figures vary, but it's between 90,000 to 120,000 Lebanese who are believed to have left.

Jon Alterman: Does that create political pressure in Lebanon or is Lebanon in such political straits right now that it just gets absorbed into the noise?

Nicholas Blanford: Politically, everything has ground to a halt in Lebanon. Before this kicked off in October, the main political issue was to try to elect a new president. That has just been pushed aside now. The Lebanese government is acting in a caretaker capacity because of the lack of a president, so its powers are limited. It certainly doesn't have the strength to step in and go to Hezbollah and say, "Enough, stop the fighting. You're causing too much damage to the south, and you're risking plunging the country into a major war with Israel that we do not want."

So, people are basically wringing their hands in frustration if they are politically opposed to Hezbollah, and everyone else is just holding their breath and waiting to see what emerges from all this.

Jon Alterman: You've described the split over Hezbollah as basically a fault line that runs through Lebanese society. Do you see a way to heal that division or to bridge it or to somehow bring Lebanese together?

Nicholas Blanford: I think it's going to remain an open, festering wound for so long as there's the broader conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. Unless there's some kind of rapprochement between the West and Iran, something that settles the region and calms everything down, and a solution for the Palestinian cause, all these regional fissures, tensions, and stresses are going to continue to be played out in Lebanon. I don't really see any way, unless there's some kind of regional shift or a regional settlement, that things will change much here.

Jon Alterman: What Hamas did on October 7th intended to terrorize Israelis and target civilians. Is that the kind of thing Hezbollah might contemplate or might be capable of? Is that something that Israelis need to include in the potential Hezbollah playbook going forward, or is it so different from what Hezbollah has done that it's not really within the realm of possibility?

Nicholas Blanford: What Hamas did on October 7th in terms of crossing the security fence and going into the Gaza envelope is straight out of Hezbollah's playbook. Hezbollah's been training to do exactly this since

at least 2006, and Nasrallah mentioned in a speech in 2012 that, "the time may come when I'll ask the guys to go and liberate Galilee." In other words, cross the border and move into northern Israel.

In terms of the atrocities that were committed on October 7th, I don't see Hezbollah doing that at all. That is simply not Hezbollah's playbook. What I would see them doing is crossing the border and potentially seizing some of the border settlements. Some of them are quite exposed with one or two roads connecting them to the rest of Israel. Hezbollah could mount ambushes there to prevent Israeli troops from coming up to try to rescue whoever's remaining in the settlement. But beyond that, I see them going in from the sea, using hang gliders exactly as Hamas did, and attacking military and infrastructure targets. So yes, this is definitely what Hezbollah's been training to do for maybe two decades.

Jon Alterman: And if you had to guess, is that what the next Israeli war with Hezbollah would look like? Would it be about crossing the border, or would it be Hezbollah unleashing the tremendous missile arsenal it has and getting into an air war with Israel? Obviously, you can have a combination of those, but do you think this war would principally be fought with soldiers or principally fought with missiles?

Nicholas Blanford: Both. But again, it does depend on the scope of the war. At the moment, there's a lot of speculation that if the Israelis feel that they need to come into Lebanon, that they won't stage a full-scale invasion of Lebanon and won't necessarily go after Lebanese infrastructure to, as some Israeli politicians like to say, knock Lebanon back to the Stone Age. They could do a limited incursion. And the idea behind this would essentially be to come into South Lebanon, up as far north as the Litani River 25 plus kilometers north of the border, and essentially rubbleize Shia villages, in particular those where Hezbollah may be based. They would go after whatever military infrastructure they could find of Hezbollah's, kill as many Hezbollah people as possible, and then pull back to the blue line.

Now, this is not a solution, of course. There's nothing to stop Hezbollah from coming back into South Lebanon afterwards, and it would be very bloody. And in some respects, once Israeli troops are on the ground in South Lebanon, the playing field begins to level a bit in Hezbollah's favor as Hezbollah's had more than 17 years to prepare the ground in South Lebanon for exactly this eventuality. So, if you have a full-scale invasion the Israelis would take a lot of casualties. It'd be very bloody and very destructive from the Lebanese side as well.

But I think the war would be limited, so you wouldn't have Hezbollah, for example, firing their ballistic missiles into Tel Aviv. They will be saving that in case the Israelis one day decide, "Right, we need to go after Hezbollah properly, and we're going to destroy Lebanon in the process." And that's the moment when you will have what the Iranians did two weeks ago, but on a much, much larger scale and with no previous warning. The country will go into lockdown for the duration. No one's going to work, no one's going to school, no one's going to university, no civilian aviation traffic, and no civilian maritime traffic. And you're going to have a level of destruction from the blue line going all the way down to Tel Aviv and beyond.

Jon Alterman: Are you confident the two sides have deterred each other for the time being?

Nicholas Blanford: I think so. I think the fact that we had 17 years of near total calm, from the 2006 war until October 8th, was testimony to that. Now, I can understand the trauma felt by Israelis after October 7th, and the fears of those Israelis who are living cheek by jowl with Hezbollah along the northern border. But they did enjoy 17 years of calm. There's no reason to suppose that once the war in Gaza is over, if things calm down between Hezbollah and Israel, that the calm couldn't last another 17 years. Assuming no one is going to go after the regime in Iran, you could have another 17 years of complete calm along the blue line.

Jon Alterman: Nicholas Blanford, thank you very much for joining us on Babel.

Nicholas Blanford: My pleasure, Jon. Thank you.

WHY ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH TENSIONS RISK BOILING OVER NOW

[CNN WORLD](#) Nadeen Ebrahim June 7 2024



Smoke billows from the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted the southern Lebanese village of Khiam near the border with Israel on May 29. Rabih Daher/AFP/Getty Images

Israel and the Lebanese Iran-backed Islamist group Hezbollah are ramping up cross-border attacks after months of low-intensity fighting, prompting the Israeli military to warn this week that it is prepared to launch a large-scale attack on its northern border.

With both sides trading fire for more than eight months, experts say Israel feels it can no longer ignore its northern front or delay taking action there.

A full-blown war appears to have become more likely – even if both sides have no desire for one, analysts believe.

Here's what we know:

WHY ARE ISRAEL AND HEZBOLLAH FIGHTING?

Lebanon and Israel have officially been in a state of war for decades. Israel launched a devastating invasion of Lebanon in 1982, sending tanks all the way to the capital Beirut, after coming under attack from Palestinian militants in the country. It then occupied southern Lebanon for 22 years until it was driven out by Hezbollah in 2000. In Lebanon, Hezbollah is officially considered a “resistance” group tasked with confronting Israel, which Beirut classifies as an enemy state. Much of the Western world has designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization.

Since then, the two sides have traded fire sporadically, but tensions boiled over in 2006 when Israel went to war in southern Lebanon after Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers. More than 1,000 Lebanese were killed in that conflict, mostly civilians, as well as 49 Israeli civilians and 121 soldiers. Two years later,

Hezbollah [returned the remains](#) of the kidnapped soldiers in exchange for the release of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, as well as the bodies of militants Israel was holding.

The latest hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah started after Hamas led an attack on Israel on October 7, killing 1,200 people and abducting 250, according to Israeli authorities. That prompted Israel to go to war with Hamas in Gaza, during which it has levelled much of the territory and killed more than 36,000 Palestinians. Hezbollah has said that its current round of fighting with Israel is to support the Palestinians in Gaza.

The military capability of the Lebanese group has grown since 2006, when it relied largely on inaccurate [Soviet-era Katyusha rockets](#). Today, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah says his group boasts more than 100,000 fighters and reservists. The group is also believed to possess 150,000 rockets that could overwhelm Israel's defenses if an all-out war breaks out.

WHY ARE TENSIONS FLARING UP NOW?

The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah has been gradually intensifying since October 8, said Heiko Wimmen, project director for Iraq, Syria and Lebanon at the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based think tank. It's a "slow-motion escalation" that "inches upwards," he said.

But both sides have come closer to war of late as clashes across the border have grown in number and scale. "There is clearly an escalation," said Wimmen, particularly in terms of deaths on each side of the border and the type of weaponry Hezbollah has been deploying.

An Israeli reservist was killed in a Hezbollah strike on a village in northern Israel on Wednesday, bringing the total number of soldiers killed on the Israeli side to 19.

RELATED ARTICLE Tensions ramp up on Israel-Lebanon border as IDF warns decision is approaching on fresh offensive

Israel and Hezbollah have also been striking much deeper into each other's territory than they were at the beginning of the war, when fighting was confined to a roughly [4-kilometer \(2.5-mile\) radius](#) of the border on either side.

Hezbollah has fired 35 kilometers into Israel, while Israel has targeted areas of Lebanon more than 120 kilometers north.

Cross-border attacks from Lebanon this week led to large fires blazing through Israel's northern region, which Israel attributed to rocket fire from southern Lebanon, where Hezbollah said it had launched a "swarm of drones" at Israeli military sites.

On Wednesday Hezbollah said it had targeted Israel's Iron Dome defense system in the northern village of Ramot Naftali, using a guided missile. Israel Defense Forces spokesperson Lt. Col. Peter Lerner told a briefing Thursday: "I can't confirm that at this stage. I can't confirm that this happened at all."

Amal Saad, a lecturer at Cardiff University and an expert on Hezbollah, [said the group's escalation](#) "is a marked departure from prior flare-ups that have occurred since October 8."

"This stage transcends merely responding to Israeli attacks and restoring deterrence; it involves conveying new messages and strategies," Saad wrote on X.

The conflict has become "very visible" and "difficult to ignore," said Wimmen, of the International Crisis Group, adding that Israeli officials feel compelled to respond, or at least be seen as responding, amid pressure to react from far-right ministers in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

There is a push within government and the Israeli army to take action in the north, Ronni Shaked, a scholar at the Truman Institute at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, told CNN. "Nobody can live in this situation."

WHAT ARE BOTH SIDES SAYING?

Rhetoric has been fiery from both sides, but experts say neither side wants a full-blown conflict.

Netanyahu [in December warned](#) that Beirut would turn into Gaza if Hezbollah chose to start an all-out war.

But Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich this week poured cold water on the prospect of a wider war, saying the IDF isn't interested in broadening the war to eliminate Hezbollah. The military is "telling us right now that it doesn't want to... launch an attack in the north, fight and defeat Hezbollah, and overwhelm it and create a security zone."

During his visit to the northern city of Kiryat Shmona [near the Lebanese border](#) on Wednesday, Netanyahu said Israel was prepared for "very intense action" in the north.

"Whoever thinks that they can hurt us and that we will sit idly by is making a big mistake," the prime minister said. "One way or another, we will restore security to the north."

Naim Qassem, Hezbollah's second-in-command, told Al Jazeera on Tuesday that the group had assessed that recent threats from Israel were not serious.

"Either way, we have decided not to widen the battle and we do not want an all-out war. But if it is imposed on us, we are ready and we won't retreat," Qassem said, adding that Hezbollah will end its attacks on Israel once the war in Gaza stops.

IS A FULL-BLOWN WAR LIKELY?

Experts say that while both sides may not choose to start an all-out war, their escalatory actions may still trigger one inadvertently.

Wimmen of the International Crisis Group said that Israel and Hezbollah are unlikely to take a conscious decision to start a war. However, the more intense the conflict becomes, the deeper each side strikes into

the other's territory and the heavier the weapons used, the more likely it is that "something goes wrong," he said.

Netanyahu is under intense pressure from the opposition and members of his coalition to take action in the north, especially given that so many Israelis have been displaced from the area.

More than 53,000 Israelis have been forced to leave their homes in the north, the IDF said. In Lebanon, more than 94,000 people have been displaced from areas and towns near the border with Israel since the conflict started, according to figures released Tuesday by the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health.

"All Hezbollah strongholds must be burned and destroyed. War!" said Israeli far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir in a statement this week.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid [also slammed the government](#), saying: "The north goes up in flames and Israeli deterrence burns with it.

"The government has no plan for the day after in Gaza, no plan to return the residents to the north, no management, no strategy. A government of total abandonment," Lapid said on X.

The US has cautioned against escalation, worried it might spin out of control. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said Wednesday the United States is "incredibly concerned" about the risk of escalation, adding that the Biden administration is engaged in diplomatic conversations "to try to avoid that conflict from escalating beyond control."

Shaked, the Truman Institute scholar, said that despite Hezbollah's assertions that its attacks on Israel are in support of Gaza, the group's strategy is likely to be closely coordinated with its closest ally Iran – especially with so much at stake.

WAR WITH ISRAEL WOULD DEEPEN LEBANON'S MYRIAD CRISES

[REUTERS](#) June 7 2024

BEIRUT, June 7 (Reuters) - The conflict between Hezbollah and Israel is unfolding against a backdrop of deep financial and political crises in Lebanon, adding to the risks for the fragile country should hostilities [spiral](#) into full-blown war.

The Iran-backed Hezbollah and Israel have been [trading fire](#) since the onset of the [Gaza war](#) in October. Both sides say they are prepared for possible escalation as mediators struggle to secure a Gaza ceasefire.

Though the conflict has been relatively contained so far, it is weighing heavily on a country where five years of domestic crises have hollowed out the state.

Here's an overview of Lebanon's troubles:

ECONOMIC MELTDOWN

Lebanon continues to be afflicted by a catastrophic financial collapse which hit the country in 2019.

Caused by decades of profligate spending and corruption by the ruling elite, the meltdown sank the currency, impoverished swathes of people, paralysed banks, and fuelled the biggest wave of emigration since the 1975-90 civil war.

The World Bank has described it as one of the sharpest depressions of modern times. Lebanon's economy shrank from \$55 billion in 2018 to \$31.7 billion in 2020. The government has yet to enact reforms needed for recovery.

The lingering impact of the crisis was captured in a World Bank report in May which found poverty had more than tripled in Lebanon over the past decade, reaching 44% of the population.

It found that one-in-three Lebanese was poverty stricken in 2022 in five surveyed governorates, including Beirut. While new Beirut restaurants serve the rich, the World Bank report said three out of five households had cut back on food spending.

The [International Monetary Fund](#) said in May a lack of action on necessary economic reforms continued to exert a heavy toll on the economy and people. It said there was no credible and financially viable strategy for the banking system.

Tourism and remittances helped the economy find a temporary bottom by 2022 and early 2023, according to the World Bank. Prior to the onset of the Gaza war, the economy was projected to expand slightly in 2023 by 0.2%. But after hostilities began, the forecast changed to a contraction of between 0.6% and 0.9%.

POLITICAL TENSIONS

Lebanon has not had a head of state or a fully empowered cabinet since Michel Aoun's term as president ended on Oct. 31, 202, leaving an unprecedented vacuum.

The government of Prime Minister Najib Mikati has been serving in a caretaker capacity since then. Filling the presidency and installing a fully empowered government requires a deal among Lebanon's deeply divided factions.

On one level, the standoff reflects rivalries among Maronite Christians, for whom the presidency is reserved in Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing system.

On another, it reflects a power struggle between the Iran-backed Shi'ite movement Hezbollah - which propelled its ally Aoun to the presidency in 2016 - and opponents who have long opposed the group's possession of arms and say it has unilaterally embroiled Lebanon in conflict again.

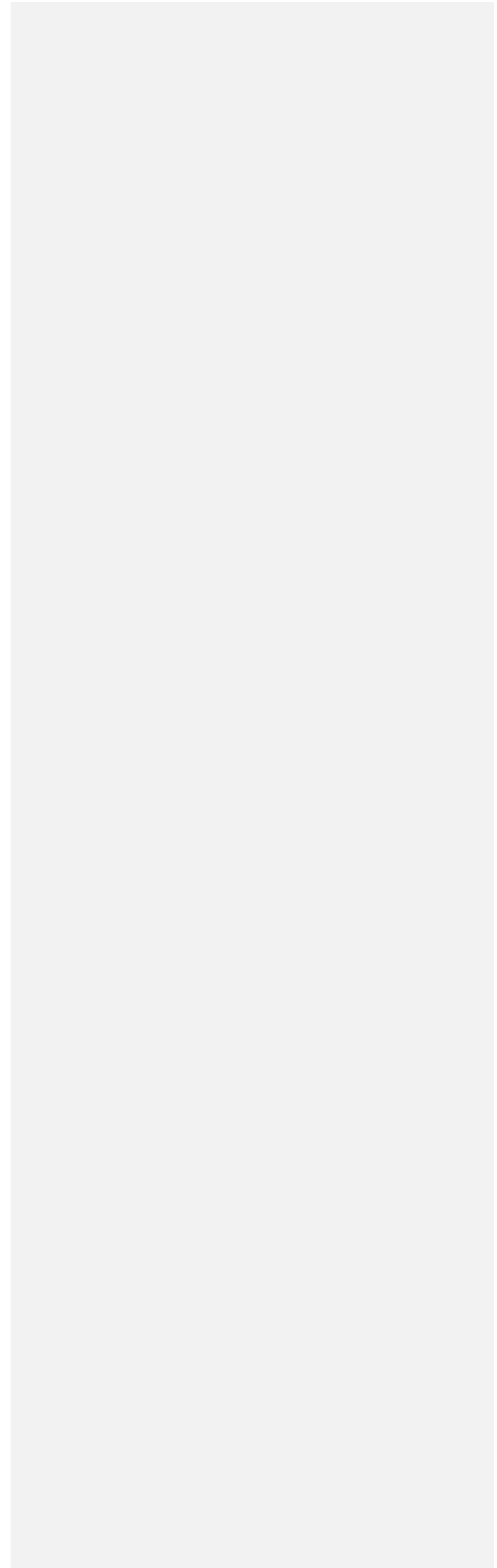
With politicians showing no compromise in the tussle over state power, a compromise on the presidency may demand the type of foreign mediation that has saved Lebanon from previous such standoffs.

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Thirteen years since Syria's conflict broke out, Lebanon remains home to the largest refugee population per capita in the world: about 1.5 million Syrians - half of whom are refugees formally registered with the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR - in a country of approximately 4 million Lebanese.

Funding for the Syria crisis is dropping, reflecting fatigue among donors grappling with other conflicts around the world. Despite their differences, parties from across Lebanon's political spectrum agree the Syrians should be sent home.

PART J
THE WEST BANK



THE WEST BANK OSLO ACCORDS

[WIKIPEDIA](#)

The **Oslo Accords** are a pair of interim agreements between [Israel](#) and the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO): the [Oslo I Accord](#), signed in [Washington, D.C.](#), in 1993;^[1] and the [Oslo II Accord](#), signed in [Taba, Egypt](#), in 1995.^[2] They marked the start of the **Oslo process**, a [peace process](#) aimed at achieving a peace treaty based on [Resolution 242](#) and [Resolution 338](#) of the [United Nations Security Council](#). The Oslo process began after secret negotiations in [Oslo, Norway](#), resulting in both the [recognition of Israel](#) by the PLO and the recognition by Israel of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and as a partner in bilateral negotiations.

(Editor's Note) The Oslo Accords divided the Palestinian West Bank into three administrative zones: Area A (18%), where the Palestinian Authority (PA) administers civil and security matters; Area B (22%), where the PA administers only civil matters; and Area C (60%) where Israel maintains full control. The West Bank became Jordanian after the war that led to formation of Israel. The Six Day war (5-10 June 1967) led to Israel taking the West Bank from the Jordanians) and enforcing Areas A, B and C. The Palestinian National Authority, commonly known as the Palestinian Authority and officially the State of Palestine, is the Fatah-controlled government body that exercises partial civil control over West Bank areas "A" and "B".

[Demographics of the State of Palestine](#) shows 3,000,021 and [Times of Israel](#) 517,000 Jews

WEST BANK

WIKIPEDIA



The **West Bank** (*Arabic*: الضفة الغربية, *romanized*: *aḍ-Ḍiffah al-Ġarbiyyah*; *Hebrew*: הגדה המערבית, *romanized*: *HaGadáh HaMa'arávit*), so called due to its relation to the [Jordan River](#), is the larger of the two [Palestinian territories](#) (the other being the [Gaza Strip](#)). A landlocked territory near the coast of the [Mediterranean Sea](#) in the [Levant](#) region of [West Asia](#),^[a] it is bordered by [Jordan](#) and the [Dead Sea](#) to the east and by [Israel](#) (via the [Green Line](#)) to the south, west, and north.^[a] The territory has been under [Israeli occupation](#) since 1967.

The territory first emerged in the wake of the [1948 Arab–Israeli War](#) as a region occupied and subsequently [annexed](#) by Jordan. Jordan ruled the territory until the 1967 [Six-Day War](#), when it was [occupied by Israel](#). Since then, [Israel has administered](#) the West Bank as the [Judea and Samaria Area](#), expanding its claim into [East Jerusalem](#) in [1980](#). The mid-1990s [Oslo Accords](#) split the West Bank into [three regional levels](#) of Palestinian sovereignty, via the [Palestinian National Authority](#) (PNA): Area A (PNA), Area B (PNA and Israel), and [Area C](#) (Israel, comprising 60% of the West Bank). The PNA exercises total or partial civil

administration over 165 [Palestinian enclaves](#) across the three areas.

The West Bank remains central to the [Israeli–Palestinian conflict](#). The Palestinians consider it the heart of their [envisioned state](#), along with the Gaza Strip. Right-wing and religious Israelis see it as their [ancestral homeland](#), with numerous biblical sites. There is a push among some Israelis for partial or complete annexation of this land. Additionally, it is home to a rising number of Israeli settlers.^[a] Area C contains 230 [Israeli settlements](#) into which [Israeli law is applied](#) and under the Oslo Accords was supposed to be mostly transferred to the PNA by 1997, but this did not occur.^[a] The international community considers Israeli settlements in the West Bank to be illegal under [international law](#).^{[a][10][11][12]} Citing the 1980 law in which Israel claimed Jerusalem as its capital, the 1994 [Israel–Jordan peace treaty](#), and the Oslo Accords, a 2004 advisory ruling by the [International Court of Justice](#) concluded that the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remain [Israeli-occupied territory](#).^[13]

The West Bank has a land area of about 5,640 square kilometres (2,180 square miles). It has an estimated population of 2,747,943 [Palestinians](#), and over 670,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, of which approximately 220,000 live in East Jerusalem.

WEST BANK SETTLER POPULATION GREW BY NEARLY 3% IN 2023 — REPORT

Citing government numbers, pro-settler group says population has passed 517,000, not including East Jerusalem; predicts 'accelerated growth'

[THE TIMES OF ISRAEL](#) AP 12 February 2024

This year's report predicted "accelerated growth" in the coming years, claiming the October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel, which triggered the current war in Gaza, persuaded many Israelis who were formerly opposed to settlement-building to change positions.

"Serious cracks have indeed developed in the wall of opposition to Jewish settlement of the West Bank," it said.

Israel captured the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip in the 1967 Six Day War. The Palestinians seek all three areas for an independent state.

The international community largely considers Israel's settlements to be illegal and an obstacle to peace by occupying land the Palestinians seek for their state. Israel considers the West Bank to be disputed and says the territory's fate should be decided in negotiations. The Biden administration recently sanctioned four settlers for violence against Palestinians and activists in the West Bank.

The report projected that if the growth rate over the past five years continues, the settler population in the West Bank will exceed 600,000 before 2030.

The report did not include population figures for East Jerusalem, where more than 200,000 Israelis live in neighborhoods that Israel considers to be part of its capital, but which the international community views as settlements.

The Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state.

Israel's government is dominated by settler leaders and supporters. The Israeli watchdog group Terrestrial Jerusalem says that since the start of the Israel-Gaza war on October 7, three plans were either approved or are about to be approved for Jewish housing in East Jerusalem.

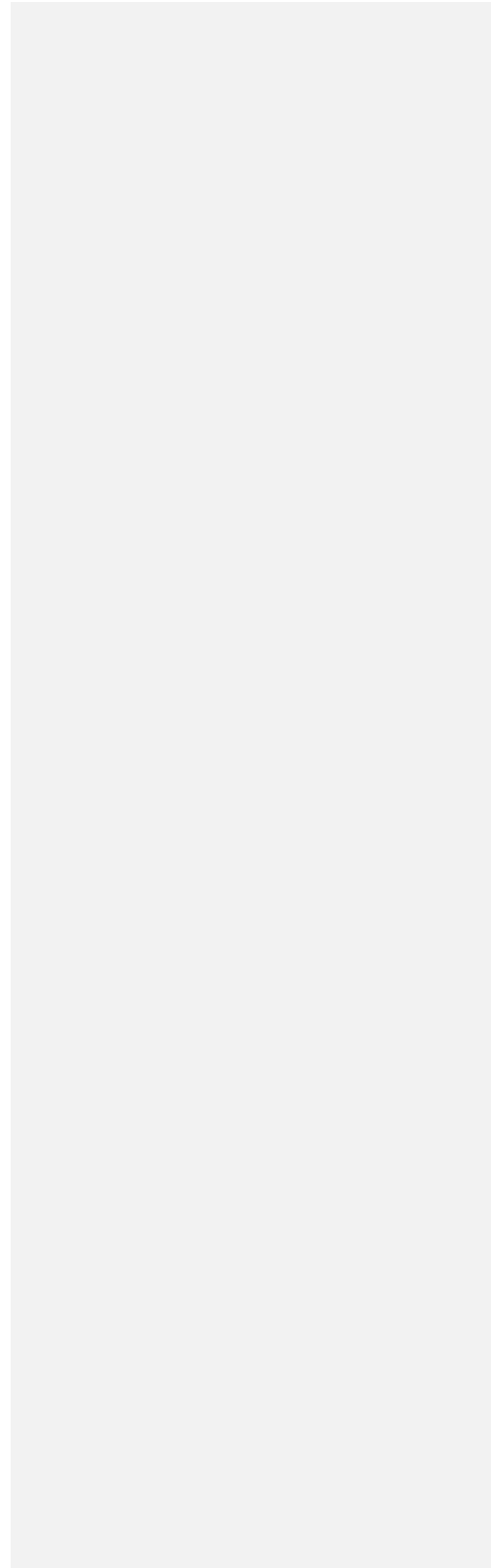
Terrestrial Jerusalem called the speed of approval processes over the last few months "frenetic."

The report came as a spasm of violence grips the West Bank.

Since the Hamas attack on October 7, Israel has held the West Bank under a tight grip — limiting movement and conducting frequent raids to arrest terror suspects.

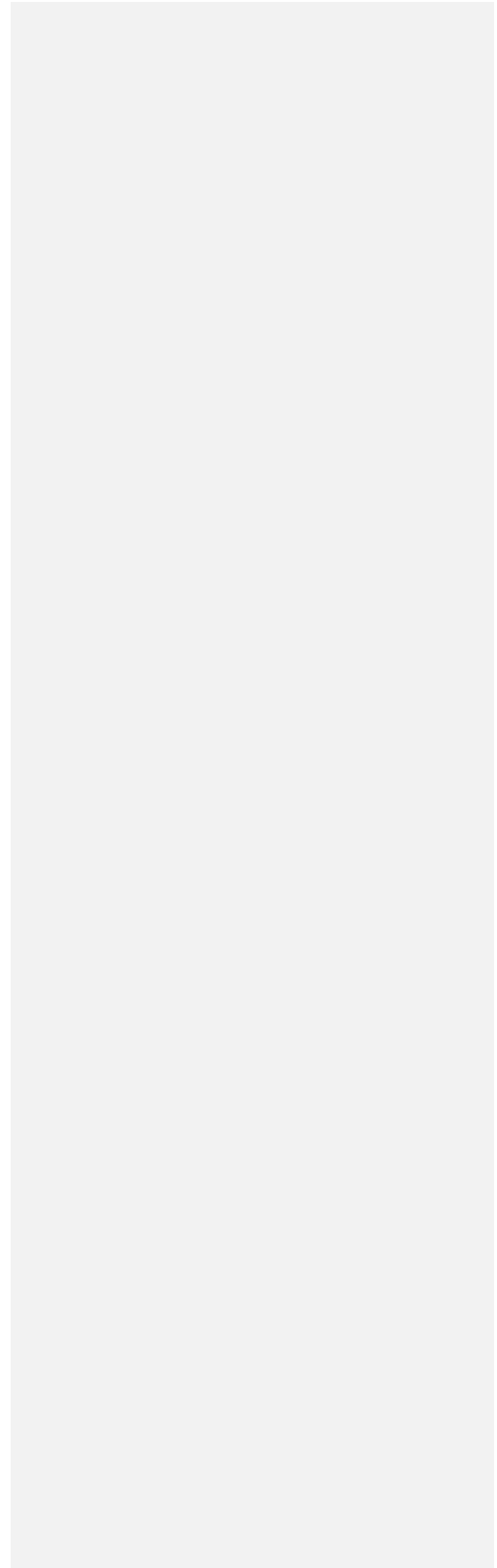
Palestinian health officials say 391 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank during that period. Most have been killed in clashes with Israeli forces. But the Israeli rights group Yesh Din says

settlers shot and killed nine Palestinians in the first month and a half of the war, among 225 incidents of Israeli civilian violence the group documented during that time.



PART K

UNWRA and UNHCR



GOVERNMENT DONORS TO UNWRA

UNWRA TOP 20 GOVERNMENT DONORS IN 2018 (US\$)					
This chart shows how reliant UNWRA is on Western donors					
	EUROPE	AMERICAS	OTHER	ARAB	TOTAL
EU (including ECHO)	178,989,326				178,989,326
Germany	177,439,447				177,439,447
Saudi Arabia				159,956,771	159,956,771
UK	92,754,569				92,754,569
Sweden	64,999,762				64,999,762
USA		60,429,282			60,429,282
UAE				53,800,000	53,800,000
Qatar				51,499,779	51,499,779
Kuwait				50,000,000	50,000,000
Japan			44,999,224		44,999,224
Netherlands	36,278,753				36,278,753
United Arab Emirates				27,828,599	27,828,599
Australia			26,746,123		26,746,123
Denmark	22,677,756				22,677,756
Belgium (including Flanders)	19,055,991				19,055,991
Italy	18,774,000				18,774,000
France (including municipalities)	17,090,974				17,090,974
Ireland	16,017,103				16,017,103
Finland	15,498,794				15,498,794
Luxembourg	15,261,693				15,261,693
Total	674,838,168	60,429,282	71,745,347	343,085,149	1,150,097,946
%	59%	5%	6%	30%	100%
			US\$	%	
		Non-Arab	807,012,797	70%	
		Arab	343,085,149	30%	
		Total	1,150,097,946	100%	

Why does such a high proportion of the UNRWA regular budget come from Western countries and such a low proportion from Arab countries?

CREATION OF UNRWA

[WIKIPEDIA](#)

Created in December 1949, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a relief and human development agency which supports more than 5 million registered Palestinian refugees, and their descendants, who fled or were expelled from their homes during the 1948 Palestine war as well as those who fled or were expelled during and following the 1967 Six Day war. Originally intended to provide jobs on public works projects and direct relief, today UNRWA provides education, health care, and social services to the population it supports. Aid is provided in five areas of operation: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; aid for Palestinian refugees outside these five areas is provided by UNHCR.

It also provided relief to Jewish and Arab Palestine refugees inside the state of Israel following the 1948 conflict until the Israeli government took over responsibility for Jewish refugees in 1952. In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently extending it until 30 June 2017.

UNRWA is the only agency dedicated to helping refugees from a specific region or conflict and is separate from UNHCR. Formed in 1950, UNHCR is the main UN refugee agency, which is responsible for aiding other refugees all over the world. Unlike UNRWA, UNHCR has a specific mandate to aid its refugees to eliminate their refugee status by local integration in current country, resettlement in a third country or repatriation when possible. **Only UNRWA allows refugee status to be inherited by descendants.**

UNRWA has had to develop a working definition of "refugee" to allow it to provide humanitarian assistance. Its definition does not cover final status.

Palestine refugees are defined as *"persons whose regular place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict."*

UNRWA services are available to all those living in its area of operations who meet this definition, who are registered with the Agency, and who need assistance. The descendants of Palestine refugee males, including adopted children, are also eligible for registration as refugees. When the Agency began operations in 1950, it was responding to the needs of about 750,000 Palestine refugees. Today, some 5 million Palestine refugees are registered as eligible for UNRWA service.

UNRWA AND THE JEWS

How 3000 years of Jewish civilisation in the Arab world vanished overnight'

(Valentine Mitchell)

in 1948. Some 3,000 Jews fled East Jerusalem.

[Jewish News](#), Lyn Julius, Sep 2, 2018, the author of 'Uprooted':

The news that the US is no longer funding UNRWA (the UN Relief and Relief Agency) should remove one of the major obstacles to settling the conflict between Israel and the Arabs. UNRWA has been perpetuating the delusion that the Palestinians are in transit to their permanent home in Israel and that one day they will return. If the 'refugees' come under the umbrella of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the focus will be on rehabilitation and resettlement in their host countries. It is not generally known that UNRWA was established with the aim of helping refugees on both sides of the conflict.

According to [Don Peretz \(Who is a Refugee?\)](#), initially UNRWA defined a refugee "as a needy person who, as a result of the war in Palestine, has lost his home and his means of livelihood." This definition included some 17,000 Jews who had lived in areas of Palestine taken over by Arab forces during the 1948 war and about 50,000 Arabs living within Israel's armistice frontiers. Israel took responsibility for these individuals, and by 1950 ([Wikipedia](#) 1952) they were removed from the UNRWA rolls leaving only Palestine Arabs and a few hundred non-Arab Christian Palestinians outside Israel in UNRWA's refugee category.

At the time there was no internationally recognised definition of what constituted a refugee. In 1951, The UN Refugee Convention agreed the following definition:

"A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

This definition certainly applies to the 850,000 Jewish refugees fleeing persecution in Arab countries, synagogue burnings, arrests and riots. Returning to these countries would have put – and still does - their lives at risk.

The burden of rehabilitating and resettling the 650,000 Jewish refugees who arrived in Israel was shouldered by the Jewish Agency and US Jewish relief organisations, such as the Joint Distribution Committee. They were shunted into transit camps or ma'abarot. The conditions were appalling.

From an early stage in the conflict, the UN was co-opted by the powerful Arab-Muslim voting bloc to skew its mandate and defend the rights of only one refugee population – the Palestinians. The UN dedicated an agency, UNRWA, to the exclusive care of Palestinian refugees. There are ten UN

agencies solely concerned with Palestinian refugees. These even define refugee status for the Palestinians explicitly: one that stipulates that status depends on 'two years' residence' in Palestine. The definition makes no mention of 'fear of persecution' nor of resettlement. Palestinian refugees are the only refugee population in the world, out of 65 million recognised refugees, permitted to pass on their refugee status to succeeding generations, even if they enjoy citizenship in their adoptive countries. It is estimated that the current population of Palestinian 'refugees' is 5,493, million. Instead of resettlement, they demand 'repatriation', an Israeli red line. (This begs the question: why would any Palestinian wish to return to an evil, 'apartheid' Israel?)

In contrast to the \$17.7 billion allocated to the Palestinian refugees, no international aid has been earmarked for Jewish refugees. The exception was a \$30,000 grant in 1957 which the UN, fearing protests from its Muslim members, did not want publicised. The grant was eventually converted into a loan and paid back by the American Joint Distribution Committee, the main agency caring for Jews in distress.

Yet on two occasions the UN did determine that Jews fleeing Egypt and North Africa were bona fide refugees. In 1957, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, August Lindt, declared that the Jews of Egypt who were 'unable or unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of the government of their nationality' fell within his remit. In July 1967, the UNHCR recognised Jews fleeing Libya as refugees under the UNHCR mandate.

Needless to say, no Jew still defines himself as a refugee. Despite the initial hardships, they are now all full citizens of Israel and the West. As such, they are a model for the resettlement of Palestinian refugees in their host countries or in a putative state of Palestine alongside Israel.

For any peace process to be credible and enduring, the international community would be expected to address the rights of all Middle East refugees, including Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries. Two victim populations arose out of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Arab leadership bears responsibility for needlessly causing both Nakbas – the Jewish and the Arab. As the human rights lawyer Irwin Cotler observes: 'Put simply, if the Arab leadership had accepted the UN Partition Resolution of 1947, there would have been no refugees, Arab or Jewish.'

UNRWA HAS CHANGED THE DEFINITION OF "REFUGEE"

[Foreign Policy](#), Jay Sekulow, August 17, 2018

Last week, Foreign Policy published a story about Palestinian refugees that claimed I am among the "activists trying to strip Palestinians of their status." The article obscured basic facts about the matters at hand—both my own role as a policy advocate and the questions that lawmakers in Congress are presently considering that pertain to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). I feel compelled to correct the record on both points. This requires first understanding the legal facts. UNRWA was founded in 1949 through U.N. General Assembly Resolution 302 at the conclusion of the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, aiming for "the alleviation of the conditions of starvation and distress among the Palestine refugees" from that conflict. The agency defines Palestinian refugees as "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict."

In 1965, UNRWA changed the eligibility requirements to be a Palestinian refugee to include third-generation descendants, and in 1982, it extended it again, to include all descendants of Palestine refugee males, including legally adopted children, regardless of whether they had been granted citizenship elsewhere. This classification process is inconsistent with how all other refugees in the world are classified, including the definition used by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the laws concerning refugees in the United States.

Under Article I(c)(3) of the 1951 U.N. Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, a person is no longer a refugee if, for example, he or she has "acquired a new nationality, and enjoys the protection of the country of his new nationality." UNRWA's definition of a Palestinian refugee, which is not anchored in treaty, includes no such provision.

Last month, members of Congress introduced a bill asking that with respect to refugees under UNRWA the policy of the United States should be consistent with the definition of a refugee in the Immigration and Nationality Act, such that "derivative refugee status may only be extended to the spouse or minor child of such a refugee" and "an alien who was firmly resettled in any country is not eligible to retain refugee status."

Foreign Policy's article includes a claim that deserves closer scrutiny and reflects the sleight of hand often performed by UNRWA. The author writes:

"Palestinians, [Sekulow and his organization] claim, are the only refugees in the world who pass on their refugee status through the generations. The view is not shared by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the State Department, which maintain that multiple generations of Afghan, Bhutanese, Burmese, Nepalese, Thai, Tibetan, and Somali people have been recognized as refugees."

The clear implication of that paragraph, and the similar claims made by UNRWA, is that the laws I have cited above are wrong, that UNRWA's definition of a refugee is consistent with the standard

definition, and that in all of these cases the descendants of refugees are considered to be refugees as well. In actuality, what the article has done is to conflate two different issues.

The 1951 refugee convention has a lengthy definition of refugee that is personal: A refugee is a person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." In registering refugees on this basis, the UNHCR interprets the convention as requiring "family unity," and it implements the principle by extending benefits to a refugee's accompanying family, calling such people "derivative refugees." Derivative refugees do not have refugee status on their own; it depends on the principal refugee. UNRWA's definition is also personal: Palestinian refugees are "persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict," but it also registers "descendants of Palestine refugee males, including adopted children." The status for descendants is not dependent upon accompanying the principal refugee.

Here is where the sleight of hand comes in: Of course it is possible for there to be multiple generations of refugees, if the multiple generations all fit the primary 1951 definition of a refugee. For example, if the granddaughter of a refugee is also outside the country of her nationality due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted, she too is a primary refugee. But she is not a refugee due to descent, because there is no provision for refugee status based on descent in the 1951 refugee convention or in internationally accepted practices for refugees who are not Palestinian refugees. Those are the laws. Now, consider the broader political facts. Since the end of World War II, millions of refugees have left refugee camps and have been resettled elsewhere, including hundreds of thousands of Jewish people who were forced out of Arab countries. Many hardworking agencies have played a role in making sure that the descendants of these refugees were never refugees themselves. These agencies include the UNHCR, whose mandate is to protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people, and assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement to a third country.

IS UNRWA'S HEREDITARY REFUGEE STATUS FOR PALESTINIAN'S UNIQUE ?

[EMET News Service](#), January 17 2019 Kohelet Policy Forum

Summary ... UNRWA's claim that their hereditary refugee status for Palestinians is not unique is simply untrue. There is no parallel and no precedent, even in protracted conflict situations, for the manner in which UNRWA transfers the "registered refugee" status, automatically, through the generations, while refusing to take any actions that would end this status. While UNHCR provides certain services on a case-by-case basis to the children of refugees, it does not make refugee status hereditary. This is one of many differences in UNRWA's treatment of its population from the general practices used by UNHCR. All these differences are designed by UNRWA to maximize the population counted as "Palestine Refugees" and perpetuate their status.

[The use here of the word "Palestinian(s)" is the author's choice. There are no such people as the "Palestinians".—ed]

See also below [THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES: A CASE STUDY IN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAUD](#)

For almost 70 years, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has created a unique category of "registered refugee" status — one that is automatically passed down to one's descendants. Under UNRWA's rules, the children and grandchildren of a Palestine refugee, and all their descendants thereof, are automatically considered 'refugees from Palestine'. Amid ongoing criticism of UNRWA's role in purposefully perpetuating the Palestinian "refugee" problem, the agency has attempted to obfuscate its policy.

UNRWA has claimed that its hereditary refugee practice is not unique, and is also practiced by the main international refugee agency, UNHCR. This background paper aims to clarify this issue.

UNRWA - Redefining refugee status There are two separate UN agencies in charge of aiding refugees: the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA). UNRWA was established in December 1949 and UNHCR in December 1950. UNHCR is responsible for all refugees except those from Mandatory Palestine, who fall within UNRWA's exclusive jurisdiction.

The UNHCR determines refugee status based on criteria from international law, in particular, the Refugee Convention from 1951, which defines a refugee as "A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to

return to it."

In certain cases, UNHCR gives refugee services — but not status — to the immediate family of a refugee but it does so in a manner that significantly differs from UNRWA's policy:

It is not automatic — it is based on a case-by-case review of whether the actual situation merits it. When it does, UNHCR gives certain services to the children of refugees. UNHCR does not automatically add the children and grandchildren of refugees to the count of refugees and does not automatically define them as refugees. Even if a child of refugees is given refugee services, the grandchild will not be eligible for status or services. UNRWA, on the other hand, automatically grants such children refugee status, resulting in exponential growth of refugee numbers.

UNHCR does not define as refugees people who acquired new citizenship. The Refugee Convention of 1951 has a cessation clause, which clearly says that a person ceases to be a refugee if he acquires a new citizenship. UNRWA acts differently: More than 2 million 'Palestine Refugees' hold Jordanian citizenship, most of whom have been born in Jordan and have lived there their entire lives and are still called 'refugees'. In addition, based on recent official census, probably 2/3 to 3/4 of the 1 million refugees registered by UNRWA in Lebanon and Syria have left those countries over the decades, with many acquiring citizenships of Western countries. Yet, UNRWA refuses to check their situation and take them off its registration rolls. UNHCR tracks individual refugees and takes them off its rolls as soon as they have acquired a status, such as third country citizenship, that ends their refugee status. This is another reason UNRWA's numbers never decline.

UNHCR does not define as 'refugees' people who are internally displaced, that is, who have moved within the same territory. "Palestine refugees" living in the 'West Bank' or Gaza Strip were in fact internally displaced since they have never crossed the internationally recognized border of Mandatory Palestine. UNRWA considers these people as refugees, and their children and grandchildren, and all their descendants, as well.

UNHCR makes efforts to ensure refugees are resettled or locally integrated where they are staying, thereby ending their refugee status. UNHCR does not exclusively promote repatriation as sole solution, as UNRWA does, but also rehabilitation in country of refuge or in third countries.

Repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement are considered equally legitimate means of ending a refugee status. They are promoted based on expediency — that is which could achieve the goal of ending the refugee status most quickly. UNRWA refuses to promote local rehabilitation and resettlement, and actually makes no effort to end the individual refugee status of the Palestinians, arguing that "it's not in its mandate". It actually is. This is the main reason that UNRWA's numbers grow exponentially whereas the numbers of refugees in other, shorter duration, protracted refugee situations, decline over time.

UNHCR's longest significant number of recorded refugees is from Afghanistan — from the early 1980s.

UNHCR does not have in its records refugees that have been defined as such for 70 years. UNRWA does. Such persistence of refugee status has no parallel.

UNRWA reports of 5.5 million refugees. These are the descendants of roughly 700,000 registered Palestine refugees from the war of 1948. These numbers include more than 2 million 'refugees' who hold Jordanian citizenship. They also include a larger number of 'refugees' who live in the 'West Bank' and Gaza

strip: They are citizens of the 'Palestinian Authority' or 'State of Palestine' and at the same time claim to be 'refugees from Palestine'.

According to the rules applied by UNHCR, these people are not refugees.

UNRWA's claim that their policy is identical to UNHCR's is a lie and shows that they are not a neutral humanitarian organization but rather a political actor aimed at perpetuating the Palestinian refugee problem.

See also ['The MiddleEast Piece - What is UNRWA?'](#)

UNWRA SEMI-STATE INSTITUTION

[fanak](#), Chronicle of the Middle East and North Africa

In retrospect, UNRWA is the only UN agency to have worked for such a long time in the exclusive service of one particular category of refugees – the 'Palestine refugees'. **Over the years, it has gradually established itself as a semi-state institution in the fullest sense, taking on responsibilities traditionally assigned to national governments. Its staff, the vast majority of whom come from the refugee communities, has grown fivefold since 1951, from about six thousand to 30,000 in 2009.**

However, UNRWA's linkage with the refugees is only predicated on humanitarian considerations. Its definition of a 'Palestine refugee' was elaborated for operational purposes only. It did not determine who is a Palestinian refugee, but rather who is eligible for its assistance programs. While it has evolved over time, its core elements have remained the same: normal place of residence in Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and loss of means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict. Descendants of male Palestine refugees have also been eligible to register on a voluntary basis with UNRWA. Since 1951, the number of 'Palestine refugees' has increased fivefold, from 876,000 refugees to 4.7 million refugees in 2008. This represents about 90.8 percent of the total number of refugees in the Middle East; and about three-quarters of the estimated total Palestinian refugee population disseminated around the world. From the outset, UNRWA's assistance mandate has been regarded by the refugees not just as a temporary international charity venture, but as an entitlement and, even more, a recognition by the international community of their status as refugees endowed with vested rights, namely the right of return to Palestine and/or to receive compensation as recommended in UNGA resolution 194 (III) (11 December 1948). UNRWA's identification with the political dimensions of the Palestinian refugee issue may have been reinforced by its status as the only significant UN stakeholder in charge of Palestinian refugee affairs, following the de facto demise of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) in the early 1950s, and the de jure exclusion of the Palestinian refugees from the UNHCR coverage. As a result, although registration with UNRWA was never officially meant to have any political implications, it has nevertheless been regarded by the refugees as a legal justification for their vested humanitarian and political rights. This is understandable since the 'registration card' it provides has constituted an official – and often unique – piece of documentary evidence attesting to their link with pre-1948 Palestine.

UNWRA ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - GAZA

The Gaza Strip is home to a population of approximately 1.9 million people, including 1.3 million Palestine refugees.

For the last decade, the socioeconomic situation in Gaza has been in steady decline. The blockade on land, air and sea imposed by Israel following the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007, entered its 10th year in June 2016 and continues to have a devastating effect as access to markets and people's movement to and from the Gaza Strip remain severely restricted.

Years of conflict and blockade have left 80 per cent of the population dependent on international assistance. The economy and its capacity to create jobs have been devastated, resulting in the impoverishment and de-development of a highly skilled and well-educated society. The average unemployment rate is well over 41 per cent – one of the highest in the world, according to the World Bank. The number of Palestine refugees relying on UNRWA for food aid has increased from fewer than 80,000 in 2000 to almost one million today.

Over half a million Palestine refugees in Gaza live in the eight recognized Palestine refugee camps, which have one of the highest population densities in the world.

Operating through approximately 12,500 staff in over 300 installations across the Gaza Strip, UNRWA delivers education, health and mental health care, relief and social services, microcredit and emergency assistance to registered Palestine refugees.

On 7 July 2014, a humanitarian emergency was declared by UNRWA in the Gaza Strip, following a severe escalation in hostilities, involving intense Israeli aerial and navy bombardment and Palestinian rocket fire. Hostilities de-escalated following an open-ended ceasefire which entered into force on 26 August 2014. The scale of human loss, destruction, devastation and displacement caused by this third conflict within seven years was catastrophic, unprecedented and unparalleled in Gaza.

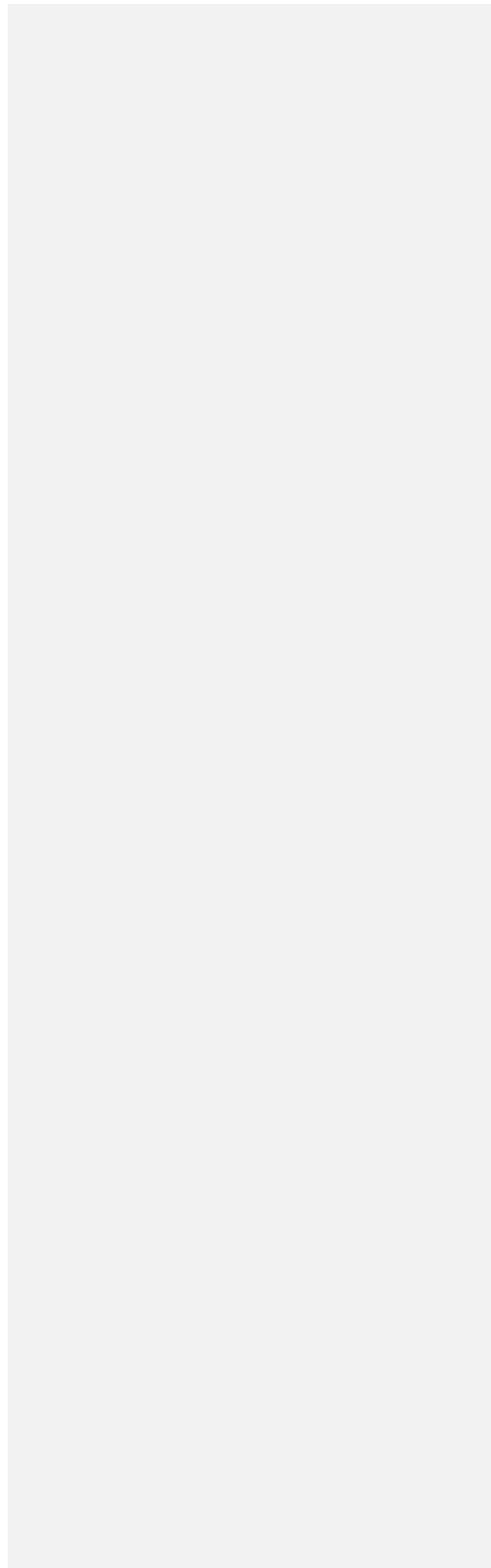
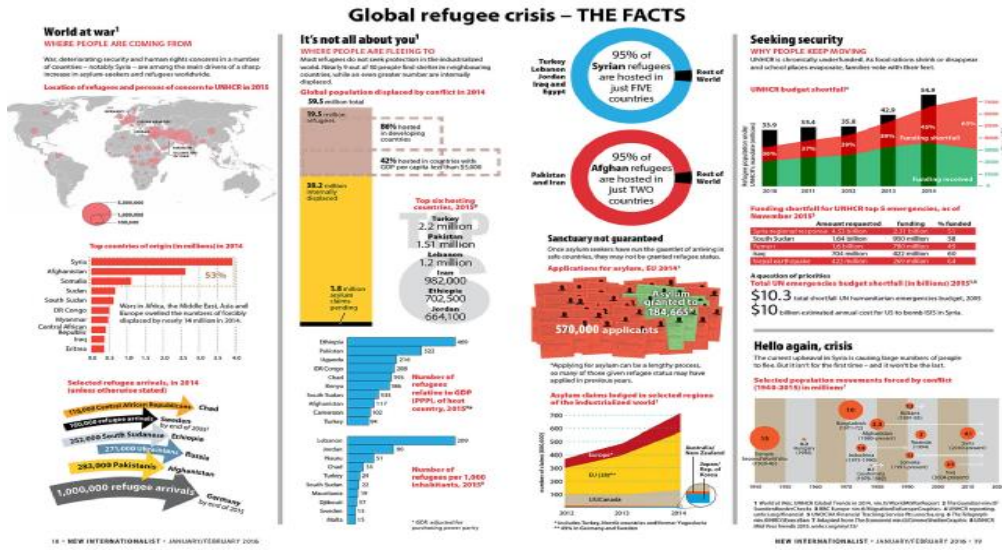
UNRWA mounted an extraordinary response during the 50 days of hostilities which highlighted its unique position as the largest UN organization in the Gaza Strip and the only UN Agency that undertakes direct implementation.

The human, social and economic costs of the last hostilities are set against a backdrop of a society already torn by wide-spread poverty, frustration and anger, heightening vulnerability and political instability. The compounded effects of the blockade and repeated armed conflicts and violence have also had a less visible, but quite profound, psychological impact on the people of Gaza. Among Palestine refugee children, UNRWA estimates that a minimum of 30 per cent require some form of structured psychosocial intervention. Their most common symptoms are: nightmares, eating disorders, intense fear, bed wetting.

In recent years, UNRWA has made significant improvements to its services in Gaza, such as its schools of excellence and excellent health services initiatives. It also better targets its

assistance to the poorest of the poor through the implementation of a proxy-means tested poverty survey. UNRWA continues to:

- Improve the academic achievement, behaviour and values of school students
- Construct desperately needed infrastructure, including schools and shelters
- Improve the quality and targeting of its food and cash assistance to the poorest of the poor
- Promote gender equality and human rights for all
- Nurture entrepreneurship by supporting the private sector
- Facts & Figures
- 1.3 million registered refugees out of 1.9 million total population
- (approximately 70 per cent)
- 58 refugee camps
- Almost 12,500 staff
- 267 schools for over 262,000 students
- 21 health centres
- 16 relief and social services offices
- 3 micro-finance offices
- 12 food distribution centres for almost 1,000,000 beneficiaries.



UNRWA COMPARISON WITH UP-TO-DATE REACTIONS

The Gulf states' support for UNRWA has long been shaped by a combination of politics and established aid practices.

UNRWA'S FUNDING CRISIS: WILL THE GULF STATES STEP UP?

In late January, a group of countries led by the United States announced their decision to suspend or review funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), a UN agency that was set up in 1949 to provide humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees. The decision was prompted by Israeli allegations that 12 of the

agency's over 30,000 employees participated in Hamas' 7 October attacks. UNRWA has warned this will compromise its ability to continue delivering vital humanitarian aid to Palestinian refugees in Gaza and has called on the affluent Gulf states to fill the resulting gap in funding.

The Gulf states are significant but inconsistent donors to UNRWA. Saudi Arabia, the largest Gulf donor, has pledged sums to the agency ranging from US\$3.6 million in 2010 to over US\$151m three years later.

Although the Gulf states have a long track record of disbursing aid to the Palestinians and have been critical of the recent suspension of UNRWA's funding, their tepid response to the agency's calls points to their complex relations with both UNRWA and the Palestinian leadership. It also reflects broader Gulf aid practices that favour bilateral over multilateral channels of assistance.

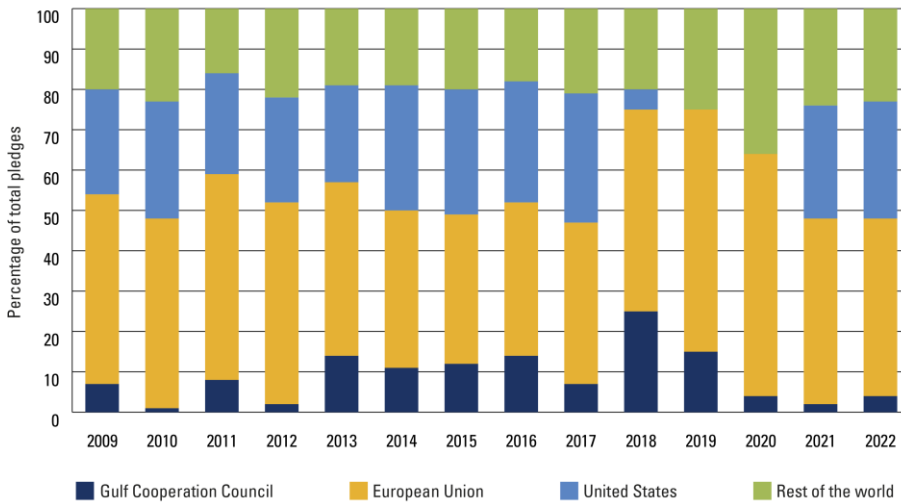
UNRWA'S FINANCIAL TROUBLES

UNRWA, which [serves](#) almost six million Palestinian refugees in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria by providing healthcare, housing and education, is funded mostly through voluntary commitments by donor states, international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The agency has faced recurrent funding challenges. Firstly, the Palestinian refugee population has [increased](#) almost sixfold since the agency's creation, outpacing the growth in donor contributions. The Syrian civil war has also [displaced](#) 280,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria, placing additional demands on UNRWA services.

Secondly, annual pledges are voluntary and unpredictable, rising or falling by substantial margins from one year to the next. These changes in contribution size are often in response to outbursts of conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, but they are also contingent on the political will of donor states.

The decision to suspend funding came from some of UNRWA's biggest donors, including the European Union, Germany and the US. Between 2009 and 2022, the US was UNRWA's largest single donor, contributing 23% of the agency's total budget, according to UNRWA figures. The EU bloc accounted for another 46% of all contributions, while the six Gulf states accounted for only 10% (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percentage of total UNRWA pledges by donor, 2009–22



Source: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

©IISS

This is not the first time that Western states have suspended their funding to UNRWA. In 2018, US president Donald Trump cut funding to the agency to punish the Palestinians for criticising the United States' decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and [pressure](#) them into accepting Trump's 'deal of the century' – a peace plan for Israel–Palestine that was widely criticised by Palestinians.

This time, however, the decision taken by 18 Western governments and Japan to suspend or review their funding could leave a much bigger gap in the agency's finances. Combined, the 18 donor states [accounted](#) for over US\$777m or 66% of all pledges made to UNRWA in 2022. The impact this will have on UNRWA's budget is not fully clear yet, especially because a few donors, including the [European Commission](#), [Australia](#), [Canada](#) and [Sweden](#), have already reversed their funding freezes.

GULF DONOR SUPPORT FOR UNRWA

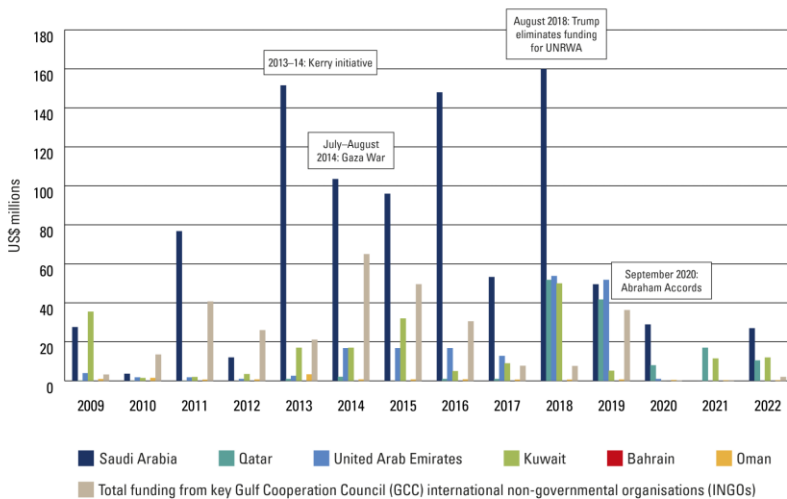
UNRWA's Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini has explicitly called on the Gulf states to step up, [touring](#) Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to raise additional funds for the agency. All four Gulf donor states [criticised](#) the decision to suspend UNRWA's funding. In February 2024, the [UAE](#) donated US\$5m to support UNRWA's relief efforts in Gaza, and a month later, Qatar and Iraq [pledged](#) US\$25m each. In late March, the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, Saudi Arabia's official humanitarian agency, [pledged](#) US\$40 million.

Nevertheless, there are several factors that cast doubt over the strength of the Gulf states' commitment to

funding UNRWA. When Trump halted US aid to the agency in 2018, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE [announced](#) additional contributions of US\$50m each to help fill the gap. However, UNRWA data shows that all the Gulf states, bar Oman, ended up reducing their overall funding the following year (see Figure 2). Even Kuwait and Qatar, which refrained from lending support to the Trump administration’s ‘deal of the century’ or establishing diplomatic ties with Israel, lowered their commitments to the agency. The Gulf states’ history of bowing to US pressure to cut funding for UNRWA implies that they do not view the agency’s upkeep as a core priority, and it bodes ill for the prospect of a surge in Gulf funding for the agency this time around.

For the Gulf states, history colours their current attitudes towards UNRWA. They have not developed a sense of ownership vis-à-vis the agency, which was funded by the US and other Western powers in the aftermath of the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. As a mainly Western creation, albeit with Arab states’ assent, the Gulf states view the agency’s upkeep as a primarily international, not regional, responsibility. Moreover, the Gulf states’ unstable relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) – the faction recognised by the UN as the official representative of the Palestinian people, with which UNRWA has been closely associated – have also affected their willingness to support the agency. During the Baghdad Summit of 1978, the Gulf states [pledged](#) over US\$155m to the PLO and about US\$94m to a joint Jordanian–Palestinian fund meant to finance reconstruction projects. After PLO leader Yasser Arafat sided with Iraq during the 1990–91 Gulf War, however, the Gulf states grew distrustful of the Palestinians and withheld aid until the al-Aqsa intifada began in 2000. Although the Gulf states’ relationship with the PLO gradually recovered, it has recently deteriorated again as several states, including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have moved closer to Israel since the signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020.

Figure 2: GCC funding for UNRWA (governments and INGOs), 2009–22



Source: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Beyond the political dynamics of their relations with the Palestinian leadership, the Gulf states also have a demonstrable preference for channelling aid directly to recipients rather than indirectly through multilateral agencies. Although the Gulf states do not report systematically on aid, official Saudi sources [estimate](#) the country's support to the Palestinians at over US\$6 billion between 2000 and 2018, only a small portion of which was channelled through UNRWA. By supporting the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank or, in Qatar's case, the Hamas-controlled government in Gaza, Gulf states increase their influence directly over Palestinian political actors. Whereas, by supporting UNRWA, their influence is greatly diluted. As a result, Gulf aid pledges for Gaza, especially in the aftermath of spikes in conflict, have seldom been followed by significant increases in Gulf funding for UNRWA. For instance, the GCC states [pledged](#) US\$1.6bn in reconstruction aid for Gaza following the 2008–09 Gaza War, but only US\$28m of that was earmarked for UNRWA's projects. Similarly, although the Gulf states [pledged](#) over US\$1.9bn in reconstruction aid for Gaza in the aftermath of the 2014 Gaza War, only Kuwait doubled its pledge to the agency. Contributions from the other five Gulf states either remained constant or decreased. The Gulf states also support the agency indirectly through international organisations with which they are closely affiliated and through state-backed charities in the region. The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) – to which the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states collectively [contribute](#) nearly 45% of its paid-up capital – plays a significant role. The IsDB stepped up its contributions to UNRWA following the 2014 Gaza War and the United States' defunding of UNRWA in 2018, though it has struggled to maintain a steady funding commitment to the agency. In 2019, the IsDB established an endowment to support UNRWA. The fund is capitalised by voluntary Organisation of Islamic Cooperation member-state and private-sector contributions, though its activities remain modest. Other entities affiliated with the Gulf states including the [GCC](#) and the [Arab Monetary Fund](#) (the six Gulf states approximately 37% of the fund's capital according to 2022 figures) have also funded small-scale UNRWA projects through the IsDB. Meanwhile, over the previous decade, NGOs from the UAE – notably the Emirates Red Crescent (ERC) and Dubai Cares – were among the region's largest non-government donors to the agency. Following the 2014 Gaza War, during which over two thousand Palestinians were killed, the ERC and Bahrain's Royal Charity Organization significantly increased their contributions that year to almost US\$43m and US\$5.8m respectively, overtaking many donor nations. In light of the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, UNRWA has [warned](#) that it may be forced to cease or downsize operations if funding does not resume. If the Gulf states choose not to follow through with pledges of additional support, then UNRWA's continued ability to operate may be at risk. In such a scenario, the Gulf states would be unlikely to shoulder the financial burden of humanitarian and economic aid for Gaza so long as their own geostrategic interests are not clearly served in the process.

UNHCR
THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES
(ALSO KNOWN AS THE UN REFUGEE AGENCY)

[Wikipedia](#)

UNHCR was established on 14 December 1950 and succeeded the earlier United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country.

UNHCR's mandate has gradually been expanded to include protecting and providing humanitarian assistance to whom it describes as other persons "of concern," including internally displaced persons (IDPs) who would fit the legal definition of a refugee under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization for African Unity Convention, or some other treaty if they left their country, but who presently remain in their country of origin. UNHCR presently has major missions in Lebanon, South Sudan, Chad/Darfur, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan as well as Kenya to assist and provide services to IDPs and refugees in camps and in urban settings. UNHCR maintains a database of refugee information, ProGres, which was created during the Kosovo War in the 1990s. The database today contains data on over 11 million refugees, or about 11% of all displaced persons globally. The database contains biometric data, including fingerprints and iris scans and is used to determine aid distribution for recipients. The results of using biometric verification has been successful. When introduced in Kenyan refugee camps of Kakuma and Dadaab in the year 2013, the UN World Food Programme was able to eliminate \$1.4m in waste and fraud.

To achieve its mandate, the UNHCR engaged in activities both in the countries of interest and in countries with donors. For example, the UNHCR hosts expert roundtables to discuss issues of concern to the international refugee community.

UNHCR REFUGEE DEFINITION

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

GLOBAL FORCED DISPLACEMENT

UNHCR's Global Trends report presents key statistical trends and the latest official statistics on refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced and stateless people worldwide, as well as numbers of refugees and IDPs who have returned to their countries or areas of origin.

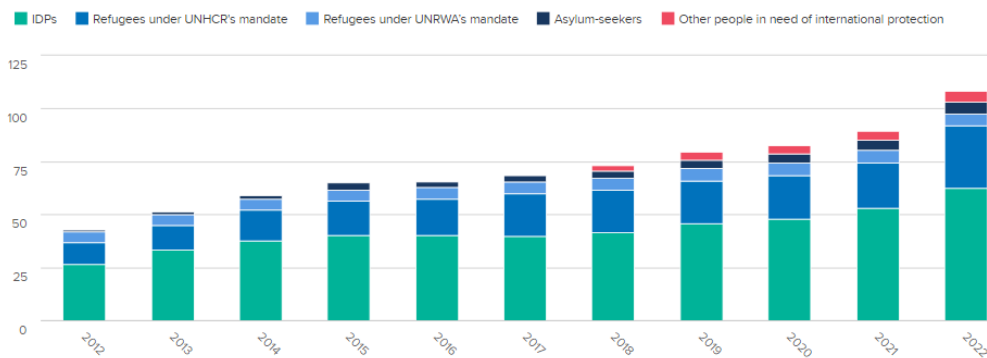
[UNHCR](#)

At the end of 2022, **108.4 million people** worldwide were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order.

This represents an increase of 19 million people compared to the end of 2021 – more than the populations of Ecuador, the Netherlands (Kingdom of the) or Somalia. It is also the largest ever increase between years according to UNHCR's statistics on forced displacement.

More than 1 in every 74 people on Earth has been forced to flee.

People forced to flee worldwide (2012 - 2022)



Learn more: [What is the difference between population statistics for forcibly displaced and the population that UNHCR protects and /or assists?](#)

NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN THE WORLD

The number of refugees worldwide increased from 27.1 million in 2021 to 35.3 million at the end of 2022, the largest yearly increase ever recorded, according to UNHCR's statistics on forced displacement.

The increase was largely due to refugees from Ukraine fleeing the international armed conflict in their country.

Overall, 52 per cent of all refugees and other people in need of international protection came from just three countries: the Syrian Arab Republic (6.5 million), Ukraine (5.7 million) and Afghanistan (5.7 million).

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPS)

Most people who are forced to flee never cross an international border, remaining displaced within their own countries. Known as internally displaced people, or IDPs, they account for 58 per cent of all forcibly displaced people.

The largest number of people displaced within their own country was 6.8 million in Syria, consistent with the end of the previous year. This means that 1 in 3 of all Syrians remaining within their country were still internally displaced at the end of 2022, after more than a decade of conflict.

Displacement in the Context of Disasters

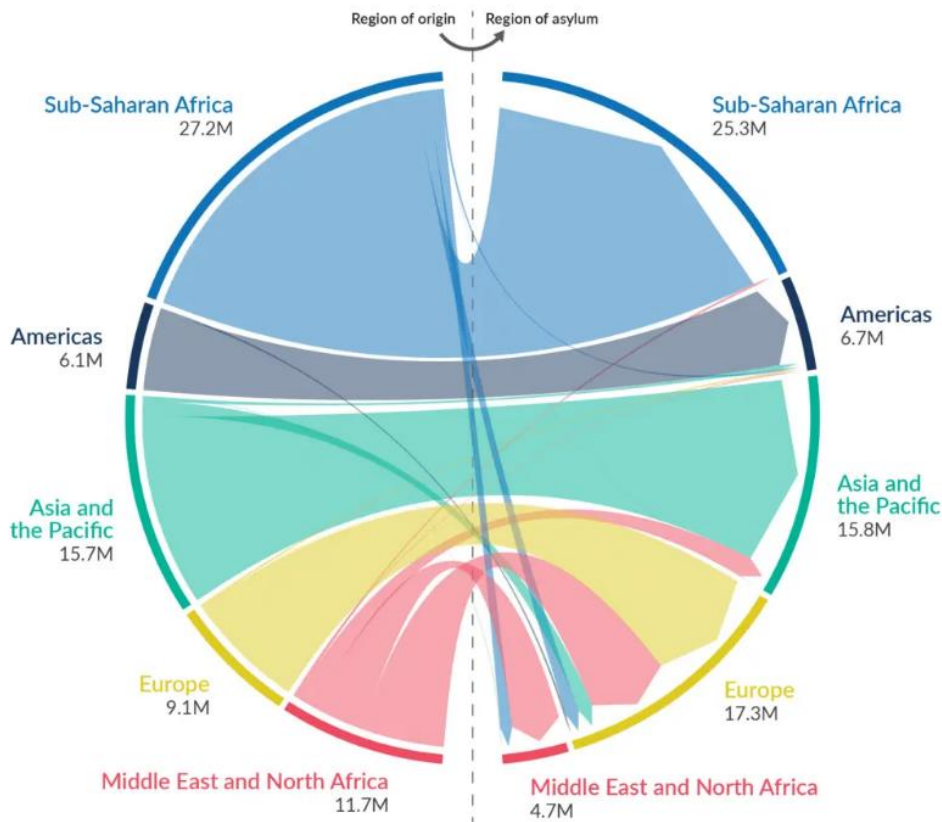
In addition to conflict and violence, people were displaced within their countries due to disasters. During the year, 32.6 million internal displacements due to disasters were reported, with 8.7 million people remaining displaced at the end of 2022, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Disaster related internal displacement accounted for more than half (54 per cent) of all new displacements in 2022.

WHAT NEXT?

New and ongoing conflicts continue to force people to flee in 2023, including as a result of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan, widespread violence in Myanmar and persistent insecurity and drought in Somalia. The surge in global energy and commodity prices has negatively affected many countries that were already fragile. This has been compounded by the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite these systemic risks, one thing that is unlikely to change in 2023 is that most refugees and displaced people stay as close to their countries as possible. At the end of 2022, 70 per cent of refugees, including people in refugee-like situations and other people in need of international protection, were hosted by neighbouring countries. Over the last five decades, three-quarters of these same populations remained within their region of origin.

Flows of refugees, people in refugee-like situations and other people in need of international protection from their region of origin to their region of asylum | 1975 – 2022



Remarkable solidarity continues to be shown for refugees and other forcibly displaced populations around the world. But this cannot be taken for granted and requires global solidarity and responsibility sharing by the international community. This means doing more to ease the pressure on the host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third-country solutions, and support conditions in countries of origin for voluntary return in safety and dignity.

The upcoming [Global Refugee Forum 2023](#) will be an opportunity to demonstrate that this solidarity remains solid, as States and other stakeholders showcase good practices and make new commitments in support of refugees and their host communities.

GLOBAL TRENDS 2022

UNHCR's Global Trends report presents the latest numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced and stateless persons worldwide.

[Download the full Global Trends report](#)

Annexes

[Download tables 1 through 23](#) (.zip)

[Download table 5](#) (.xlsx)

Database

The full data set is available at [Refugee data finder](#).

All data are provisional and subject to change.

THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES A CASE STUDY IN INTERNATIONAL FRAUD

[THE TIMES OF ISRAEL](#), James Cooper, November 29 2017. James Cooper is a practicing lawyer in the Greater Toronto Area.

What if you discovered that the overwhelming majority of Palestinian refugees never actually left Palestine in 1948, that they just evacuated from those portions of Mandate Palestine which constituted the frontline in what was promised to be a war of extermination of the Jewish population that lived within the confines of the war zone?

What if you found out that, in the vast majority of cases, those refugees did not scatter across the world or settle hundreds of miles from the land in which they were born? What if the truth was that in many cases, masses of those alleged refugees relocated tens of miles from their original homes, living not amidst any foreign majority population, but rather in territories where they constituted the majority and yet refused to exercise – or to demand – any kind of sovereignty for themselves?

What you are about to learn is the chronicle of an international legal fraud that has been perpetrated over the course of seven decades. The main financier and facilitator of this fraud is the institution known as the United Nations, specifically conducted through its member nations and through the offices of one of its constituent bodies, known as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

In 1948, an estimated 800,000 Palestinians evacuated the contested portions of Mandate Palestine, having summoned in five neighboring Arab armies to exterminate the 600,000 Jewish residents living amid the frontlines that would eventually be bounded by the armistice borders of the State of Israel.

According to the UNRWA's website (unrwa.org), there are currently 5 million people registered as Palestinian refugees, among whom 1.5 million live in 58 refugee camps aided by UNRWA, spread throughout the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and East Jerusalem (yes, there are Palestinian "refugees" in Jerusalem).

Most of the original cohort of 1948 Palestinian refugees are no longer alive. The burgeoning population of Palestinian refugees you see today are the descendants of that original cohort – mostly third or fourth generation refugees, the world's only case of long-term, intergenerational refugee status inheritance.

If you thought that, to be counted as a Palestinian refugee, one must live in a refugee camp, you are mistaken. According to the UNRWA's own figures, only 30% of Palestinian refugees actually live in what the UNRWA liberally denotes as "camps", but which are more accurately

described as UN-supported shantytowns. The rest – 70% – live outside those “camps”, overwhelmingly under the sovereignty and de facto governance of fellow Palestinians.

The UNRWA has not been accorded any legal capacity to determine who is a Palestinian refugee under international law. As a relief and aid agency, the UNRWA has its own particular definition as to who is eligible to receive UNRWA-funded services, whether in the camps themselves or anywhere else where UNRWA operates, including East Jerusalem.

The UNRWA defines Palestinian refugees as “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict” – in other words, applicable to any Arab resident who lived in Palestine at any time less than two years before the creation of the State of Israel, whether they had resided in Palestine as a recent migrant worker or as a resident with deep ancestral ties to the land.

According to the UNRWA, any descendant of a Palestinian male refugee – and their adopted children – are eligible to be registered as refugees for the purposes of receiving UNRWA aid services. Presumably, a Palestinian female refugee who married a non-refugee is ineligible to have her descendants registered for UNRWA aid.

Regardless of the questionable eligibility requirements, the important point to keep in mind is that UNRWA registration lists cannot be taken as a legal census of Palestinians considered as refugees under international law. At best, it is a registrant list for persons entitled to call upon various aid services from the UNRWA.

As the UNRWA makes clear, it does not administer, police, or manage the “refugee camps” it works in. Rather, the governing host authority provides the land, police, and overall governance, while the UNRWA merely administers humanitarian aid and education services through the installations it manages within and outside the perimeters of those “camps.”

Other than paying the salaries of UNRWA’s core staff, the United Nations itself does not provide the bulk of the UNRWA’s funding. Rather, the agency is kept afloat through voluntary donations, with close to 50% of those donations provided by the American government (the largest donor), followed by the European Union. Since only Congress has the power to approve and allocate any portion of American government spending, it can be said that the operations of UNRWA are substantially underwritten by Congress and the American taxpayer.

Under international law, Palestinian refugee status is subject to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status on Refugees (the UN Convention) , which applies the generally applicable definition of a refugee, and likewise determines the factors for the cessation of refugee status. There is, in fact, no international instrument of law that designates the UNRWA as a body competent to legally define and determine which Palestinian is or is not a refugee for the purposes of international law.

Again, to reiterate, the UNRWA is little more than the agency designated to provide aid and services to Palestinians that the UNRWA defines, according to its own peculiar criteria, as “refugees” (i.e. registrants entitled to receive UNRWA aid services).

As mandated by the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, the agency tasked with overseeing the protection of the rest of the world’s refugees is the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). To be clear, the UNHCR is not a judicial body in any sense of the term. Nevertheless, it provides determinations of refugee status (and the cessation of such status) in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 1951 UN Convention. Signatories to the UN Convention look to UNHCR in considering which individual, or groups, are entitled to refugee protection.

For practical reasons, UNHCR does not administer aid to Palestinians who receive such aid under the UNRWA system. A widely held myth is that UNRWA sets aside a special definition under international law for Palestinian refugees, while UNHCR applies a general definition for all other refugees. As previously noted, UNRWA is not set up to legally define which Palestinians are refugees under international law.

Another widely held myth is that UNRWA has the legal power to convey hereditary refugee status on Palestinians it considers as entitled to receive its services. Most clearly, it does not. Whether any particular Palestinian has retained or ceded their refugee status under international law is subject to factors considered by reference to the UN Convention. Under the UN Convention, as interpreted by UNHCR, a child of a refugee may acquire derivative refugee status – in a sense, inheriting the refugee status of the original refugee applicant.

However, this inter-generational refugee situation is often parsed in the context of protections accorded to coherent family units. Family unity is considered a desired goal under the refugee protection system, particularly where the aim is to maintain the services and protections of the family unit in an asylum country.

With regard to the very unique Palestinian situation, there are certain clear determinations that can be made under international law with respect to those who clearly do not have refugee status under any rudimentary analysis of the applicable UN Convention.

For instance, in the May 30, 1997 Note on Cessation Clauses, the UNHCR Standing Committee indicated, “Cessation of refugee status therefore applies when the refugee, having secured or being able to secure national protection, either of the country of origin or of another country, no longer needs international protection.”

Note that the underlying concern here is “international protection”, not necessarily repatriation to the country of origin. With respect to the Palestinian situation in Jordan – a de facto Palestinian State with 70% of the population being of Palestinian origin – the UNRWA counts over 2 million residents as “refugees”, though virtually all of them live outside of “camps” and have full rights of citizenship. By any stretch of the imagination, it must be conceded that the

Palestinians in Jordan have been able to secure national protection in another country (i.e. Jordan, though this country was once part and parcel of Palestine before the East Bank portion was severed and rechristened as Transjordan).

In short, their situation has long since triggered the cessation clauses of the UN Convention. While the UNRWA may continue in its efforts to provide 2 million Jordanian citizens with aid services – and freely label them as “refugees” – their policy has absolutely no bearing or substance under international law. That removes 2 million Jordanian Palestinians from the “refugee” ledger.

Then, what about the Palestinian “refugees” in East Jerusalem? Under Israeli law, not only do they have permanent residency rights, but they also have the right to elect to take on Israeli citizenship, though most elect not to. But – and this is a key point – under any reasonable interpretation of refugee law, one cannot elect to stay a refugee, particularly when one already has access to, and the benefits of, national protection in the country in which one resides. So much for the Palestinian “refugees” in Jerusalem.

What, then, of the Gaza Strip, where the UNRWA registers roughly 70% of its residents – 1.3 million out of a population of 1.9 million – as “refugees”? According to UNRWA, there are eight refugee “camps” in Gaza, but they are more accurately termed as urban enclaves or neighbourhoods indistinguishable from any other crowded urban enclaves in Gaza. Nevertheless, the UNRWA insists on labeling these neighbourhoods as “camps”, though residents are free to stay or leave as they wish.

More problematically, from the perspective of refugee law, is the question as to whose “national protection” they are under. More than 20 years ago, the Palestinians of Gaza were governed by the Palestinian Authority as per the Oslo Accords. As of 2006, this “refugee” population has been under the “national protection” of Hamas. It may very well be the world’s only “refugee” population that fields its own missile arsenal, army, and a criminal justice system (of sorts).

According to Palestinian “Refugee” President Mahmud Abbas, 70% of the population of the Gaza Strip retains the theoretical right to “repatriate” a few miles across the border into the State of Israel. It may be the first instance in the annals of refugee law in which the bulk of the “refugee” population yearns to surrender their status as the majority population in their own country, and to seek minority status within the confines of the state next door in which they never had any citizenship. By any stretch of the imagination, the cessation clauses of the UN Convention have long since been triggered by the residents of the Gaza Strip. That removes a further 1.3 million Palestinians from the “refugee” ledger.

And now on to the West Bank, where the UNRWA has registered 775,000 “refugees”, with 25% of them spread across 19 “camps”. As the UNRWA freely admits, however, it does not run these “camps.” Rather, the responsibility for the administration and governance of these camps

rests with the host authority, which just happens to be under the auspices of the Palestinian President. In other words – like their counterparts in Gaza – the “refugees” themselves serve as the hosts and administrators of their own “refugee” camps.

Under refugee law, repatriation to the original country of one’s nationality is just one option to bring about an end to one’s refugee status. Another option lies in integrating oneself into the local host population. But what if the local host population just happens to be your fellow nationals? Unless an international jurist can raise a persuasive argument that 775,000 West Bank “refugees” are unable to sufficiently integrate with themselves in the West Bank, I would argue that here is a good case for removing a further 775,000 West Bank Palestinians from the refugee ledger.

All of which leaves us – according to the UNRWA’s trustworthy figures – 450,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and around 500,000 in Syria (though those numbers have no doubt diminished substantially over the last few years, in light of the current turmoil in these countries). In terms of the UN Convention, these residents are able to present a comparatively stronger case for maintaining their legal status as refugees, or at least the need for international protection. For one thing, over the course of decades, they have formed a minority population in the midst of a majority population that otherwise disparages them and that has historically denied them full participation as citizens in line with the host residents.

With regard to the Palestinians in Syria, they remain vulnerable to the spillover of bloody civil war that has recently fragmented the country. However, when one looks closer, one must ask: Does a theoretical need for refugee protection in this instance necessarily lead to a need to repatriate the population to the country of origin, much less to the State of Israel?

As noted above, the governing concern of the UN Convention is that the refugee achieve some kind of practical protection, whether that comes from repatriation or from integration into the local host population. As of this writing, certainly the Palestinians in Syria – along with almost all Syrians, incidentally – may be considered a population in need of physical protection. Currently, the option of local integration is not practicable.

But in light of the current demography of Palestinians who reside within the borders of what formerly constituted Mandate Palestine, there are far more practical options to consider than mass settlement of Syrian and Lebanese Palestinians within the borders of the State of Israel.

Let us examine, for instance, this notion of “repatriation.” Under refugee law, there is no right to be repatriated to an ancestor’s house or neighbourhood that you had never lived in. Even with the provisional stipulation that refugee protection status can be inherited under international law, the repatriation rights of the stateless grandson cannot be equated with those of the grandfather who was forced to abandon his house and neighbourhood.

In the event the Palestinian grandson one day crossed the border from Syria into what was once Mandate Palestine, and chose to settle securely either in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank,

or Jordan, his refugee status would come to an end, despite the fact that he nevertheless wished to reclaim the grandfather's house over the border in that part of the former Palestine Mandate that now comprises the State of Israel.

In short, there is absolutely no special or intrinsic right under refugee law for any Lebanese or Syrian Palestinian to "repatriate" into the State of Israel as opposed to those areas of the former Palestine Mandate where the Palestinians effectively comprise the host population.

Even under the most generous and liberal reading of the UN Convention, a mass repatriation of such a population to the State of Israel would be discouraged and avoided on practical grounds alone. More to the point, what exactly makes the borders of the State of Israel the necessary go-to destination for an alleged Palestinian refugee?

As noted, the aspiration of refugee protection law is to repatriate a refugee within their "country of origin" or among their "nationality of origin". The Palestinians who evacuated the contested frontlines of a portion of the Palestine Mandate, which eventually became the State of Israel, cannot maintain – under any principle of refugee law – an inherited, inter-generational right to repatriate to the same home, neighbourhood, or town once occupied by one's ancestor.

In practice, refugee law simply does not operate on that level of particularity. Rather, the unit of international redress is the state or nationality of origin. Under refugee law, a Palestinian cannot "reacquire" Israeli nationality or citizenship rights because they never had such rights to begin with. A "return" to your grandfather's former house in Haifa may very well be considered as a return to the ancestral homestead, but under refugee law, it could not be considered as a "return" to your nationality of origin, particularly in a situation where your nationality of origin has subsequently coalesced as an autonomous authority elsewhere in another portion of what was once Mandate Palestine.

Thus, even when – at least for the sake of argument – one stipulates and concedes that Palestinian refugee status might be inherited, and that – after 70 years – there might exist some kind of right in refugee law for repatriation of the descendants of the original refugees, it is difficult to argue in good faith that such refugees by rights must be settled in the portion of their former "country of origin" that now comprises a foreign nationality (i.e. Israeli), rather than in the portion of their country of origin that comprises their own nationality (i.e. Palestinian).

Up to this point, I have stipulated that – as of 1948 – there exists a "nationality of origin" that one could describe as "Palestinian." In truth, it would be anachronistic and wholly inaccurate to accept such a stipulation on its face. The 1948 invasion of Palestine by five Arab nations – in concert with the Arabs of Mandate Palestine – was premised on incorporating Palestine as part of the greater Arab nation, and was based on the ideology of pan-Arab nationalism, itself founded by the leader of the Arab community in Palestine, Haj Amin al-Husseini. .

As late as 1964, the PLO Charter defined its national goal as providing for the armed liberation of Palestine, for the express purpose of incorporating it into the greater Arab nation.

With respect to refugee law, the relevant time frame of reference is the year 1948. In short, we must look at the circumstances that existed at the time the refugee crisis first arose. At that time, all sources were consistent with the collective understanding that the Arabs of Palestine viewed themselves not as “Palestinian” in nationality, but rather as citizens of the greater Arab nation. On that basis, the armies of five neighbouring Arab states were called in by the Arab leadership of Palestine to claim all of Mandate Palestine for the greater Arab nation, in accordance with the ideology of pan-Arab nationalism.

It is a crucial – yet conceptually subtle – point – to emphasize. If, indeed, the Arabs of Palestine declared themselves as fellow belligerents and as fellow citizens, of the greater Arab nation that invaded the newly formed State of Israel in 1948, then their self-declared “nationality of origin” on this date would arguably be shared with the citizens of their fellow co-belligerents, among whom were the Jordanians, Syrians, and Lebanese. In short, all the belligerents against the newly formed State of Israel – including the Arab leadership of Mandate Palestine – declared war against the Jewish State on the basis of their shared nationality as members of the greater Arab nation, whether Sunni, Shiite, or Christian.

According to the nationalized dynamics of the conflict, the Arab nationals of one part of Mandate Palestine sought refuge among fellow Arab nationals in other portions of Mandate Palestine, and across the border with fellow Arab nationals in the neighbouring Arab states.

What set the Palestinian Arabs apart in those neighbouring Arab states was not due to any inherent cultural or ethnic differences, but rather due to the political and legal need to keep them demographically intact and isolated from the host population, so as to retain their refugee status and their political use as part of the regional toolkit in the ongoing war to bring about the collapse of the State of Israel.

A suitable frame of reference would be the mass population exchanges that accompanied the partition of Pakistan from a portion of India in 1947. Upon the creation of Pakistan, millions of Muslims were uprooted and “repatriated” into the newly created Muslim state of Pakistan, while masses of Hindu adherents were evacuated from areas that would comprise Pakistan, and “repatriated” into the Hindu majority state of India.

With respect to the India-Pakistan crisis, there has been no international call for several million Hindus to be “repatriated” back into the territories that were incorporated into the Muslim majority state of Pakistan. It would be an absurd request in any case, in light of the fact that there would be no “nationality of origin” for these Hindu residents to “reacquire” in the Muslim state of Pakistan.

So, too, with the respective Jewish and Arab populations that were displaced in the wake of the creation of the State of Israel. An estimated 800,000 Middle Eastern Jews were expelled, or fled, from various countries around the Arab world, and subsequently integrated with their fellow Jews within the State of Israel.

Over the course of decades, there has been no sustained call for the Jewish refugees of the Middle East to be repatriated back to their original homes, or to be compensated en masse. By contrast, the Arab refugees from the 1948 war were effectively “weaponized” by the Arab World as demographic cannon fodder to be employed against the State of Israel, to be held in place in refugee settlements – again, mostly within the borders of Mandate Palestine – for the sole purpose of sustaining their legal status as refugees under international law.

Thus, up until 1967, both Egypt (in the Gaza Strip) and Jordan (in both Jordan and the West Bank) opted to permanently warehouse masses of Palestinians in refugee “camps” within the borders of Mandate Palestine for no reason at all, except to preserve for them the legal option of being repatriated across the border of the State of Israel.

With the active support of the oil-rich Gulf States, and in collusion with the Soviet Union (up until 1967) – and thereafter, with the European Union – the UNRWA would serve as the educational and “humanitarian” instrument by which an intergenerational refugee population would be educationally nourished on an identity of grievance, victimhood, and, above all, a fervent desire to destroy the very state in which they were demanding to be repatriated – incidentally, an ongoing circumstance of belligerence according to which the UN Convention advises against repatriation.

After 1967, once Israel acquired the territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, an initial effort was made by the Israeli government – in its new role as the Administrative Authority in these territories – to dismantle the refugee settlements and to prod the “refugees” to integrate with the other Palestinian Arab residents of the area who weren’t registered by the UNRWA.

But the “refugees” – and the United Nations – were having none of it. So long as the UNRWA umbrella remained in place, the legal fiction could be sustained that any Palestinian Arab receiving aid by the UNRWA preserved a future ticket to settle in the State of Israel.

In time, when even the majority of Palestinians drifted out of the physical boundaries of the “camps” – which were now “camps” only in the sense that they had UNRWA installations set up within the boundaries of these designated crowded neighborhoods – the UNRWA brand was such that you no longer even needed to reside in a “camp” in order to sustain your refugee status. So long as you were registered with the UNRWA, and thus eligible to receive its services, you would be deemed a Palestinian “refugee” in the eyes of the US State Department, the European Union, and most of the other member states of the UN.

While integration into the local host community would be sufficient to end refugee status under the UNHCR system, the UNRWA umbrella remained in place – and would be repeatedly renewed by the UN – in order to artificially and indefinitely sustain Palestinian refugee status. Under the UNRWA umbrella, local integration would be wholly irrelevant in determining the end of one’s refugee status; henceforth, repatriation – into the Jewish State – would be considered

as a valuable and viable bargaining chip to be placed on the table, at least so long as one was registered with UNRWA.

As we have seen, the overwhelming majority of Palestinian refugees do have a number of options available to end their refugee status. Those options, in turn, challenge the underlying rationale for refugee protection law, which is to mitigate the refugee's vulnerable position with practical solutions.

In other words, if the refugee is presented with a viable option to improve their unfortunate circumstances, yet the refugee elects instead to maintain the status quo in order to preserve future options currently unavailable to that refugee (i.e. they want to voluntarily maintain their legal status as a refugee without triggering the cessation clauses), that stance can justifiably be viewed as insincere, as fraudulent, as evidence of bad faith conduct.

All of which brings us to the legal fraud that forms the basis of the Palestinian refugee claim. Under common law, when a party claims a personal injury, they have a duty to mitigate their losses, even while seeking redress for the alleged tort committed against them.

For seventy years, the Palestinians have claimed to suffer a grievous tort at the hands of the Jewish population they had initially sought to "throw into the sea." Back in 1948, under international law, the newly formed State of Israel was under absolutely no legal obligation to accept a hostile population back into the domain of the once contested frontline.

By point of contrast, the Palestinians who remained within the borders of the State of Israel – after the initial cessation of hostilities in 1949 – happened to come from villages and towns where the population refrained from threatening the viability and physical safety of the newly formed state and its Jewish inhabitants. That population has since grown more than ten-fold over the course of several decades, sharing in the full rights of Israeli citizenship.

In the two decades from 1949 to 1967, the overwhelming bulk of internally displaced Palestinians continued to reside in the portions of Mandate Palestine that did not comprise the State of Israel, among a host population that was overwhelmingly Palestinian in origin. In that time frame, there was neither any plea nor request for "camp" residents to be integrated into the local host population, whether among their fellow countrymen in the West Bank, in Gaza, in Jordan, or among their fellow Arab neighbours in Syria and Lebanon.

Nor in that time frame was there any call or desire to exercise any kind of sovereign national governance over those portions of Mandate Palestine where they constituted the overwhelming majority.

f, in the case of Syria and Lebanon, the host governments made a concerted effort to maintain the minority Palestinian population in their second-class status, it is telling that no effort or request was made by these residents to resettle themselves among their "countrymen" in Gaza, the West Bank, or Jordan. On the one hand, they claimed to "suffer" on account of their

extended refugee status, yet on the other hand, took every measure to ensure that they would not do anything to trigger the legal cessation of their refugee status.

In order to maintain the legal fiction of an ongoing refugee “crisis”, both the Arab World and the West – in collusion with the Soviet Union – did everything possible to ensure that Palestinian refugee “camps” would stay in place, even as they evolved into crowded urban enclaves. So long as the UNRWA would continue to offer services there and continue to designate these enclaves as “camps”, the legal fiction could continue in perpetuity.

Even as the majority of Palestinian “refugees” left the “camps” for more desirable accommodations, the remnant that chose to stay on in these “camp” /UNRWA-serviced enclaves would continue to be shown to the world as Exhibit A in the showpiece of Palestinian “suffering”.

However, lost in all this extended propaganda – even to much of the Israeli public – was this notion of Palestinian choice, of Palestinian agency, of the failure to mitigate one’s presumed injuries.

Against the evidence of that course of conduct, the incessant call for the “refugees” to repatriate en masse, from the Palestinian enclave of their portion of Palestine, into the Jewish enclave of the remaining portion, could only be seen for what it was – a strategy intended to demographically dissolve the Jewish polity within the borders of the State of Israel.

Since the signing and implementation of the Oslo Accords, the Palestinians have taken some element of sovereign control over the Gaza Strip and over significant portions of the West Bank, denoted as Areas A and B. And yet, in these areas alone, a combined total of roughly 2 million Palestinian “refugees” claim the theoretical right to leave their “country of origin”, and to settle instead within the borders of the State of Israel, to live among six million Jews as a hostile minority.

The US State Department – for the sake of “peace” – continues to underwrite the legal fiction that the Palestinians suffer a legitimate refugee “crisis” that somehow requires Israel’s participation and concessions to resolve.

In the meantime, the Palestinians continue on as history’s most astoundingly unique case study in refugee crisis management. Where other refugee populations tend to diminish in the space of a few years, this one grows inter-generationally by orders of magnitude, mostly by means of natural growth rather than through ongoing displacement. Where other refugee populations look for any viable option to get out of the camps, this one seeks out funding, services, and indoctrination activities to keep a credibly sustainable mass of their population in the camps. While most refugee populations will do anything to end their legal status as refugees, this one will do anything to keep their legal status as refugees from ending.

In recent years, the Palestinian President has presented the international community with a truly puzzling legal conundrum to work through. If, on the one hand, you intend to argue that –

thanks to the Oslo Accords – you now preside over a quasi-sovereign political entity that is internationally recognized as the “State of Palestine”, then under what principle of refugee law can you credibly maintain the argument that a significant proportion of your citizens nevertheless require the “protection” of being “repatriated” to the alien state next door?

The answer: You can’t credibly maintain this legal paradox. Yet in collusion with the majority of member states that comprise the United Nations, you can fraudulently maintain the illusion that your arguments are indeed credible under international law.

UNWRA TOP 20 GOVERNMENT DONORS IN 2018 (US\$)					
This chart shows how reliant UNWRA is on Western donors					
	EUROPE	AMERICAS	OTHER	ARAB	TOTAL
EU (including ECHO)	178,989,326				178,989,326
Germany	177,439,447				177,439,447
Saudi Arabia				159,956,771	159,956,771
UK	92,754,569				92,754,569
Sweden	64,999,762				64,999,762
USA		60,429,282			60,429,282
UAE				53,800,000	53,800,000
Qatar				51,499,779	51,499,779
Kuwait				50,000,000	50,000,000
Japan			44,999,224		44,999,224
Netherlands	36,278,753				36,278,753
United Arab Emirates				27,828,599	27,828,599
Australia			26,746,123		26,746,123
Denmark	22,677,756				22,677,756
Belgium (including Flanders)	19,055,991				19,055,991
Italy	18,774,000				18,774,000
France (including municipalities)	17,090,974				17,090,974
Ireland	16,017,103				16,017,103
Finland	15,498,794				15,498,794
Luxembourg	15,261,693				15,261,693
Total	674,838,168	60,429,282	71,745,347	343,085,149	1,150,097,946
%	59%	5%	6%	30%	100%
			US\$	%	
		Non-Arab	807,012,797	70%	
		Arab	343,085,149	30%	
		Total	1,150,097,946	100%	

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN UNWRA AND UNHCR

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) are two separate organizations within the United Nations system, but they have distinct mandates and areas of operation.

UNHCR:

1. **Mandate:** UNHCR is the global organization dedicated to protecting refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people, and assisting in their voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement to a third country.
2. **Scope:** UNHCR has a global mandate and operates in various countries and regions around the world where there are refugee situations.
3. **Beneficiaries:** UNHCR's primary beneficiaries are refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless people, and other groups of concern.

UNRWA:

1. **Mandate:** UNRWA was established specifically to provide relief and humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees who were displaced from their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.
2. **Scope:** UNRWA operates primarily in the Middle East region, specifically in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.
3. **Beneficiaries:** UNRWA's beneficiaries are Palestinian refugees and their descendants who were displaced from their homes in what is now Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Key differences:

1. UNHCR has a global mandate, while UNRWA's mandate is focused on Palestinian refugees in the Middle East region.
2. UNHCR deals with various refugee situations and displaced populations worldwide, while UNRWA exclusively serves Palestinian refugees.
3. UNHCR is funded through voluntary contributions from governments and private donors, while UNRWA receives a significant portion of its funding from the United Nations regular budget and voluntary contributions.

Despite their different mandates and areas of operation, both organizations work towards providing protection, assistance, and durable solutions for displaced populations, albeit with different target groups and geographical scopes.

The UNHCR and UNRWA have different functions and areas of operation, which stem from their distinct mandates and historical contexts.

UNHCR's Functions:

1. **Protection:** UNHCR plays a crucial role in ensuring the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers, and other persons of concern, advocating for their rights and providing legal assistance.
2. **Emergency assistance:** UNHCR provides emergency relief, such as shelter, food, water, and medical care, to populations affected by conflict, natural disasters, or other emergencies.
3. **Durable solutions:** UNHCR facilitates durable solutions for refugees, including voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement to a third country.
4. **Statelessness:** UNHCR works to prevent and reduce statelessness by providing legal and technical assistance to governments and promoting accession to relevant international conventions.

UNRWA's Functions:

1. **Education:** UNRWA runs one of the largest school systems in the Middle East, providing primary and vocational education to Palestinian refugee children.
2. **Health care:** UNRWA operates a network of primary healthcare facilities, providing essential medical services to Palestinian refugees.
3. **Relief and social services:** UNRWA provides food assistance, cash assistance, and other social services to Palestinian refugees, particularly those living in poverty or facing emergencies.
4. **Camp infrastructure and improvement:** UNRWA manages and maintains infrastructure in Palestinian refugee camps, including repairs, construction, and camp improvement projects.

Regarding the Jewish population and UNRWA, it is important to note that UNRWA's mandate is specifically focused on Palestinian refugees and their descendants. Jewish refugees who left or were displaced from the region during the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict and subsequent events were not included in UNRWA's mandate. Instead, they were assisted by other organizations, such as the Jewish Agency for Israel and various international aid agencies.

Many Jewish refugees from Arab countries sought refuge in Israel, which was established as a state in 1948. Israel accepted and absorbed a significant number of Jewish refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, providing them with citizenship, housing, and integration assistance.

In summary, while UNHCR has a global mandate to assist various refugee populations, UNRWA's specific mandate is to provide assistance and protection to Palestinian refugees in the Middle East region. The Jewish refugees from the region were not covered by UNRWA's mandate and instead sought refuge and assistance through other channels, primarily in Israel.

UNHCR and UNRWA have different definitions of who qualifies as a Palestinian refugee, which contributes to the difference in the number of beneficiaries they serve.

UNHCR: UNHCR's definition of a refugee is based on the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. According to this definition, a refugee is someone who has fled their country of origin due to a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

UNHCR does not have a specific category for Palestinian refugees. Palestinian refugees who meet the general refugee definition are included in UNHCR's global refugee statistics, but they are not separated or counted as a distinct group.

As of the end of 2022, UNHCR reported assisting around 92.7 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced persons.

UNRWA: UNRWA has a specific definition for Palestinian refugees, which includes:

1. Palestinians who resided in Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948 and lost their homes and livelihoods as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.
2. Descendants of those Palestinian refugees, including legally adopted children.

UNRWA's definition is more expansive than UNHCR's, as it includes not only the original refugees but also their descendants, regardless of their current circumstances or location.

As of January 2023, UNRWA reported serving around 5.8 million registered Palestinian refugees in its areas of operation:

- Jordan: 2.4 million
- Lebanon: 475,000
- Syria: 538,000
- Gaza Strip: 1.5 million
- West Bank: 918,000

It's important to note that while UNHCR and UNRWA have different definitions and numbers, their mandates complement each other in addressing the needs of displaced populations, with UNHCR focusing on a global scale and UNRWA specifically assisting Palestinian refugees in the Middle East region.

Here are the numbers for UNHCR and UNRWA, including their total beneficiaries and breakdown by function and location:

UNHCR: Total Beneficiaries (as of end 2022): 92.7 million forcibly displaced people worldwide

Functions:

1. **Protection:** UNHCR provides protection and assistance to all 92.7 million people under its mandate.
2. **Emergency assistance:** In 2022, UNHCR provided emergency assistance to around 20.2 million people affected by conflict or natural disasters.
3. **Durable solutions:** In 2022, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 598,000 refugees, the resettlement of 107,800 refugees, and the local integration of an undisclosed number.
4. **Statelessness:** UNHCR reported assisting around 4.3 million stateless people in 2022.

UNRWA: Total Beneficiaries (as of January 2023): 5.8 million registered Palestinian refugees

Functions:

1. Education: UNRWA runs 715 schools, providing education to around 535,000 Palestinian refugee students.
2. Health care: UNRWA operates 144 primary healthcare facilities, serving around 3.5 million Palestinian refugees.

3. Relief and social services: UNRWA provided food assistance to around 1.8 million Palestinian refugees and cash assistance to around 438,000 Palestinian refugees in 2022.
4. Camp infrastructure and improvement: UNRWA manages and maintains infrastructure in 58 recognized Palestinian refugee camps.

Breakdown by Location:

- Jordan: 2.4 million registered Palestinian refugees
- Lebanon: 475,000 registered Palestinian refugees
- Syria: 538,000 registered Palestinian refugees
- Gaza Strip: 1.5 million registered Palestinian refugees
- West Bank: 918,000 registered Palestinian refugees

It's worth noting that while UNHCR's mandate is global, UNRWA's mandate is specifically focused on Palestinian refugees in the Middle East region, which accounts for the difference in the total number of beneficiaries and the geographical distribution of their operations.

Here are the numbers for administration and services provided by UNHCR and UNRWA:

UNHCR: Total Staff (as of 2022): Around 20,000 personnel, including 11,400 national staff and 8,600 international staff.

Administration and Services:

1. Protection: UNHCR has a dedicated Division of International Protection that coordinates and oversees the organization's protection work globally.
2. Emergency assistance: UNHCR has a Division of Emergency, Security, and Supply that manages emergency preparedness and response operations.
3. Durable solutions: UNHCR has a Division of Resilience and Solutions that facilitates voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement programs.
4. Statelessness: UNHCR has a dedicated Statelessness Section that works to prevent and reduce statelessness worldwide.

UNRWA: Total Staff (as of 2022): Around 28,000 staff members, with over 24,000 working as teachers or healthcare workers.

Administration and Services:

1. Education: UNRWA operates 715 schools with over 22,000 educational staff members, serving around 535,000 students.
2. Health care: UNRWA operates 144 primary healthcare facilities with over 3,500 health staff members, serving around 3.5 million Palestinian refugees.
3. Relief and social services: UNRWA has a dedicated Relief and Social Services Program that provides food assistance, cash assistance, and other social services to Palestinian refugees in need.
4. Camp infrastructure and improvement: UNRWA has a dedicated Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program that manages and maintains infrastructure in 58 recognized Palestinian refugee camps.

In terms of administration, UNHCR has a headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, and a network of regional and country offices worldwide. UNRWA has its headquarters in Amman, Jordan, and field offices in its areas of operation (Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank).

Both organizations rely heavily on voluntary contributions from governments, intergovernmental organizations, and private donors to fund their operations and provide essential services to their respective beneficiaries.

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UNDERSTANDING THE PALESTINIAN PHRASE "FROM THE SEA TO THE RIVER"

The phrase "from the sea to the river" is a historical and political expression used by some Palestinians to refer to their claimed territorial aspirations over the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

This land encompasses the area of historic Palestine, which includes modern-day Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. The "sea" refers to the Mediterranean Sea, and the "river" refers to the Jordan River, which forms the eastern boundary of the West Bank.

The phrase is rooted in the Palestinian national movement and reflects the aspirations of some Palestinians for a state that encompasses the entire territory of historic Palestine, before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

It is important to note that the interpretation and implications of this phrase are highly contentious and subject to different perspectives:

1. From the Palestinian perspective, it symbolizes their historical and political claims to the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, which they consider their rightful homeland.
2. From the Israeli perspective, this phrase is often seen as a rejection of Israel's existence and a desire to replace it with a single Palestinian state, which is unacceptable to Israel and many in the international community.

The phrase has been used by various Palestinian political factions and leaders, including the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Hamas, to assert their territorial claims over historic Palestine. However, it is a controversial and divisive expression, as it conflicts with the two-state solution advocated by the international community and many Palestinians themselves.

It is important to note that the interpretation and implications of this phrase are complex and subject to ongoing debates and negotiations within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The phrase "from the sea to the river" carries different interpretations and implications for Palestinians and Israelis:

For Palestinians:

1. Historical and national aspirations: The phrase represents the Palestinian national aspirations for self-determination and statehood over the entirety of historic Palestine, which stretches from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. It symbolizes their deep-rooted connection to the land and their desire to establish a sovereign Palestinian state in what they consider their historical homeland.
2. Rejection of the two-state solution: Some Palestinians interpret this phrase as a rejection of the two-state solution, which envisions an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. Instead, it implies a desire for a single, unitary state for Palestinians over the entire territory, potentially at the expense of Israel's existence as a Jewish state.

3. Right of return: The phrase is sometimes associated with the Palestinian demand for the right of return for Palestinian refugees and their descendants to their ancestral homes, *which are now located within Israel's borders*.

For Israelis:

1. Existential threat: From the Israeli perspective, the phrase "from the sea to the river" is often seen as a direct challenge to Israel's existence and territorial integrity. It is interpreted as a call for the replacement of Israel with a single Palestinian state, which is unacceptable to most Israelis who view Israel as the national homeland for the Jewish people.
2. Rejection of peace negotiations: The phrase is seen by some Israelis as a rejection of the peace process and negotiations aimed at achieving a two-state solution, which has been the primary framework for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
3. Security concerns: The phrase raises security concerns for Israelis, as it implies the potential loss of strategically important territories, such as the West Bank and the Jordan Valley, which are currently under Israeli control and considered vital for Israel's defense.

It is important to note that the interpretations and implications of this phrase are highly contentious and reflect the deep-rooted complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While some Palestinians view it as a legitimate expression of their national aspirations, many Israelis perceive it as a threat to their existence and security. The phrase remains a significant obstacle to achieving a peaceful resolution to the conflict, as it highlights the divergent narratives and territorial claims of both sides.

DEFINITION OF JEWISH AND PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

The definitions of Jewish and Palestinian refugees differ based on the historical context and the organizations involved in addressing their situations.

Jewish Refugees: There is no universally accepted legal definition of Jewish refugees, as they were not specifically defined or covered by the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. However, the term is generally used to refer to Jews who were forced to flee from Arab and Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa, primarily following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent Arab-Israeli conflicts.

Many Jewish communities faced persecution, violence, and discrimination in various Arab countries, leading to their displacement and exodus. It is estimated that between 1948 and the early 1970s, around 850,000 to 1 million Jews were forced to leave their homes in Arab countries.

Palestinian Refugees: The definition of Palestinian refugees is provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which was established specifically to assist this population.

According to UNRWA, a Palestinian refugee is defined as "any person whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period of 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict."

This definition also includes the descendants of those Palestinian refugees, including legally adopted children. UNRWA's mandate is to provide assistance and protection to this population until a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian refugee issue is found.

It is important to note that the definitions and statuses of Jewish and Palestinian refugees are subject to ongoing debates and differing perspectives. While the international community recognizes the rights and needs of Palestinian refugees, there is no equivalent UN agency or specific mandate for Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

The issue of refugees, their definitions, and their right to return or compensation remains a contentious aspect of the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its potential resolution.

The definitions of Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees/exiles evolved due to the specific historical circumstances and events surrounding their displacement.

Palestinian Refugees: The definition of Palestinian refugees by UNRWA stems from the events of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, which led to the displacement of a large number of Palestinians from their homes in what became the State of Israel.

Reason for the definition:

- The 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict resulted in the exodus of around 700,000 to 900,000 Palestinians from their homes and villages.
- UNRWA was established in 1949 to provide humanitarian assistance to this displaced Palestinian population.
- The definition was designed to cover those Palestinians who lost their homes and means of livelihood due to the 1948 conflict and their descendants.

Numbers and changes:

- Initially, UNRWA registered around 750,000 Palestinian refugees in 1950.
- As of January 2023, UNRWA reported serving around 5.8 million registered Palestinian refugees and their descendants.
- The definition has been expanded over time to include subsequent generations of descendants born to registered Palestinian refugees.

Jewish Refugees/Exiles: There is no universally accepted legal definition of Jewish refugees, but the term generally refers to Jews who fled or were expelled from Arab and Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East and North Africa following the establishment of Israel in 1948.

Reason for the exile:

- After the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, many Jewish communities in Arab countries faced persecution, violence, and discrimination.
- This led to the mass exodus of Jews from these countries, as they were forced to flee or were expelled.

Numbers:

- It is estimated that between 1948 and the early 1970s, around 850,000 to 1 million Jews were displaced from Arab countries.
- The majority of these Jewish refugees and their descendants were absorbed and integrated into Israel, while others immigrated to other countries.

Unlike Palestinian refugees, there is no specific UN agency or mandate dedicated to addressing the situation of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. However, their displacement and exodus have been recognized by various international bodies and organizations, including the United Nations.

The differing definitions and approaches to Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees/exiles reflect the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the divergent narratives and perspectives surrounding the events of 1948 and their aftermath.

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WHY ARE SOME COUNTRIES SUSPENDING ITS FUNDING?

Editors Note: The United Nations has two 'refugee organisations'. UNWRA who is responsible for Palestinian Refugees and UNHCR who is responsible for refugees in the rest of the world. UNWRA has taken on the additional function of education, health and camps, has 30,000 employees with Europeans being responsible for senior executive posts.

They now have different refugee definitions. UNHCR only accepts refugees from the country they left while UNWRA changed the definition to include the refugees descendants. The result is that UNWRA has now over 5 million refugees while only few original refugees still survive.

REUTERS January 30, 2024 Updated 2 months ago

GENEVA, Jan 29 (Reuters) - Major donors to the U.N. Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA) have suspended funding after [allegations](#) emerged that around 12 of its tens of thousands of Palestinian employees were suspected of involvement in the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel by Hamas.

What Does UNWRA Do?

UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) was established in 1949 by a U.N. General Assembly resolution, following the war surrounding the founding of Israel, when 700,000 Palestinians fled or were driven from their homes.

Today it directly employs 30,000 Palestinians, serving the civic and humanitarian needs of 5.9 million descendants of those refugees, in the Gaza Strip, West Bank and in vast camps in neighbouring Arab countries. In Gaza, it employs 13,000 people, running the enclave's schools, its primary healthcare clinics and other social services, as well as distributing humanitarian aid. Its services in Gaza have increased in importance since 2005, when Israel and Egypt imposed a blockade causing an economic collapse with one of the highest unemployment rates in the world.

Since Israel launched its war following the Oct. 7 attacks, around a million Gazans, or nearly 45% of the enclave's population, have been sheltering in UNRWA schools, clinics and other public buildings.

Nearly the entire Gazan population now relies on UNRWA for basic necessities, including food, water and hygiene supplies.

More than 150 UNRWA staff have been killed since the start of the conflict, making it the deadliest conflict ever for U.N. employees.

Who Are its Main Donors?

Contributions from United Nations member states, including regional governments and the European Union, account for more than 89% of the agency's funding. It also receives funding from the regular U.N. budget and financial contributions from other U.N. bodies.

In 2022, its top government donors were the United States, Germany, the European Union, Sweden, Norway, Japan, France, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland and Turkey.

Countries including the United States, Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Switzerland have suspended their funding of the agency in the wake of the allegations.

What Are Israel's Allegations?

A six-page [Israeli dossier](#) shared with the United States and reviewed by Reuters says 12 UNRWA staff members took part in the Oct. 7 attacks, including nine who worked as teachers in the agency's schools. Ten of them directly participated in the raid into Israeli territory, during which fighters killed 1,200 people and captured more than 240 hostages, and two others were summoned to assist the raid.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the number of UNRWA staff that participated in the raid was 13.

The dossier says Israel also has wider evidence that UNRWA has employed 190 Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants.

What Does UNWRA Say About the Israeli Allegations?

UNRWA says it acted swiftly to fire staff after being alerted of Israeli evidence that they participated in the Oct. 7 attacks. It believes the cuts to its funding now could jeopardise its entire mission and dramatically worsen an already catastrophic humanitarian emergency in Gaza.

"It is shocking to see a suspension of funds to the agency in reaction to allegations against a small group of staff, especially given the immediate action that UNRWA took by terminating their contracts and asking for a transparent independent investigation," [UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini](#) said.

A spokesperson for the agency said on Monday that UNRWA would not be able to continue operations in Gaza and across the region beyond the end of February if funding did not resume.

UNRWA has been under financial strain for years. In January 2023, it appealed for [\\$1.6 billion in funding](#), saying its operations were at risk.

What Has Israel Said About UNWRA Over the Years

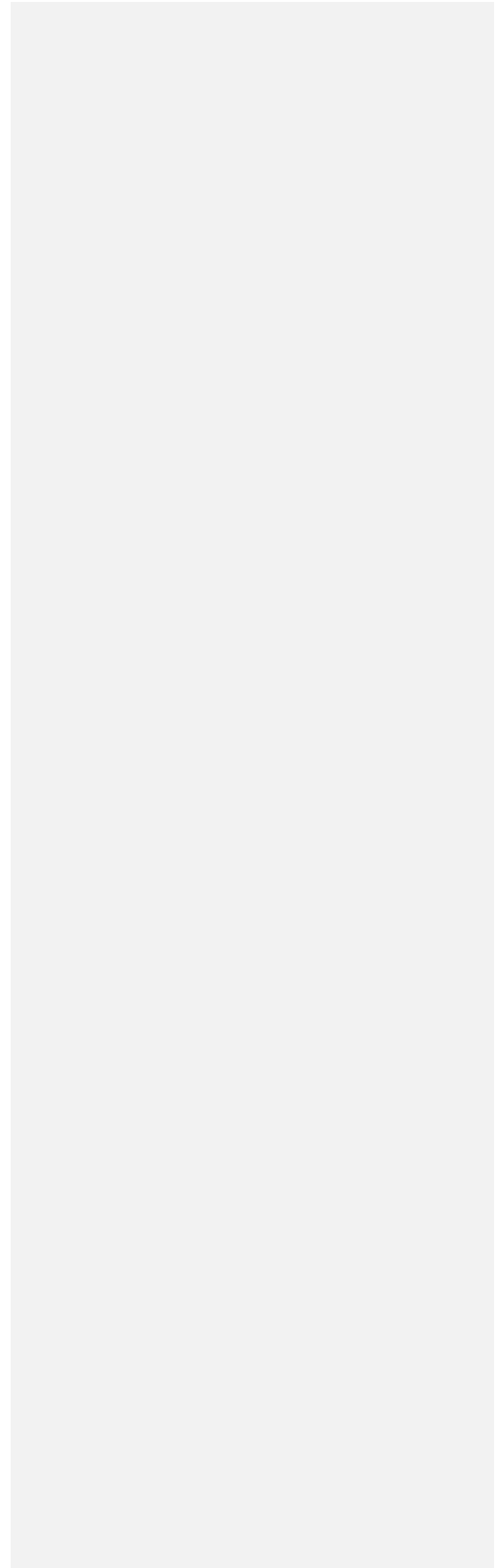
Israeli authorities have long called for the agency to be dismantled, arguing that its mission is obsolete and it fosters anti-Israeli sentiment among its staff, in its schools and in its wider social mission. UNRWA strongly disputes this characterisation.

UNRWA is "perforated with Hamas", Netanyahu said on Monday. "In UNRWA schools they've been teaching the doctrines of extermination for Israel - the doctrines of terrorism, glorifying terrorism, lauding terrorism".

[Netanyahu](#) has in the past called on the United States, Israel's top ally and the agency's biggest donor, to roll back its support. He praised the Donald Trump administration for defunding the agency.

UNRWA has also faced other controversies in the past. In 2019, the head of the agency resigned amid a [misconduct inquiry](#). In 2014, the head of the United Nations expressed alarm after [rockets](#) were found at a vacant UNRWA school and later went missing. Reporting by Gabrielle Tétrault-Farber Editing by Peter Graff

PART L
GENERAL



ARAB STATES ARE GIVING PALESTINIANS THE COLD SHOULDER – HERE'S WHY

Former U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker on why
Arab states won't accept Palestinians fleeing war.

Ryan Crocker warns that the current conflict between Israel and Hamas — and its potential resolution — depend on understanding the history from the Arab side, and the reluctance of other Arabs to come to the Palestinians' aid. | Ali Haider/AFP via Getty Images

[POLITICO](#), MICHAEL HIRSH 02/21/2024 05:00 AM EST

Michael Hirsh is the former foreign editor and chief diplomatic correspondent for Newsweek, and the former national editor for POLITICO Magazine.

Israel is poised to launch a ground operation in the city of Rafah on Gaza's border with Egypt, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees have fled in the four months since Israel began retaliating for the Hamas attack on Oct. 7, 2023. Some members of Israel's conservative government are now openly advancing the idea of expelling the Palestinian population from Gaza altogether.

If that were to happen, they would have nowhere in the Arab world to go, says former U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker. Despite public support for Palestinian rights, in truth nearly every Arab state has long viewed the Palestinians with "fear and loathing," Crocker says. This is especially true of Egypt, which will continue to refuse to admit Palestinians from across the border, he says.

Perhaps no American diplomat has seen more history unfold in the Middle East than Crocker. Dubbed "America's Lawrence of Arabia" by President George W. Bush, who awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Crocker spent nearly four decades representing America's interests in the Arab world, serving as U.S. ambassador to Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Kuwait, as well as to Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Now 74 and retired, Crocker was a survivor of the 1983 terrorist bombing of the U.S. embassy in Lebanon, which killed 64 people. He has watched up close as the Palestinian cause evolved from a guerrilla movement into a failed diplomatic bid for statehood in the 1990s and early 2000s, and finally into what has become a desperate struggle for survival under the Israeli onslaught today. And he warns that the current conflict between Israel and Hamas — and its potential resolution — depend on understanding the history from the Arab side, and the reluctance of other Arabs to come to the Palestinians' aid.

The following has been edited for length and clarity.

So far, Arab states have not permitted the resettlement of Palestinians in their territory. What's struck you most about their response to Israel's war in Gaza?

What's noteworthy in this entire conflict since Oct. 7 has been the lack of reaction or response from the Arab world. Saudi Arabia continues to hold the door open for a peace agreement with Israel. The UAE,

Morocco and Bahrain didn't even withdraw ambassadors. Jordan did, but of course with about half of its population being Palestinian, Jordan has a particular problem. That lack of reaction I think is very telling. If you needed another example that Arab states are not viscerally concerned about the Palestinians and their fate, this would be it.

The Biden administration is pushing hard to end the conflict by demanding that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu begin discussing a postwar settlement for the Palestinians, including a future state. In return, Saudi Arabia and other Arab states would help rebuild and continue normalizing relations with Israel. But if the Arab states are merely giving lip service to the Palestinian cause without caring much about it, that suggests that all Netanyahu would have to do is make the right noises about giving the Palestinians some autonomy, but not much more.

Correct?

I think you've got it exactly right. Netanyahu wouldn't have to do very much to put this back on track again, but I think it's unlikely he will do even that. [Netanyahu has refused to consider any negotiations over a Palestinian state.]

How far back does this history of Arab antipathy to the Palestinians go? If the Palestinians were forced out of Gaza, would anyone accept them?

They are truly a people without a land or a refuge anywhere. We've all seen the horror of Gaza, and that's overshadowed the nightmare of the West Bank, which is appalling in its own right. Then you look at the Palestinian diaspora, where they have had an existence of pure hell by and large. I was in Beirut at the time of the Israeli invasion [of Lebanon in 1982] and the [massacre at the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp](#) carried out by Lebanese forces. But it was just one of many massacres.

"The last thing the Arab states, particularly those around Palestine and Israel, wanted to see was an independent Palestinian movement, let alone a state," Ryan Crocker said.

[Tall al-Za'tar](#), the big Palestinian refugee camp in East Beirut, was besieged by Lebanese forces and reduced to rubble in the early days of the Lebanese civil war in 1975. And just three years after the Shatila massacre, in 1985, something started called the "War of the Camps." That was Lebanese Shia, backed by Syria and Iran, laying siege to the Shatila and Bourj el-Barajneh camps for almost three years with untold numbers of dead and wounded among the Palestinians. And the irony there of course is when you fast forward to today and the supposed Iranian support for Hamas and the Palestinian cause generally — well, not so much. It is a marriage of convenience. All part of Iran's larger strategy of exporting force beyond its borders with allies and proxies. We in the West do not remember the War of the Camps, but I assure you that the Iranians and Palestinians do. They understand there is no love in Tehran on the part of Ayatollahs for the Palestinians or their cause.

That's somewhat ironic considering that many American politicians and Israelis blame Iran for the Hamas attack.

I don't think the Iranians planned the Oct. 7 attack. In fact, I'd be confident that they didn't. But neither were they appalled or outraged. The fact that there is no ideological affinity in Iran for the Palestinian cause doesn't mean they don't use the Palestinians for horrific ends of their own.

Doesn't it all start after the Six Day War in 1967, when Arab leaders first recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization [the original group founded in 1964 to re-establish control over the land that became Israel], following the defeat by Israel and the fleeing of Palestinians from the West Bank?

The 1967 war and emergence of the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" was a watershed moment. Prior to that, the Palestinians in political terms were effectively a function of other Arab states and Arab militaries. You had the PLA, the Palestine Liberation Army, that was under command of other Arab states — Jordan and Syria in particular. So in a sense, you went from, say, 1947 and 1948 to 1967 without an independent Palestinian voice.

The trauma of '67 changed that, where the PLO did emerge as the voice of the Palestinians. And what reaction did you get from the other Arabs? Fear and loathing. The 1967 war forced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into exile following their brethren from the '48 war [over the founding of Israel]. Many of them wound up in Lebanon and Jordan. And in Lebanon they emerged as an entity that was increasingly independent of any Lebanese government control. ... In 1969, the Cairo accords effectively gave the Palestinians under the PLO virtual autonomy in areas where they were settled. They ran the camps and increasingly ran south Lebanon, and that of course was a precipitating factor for the 1982 Israeli invasion.

But getting back to the main point: The last thing the Arab states, particularly those around Palestine and Israel, wanted to see was an independent Palestinian movement, let alone a state.

Was this because the Arab regimes feared that the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs displaced by the creation of Israel in 1948 — known as the *Nakba* (Arabic for "catastrophe") — and then displaced again in 1967 would want to assume control of the territory of other Arab states?

Yes, in part. The *Nakba* of 1948 shook the legitimacy of Arab regimes. Seven Arab states declared war on the Zionists — and were decisively routed. Arab leaders feared the consequences of their failure in Palestine, both from elements within their own societies and from Palestinians themselves. ... But the fact that [Palestine Liberation Army] units were under the command of the Arab armies allowed them to keep control of Palestinian arms until the Six Day War. The 1967 war brought two dramatic changes: It ended dreams of the conquest of Israel by force of arms, and it gave rise to the PLO as a somewhat independent force. These combined to shift the fight for Palestinian control of territory to the Arab lands themselves — Lebanon in 1969 and Jordan in 1970.

That is what led to Black September, the 1970 PLO effort to overthrow the Jordanian monarchy. That failed not just because of the prowess of the Jordanian military but also because the Syrians withheld the air support for the Palestinians they had promised, and that allowed the Jordanians to win the day. That Syrian

air force was under command of a general named Hafez al-Assad [later ruler of Syria], whose hatred and fear of all things Palestinian was intense.

That was one of the many ironies of the Israeli invasion in 1982, in that Israel did serious work for Syria in dismantling the PLO structures in Lebanon and forcing the PLO to evacuate from Beirut.

Wasn't there once some actual support in parts of the Arab world for the Palestinian cause, which back then was still mostly secular, under the PLO? That's in contrast to the dominance today of Hamas, which is anathema to Egypt and the other Arab regimes because of its Muslim Brotherhood-inspired ideology.

It's a great point. One does tend to look back at the good old days with rose-colored glasses: Gee, if only we could resurrect secular Palestinian nationalism. But even that was seen as an existential threat to both Jordan and Syria. For both countries, the PLO was a threat that they dealt with in different ways, but for both it was their top national security concern. Everything else was secondary. I don't think we grasped that in the case of Syria.

The so-called Arab street [a term for public opinion in the Arab world] was behind the Palestinian cause, but it never really affected policy on part of any of the Arab governments. As you go around the region almost all [the Arab governments] were united on one point, which was that the Palestinians were a threat, a foreign population that should be weakened if not exterminated.

In Syria, you had the orchestration of a [campaign against the PLO](#), and in Jordan, and the same in Egypt. It is noteworthy there is no Palestinian population in Egypt. Going back to the days of [former Egyptian leader] Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Egyptians saw the threat. Again, the Palestinians contributed to their isolation through some spectacular acts like the [assassination of a Jordanian prime minister](#) in front of the Sheraton hotel in broad daylight in Cairo by two Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PLPF] gunmen, one of whom stooped down to drink the assassinated prime minister's blood.

Yasser Arafat was President of the Palestinian Authority from 1996 until his death in 2004. "Fatah [the largest faction of the PLO] and Arafat presented the greatest threat to Syria — their secular, nationalist ideology had broad appeal among Palestinians," Crocker said.

That is why Egypt just exploded when [U.S. Secretary of State] Tony Blinken proposed they give temporary sanctuary to Gazans. Again, there is an ideological overlay of enmity because of Hamas' Muslim Brotherhood affiliation, but the deep antipathy and fear on the part of the Egyptian government toward the Palestinians predates that by decades.

All in all, the Palestinians have been hamstrung by their so-called Arab brothers. That was a line I picked up in Lebanon — when someone calls you "brother," you know you've got to watch your back.

So you think there has been a fairly consistent policy by the Arab states all along — one of rhetorically supporting the "Palestinian cause" but rejecting, in practice, any prospect of Palestinian independence?

After the Khartoum summit [of Arab leaders following the Six Day War], rhetorical support for the PLO was the staple of Arab politics. Yet the actual practice of Arab governments vis-a-vis the Palestinians was exactly the opposite. Now in fairness, the fight then was about Palestinian control of other Arab lands, be it in Lebanon or Jordan, not about the Palestinians engaged in an existential struggle to establish their own state in the West Bank or Gaza. The Israelis were too formidable a power to make that even a possibility, so the fight took place outside of Israel and the Palestinian territories.

The Palestinians did get some refuge at various points, in places like Libya and Sudan, correct?

Well, in terms of Libya and Sudan, and the Palestinians, those two countries became destinations for PLO fighters who were evacuated from Beirut as part of the [Habib \[cease-fire\] agreement](#) [negotiated by U.S. envoy Philip Habib in 1981]. I was involved in that. The negotiations to find locations that would accept these Palestinian fighters — I don't know how we ever talked the Tunisians into accepting the PLO leadership. Some of the hardest parts of the entire diplomatic effort to end the fighting [in 1981] involved trying to find locations for the PLO leadership and its rank and file, because nobody wanted them. Those were extraordinarily tough talks. And again, it is noteworthy that the Syrians accepted none of them. We didn't even ask Jordan. So it was those countries farther afield, not directly involved in the conflict and without substantial Palestinian populations. Tunisia ended up with the headquarters. ... I think the Tunisians eventually accepted because they felt not having a Palestinian population meant they were not likely to be internally destabilized by it.

Given all your experience as ambassador in the region since you were first posted as political officer in Lebanon in 1982, reflect on your discussions with Washington about these issues. Did the American administrations get it?

I think we've missed the complexity of it, and the intensity. ... I don't think we understood in depth just how deeply rooted Syrian fear and antipathy toward the PLO and Palestinians really was. I don't think we really understood how deep the chasm was between Arab rhetoric supporting the PLO and the fear and loathing behind the mask. In the case of Syria, how Assad could manage an extreme anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian position ... with action on the ground that was decidedly anti-Palestinian. The Israelis certainly missed it as well.

Did that mean there were opportunities missed to get things right for the Palestinians? For example, the Camp David summit in 2000, when then Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat declined to make a deal for statehood?

There certainly were. I think a huge missed moment took place in 2000, but it wasn't with Arafat. It was the talks in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, between Ehud Barak and Farouk al-Sharaa, the Syrian foreign minister. I was ambassador to Syria at the time. ... I noticed a sea change in the Syrian government's attitude toward Israel. They were fascinated by the Israeli election campaign. I was called in to see Sharaa several times. He wanted to know my assessment: Could Barak pull this off? And then he was almost ecstatic with the results [of the Israeli election] when Barak won and signalled he would open peace talks with Syria. Albright put that idea to Assad and he accepted.

Those talks in January 2000 made amazing progress. We produced a draft peace agreement that Sharaa said he could work with. Barak said he needed a pause, so much was happening so fast, he needed to talk with the political class in Israel and [President Bill] Clinton let him go. Those talks never resumed because the draft peace agreement was leaked by the Israelis, to the embarrassment of the Syrians. And [Syrian leader Hafez] al-Assad was ill. He was motivated by the desire to hand his son a stable future in Syria, and he thought there was an opportunity. But with the clock running out on his own life — he was dead by early June — he shifted his thinking to abandoning the peace process and consolidating authority for Bashar [his son, current Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad] domestically.

That would have transformed the Middle East, because Iran stayed completely silent. The Iranians were determined not to destroy the relationship with Syria, which was strategically important to them. So Tehran would have tacitly accepted a peace agreement. It would have allowed Lebanon to step forward. And it would have finally given the Palestinians the freedom at the time, when the Oslo process was active, to make their own settlement with Israel.

How would an agreement with Syria have changed things for the Palestinians?

Fatah [the largest faction of the PLO] and Arafat presented the greatest threat to Syria — their secular, nationalist ideology had broad appeal among Palestinians. Assad used the PFLP and other [radical Palestinian] rejectionists to limit Arafat's freedom of maneuver. A Syrian-Israeli agreement would have removed this constraint, allowing Fatah greater freedom to pursue Palestinian-Israeli peace.

EXPLAINER: WHAT IS BEHIND THE PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTESTS AT US UNIVERSITIES?

Editors Note

These protests have appeared earlier, for example

Terrorist Hunter (2003) Anonymous Author. The extraordinary story of a woman who went undercover to infiltrate radical Islamic Groups operating in America (She was an Iraqi Jewess who had escaped from Iraq and infiltrated US groups financed by Saudi Arabia)

Wikipedia **Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP; طلاب من أجل العدالة في فلسطين)** is a pro-Palestinian college [student activism](#) organization in the United States, Canada and New Zealand. It has campaigned for [boycott and divestment against corporations that deal with Israel](#) and organized events about Israel's human rights violations. In 2011, *The New York Times* reported that "S.J.P., founded in 2001 at the University of California, Berkeley, has become the leading pro-Palestinian voice on campus."^[1] As of 2019, SJP had over 200 chapters at American and Canadian universities.^[2] Some SJP chapters in the U.S. have adopted the name **Palestine Solidarity Committee** or **Students for Palestinian Equal Rights**. In Canada, some SJP chapters have adopted the name **Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA)**, or **Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR)**.

REUTERS May 3 2024



A drone view shows demonstrators at a protest encampment in support of Palestinians, during the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington, U.S., May 2, 2024.

[Student protests](#) over the [war in Gaza](#) have swept the U.S. in [past weeks](#), with police clearing a number of encampments, at times after confrontations between protesters and counter-protesters; other tent protests dismantled after universities agreed to protesters' demands; and some demonstrations continuing.

HERE ARE DETAILS ON THE PROTESTS:**WHAT DO THE PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTESTERS WANT?**

Across campuses where protests have broken out, students have called for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza, an end to [U.S. military assistance](#) for Israel, university divestment from arms suppliers and other companies profiting from the war, and amnesty for students and faculty members who have been disciplined or fired for protesting.

The students are protesting Israel's offensive in Gaza, which it launched after a Hamas attack on Oct. 7 that Israel says killed 1,200 people. Israel has killed over 34,000 people in retaliation, according to Gaza health authorities.

WHO ARE THE PROTESTERS SUPPORTING PALESTINIANS?

Pro-Palestinian protests have drawn students, faculty and outside activists, including of Jewish and Muslim faiths. The groups organizing the protests include Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for peace.

The encampments have hosted a diverse array of teach-ins, interfaith prayers and musical performances.

Organizers have disavowed violence against pro-Israel counter-protesters, although some Jewish students have said they feel unsafe on campus and unnerved by chants they call antisemitic.

Some city leaders and university administrators have said activists from outside campus have co-opted or orchestrated protests. The University of Texas, Austin, for instance, said of the 79 people arrested on its campus on April 29, 45 had no affiliation with the university.

WHO ARE THE COUNTER PROTESTERS?

Campus counter protests have been led by Israeli American and Zionist groups as well as fellow students and Jewish-American community members.

Hundreds of people attended a counter rally at UCLA in Los Angeles organized by the Israel advocacy group the Israeli American Council. A Jewish student activist at UCLA posted video of himself being barred from an area of campus by pro-Palestinian protesters.

A scuffle broke out at the University of California, Berkeley on May 1 between the co-founder of Zionist group Students Supporting Israel and a pro-Palestinian protester.

At Arizona State University student counter protesters helped police dismantle a protest encampment on April 27. Hundreds of students at the University of Mississippi, some waving U.S. flags and banners supporting former President Donald Trump, chanted against pro-Palestinian protesters on May 2.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE RESPONSE FROM AUTHORITIES?

Some school administrators have called in local law enforcement to arrest protesters and clear camps and sit ins. Others have let camps operate or reached deals to end protests.

[Columbia sent in police](#) on April 18, a day after students set up a camp on the Manhattan campus. On April 30 police again raided the camp and a building occupied by students, making hundreds of arrests. President Minouche Shafik said the camp was an unauthorized protests that had made the campus "intolerable" for many Jewish students.

The University of California, Berkeley has allowed a pro-Palestinian camp so long as it does not disrupt campus operations and there is no threat of violence.

Northwestern University, Brown University and Rutgers University are among colleges that have reached deals to disband camps. Brown will hold a vote on possible divestment from firms connected with Israel. Rutgers agreed to set up an Arab cultural center and look into creation of a Middle East studies department.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT ON REGULAR CAMPUS LIFE?

Columbia has at times had to switch to all-virtual classes.

The University of Southern California [called off](#) its main-stage graduation ceremony after canceling the valedictorian speech by a Muslim student and dozens of arrests after police cleared a pro-Palestinian encampment.

California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, canceled in-person classes after students barricaded themselves in an administrative building.

The University of Michigan said it would allow free expression and peaceful protest at its early May [graduation ceremonies](#) but would stop "substantial disruption."

HOW ARE POLITICAL LEADERS RESPONDING?

Democratic President Joe Biden, who has been criticized by the protesters for [supplying funding](#) and weapons to Israel, told reporters on Thursday that Americans had the [right to demonstrate](#) but not to unleash violence.

Trump, the Republican candidate for the 2024 election, called the campus protests "[tremendous hate](#)" and said the April 30 [police raid on Columbia](#) "was a beautiful thing to watch."

ISRAELAM FOR TUESDAY MAY 7, 2024

ISRAELAM

The IDF has taken over the Rafah crossing on the Gaza side and is mounting targeted operations against terrorists in eastern Rafah.

The international media reported that Hamas accepted a ceasefire proposal and that Israel subsequently rejected it. In truth, Hamas accepted their own version of a proposal that was totally unacceptable to Israel and the U.S. They did not accept the deal proposed by Israel and supported by the U.S., that would release 33 Israeli hostages in exchange for a 6 week ceasefire and the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners. The result of the Hamas "acceptance" and the media coverage was that Israel comes out looking like the bad guy -- just like Hamas planned.

[Hamas clearly fired those rockets at the Kerem Shalom crossing on Sunday to draw Israel into mounting a full scale invasion of Rafah. By doing so they made it clear that they are not interested in a ceasefire or in releasing hostages. All they are interested in is to harm Israel by isolating it in the international community and making it into a pariah state -- and the easiest and quickest way for them to accomplish that is through an Israeli invasion of Rafah that leads to the deaths of thousands of civilians.

Israel has not launched a full scale invasion of Rafah. The IDF is currently just operating in a very limited and targeted manner, in order to be able to stop in the event that Hamas accepts a reasonable ceasefire proposal. Israel also wants to respect the demands of the Biden administration not to invade Rafah. But if Hamas continues to reject proposals and attack Israeli forces, Israel might have to move forward with a full push into Rafah to finish the job it started on October 8 -- the destruction of Hamas as a viable fighting force.]

The Biden administration is reportedly delaying a shipment of thousands of weapons to Israel. For more, [click here](#).

Drone attacks and racket barrages against Israel continue in the north. The air force is responding.

The IDF announced the names of 2 soldiers killed in a drone attack on Metula on Sunday:

- Major (res.) Dan Kamkagi, 31 years old, from Kfar Oranim, a fighter in patrol battalion 6551, half-fire formation (551).
- Major (res.) Nahman Natan Hertz, 31 years old, from Elazar, a fighter in patrol battalion 6551, half-fire formation (551).

PART M

PALESTINIANS REFUSED
CITIZENSHIP
BY ARAB COUNTRIES

SOME ARAB COUNTRIES THAT DO NOT ALLOW PALESTINIANS TO BECOME CITIZENS, ALONG WITH BRIEF EXPLANATIONS:

CLAUDE.AI

Here is a list of some Arab countries that do not generally allow Palestinians to become citizens

Lebanon: Palestinians in Lebanon are denied citizenship and many civil rights. This policy stems from the government's fear of upsetting the delicate sectarian balance in the country if Palestinians were naturalized.

1. **Libya:** Under Muammar Gaddafi's rule, Palestinians were prohibited from obtaining Libyan citizenship. This policy continues today largely due to concerns about altering the country's demographics.
2. **Syria:** While Palestinians have certain rights in Syria, they are denied citizenship. This is ostensibly to avoid being accused of attempting to resettle Palestinian refugees permanently.
3. **Kuwait:** Palestinians are viewed as "illegal residents" in Kuwait and are denied citizenship rights. This dates back to the 1991 Gulf War when many Palestinians were expelled for alleged support of Saddam Hussein.
4. **Saudi Arabia:** The Saudi government does not allow Palestinians to become citizens, likely because of concerns about demographic shifts and foreign policy considerations related to Israel.
5. **United Arab Emirates:** Palestinians cannot obtain Emirati citizenship under normal circumstances. Some exceptions have been made for Palestinian investors and skilled workers.
6. **Jordan:** Although Jordan has granted citizenship to many Palestinians over the years, large numbers remain stateless, particularly refugees from Gaza.

The common threads are fears about altering national demographics, sectarian tensions, and the desire not to be seen as resolving the Palestinian refugee issue permanently.

Human rights groups have criticized these citizenship policies.

**List with the approximate numbers of Palestinians
affected by lack of citizenship in each Arab country:**

1. **Lebanon:** An estimated 174,000 Palestinian refugees are denied citizenship.
2. **Libya:** Around 30,000-35,000 Palestinians were prohibited from obtaining Libyan citizenship under Gaddafi's rule.
3. **Syria:** There are around 438,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria denied citizenship rights.
4. **Kuwait:** Around 100,000 Palestinians were stripped of their rights and citizenship after the 1991 Gulf War.
5. **Saudi Arabia:** The Saudi government denies citizenship to around 250,000-280,000 Palestinians residing in the country.
6. **United Arab Emirates:** Approximately 10,000-15,000 Palestinians cannot obtain Emirati citizenship normally.
7. **Jordan:** Despite granting citizenship to many, Jordan still has around 2.2 million Palestinians, many of them denied citizenship, especially refugees from Gaza.

In total, the citizenship policies of these Arab nations have left over 3 million Palestinians across the region without citizenship rights and rendered stateless.

Human rights organizations have highlighted how this deprives Palestinians of basic rights and a dignified life in these host countries.

PART N

PEACE TREATY

