

ISRAEL - PALESTINIANS - TOGETHER THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

FOR
'JEWISH HISTORY IN THE PAST 2,000 YEARS'
GO TO

www.jewishwikipedia.info

CONTACT US
jewishwikipedia@gmail.com

SUMMARY



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.

Table of Contents

SUMMARY.....	1
The Story of Jewish History is Told in Our Two Websites.....	8
Why Have the Palestinian-Israeli Conflicted Since WW1?.....	9
.....	9
Most Read of 2021: “Israel” and “Palestine”: Where Should History Begin, and Should it Matter?	16
Inside the Tunnels of Gaza.....	20
Israel and Hamas Tunnels.....	43
‘Smart Bombs’ on Target at Air HQ Post : Arms: Lasers guided explosives with unprecedented accuracy, boosting role of U.S. technology.	46
Israel Targets Hamas’s Labyrinth of Tunnels Under Gaza	47
Why the Maze of Tunnels Under Gaza Is Key to the Israel-Hamas War	50
Israeli Troops Recover Bodies of Six Hostages in Gaza Tunnel.....	50
Inside the Gaza terror tunnel where hostages were held	50
ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR 2023-.....	51
Past Precedents for Muslim and Jewish Peace.....	52
Timeline: Key Events in the Israel-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.....	58
Early confrontation between the Arabs and Jews.....	61
THE HAMAS PREMISE	64
Israel’s bravery has exposed the lie at the heart of Starmer’s foreign policy.....	65
PART A INTRODUCTION	68
TIMELINE: KEY EVENTS IN THE ISRAEL-ARAB AND ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT	69
1897-1947: Pre-State Israel	69
1897: First Zionist Congress	70
1917: The Balfour Declaration.....	70
1920: The League of Nations Mandate	70
1920: Creation of the Haganah	71
1929: Hebron Massacre.....	71
1930s: The Arab Revolt.....	71
1936: Peel Commission	72
1939: White Paper	72
1947-1979: Arab-Israeli Wars and Peace Attempts.....	72
1947: UN Resolution 181	72
1948: Israel’s War of Independence.....	73
1956: Suez Crisis (Sinai War)	73
1964: Creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization	74
1967: Six-Day War	74
1972: Munich Olympics Massacre	75
1973: Yom Kippur War (October War).....	75
1979: Camp David Accords - Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel	76
1982-Present: Peace Process and Terrorism	76

1982: First Lebanon War.....	76
1987: First Intifada	76
1991: Madrid Peace Conference	77
1993: Oslo Accords.....	77
1994: Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty	78
1995: Assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin	78
2000-2005: Second Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada)	78
2005: Israel Withdraws from the Gaza Strip.....	79
2006: Second Lebanon War.....	79
2007: Hamas Takes Control of Gaza	80
2007: Annapolis Conference	80
2008-2009: Operation Cast Lead (Gaza War).....	81
2009-2010: Settlement Freeze.....	81
2012: Operation Pillar of Defense	81
2014: Operation Protective Edge	82
2020: Peace to Prosperity Plan.....	82
2021: May Conflict in Gaza	83
2022: August Operation in Gaza	83
Gaza War - Friendly and Opposite Countries to Israel	89
Countries Support to Hamas	91
Yemen, Iraq, and Israel with Focus on the Red Sea	95
Why did British double dealing create double dealing between the Arabs and Jews in Palestine?	100
Yemini: Jewish 'nakba' was worse than the Arab	101
Jews, Muslims, and an "Origin Story" of the Arab-Israeli Conflict	102
The expulsion of Jews from Arab countries and Iran – an untold history.....	110
Arabs don't all stand with Hamas	113
Generations of Palestinian Refugees Face Protracted Displacement and Dispossession	116
The Road to October 7: Hamas' Long Game, Clarified	124
'The Haj' by Leon Uris HELPS to Understand ARAB Conflict. Land, Life and Development	139
Israel-Hamas War October 2023-	140
The October 7, 2023, attack.....	142
December 2023–January 2024: pressure mounts for a cease-fire	145
February–April 2024: invasion of Rafah looms	146
May–June 2024: Rafah invasion, Operation Arnon, and pressure for a cease-fire	146
22 July Israeli air strikes target Houthi port, Yemen Swords of Iron	149
WHY BEING 'TOGETHER' IS SO IMPORTANT	154
POPULATION OF THE REGION OF PALESTINE.....	157
From the Early Ottoman Period	157
The Demographics of Israel	160
Demographics of the State of Palestine.....	161
JEWISH BIOGRAPHIES, BOOKS, PIRATES, NAMES and OTHER LINKS	162
WHY TEACH THE HOLOCAUST WHICH HAPPENED ABOUT 80 YEARS AGO?	163
PALESTINIAN BIOGRAPHIES	166
Amin al-Husseini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem after 1920	166
Yasser Arafat	168
Ismail Haniyeh	171

Mahmoud Abbas.....	174
SEARCHING FOR TEXT	180
PART B VIDEOS	181
Videos - Overview	182
Oct. 7 2023:.....	182
Documentation of Crimes Against Humanity	182
Videos – Gaza and Hamas	192
Videos – Lebanon and Hezbollah	199
Videos – Islamic Jihad	207
Videos – Gaza Tunnels	208
Videos – Golan Heights	212
Videos – West Bank.....	214
Videos - Yemen	216
Videos – Teaching Palestinian Children	219
Videos – IRAN.....	221
Videos - UNWRA.....	224
Beneath UNRWA HQ in Gaza	224
Hillel Neuer testifies before U.S. Congress on UNRWA and the Colonna Report ...	225
Hamas command room inside UNRWA HQ in Gaza; IDF finds drone, weapons caches and more	226
<p>IDF troops have located weapons and a command room used by Hamas at UNRWA's headquarters in Gaza City. The troops raided the compound on July 08 following intelligence indicating Hamas' presence inside the UNRWA HQ in Gaza City. The UNRWA HQ has not been in use in recent months. The IDF raided the compound earlier this year, discovering a major Hamas tunnel network that passed beneath it. In the latest operation, the IDF said the commandos captured Hamas operatives who attempted to flee the UNRWA facility. Commando Brigade troops also found parts of Hamas drone, a command room used to observe Israeli forces and dozens of weapons, including rockets, machine guns, mortars, explosive devices, grenades and drones that drop bombs. In a nearby university building, the IDF said the commandos located an underground bomb-making lab and additional weapons.....</p>	
UN Head ADMITS Hamas Tunnels Built Under UN Buildings!	226
PART C THE JEWISH/PALESTINIAN STORY	227
The Creation of Palestine.....	228
Origins and Evolution of Zionism	231
Land Ownership in Palestine, 1880–1948	238
The Rohr Jewish Learning Institute Moshe Aumann	238
The British Mandate in Palestine	248
What Is <i>Aliyah</i> ?.....	250
The Arab World has Forsaken the Palestine Cause.....	254
PART D THE CREATION OF ISRAEL	257
UN Partition of Palestine, 1947	258

Palestinian Refugees.....	259
Jewish Exiles from Arab Countries to Israel	260
Displacement of Jews from Arab Countries 1948-2012	261
How Arabs stole Jewish property	262
What to Know About the Arab Citizens of Israel	265
Palestine Refugee Camps.....	271
Arab League Boycott of Israel	272
Zionism and Judaism: Are they Independent?.....	274
What's the Difference Between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism?	275
PEACE TREATY and ATTEMPTED PEACE TREATIES between Israel and Others.....	278
Abraham accords	279
PART E STATE OF PALESTINE	284
STATE OF PALESTINE.....	285
Who is a Refugee?.....	287
Do Palestinians have the lowest standard of living in the world?.....	289
PART F WARFARE AFFECTING ISRAEL BEFORE GAZA	300
Judea and Israel Major Wars and Other Conflicts After Their Destruction and Resurrection After 2000 Years	301
The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).....	304
The Six Day War led Jerusalem and the West Bank to becoming Occupied By Israel	305
The Oslo Accords	306
The Intafada, 1987-1993	308
PART G EFFECT ON ISRAEL AND GAZA OF WARFARE AFTER HAMAS' ELECTION IN 2006	309
British Control of Gaza	310
Gaza, Dispute for Control between Fatah and Hamas	312
Fatah-Hamas Conflict.....	314
Palestinian Rocket Attacks on Israel FROM 2000	315
2008-9 Gaza War	319
2012 Israeli Operation in the Gaza Strip.....	319
2014 Gaza War.....	319
2021 Israel–Palestine Crisis.....	319
2023 Hamas-Led Attack on Israel	321
Israel Gaza War: History of the Conflict Explained	322
Why are Israel and Gaza at war now?	328
Who supports who in the Israel-Hamas war?	328
Hamas, Fatah Sign Declaration on Plans to Seek Joint Government; Israel Slams Fatah	330
Hamas Leaders Worth Staggering \$11Billion Revel in Luxury – While Gaza's People Suffer	332
Israel Faces 'Long, Difficult War' After Hamas Attack From Gaza.....	337
More on Israel-Gaza attacks	338
PART H GAZA AND HAMAS.....	341

Gaza Strip.....	342
A Brief History of Gaza's 75 Years of Woe.....	348
Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and the irredentist demand that Israel be destroyed	351
The Enduring Legacy of Islamic Imperialism	356
Hamas: The Palestinian militant group that rules Gaza	356
Gaza Strip in maps: How life has changed	360
The dilemma of rebuilding Gaza without rearming Hamas	371
A phoenix' and a 'magical city': How residents remember Gaza before the war	376
Israel's bravery has exposed the lie at the heart of Starmer's foreign policy.....	381
Doctrine of Hamas – the Islamists	384
What is Hamas	387
Hamas: Words and Deeds.....	396
There Are No Civilians In Gaza.....	397
Why is Hamas Classed as a Terrorist Group?	400
Hamas Diplomacy: From Haniyeh to Sinwar	402
Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	406
GAZA'S UNDERGROUND: Hamas's entire politico-military strategy rests on its TUNNELS	412
Israel Targets Hamas's Labyrinth of Tunnels Under Gaza	415
Gaza's Underground: Hamas's Entire Politco-Military Strategy Rests on its Tunnels	420
Use of Human Shields by Hamas	423
Hamas officials admit its strategy is to use Palestinian civilians as human shields -V E R Y I M P O R T A N T	424
Israeli Forces Seize Rafah Border Crossing in Gaza, Putting Cease-fire Talks on Knife's Edge.....	426
The IDF Has Taken Over the Rafah Crossing on the Gaza Side.....	429
PART I HEZBOLLAH	430
What Is Hezbollah?	431
The Third Lebanon War between Israel and Hezbollah has begun. What's next?	438
New Atlanticist Alex Plitsas September 23 2024	438
The Coming Conflict with Hezbollah	440
Hezbollah's Struggle Against Israel.....	442
Hezbollah: What weapons does it have?	448
A visual guide.....	448
Analysis: Hassan Nasrallah's killing transforms an already deadly regional conflict.....	451
Warring with shadows	453
Why Israel-Hezbollah tensions risk boiling over now	456
War with Israel would deepen Lebanon's myriad crises.....	460
West Bank Settler Population Grew by Nearly 3% in 2023 — Report.....	462
PART K UNWRA and UNHCR	464
Government Donors to UNWRA	465

Creation of UNWRA	466
UNWRA and the Jews	467
UNWRA Has Changed the Definition of “Refugee”	469
Is UNWRA’s Hereditary Refugee Status for Palestinian’s Unique ?	471
UNWRA SEMI-STATE INSTITUTION	474
UNWRA Comparison With Up-to-Date Reactions	477
UNHCR	481
Global Forced Displacement	482
Internally Displaced People (IDPs)	483
Global Trends 2022	485
The Differences Between UNWRA and UNHCR	499
Understanding the Palestinian Phrase "From the Sea to the River"	504
Definition of Jewish and Palestinian Refugees	506
Why Some Countries Have Suspended Its UNWRA Funding?	508
PART L GENERAL	510
Arab States are Giving Palestinians the Cold Shoulder – Here’s Why	511
Explainer: What is Behind the Pro-Palestinian Protests at US Universities?	517
IsraelAM for Tuesday May 7, 2024	520
PART M PALESTINIANS REFUSED CITIZENSHIP BY ARAB COUNTRIES	521
Arab Countries Who Do Not Allow Palestinians to Become Citizens	522
PART N PEACE TREATY	527

THE STORY OF JEWISH HISTORY IS TOLD IN OUR TWO WEBSITES

The first, jewishwikipedia.info covers 2000 years

*The second jewishwikipedia.info/ottoman-palestine-israel.pdf
covers the past 100+ years.*

World War One saw the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Britain accepted the League of Nations Mandate coastal area

to the south of Syria to be known as Palestine

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

The British Mandate came to an end shortly after World War 2

and the new state of Israel was created in 1948

The two biggest groups in Palestine were the Arabs and the Jews.

TO UNDERSTAND THE BELIEFS
OF PALESTINIAN CHILDREN AS THEY GREW OLDER

Go to

[VIDEOS – TEACHING PALESTINIAN CHILDREN](#)

WHY HAVE THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICTED SINCE WW1?

THE MYSTERY OF THE JEWS

[simpletoremember.com](https://www.simpletoremember.com) 13 Jan 2015 20min 52sec

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 ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT explained ON A MAP

[Geo History](#) 18 May 2024 33min45sec (see transcript)

HOW BRITAIN STARTED THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

[Free Documentary History](#)

3 Mar 2021 52min 35sec

The bitter struggle between Arab and Jew for control of the Holy Land has caused untold suffering in the Middle East for generations. It is often claimed that the crisis originated with Jewish emigration to Palestine and the foundation of the state of Israel. Yet the roots of the conflict are to be found much earlier – in British double-dealing during the First World War. This is a story of intrigue among rival empires; of misguided strategies; and of how conflicting promises to Arab and Jew created a legacy of bloodshed which determined the fate of the Middle East.

HOW THE FIRST WORLD WAR CREATED THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICTS

[The Great War](#)

8 Dec 2023 23min 26sec

The modern Middle East is a region troubled by war, terrorism, weak and failed states, and civil unrest. But how did it get this way? The map of today's Middle East was mostly drawn after the First World War, and the war that planted many of the seeds of conflict that still plague Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Syria and even Iran today.

PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

PART I: TO 1949

[Henry Abramson](#)

19 Nov 2023 29min 10sec

PART II: 1949 – 1993

[Henry Abramson](#)

26 Nov 2023 31min 29sec

PART III: FROM OSLO TO OCTOBER 7 2023

[Henry Abramson](#)

3 Dec 2023 30min 59sec

There is a lot to learn about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—that's why we have DOZENS of 5-Minute Videos devoted to the topic.

PART 1

[PRAGER U](#)

10 Oct 2023 58min 58sec

PART 2

[PRAGER U](#)

1hour 5min 3sec

Most Read of 2021: “Israel” and “Palestine”: Where Should History Begin, and Should it Matter?

Some Proposals for the future of Gaza after Hamas has been replaced

PROPOSAL 1 The Future of Gaza (COUNCIL OF FOREIGN RELATIONS)

A new proposal for the future of Gaza urges formation of an International Trust for Gaza Reconstruction. Blog Post by Elliott Abrams March 8, 2024

The Gaza situation got a lot of attention in the State of the Union speech. I was part of a group that spent several months—with two visits to Israel and one to Saudi Arabia, many meetings in both places, and about one hundred zoom meetings with U.S., Israeli, Palestinian, Saudi, Emirati, civilian, military, and security officials—devising a Gaza plan.

Called the *Gaza Futures Task Force* and formed by JINSA and the Vandenberg Coalition, we have published *The Day After: A Plan for Gaza* and it can be found

here: <https://vanderbergcoalition.org/the-day-after-a-plan-for-gaza/>.

Our five-page action plan can be found here: <https://vanderbergcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/The-Day-After-A-Plan-for-Gaza-Action-Plan.pdf>.

Very briefly, the plan calls for establishment of an *International Trust for Gaza* that would funnel funding for humanitarian relief and reconstruction, oversee deradicalization in Gaza, and undertake most governmental functions including provision of security. How will it do that? I urge you to look at the Plan and then the full report.

A brief comment on the President’s proposal that the United States assist with a maritime aid plan with a route from Cyprus to Gaza: it’s a good idea, and has been discussed for months. It will help increase the amount of aid arriving, and usefully take pressure off both Egyptian and Israeli supply routes.

But there is a huge problem, one that the President did not even address: what happens when the aid arrives in that new port? Who receives it? Who distributes it? The President suggested no plan, nor even ideas, for establishing security in Gaza. Unless he does, the kind of anarchy we see now in Gaza, including attacks on aid convoys, will only grow. He should read the Gaza Futures Task Force Report and Plan.

PROPOSAL 2. Five Alternatives for the Future of Gaza

Col. (res.), Shay Shabtai June 24, 2024

BESA Center Perspectives Paper No. 2,287, June 24, 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: In this article I will present five alternatives for the future of Gaza. Israel's long-term strategy to ensure its continued existence entails the accomplishment of these goals: destruction of Hamas's military capabilities, abolition of Hamas control in Gaza, and the preservation of good relations with the United States. Less core strategic considerations are the return of the abductees, the crisis on the northern front, relations within the region, and Israel's legitimacy. The alternatives for Gaza's future are: the Hamas option, which is the most problematic; the revitalized Palestinian Authority option; the military-civilian option, which seems the most balanced; the chaos option; and the sovereignty option, which is also very problematic. It is essential to conduct a far-reaching discussion on all these alternatives and to avoid attachment to any one of them.

Discussions about the future of Gaza are being conducted in isolation, without comparative discourse, and the political dimension is causing opinions to harden rather than remain open and flexible. Thus, for example, the head of the INSS Institute wrote on May 29 that "An alternative civil address in Gaza [is] the need of the hour" and opened with the words "There is no time," while Gabi Siboni from the Mishgav Institute said on May 24 that "We need to enter the Strip and take control of all humanitarian aid in Gaza." And so on.

There are several alternatives for the future of Gaza, and in this article I will present five of them. A choice will be made through a comparative discussion of their costs and benefits. Constructive strategic planning creates maximum flexibility for decision makers, and optimal conduct would be to implement close alternatives that all serve Israel's strategic goals.

Before presenting the options, we must define the Israeli goals and interests according to which they will be examined. I propose that Israel's goals and interests should be prioritized thus:

Destroying Hamas's military capability: This is the key strategic need. Israel's long-term position in the region depends on its delivering the clear message that anyone who carries out a criminal attack like that of October 7 will, at the very least, lose their military capabilities and their ability to harm Israel for a very long time.

Abolition of Hamas control in Gaza: Following on from the first consideration, Israel must strive to ensure that any party – especially a terrorist organization – that carries out murderous attacks against Israel will lose its rule and its leaders their lives. Between the statement that it is impossible to eliminate an idea, especially a radical one, and the statement that the existence of Hamas in any form, including a civilian one, should be protested, there are many shades of possibility, a significant one of which should be the abolition of Hamas control.

Relations with the United States: Every alternative should take into account the strategic need to maintain good relations with the United States over time. This is a complex consideration against the background of American domestic politics. There can be disagreements, even difficult ones, with the American administration, but Israeli insistence on its positions should be part of a healthy relationship between the countries despite occasional extreme asymmetry. An Israel that pleases the Americans time

and time again will lose its position in the United States. With that said, however, it is important to respect American global interests and help to promote them.

The return of the abductees: This is an important issue, but as it is not an existential necessity, it does not meet the same level of importance as the previous considerations. The return of the abductees is a matter of moral and value considerations but not strategic ones. The reality is that there is no scope for a comprehensive deal with Hamas because Sinwar's personal fate depends on his holding the hostages. He will continue to hold them as long as possible until he has another survival option. Efforts to return the abductees through operational means or through local deals should be continued in every way.

The issue of the northern front and dealings with Iran: This consideration is also complex. Hezbollah has said it will not stop firing on the north and will not allow the return of the displaced residents without the cessation of fighting in Gaza. But for Israel, the cessation of fighting in Gaza without the achievement of its objectives against Hamas would represent serious damage to its deterrence against it and against Iran. This is an impasse that can be resolved with either a wider-scale war, which would severely damage Hezbollah's capabilities; or an informal arrangement that Nasrallah can present as an achievement or as a "non-cessation" of the fighting while the war in Gaza continues. Because of this impasse, this consideration has been relegated to a relatively low place, though in principle it is more fundamental.

Approaching the moderate regional countries, with an emphasis on Saudi Arabia: The war in Gaza, the escalation with Iran, and the incessant Houthi attacks only strengthen the region's understanding of the need to join forces with Israel. While the delay in implementation stems from public opinion and American interests, it seems that it will eventually continue, and Israel's continued military achievements against Hamas strengthen the likelihood that it will come to fruition. This consideration, therefore, has less influence on the choice between the alternatives.

The issue of Israel's legitimacy: In this area there is a gap. While in the short and medium term Israel's legitimacy is under pressure from international institutions, in the long term, the gap – if not the abyss – between the false and politicized accusations against Israel and the actual situation on the ground will be revealed. Although the war is creating negative images, it is one of the "cleanest" wars in history in terms of the proportion of combatants to civilians killed and the amount of humanitarian aid entering Gaza. Therefore, despite the need to continue to fight resolutely and place the blame for the consequences on Hamas, in choosing alternatives, this is a less influential concern.

There are second-order considerations. These include resources (the economic cost of each option); legal (Israel's obligations towards Gaza within the framework of international law and how they are realized); and social (the impact on each option on national resilience, though in my view this is included in each consideration). It would be better for these considerations to affect the means of carrying out the preferred option and less the actual choice.

Now that the seven main considerations have been defined, the five alternatives can be defined and examined:

The Hamas alternative: In this option, the fighting in Gaza stops and the IDF withdraws from it in exchange for the release of the abductees and the cessation of fighting in the north. A militarily weakened Hamas returns to control the Strip. This option is being promoted by some of the families of abductees and several opposition elements to the government, and the American administration may also support it for internal political reasons. In examining this choice against the balance of considerations, it is clear that while it might achieve the release of the abductees and the cessation of fighting in the north and might be perceived as a good move in terms of relations with the United States, it would substantially harm Israel's core strategic need to destroy Hamas's military capacity and abolish its control in Gaza. The notion that this option would lead to a comprehensive solution to the issue of the abductees and the Hezbollah challenge is questionable. It is more likely that the fighting would resume under less favorable conditions for Israel.

The revitalized Palestinian Authority alternative: In parallel with continued military damage to the military capabilities of Hamas and its government, a governmental and security alternative would be built that would include a revitalized Palestinian Authority with the integration of local elements and the backing and involvement of a coalition of Arab and Western countries. This "nation-building" alternative is being promoted by the United States and European countries in apparent collaboration with Arab countries, as well as by elements in Israel who give too much weight to the official American position. This option promotes American and possibly regional considerations (it is too early to say whether the Arab position is real or the artificial product of American pressure), but there is a big question mark over how much it would be able to provide a real answer to the core considerations of harming Hamas and preventing its re-establishment. It also provides no broad response to the issues of the abductees and the challenge in the north.

The military-civilian alternative: In this option, Israel continues to hit the Hamas organization, both in its military capabilities and in its governance, until it is sufficiently weakened to allow local Palestinian elements to replace it on the ground, with considerable regional and international backing. This alternative is being promoted by Prime Minister Netanyahu and is reflected in key components of the cabinet's decisions. This option provides a good answer to the core considerations of harming Hamas, and might even be tacitly accepted by the Americans and Arab and international actors. It does not, however, provide a solution to the problems of freeing the abductees and the fighting in the north.

The "chaos" alternative: Here, Israel continues to strike at the Hamas organization, both in its military capabilities and in its governance, and at the same time allows local, regional and international parties to create governmental alternatives on the ground that may mature into a comprehensive governmental alternative. This option was given expression in the opinion that called (at least at the beginning of the war) for the "Somalization" of Gaza, meaning a kind of supervised, partially independent nation-building. This alternative would allow Israel to define what would not happen and others to decide what is possible. It provides a good answer to Israel's core considerations in terms of Hamas, but would be difficult for the Americans and the regional and international actors to digest. It also does not solve the problems of the abductees and the north.

The sovereignty alternative: Israel imposes a total military government on Gaza, applies its full military and security control over the Strip, and perhaps occupies and even annexes parts of it. This option is being promoted by the right wing of the government. While it provides a good answer to the core considerations in terms of Hamas and might even bring gains on the issue of the abductees, it would make relations with the United States as well as other considerations very difficult.

The alternatives for the future of Gaza clearly entail a complex discussion. It is likely possible to move between alternatives and merge them according to developments. As of today, the option that best balances Israel's considerations is the military-civilian one. The most problematic are the Hamas option and the sovereignty option. It is appropriate and correct to continue a complex comparative discussion on Israel's considerations and the alternatives to achieve them and to avoid perceptual and political attachment to any one of them.

PROPOSAL 3 GAZA FUTURES TASK FORCE (The Vandenberg Coalition, JINSA)

Observations and Action Proposal: The International Trust for Gaza Reconstruction

On October 7, Hamas, as the de facto government of Gaza, launched a war against Israel; but this war also arises from a broader program of Iranian regional aggression. With great determination, the Iranian regime disrupts peace in pursuit of its goals of driving the United States from the Middle East, destroying Israel, and asserting Iranian hegemony. **To this end, the Iranian regime provides** arms, training, funding, and direction to terrorist armies across the region, intimidates or seeks to overthrow legitimate regional leaders and governments, and actively seeks the extinction of the UN-recognized state of Israel. **Any “day after” or post-war scenario must consider:**

- 1) restoring the deterrence and security needs of Israel**, both for its own people and its standing as a powerful regional ally and essential component of resisting Iran's ambitions;
- 2) dismantling Hamas as a military and governing force and protecting against its reconstitution** through Israel's continued freedom of action against it and against Palestinian Islamic Jihad; and by de-militarizing, de-radicalizing, and improving conditions in Gaza such that major terrorist attacks like October 7 can't and won't happen again;
- 3) drawing upon and empowering Gazans** dedicated to a peaceful future;
- 4) recognizing a political horizon** and thus securing essential participation and support from the United States and its most powerful and influential Arab partners; and
- 5) countering more generally Iran's aggressive campaign** to derail regional peace efforts, including by constraining the threat posed by Hezbollah and resuming progress toward normalizing Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The Israeli and Palestinian people deserve a better life than what Hamas – aided by outside forces – forced upon Gaza: serving as human shields protecting Iranian-backed aggression. The region

deserves a better future than Iran strives to impose on others. Restoring a realistic path to a two-state solution can be a part of that better Gazan and regional future and a longterm political horizon for two states should be recognized. In order to move to such a political horizon, the first steps must be reconstruction of Gaza and revamping of the Palestinian Authority (the "PA").

(Go to [GAZA FUTURES TASK FORCE FOR REMAINDER OF LINK](#))

MOST READ OF 2021: "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 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.

This article originally published on 19 June 2021. It is one of the top ten most read articles published in Australian Outlook in 2021.

[Dr Daniel Miller](#) is Chair of the Dept. of Religion, Society and Culture at Bishop's University in Sherbrooke (Quebec), Canada. He received his PhD in Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan. His areas of

academic interest are Canaanite-Israelite cultic practices, ancient West Semitic magic and, more recently, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. He has taught courses in Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), comparative world religions, politics and religion, ancient Near Eastern magic and divination, apocalypticism, New Religious Movements and Biblical Hebrew.

This article is published under a Creative Commons License and may be republished with attribution.

INSIDE THE TUNNELS OF GAZA

IMPORTANT – GO TO [REUTERS](#) TO SEE FULL GRAPHICS

[REUTERS](#) [Adolfo Arranz](#), [Jonathan Saul](#), [Stephen Farrell](#), [Simon Scarr](#) and [Clare Trainor](#)

Dec 31 2023

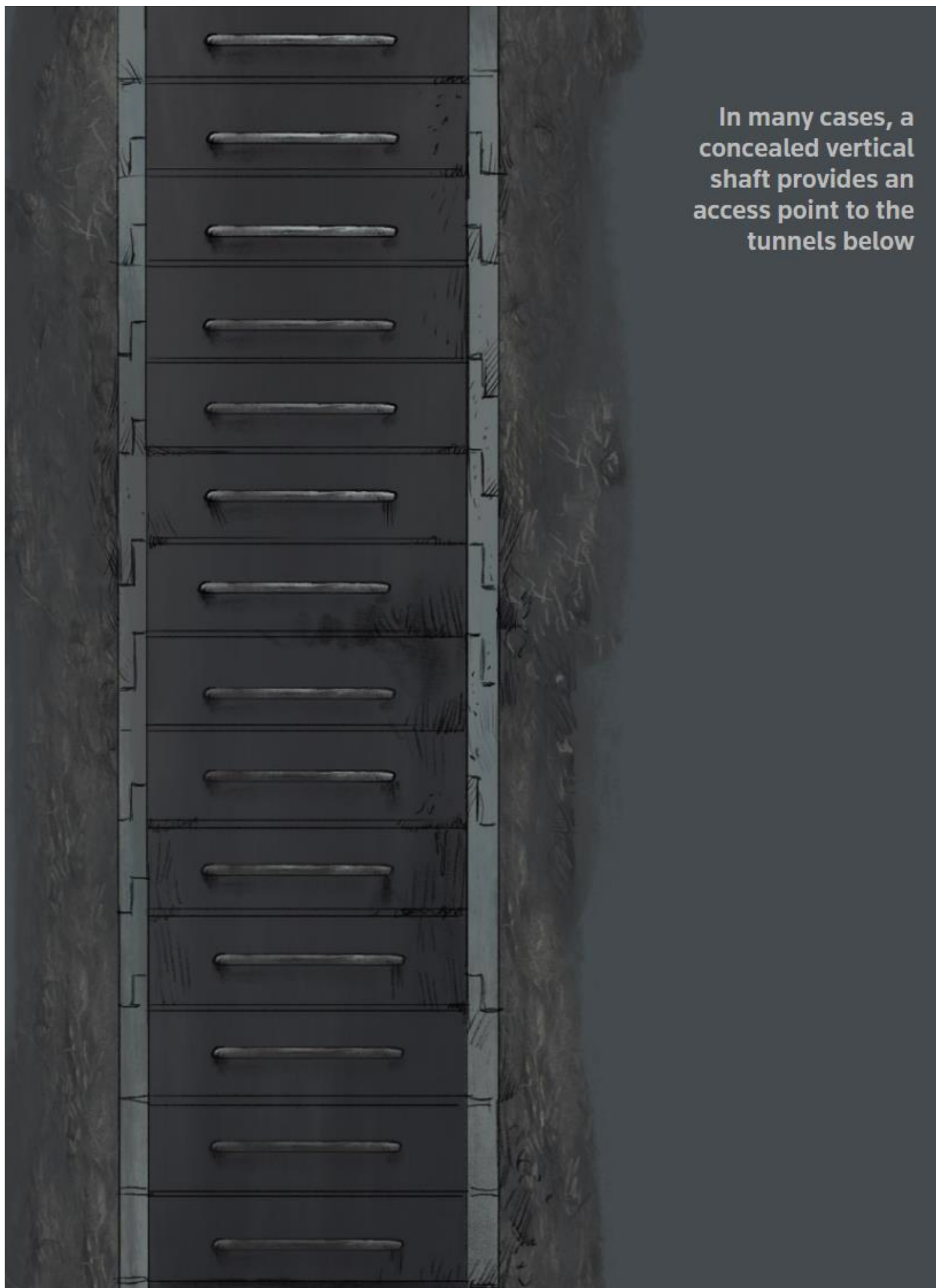


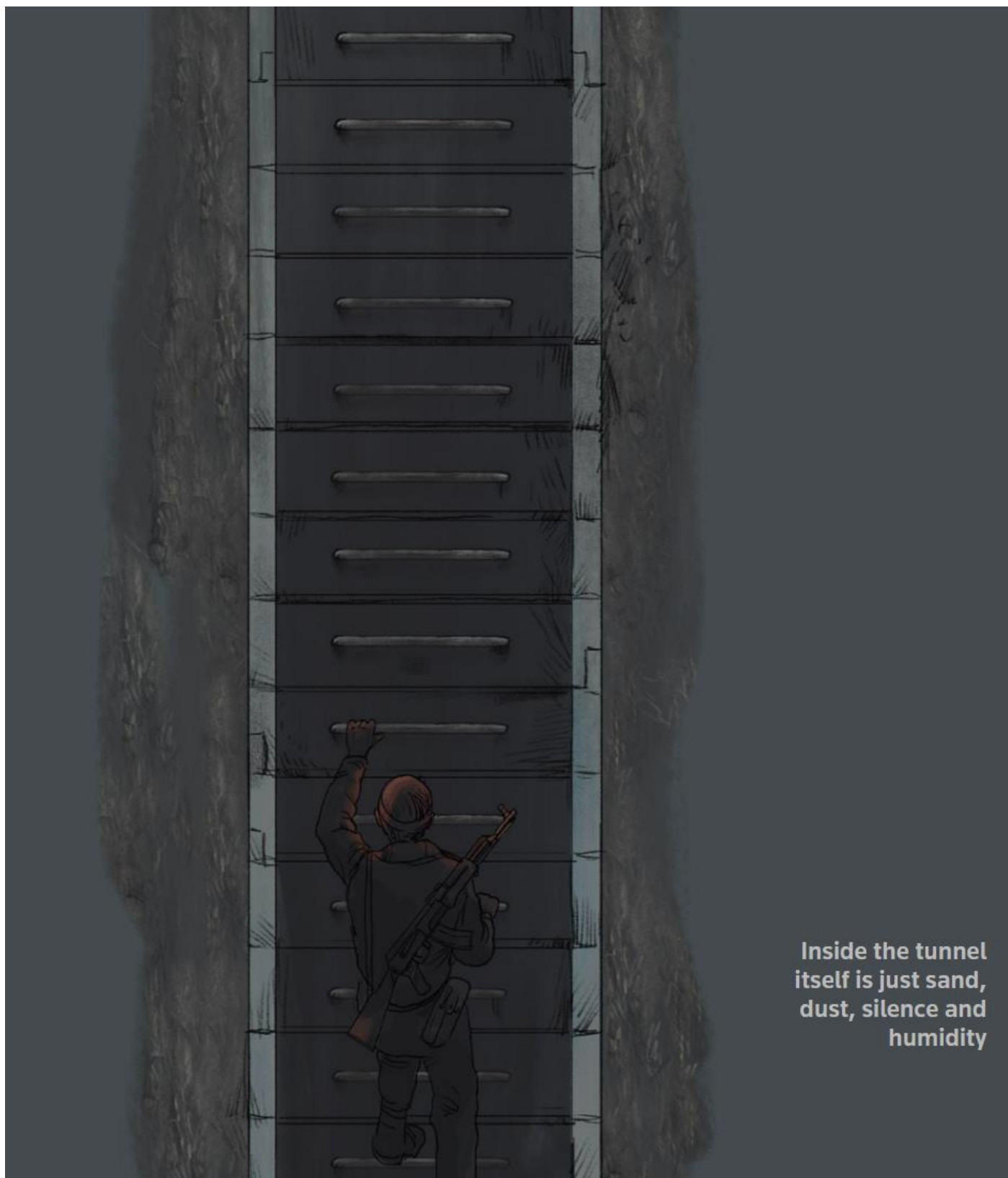


Beneath the warscape of Gaza City lies a vast network of tunnels built by the Palestinian militant group Hamas. Some entrance shafts are hidden among what remains of the city's multi-storey buildings, ravaged by Israeli air strikes. Others are concealed in sandy dunes outside the city. Or tucked away in private homes. They lead to a warren of interconnecting passages that stretches below Gaza's streets, extending for hundreds of miles into almost every area of the enclave.

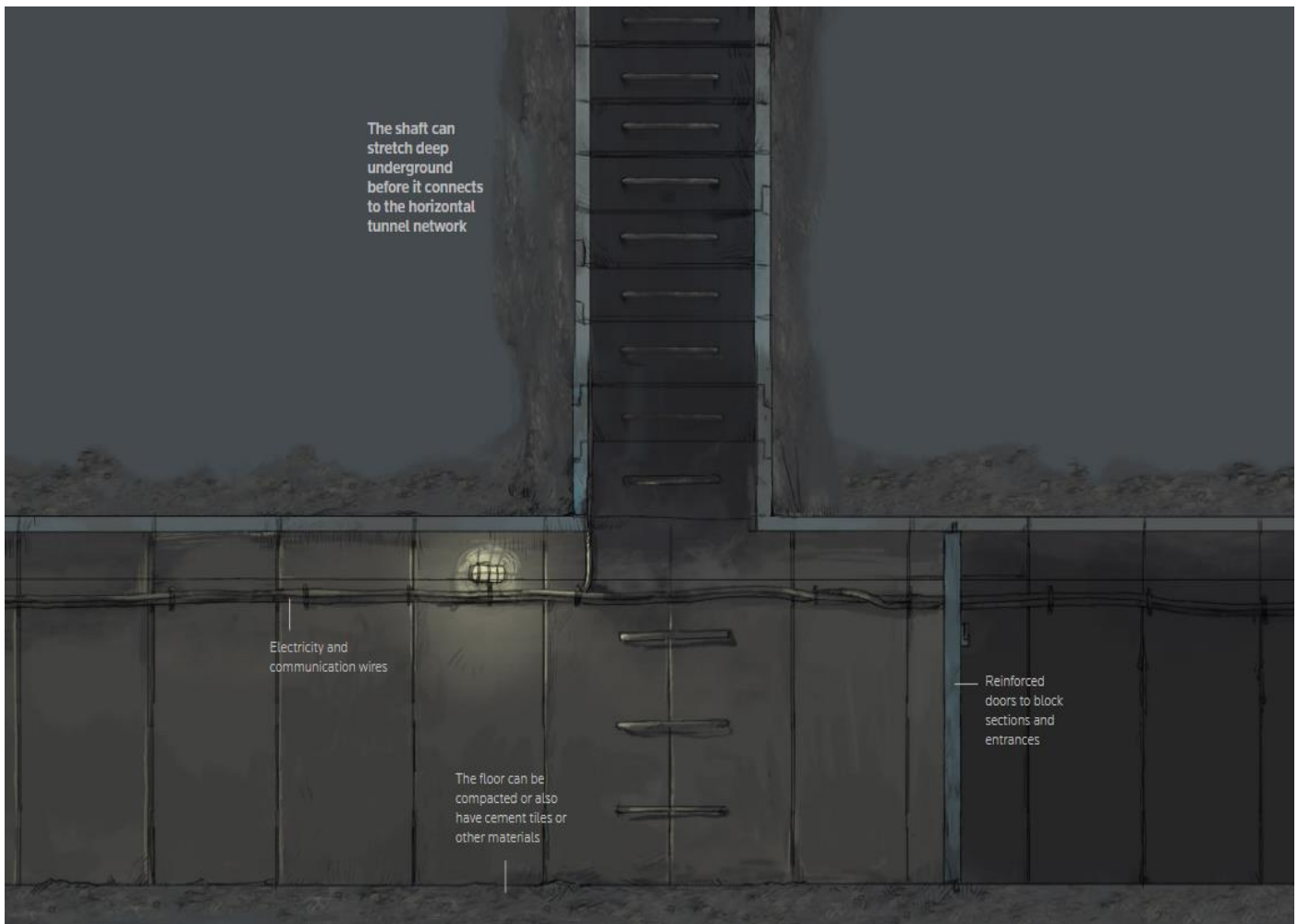
Reuters spoke to seven military experts and officials, and drew on its own reporting on the ground in Gaza, as well as descriptions and images from Hamas and the Israeli military, to piece together a picture of the scale and sophistication of the tunnel network







Inside the tunnel
itself is just sand,
dust, silence and
humidity



THE GAZA METRO

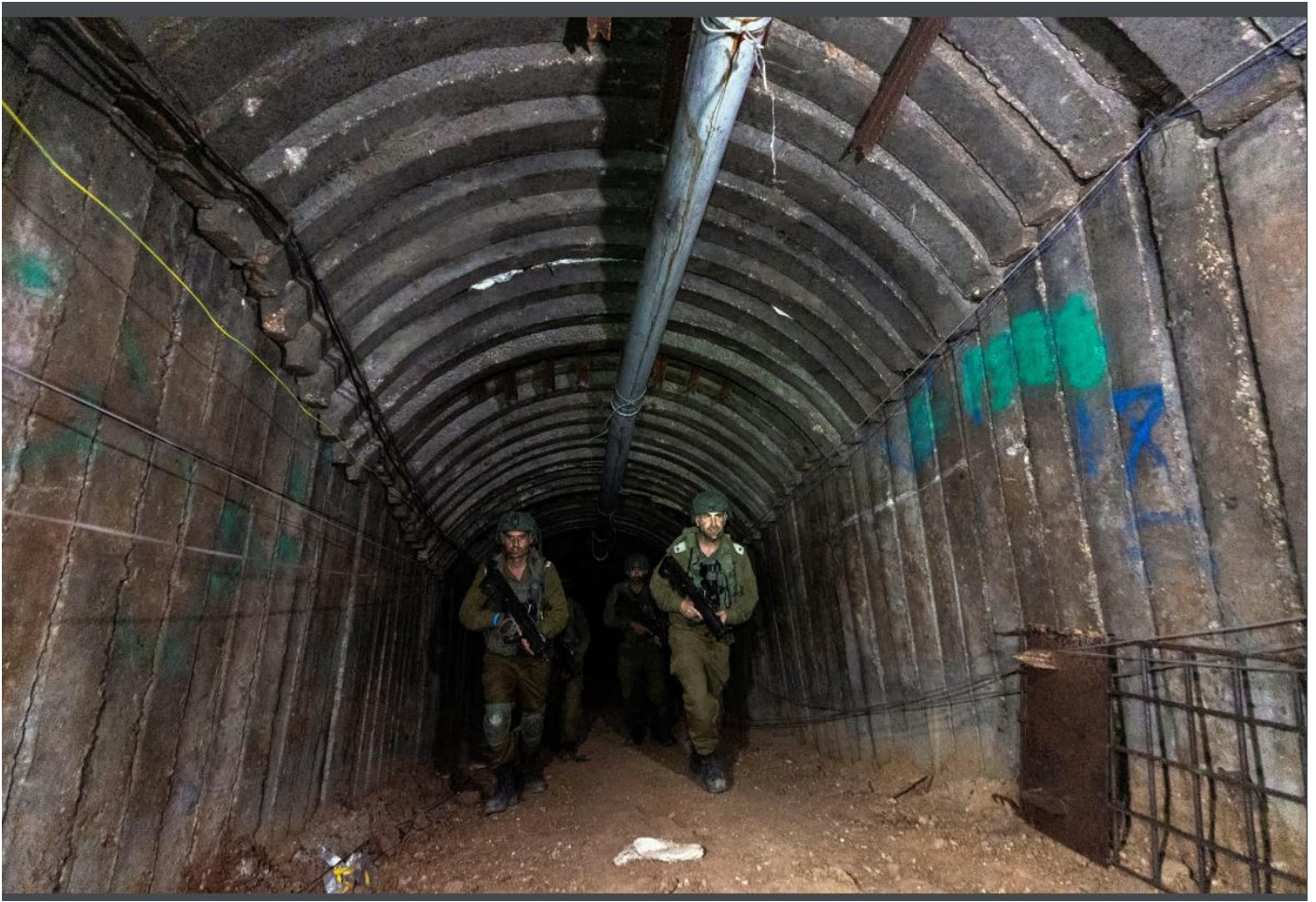
Hamas, which has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007, said two years before the current conflict erupted that it had installed a network of more than 500 kilometers (310 miles) of tunnels - roughly equivalent to half the length of the New York subway system.

The Israeli military has nicknamed it the Gaza metro.

Israel says the tunnels have been a primary target of its air strikes, artillery bombardment and ground forces since the war began. Images shared by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), as well as Reuters reporting on the ground, show the tunnels have specialized sections for launching military attacks, as well as logistics areas, storage facilities and transportation routes.

Hamas has said it is using the tunnels, and other safe places, to hide hostages seized in its Oct. 7 attack on Israel. Hamas gunmen killed some 1,200 people and took 240 captives in the raid, which sparked the war. Around 110 of those hostages have been released, most of them during a week-long ceasefire that ended in late November, while Israel says 129 remain in Gaza, though it says 22 of those are believed to be dead.

Israel's air and artillery bombardment has killed more than 21,800 people, according to health authorities in Hamas-run Gaza.



Israeli soldiers walk through what Israel's military says is an iron-girded tunnel designed by Hamas to disgorge carloads of Palestinian fighters for a surprise storming of the border, amid the Israeli army's ongoing ground operation against Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, close to Erez crossing in the northern Gaza Strip, December 15, 2023. REUTERS/Amir Cohen

The scale of some of the tunnels demonstrate significant planning and resources. In mid-December, the Israeli military uncovered what it called the biggest tunnel to date. The passageway, wide enough to drive a car through, emerged in a sand dune at the northern edge of the Gaza Strip, just 100 meters south of Israel's Erez military checkpoint, which controls all pedestrian access from Israel into Gaza.

Reinforced with concrete and iron, the tunnel was 3 meters (10 feet) in diameter, and 4 km (2.5 miles) long - enough to reach into northern Gaza City. With cables and piping to provide power and ventilation, the tunnel descended down a ramp to a depth of 50 meters below ground, the Israeli military said.

Erez was one of the places attacked by Hamas gunmen on Oct. 7. The Israeli military said the tunnel was designed to transport Hamas fighters to the border area, but didn't confirm it was used in the attack.

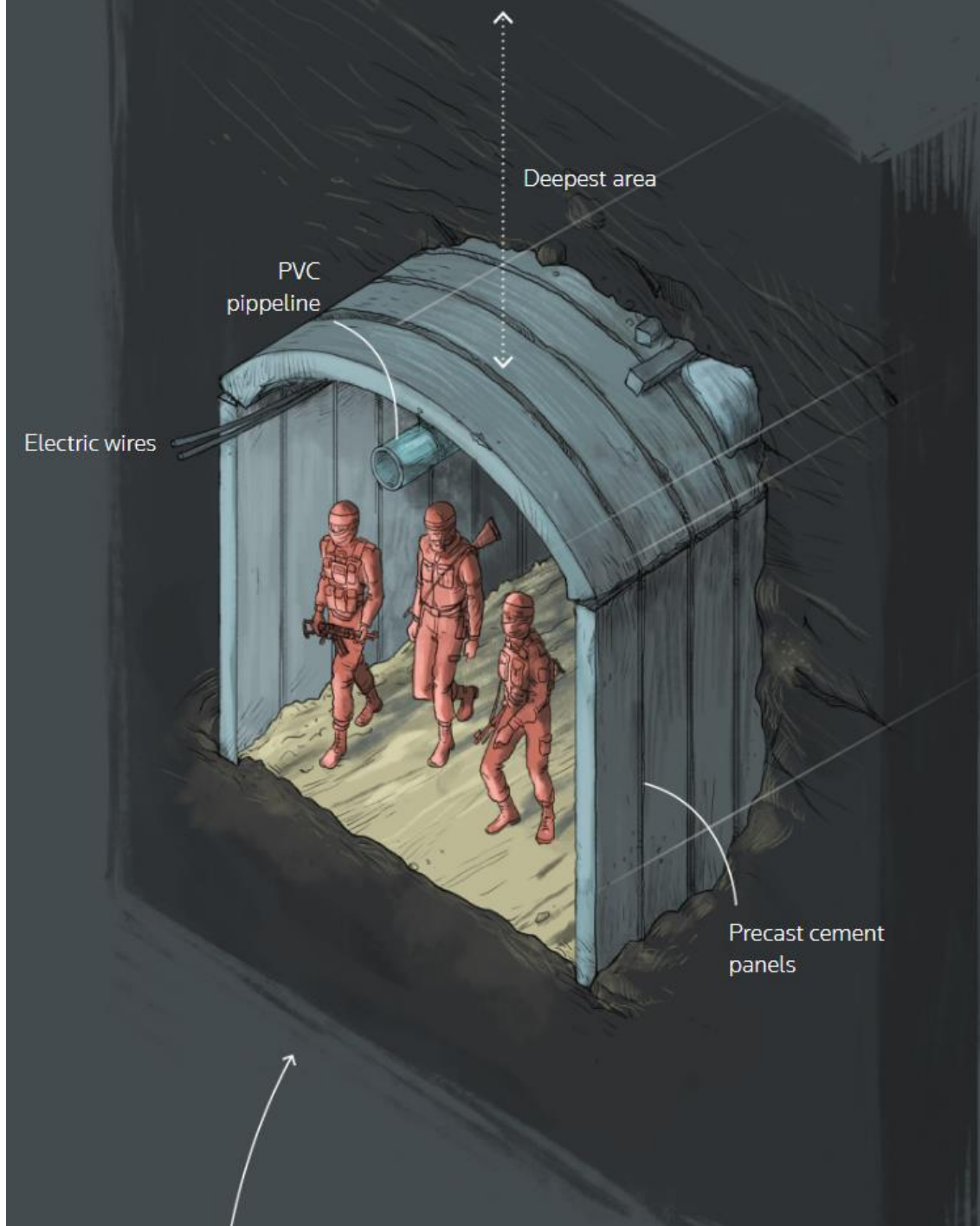
Hamas responded to Israel's discovery by releasing a video of what appeared to be bodycam footage of Oct. 7, showing fighters emerging from a tunnel in the dunes and attacking an Israeli military position.

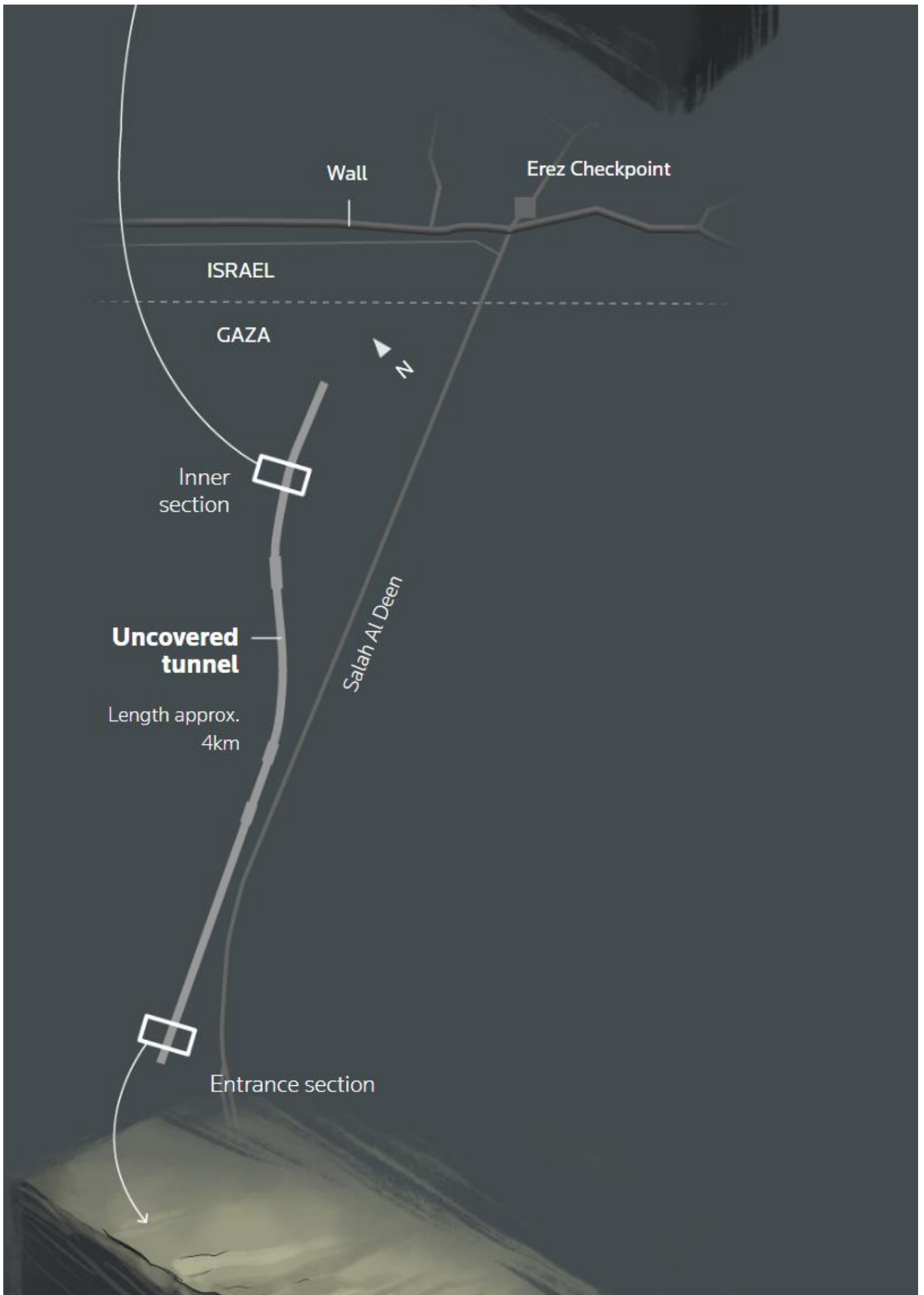
Reuters was able to confirm the location as the Erez crossing, using visible landmarks. "You arrived too late ... Mission had already been completed," read an on-screen message at the end of the video.

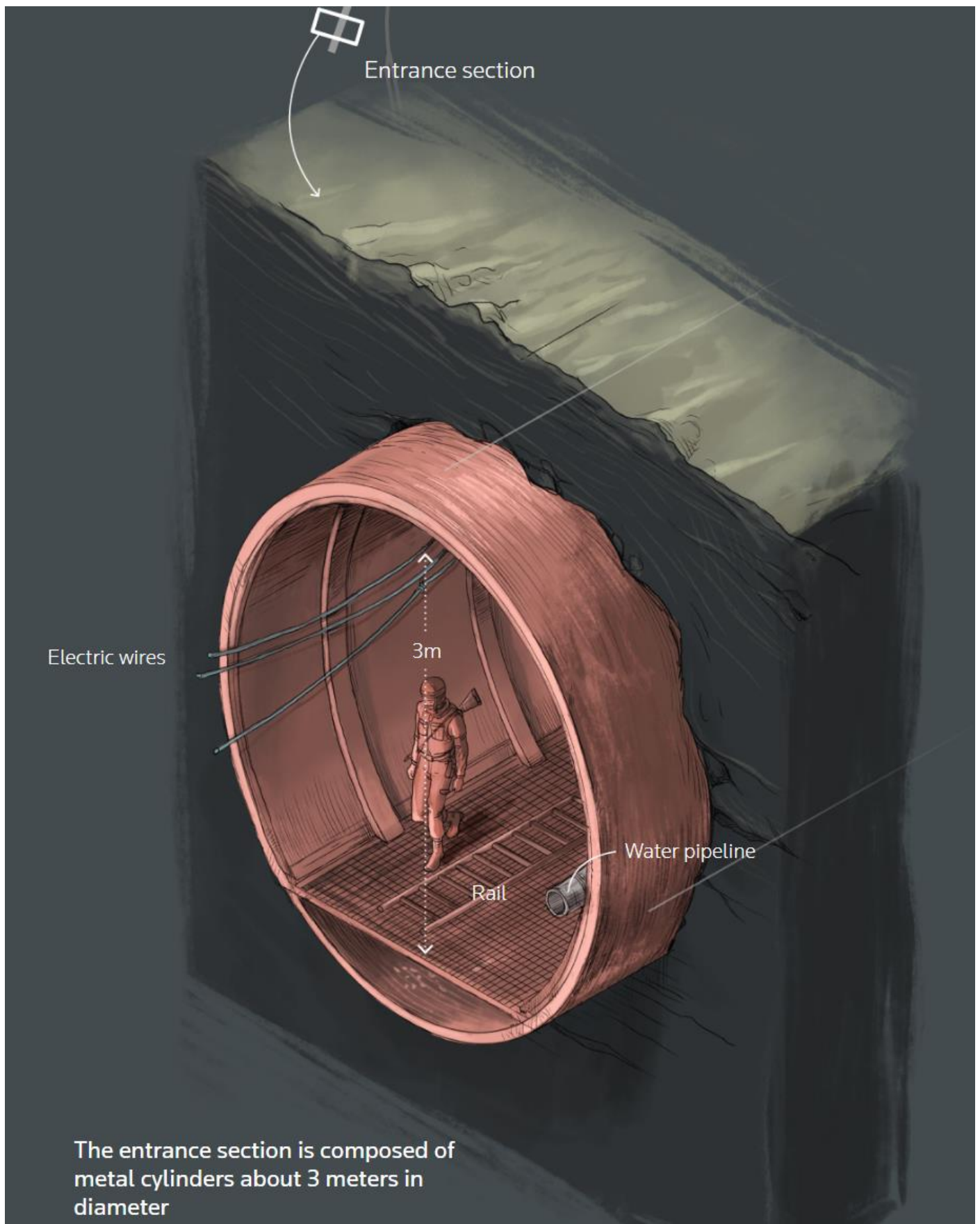
Hamas didn't immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment on its tunnel building activities.

The IDF said in a statement it has a variety of methods and successful experience in dealing with tunnels of all types. It did not provide further details.

The tunnel enables the transportation of troops, including vehicles, in large numbers



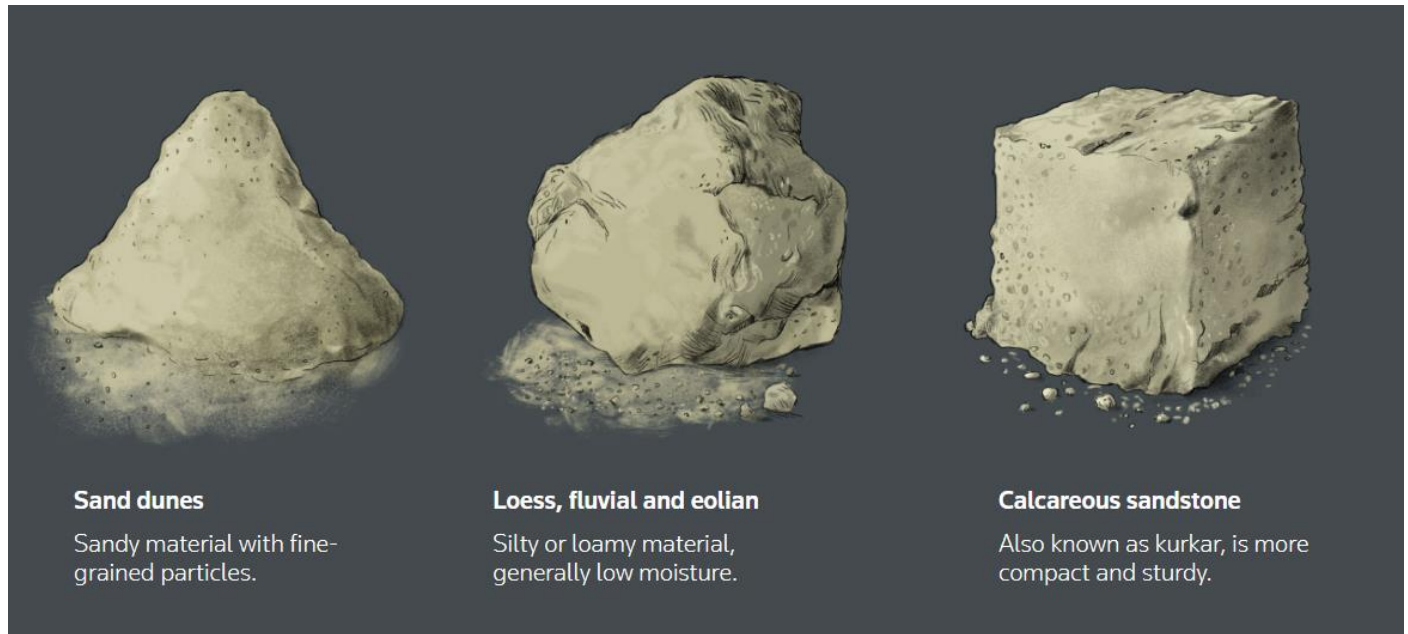




ON SOFTER GROUND

The types of sandy or loamy soils common in Gaza made it both easier for Hamas to excavate the tunnels and harder for Israel to destroy them, two experts said.

The three main types of soil in the 365 sq. km. enclave are:



Even in the trickier areas - such as the dunes near the Mediterranean coast that are prone to water infiltration - Hamas had enough building materials and resources to adjust to the type of soil they were dealing with, said Professor Joel Roskin, a geomorphologist and geologist with Israel's Bar-Ilan University near Tel Aviv, who has studied the tunnel network.

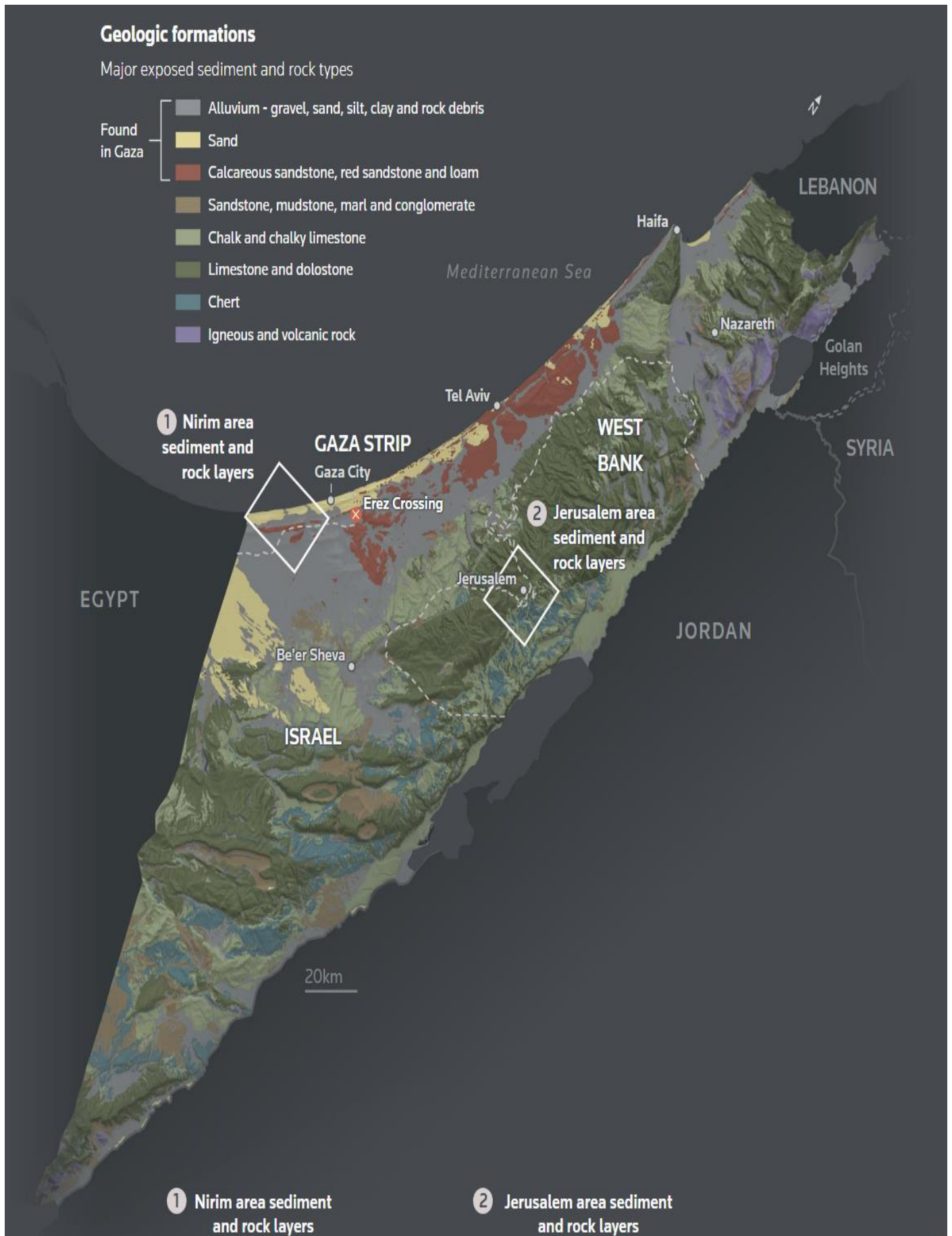
"What we've seen is that there are so many tunnels that have been reinforced with concrete," Roskin said, adding that Hamas had invested considerable money and manpower in construction.

"To dig deeper demands more resources, more energy. The deeper tunnels are of course more difficult to detect."

Geologic formations

Major exposed sediment and rock types

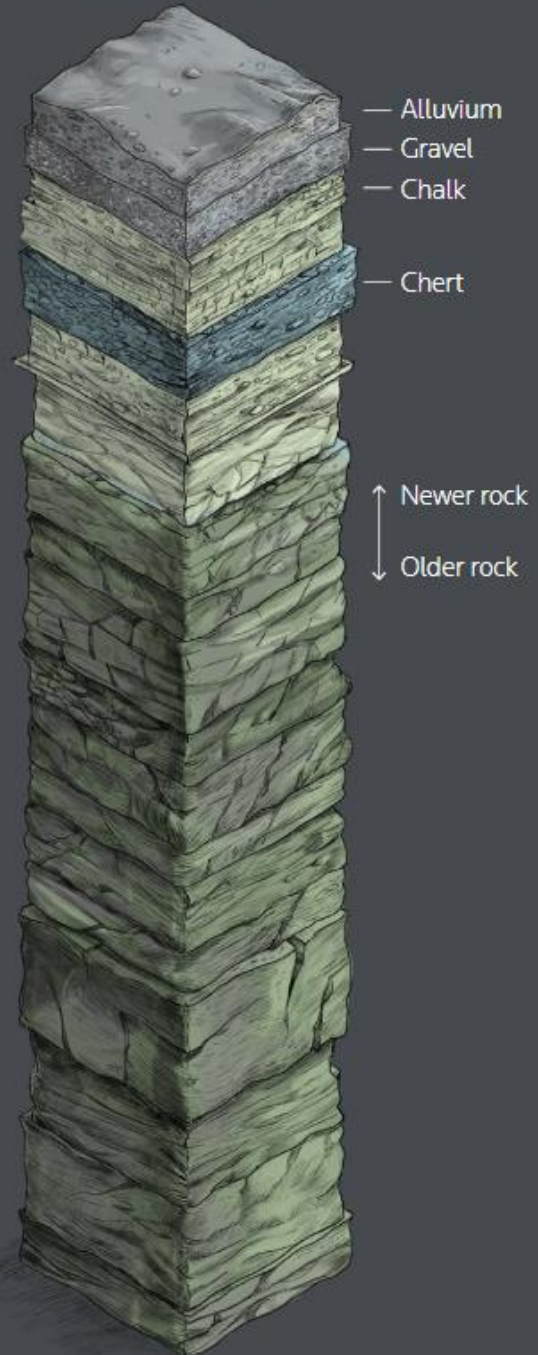
- Found in Gaza
- Alluvium - gravel, sand, silt, clay and rock debris
 - Sand
 - Calcareous sandstone, red sandstone and loam
 - Sandstone, mudstone, marl and conglomerate
 - Chalk and chalky limestone
 - Limestone and dolostone
 - Chert
 - Igneous and volcanic rock



① Nirim area sediment and rock layers



② Jerusalem area sediment and rock layers



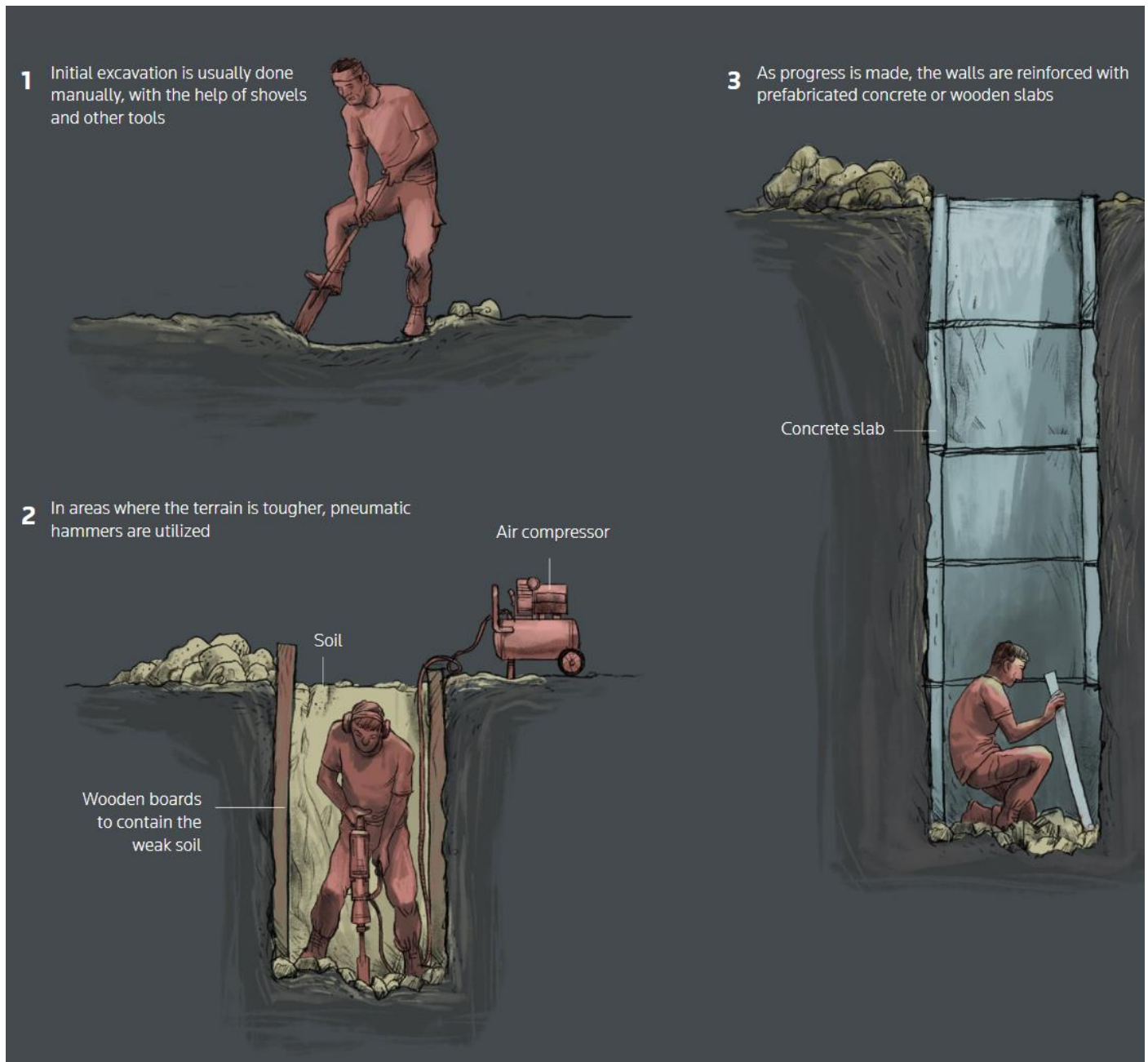
John Spencer, chair of urban warfare studies at the Modern War Institute and a founding member of the International Working Group on Subterranean Warfare, said the sandy nature of the soil had certainly made it easier for Hamas.

“I have seen many videos of them digging by hand or using simple power tools,” he told Reuters. “The soil is conducive to rapid and unskilled digging.” By contrast, he said, the Lebanese Shi’ite group Hezbollah had to dig through solid rock in south Lebanon to build cross border tunnels into northern Israel.

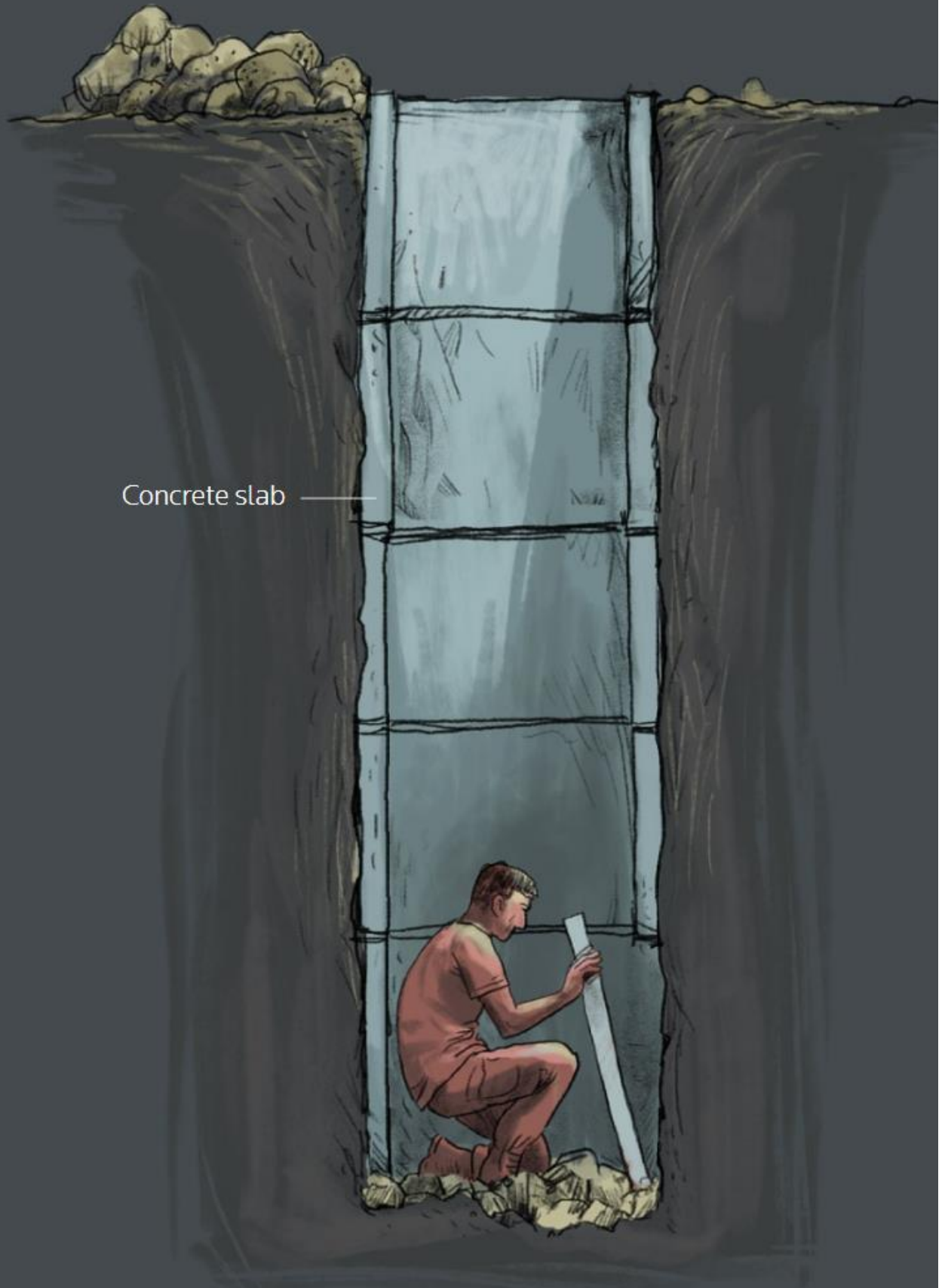
Hezbollah has not confirmed the existence of the tunnel network but, in 2019, the Israeli military put on display one tunnel that, it said, reached depths of 80 meters (265 feet) as it ran from a kilometer inside Lebanon into Israel near Zar'it in the Upper Galilee.

The relative softness of the soil in Gaza is also a disadvantage to the IDF teams seeking to clear and destroy the network, Spencer said.

"The loose soil actually reduces the IDF use of explosives to destroy tunnels as the soft soil absorbs explosive force. Add the blast doors in the tunnels we've seen, and that further reduces the effects of explosive force traveling through the tunnel."

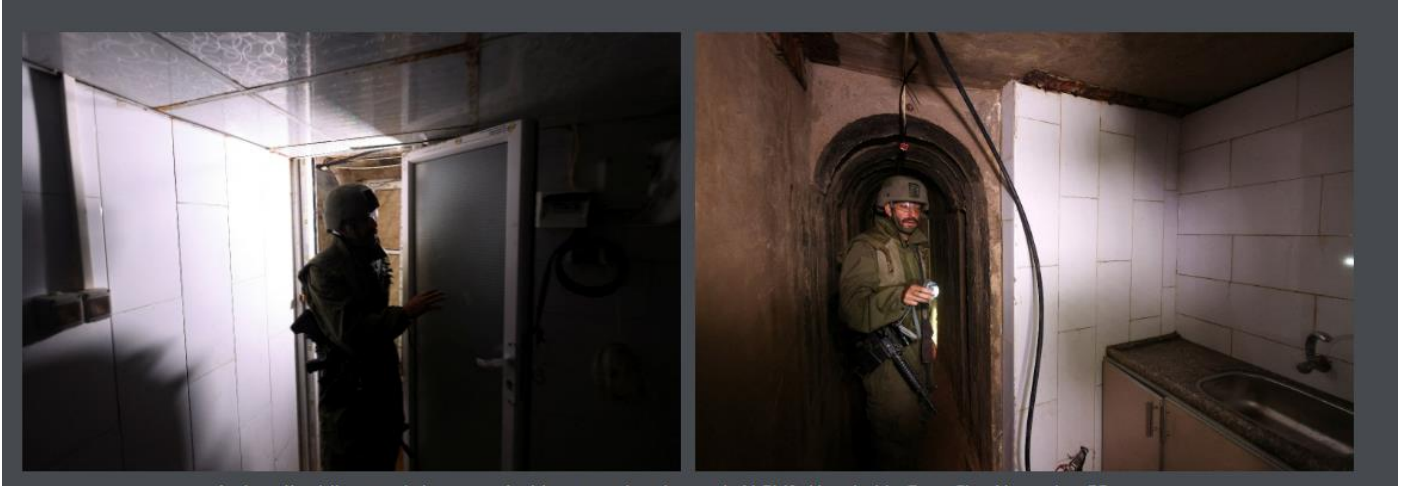


- 3** As progress is made, the walls are reinforced with prefabricated concrete or wooden slabs



On Nov. 22, the Israeli army showed some news organizations a concrete-lined tunnel near Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City that, it said, was a command post for Hamas fighters. The tunnel complex, which the IDF said was at a depth of around 10 meters below ground, featured a bedroom, a tiled bathroom, kitchen and meeting room.

Reuters photographer Ronen Zvulun went inside the tunnels. “The tunnel floor is sand but the walls and roof are lined with concrete, like a tiny road or train tunnel. And just about high enough for someone to stand upright.”



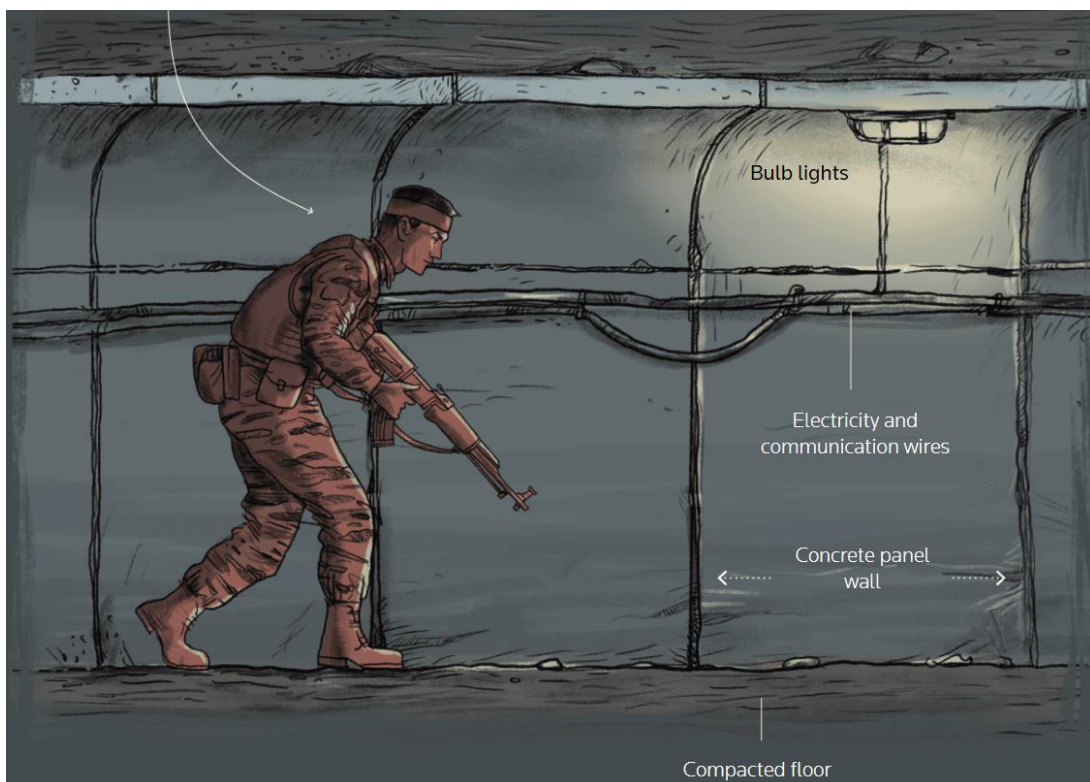
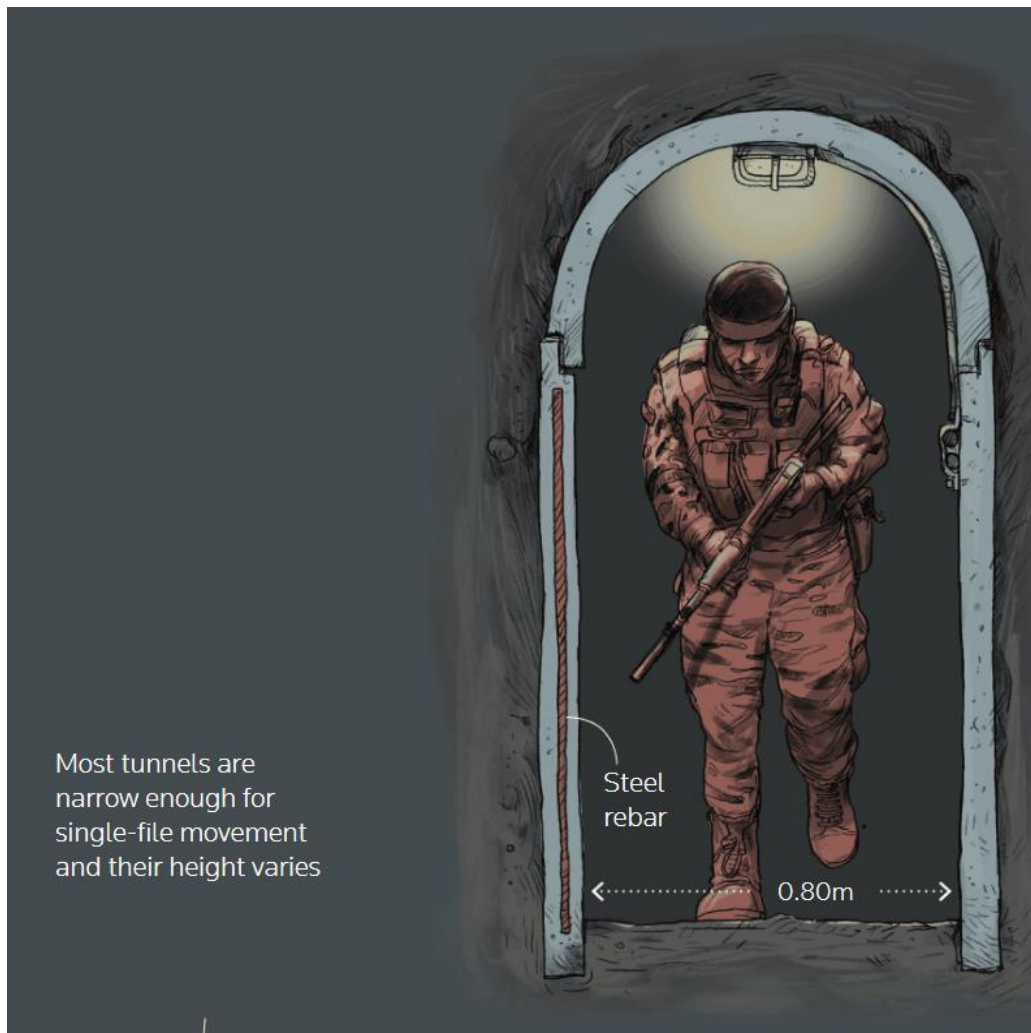
An Israeli soldier stands in a room inside a tunnel underneath Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, November 22, 2023. REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun

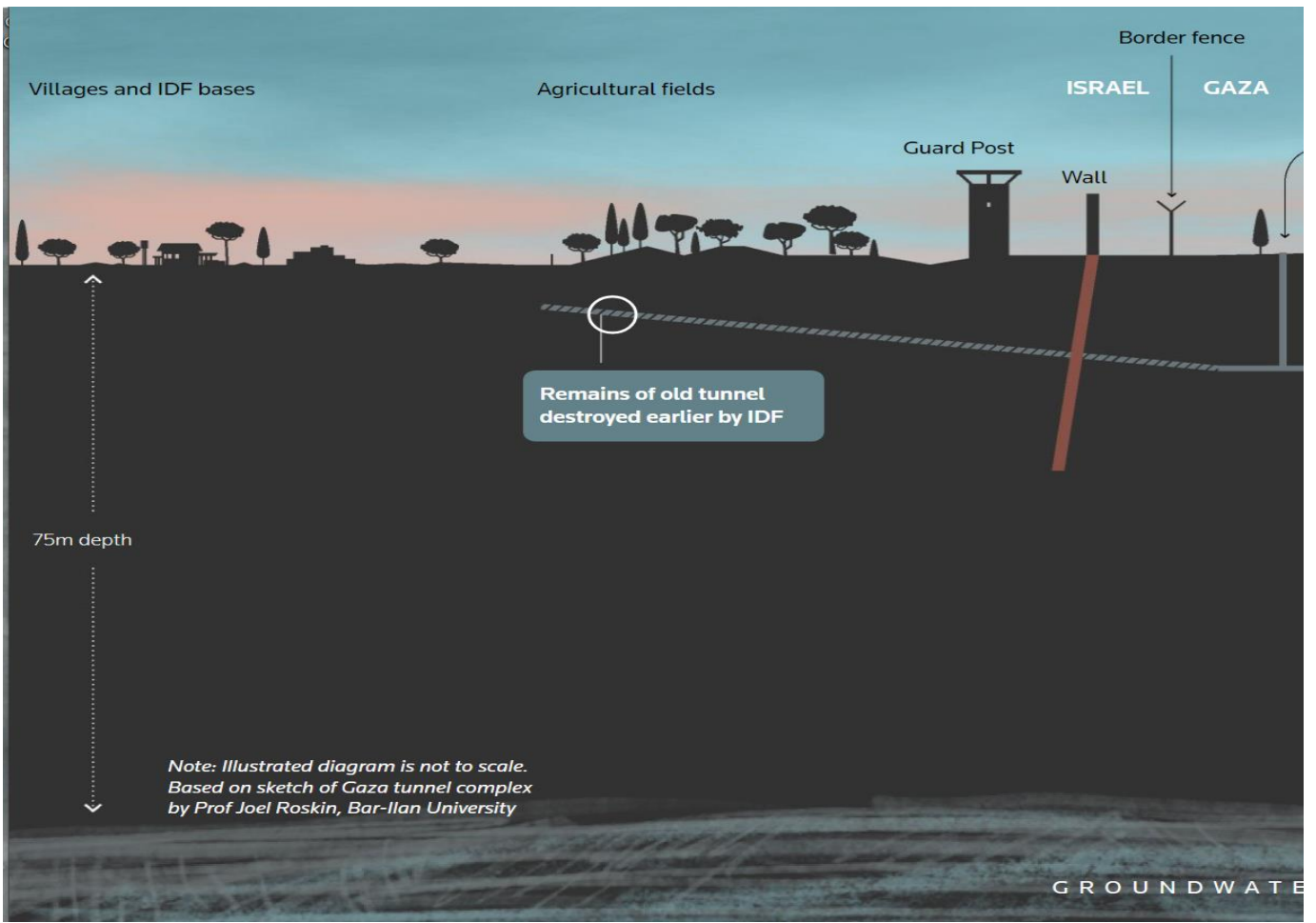
“Inside, you hear nothing. If an air strike hit directly above or nearby, it would no doubt register, but anything a few blocks away, you would probably hear nothing that far underground,” Zvulun said.

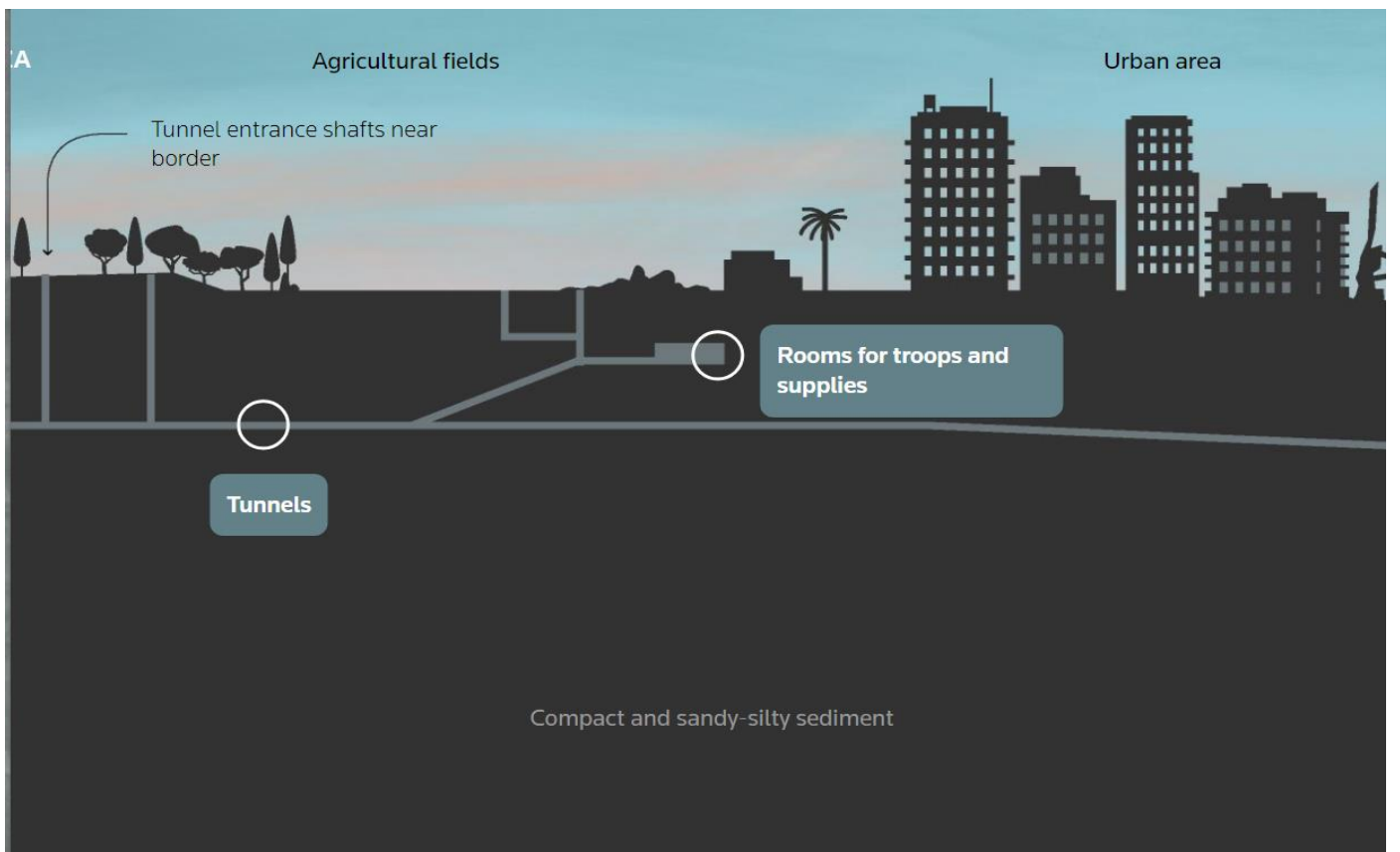
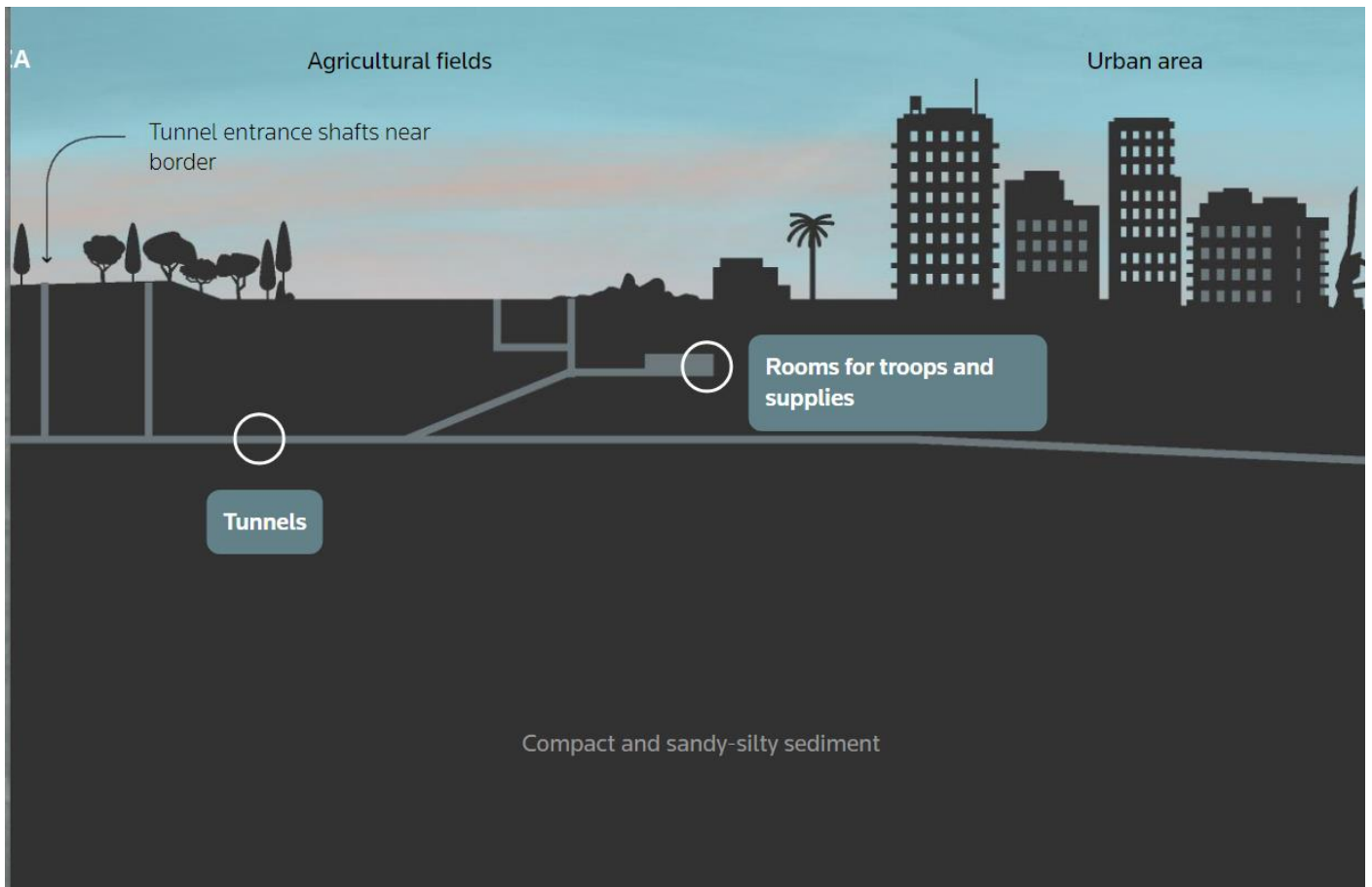
Israel accuses Hamas of deliberately locating its tunnels, rocket-firing sites and other military infrastructure near schools and hospitals, and in densely populated areas, using civilians as human shields. Hamas rejects the accusation. Meanwhile, Palestinian human rights groups say they have asked the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate Israel on war crimes charges for carrying out air strikes on civilian areas.

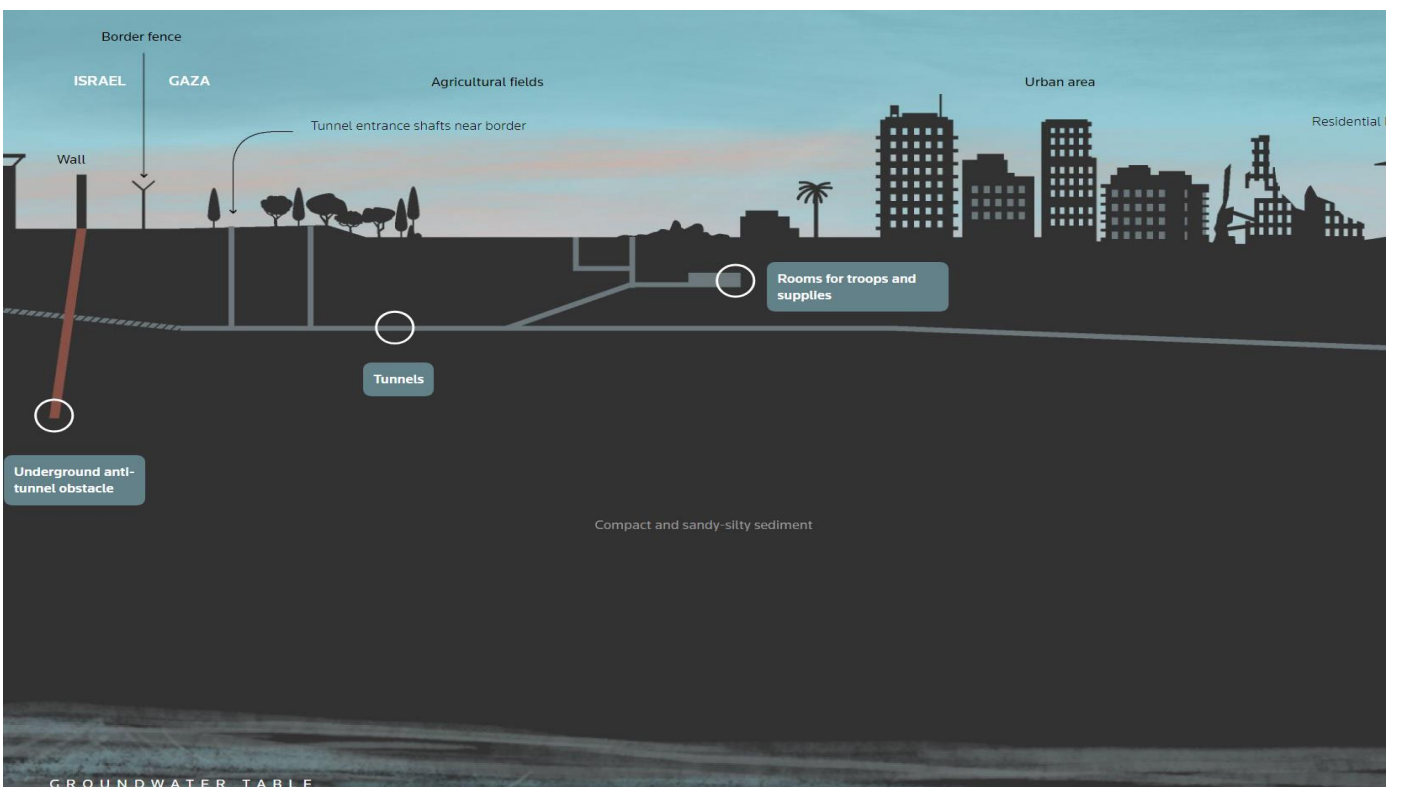
The IDF says it has taken steps to minimize casualties and abides by the rules of war. It has pledged to continue its military operation until Hamas is destroyed, the hostages released and any threat to Israel from Gaza is removed.

The ICC said in a statement to Reuters that it had extensive contacts with Palestinian civil society groups as part of an investigation of possible war crimes in Palestinian territories that it opened two years ago, covering the period back to 2014. “This cooperation, combined with other investigative actions, has allowed the Office to collect considerable information with respect to alleged crimes committed in Gaza,” it told Reuters









TUNNEL WARFARE

Israel's military said its ground forces had uncovered around 1,500 Hamas tunnels and shafts throughout the Gaza Strip, as of Dec. 19.

"Dismantling Hamas's underground strongholds in the north, center, and south is a significant step in dismantling Hamas, and it takes time," military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari told a press briefing. The network has been in construction for years. In the early 1990s, Egyptian and Israeli forces reported finding cross-border tunnels used to smuggle weapons, supplies and militants from Egypt into Gaza. Tunnel-building became easier after Israel pulled its troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005. Two years later, Hamas seized full control of the Gaza Strip from President Mahmoud Abbas's Palestinian Authority. The tunnel-makers are thought to have dumped much of the excavated soil into the sea, making it difficult to detect the scale of their activities, according to Israeli security sources. The rest is used for construction. In previous conflicts, the IDF failed to decommission the tunnel network. After a brief 2014 conflict, in which the Israeli military said it neutralized 32 Hamas tunnels, the militant group showed Reuters that parts of its network were untouched. And following the last round of hostilities in 2021, Hamas' leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, said the group had more than 500 km of tunnels, of which the Israelis destroyed only a fraction. The IDF has not publicly estimated how large the tunnel network may be.



*An Israeli soldier secures a tunnel underneath Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, November 22, 2023.
REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun*

TACKLING THE TUNNELS

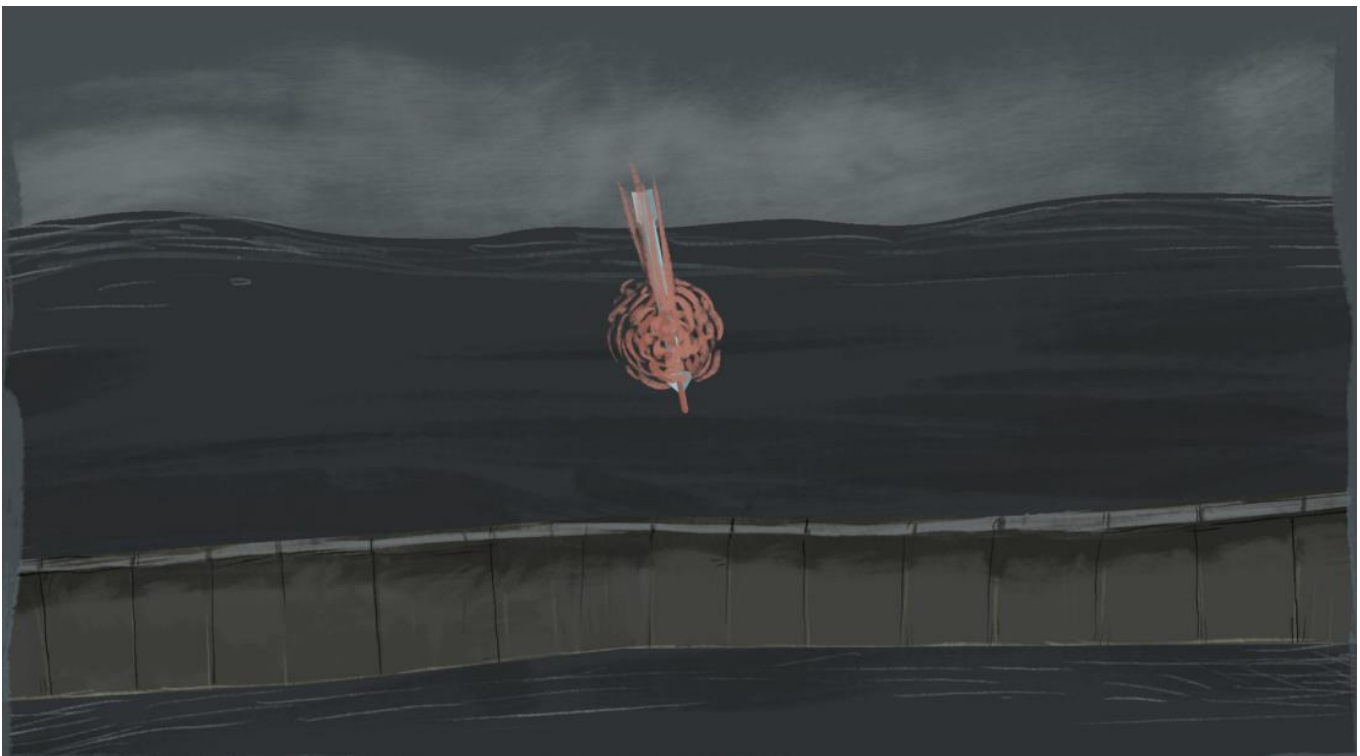
During the current conflict, the Israeli air force has typically first bombed the area above suspected tunnels to flatten any structures. Then bulldozers are used to uncover the tunnel shafts and locate any booby traps or improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Finally, ground troops go in to destroy, or to seal off, the tunnels and shafts, according to two security sources and IDF footage reviewed by Reuters.

Israel says it is doing what it can to spare civilians. Israel's Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Herzi Halevi said on Dec. 26 the military was being "focused and precise in its actions". However, some of Israel's staunchest allies - including the United States, Britain and Canada - have urged it to do more to reduce civilian deaths from what President Joe Biden has called "indiscriminate bombing".

Eyal Pinko, a former senior official with Israel's intelligence services until 2017, said part of the challenge was that it was hard to precisely locate the whereabouts of tunnels: even Israel's Ground Penetration Radar (GPR) was only effective to 15 or 20 meters below ground for major tunnels. Below that depth, it would struggle to detect anything at all, he said. "They are digging very, very low and this is very problematic," Pinko said, adding that some tunnels could be 70 or 80 meters deep. "There is a huge intelligence gap about those tunnels."

"They (Hamas) are popping up from tunnels and you don't know that there is a tunnel over there."

The IDF declined to provide specific details on its tactics in locating and destroying the tunnels.



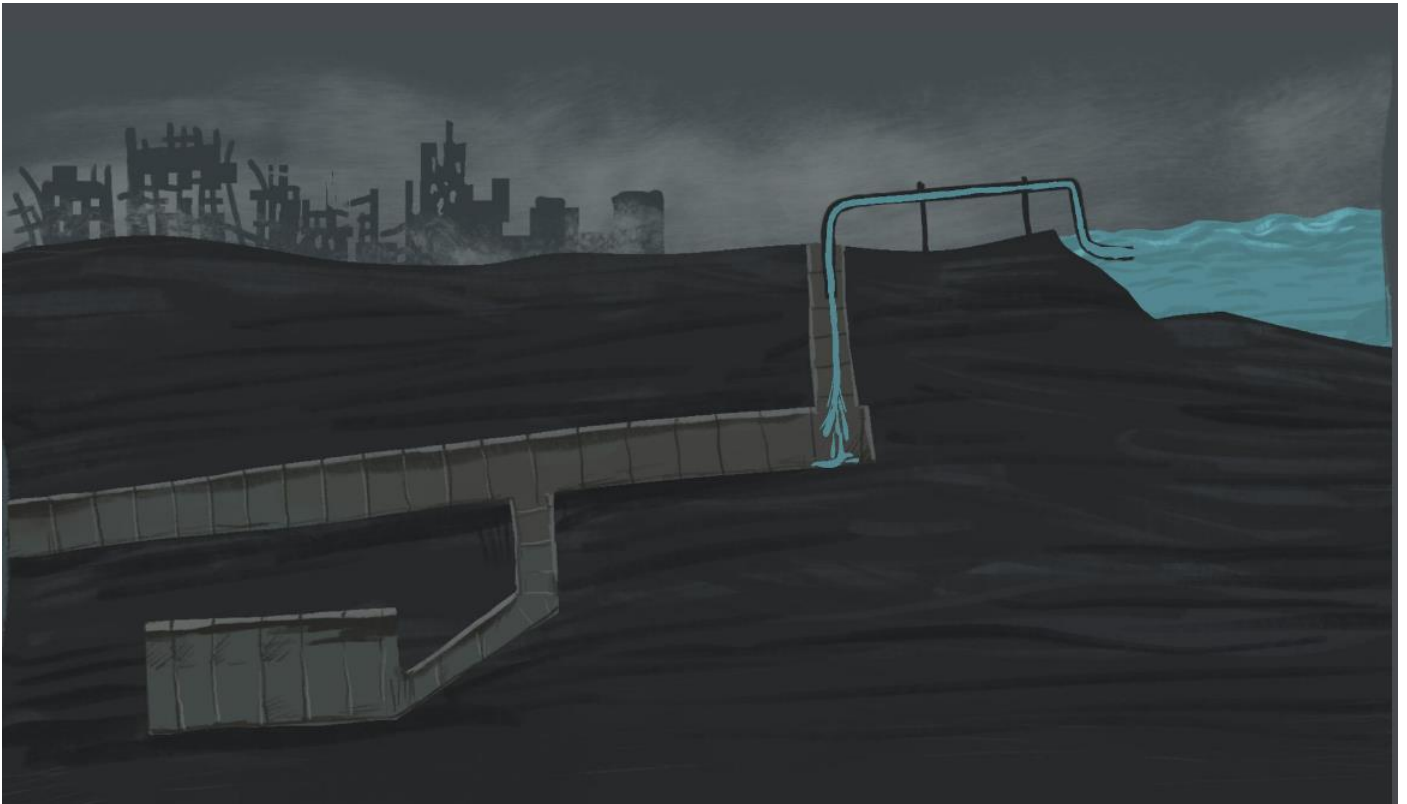
Once inside the tunnels, specialists including the Combat Engineering Corps' elite Yahalom unit use a wide variety of methods to search, record and destroy the tunnels, including K-9 dog units fitted with cameras, and explosive gel charges.

Four military experts say that clearing the tunnels manually would be a lengthy process and expose soldiers to the risk of booby traps or ambush by concealed Hamas fighters. The Israeli military said it had lost 167 personnel during the Gaza operation, as of Dec. 28, many of them killed by attacks launched from the tunnel network.

The military is experimenting with drones to search the tunnels without risking the lives of soldiers.

“The biggest problem in deploying drones underground right now is they get maybe a hundred feet into a tunnel network, then the tunnel makes a right or left turn and they completely lose signal,” said Blake Resnick, CEO of U.S. based drone maker BRINC, who said it is testing drones with the Israeli military. The latest drones being tested have a networking facility that allows its operators to fly one a few hundred feet into a tunnel, until the structure changes direction. “They can land that drone, use it as a repeater, and then send in another drone deeper into the network,” he said. “And they can do that, practically as many times as they want.”

He said a new generation of drones they were testing has thermal imaging, night vision illuminators, and front-facing lidar sensors that create a 3D map of their environment as they fly.



After President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi came to power in Egypt in 2014 and decided to shut down the cross-border tunnel network in southern Gaza, he ordered it flooded with sea water.

However, the risk of killing Israeli hostages may make that an unlikely option for Israel. There was outcry in Israel in mid-December after three hostages were accidentally shot dead by Israeli forces, when they were waving a white flag.

Sources:

Israel Defense Forces; "A Case Study of Thin Concrete Wall Elements Subjected to Ground Loads, by Davide Elmo and Amichai Mitelman, MDPI; Haaretz; Bar-Ilan University - Prof. Joel Roskin; Britannica; Geological Survey of Israel; Natural Earth; SRTM

Development by

Sudev Kiyada, Han Huang and Jitesh Chowdhury

Additional reporting by Ronen Zvulun and Jiawei Wang, Edited by Daniel Flynn

ISRAEL AND HAMAS TUNNELS

Attack by Hamas against Israel on October 7 2023 led to the declaration of war by Israel against Gaza and removal of Hamas from Gaza.

Experience of previous wars against Hamas had shown them that their entire politico-military strategy rested on its tunnels.

What this meant is shown by John Spencer

In the [Modern War Institute at West Bank](#) on 18 January 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.

**'SMART BOMBS' ON TARGET AT AIR HQ POST :
ARMS: LASERS GUIDED EXPLOSIVES
WITH UNPRECEDENTED ACCURACY,
BOOSTING ROLE OF U.S. TECHNOLOGY.**

LOS ANGELES TIMES Jan 19 1991 Sara Fritz and Karen Tumulty

WASHINGTON — It was like a scene from “Star Wars.” With pinpoint accuracy, a U.S. F-111 fighter plane dropped a 2,000-pound, laser-guided bomb down the air shaft of the Iraqi air defense headquarters and blew the massive building to smithereens.

Pictures of the successful air raid over Baghdad were proudly displayed Friday by U.S. commanders as evidence that modern technology has provided U.S. forces with an unprecedented ability to attack the headquarters of the enemy’s top echelon.

The purpose of such bombing, according to military experts, is to “decapitate” the Iraqi military--not necessarily by killing President Saddam Hussein and his top commanders, but by disrupting the command and control system by which Hussein communicates with his troops in the field.

For the first time in history, U.S. forces are able to take advantage of their technological superiority to target enemy command and control systems at the outset of a war, a strategy that American commanders believe already has undermined Iraq’s ability to strike back.

“I think to date we have been quite successful,” declared Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the allied forces. Added President Bush: “As each hour goes by, they are going to be relatively less able to respond.”

ISRAEL TARGETS HAMAS'S LABYRINTH OF TUNNELS UNDER GAZA

[BBC News](#) David Gritten 13 October 2023



The leader of Hamas in Gaza has previously claimed that it has 500km of tunnels

Getty Images

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.

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, external** 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.

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.

"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.

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 there is no way to prevent them." 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**

AFP

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, external, 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.

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

[The Wall Street Journal](#) | 26 October 2023 5min

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. WSJ's Rory Jones – who visited them in 2014 – explains how they pose a unique challenge to Israel and could make urban combat costly for both Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians.

ISRAELI TROOPS RECOVER BODIES OF SIX HOSTAGES IN GAZA TUNNEL INSIDE THE GAZA TERROR TUNNEL WHERE HOSTAGES WERE HELD

[DW News](#) | 1 Sept 2024 4min 20sec

Israel says that its forces have recovered the remains of six Israeli hostages during operations in Gaza. Israeli-American Hersh Goldberg-Polin is among those confirmed dead. Hamas captured him and four others at a music festival during the October 7 terror attacks. Hours before their deaths were announced, thousands protested in Tel Aviv to demand a deal to free the remaining hostages in Gaza. Around a hundred people still remain captive in Gaza, including 33 that the Israeli army says are dead.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR 2023-

[Brittanica](#)



Israel-Hamas War, war between [Israel](#) and Palestinian militants, especially [Hamas](#) and the [Palestinian Islamic Jihad](#) (PIJ), that began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched a land, sea, and air assault on Israel from the [Gaza Strip](#). The October 7 attack resulted in more than 1,200 deaths, primarily Israeli citizens, making it the deadliest day for Israel since its independence.

More than 240 people were taken [hostage](#) during the attack. The next day, Israel declared itself in a state of war for the first time since the [Yom Kippur War](#) in 1973. The war began with the [Israel Defense Forces](#) (IDF) conducting air strikes on the Gaza Strip, followed weeks later by the incursion of ground troops and armored vehicles. By early 2024 tens of thousands of Gazans had been killed and over half of the buildings in the Gaza Strip had been destroyed or damaged.

PAST PRECEDENTS FOR MUSLIM AND JEWISH PEACE

A solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine seems as far away as ever.

But, says Martin Gilbert, past relations between Muslims and Jews

have often been harmonious and can be so again.

[HISTORY TODAY](#) Vol 60 Issue 8 Martin Gilbert, August 2010

Past Precedents for Muslim and Jewish Peace

A solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine seems as far away as ever. But, says Martin Gilbert, past relations between Muslims and Jews have often been harmonious and can be so again.

[Martin Gilbert](#) | Published in [History Today Volume 60 Issue 8 August 2010](#)

Enmity between Jews and Muslims seems to be a fact of life in the 21st century: a hostility that impinges on Jewish and Muslim life worldwide and, in particular, on the Arab-Israeli conflict, now in its sixth decade. When did this enmity begin? How was it sustained? Why did it survive? In order to answer these questions we must look to the other side of the coin, to a story that might serve both sides today as a positive reminder of what could lie ahead.

Hostility has unquestionably been a part of the long historical narrative of Arab-Jewish relations. Among the chants and placards that accompanied and followed the Turkish ships carrying aid to the Gaza Strip, and which were intercepted by Israeli forces, was the Muslim rallying cry: 'Jews: remember Khaibar. The army of Muhammad is coming back to defeat you.'

This cry has echoed in each decade of modern times. On August 7th, 2003, when Amrozi bin Nurhasin, one of the 'Bali bombers', entered an Indonesian courtroom for sentencing, having been found guilty of blowing up more than 200 people – none of them Jews – he shouted out the same rallying cry in the presence of the world's media.

The cry refers to an event that took place in the year 628, when, as leader of the new faith of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad achieved one of his first military victories, against a Jewish tribe living in the oasis of Khaibar on the Arabian peninsula. Contemporary Arab sources report that between 600 and 900 Jews were killed in the battle. This Muslim victory was followed by the spread of segregation and taxation for non-Muslims, as well as forcible conversion to Islam.

Two months after Amrozi bin Nurhasin received his sentence of death, the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad – who in 1986 had inaugurated an 'Anti-Jews Day' – told the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference held in the Malaysian city of Putrajaya, that: '1.3 billion Muslims cannot be defeated by a few million Jews. There must be a way ... Surely the 23 years' struggle of the Prophet can provide us with some guidance as to what we can and should do.'

Within three years of this appeal, Palestinian Arab voters cast a majority of their votes for Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement (44 per cent as against the 41 per cent who voted for Hamas's nearest rival, Fatah). The Hamas Charter, promulgated in 1988, looks forward to the implementation of 'Allah's promise', however long it might take:

The Prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, said:

'The Day of Judgement will not come about until Muslims fight the Jews (killing the Jews), when the Jew will hide behind stones and trees. The stones and trees will say O Muslims, O Abdullah, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'

From the time of the Babylonian conquest of Judaea 2,500 years ago Jews have been dispersed, first in Mesopotamia and Persia (now, respectively, Iraq and Iran), then, following the Roman conquest of Judaea, throughout Arabia and North Africa from Egypt to Morocco: all lands that came under Muslim rule with the conquests of Muhammad. In the 12th century, 600 years after the death of Muhammad, the Jewish sage Maimonides (1135-1204) described the situation of the Jews after five centuries of Muslim rule: 'No nation has ever done more harm to Israel.' He went on to elaborate: 'None has matched it in debasing and humiliating us. None has been able to reduce us as they have.'

REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST

Yet there is another side to this tale of debasement and humiliation. By the end of the 20th century Bernard Lewis, among the most eminent historians of the Middle East, a lifelong student of Jews and Islam and himself a Jew, reflected on the 14 centuries of Jewish life under Islamic rule since Muhammad. He concluded that the situation of Jews living under Islamic rulers 'was never as bad as in Christendom at its worst', even if it was never 'as good as in Christendom at its best'. Lewis continued: 'There is nothing in Islamic history to parallel the Spanish expulsion and Inquisition, the Russian pogroms, or the Nazi Holocaust.'

From the time of Muhammad in the seventh century and the rapid military conquests of Islam that followed the Jews were subjects of their Muslim rulers throughout a great swathe of land, stretching from the Atlantic coast of Morocco to the mountains of Afghanistan. Being non-Muslims, the Jews held, along with all Christians and other religious minorities under Muslim rule, the status of dhimmi, literally the 'people of the contract' or 'people of the book', referring to the common roots of the Abrahamic religions. Dhimmi were of an inferior status which, while giving them protection as a minority to worship in their own faiths, subjected them to many vexatious and humiliating restrictions in their daily lives, including a sometimes punitive *jizya*, or head tax.

History shows, however, that in every century and in every land under Muslim rule, despite moments of persecution, dhimmi regulations could be relaxed, the *jizya* reduced to a nominal amount with the Jews thus becoming an integral and respected part of Muslim society. This accommodation has a long history. In 638, under the second Caliph, Muhammad's companion and second father-in-law Omar ibn al-Khattab (r. 634-44), the army of Islam conquered several cities formerly under Christian rule in which the Jews openly aided the Muslim conquerors, hoping to be free of Christian persecution. Jewish soldiers fought in the Muslim ranks as volunteers, Jews acted as guides and provided food and provisions for the Muslim armies. A new Jerusalem

When Omar made his way to Jerusalem in 638 the Jews asked him for permission for 200 Jewish families to live in the city. Because the Christian patriarch vehemently opposed this suggestion, Omar fixed their number at 70. Omar gave these Jewish families their own area in Jerusalem, located in what is now the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. There they were allowed to build a religious college and a synagogue and to pray in the neighbourhood of the Temple Mount, once the site of Solomon's Temple.

Contemporary Jewish sources emanating from Baghdad relate that when Omar conquered Babylonia he confirmed that the leader of the Jewish community there – who was known as the Exilarch and was at that time Bustanai ben Haninai – would remain as Exilarch under Muslim rule, with authority over the Jews of the province (modern-day Iraq).

Sixty years later, another Caliph, Abd al-Malik, appointed Jewish families to be guardians of the Temple Mount – known to Muslims as Haram ash-Sharif ('The Noble Sanctuary') – and charged them with maintaining the cleanliness of the Mount and with making glass vessels for its lights and kindling them. He also decreed that these particular Jews should be exempt from payment of the *jizya*. Other Jews obtained positions of authority in al-Malik's administration.

Jewish doctors, merchants and artisans lived prosperously and worked productively under Muslim rule. In Afghanistan, in the 11th and 12th centuries, Jewish communities likewise flourished; Sultan Mahmud (998-1030) assigned a Jew named Isaac to administer his lead mines and melt ore for him. One of the most successful Jews in a Muslim land in the 12th century was Abu al-Munajja Solomon ben Shaya, a government official in Egypt. As the administrator of several districts, his fame rested on the irrigation canal that he constructed over six years, bringing water to a parched agricultural landscape. So successful was he that he was given the Arabic title Sani al-Dawla ('The Noble of the State').

Many great Jewish thinkers, scholars and poets lived in Muslim lands. Maimonides – Musa ibn Maymun in Arabic, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon in Hebrew and known by his Hebrew acronym as the Rambam – was the greatest Jewish scholar of the Middle Ages. In 1164, having fled Muslim persecution in Fez, he settled in Egypt under the tolerant Shi'ite Fatimids, where he became a court physician. In his writings on food and diet he advocated a 'shared convivial meal' as a way to conquer anxiety and tension 'and also suspicion between ethnic groups'.

Close to power in Islamic society, Maimonides spoke and wrote in Arabic and was conversant with Arab thought and culture. In Cairo, one of the great intellectual centres of the Arab world, he entered an environment that encouraged his learning and his creativity. He also served as Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community there. His fame as a physician was such that Saladin, when Sultan of Egypt, appointed him court physician.

Among Maimonides' medical writings was *Fi 'I-Jima'a* ('*On Sexual Intercourse*'), a treatise on sex and aphrodisiacs concentrating heavily on dietetics, a branch of medicine in which he was a pioneer. The treatise was commissioned by Sultan Omar, the nephew of Saladin. Intended for a non-Jewish reader, it was distributed in Arabic.

A draft proclamation survives declaring Maimonides Ra'is al-Yahud, 'Head of the Jews', recognised by the Muslim authorities as the official representative of the Jewish community in Cairo.

The great Muslim warrior, Saladin, a Kurd and scourge of the Christian Crusaders, conquered Jerusalem in 1187 after a five-month siege. Saladin encouraged the Jews to return to the city. Some came from as far south as Yemen, others from North Africa. Between 1209 and 1211, Jews also reached Jerusalem from England, northern France and Provence. Some 300 rabbis in all were welcomed to the city by its Muslim rulers.

There are many other examples of constructive cross-cultural engagement. Accounts survive of the revenue and expenditure of a large house in Cairo lived in by Jews and Muslims in 1234 and owned jointly by them. There were no doubt other such arrangements. Like Maimonides, many Jews attained well-remunerated positions as doctors at Muslim courts, under almost all but the most fanatical caliphates, often holding considerable influence. Jewish doctors for whom medicine had long been a traditional speciality were highly prized in Muslim societies. So too were Jewish linguists, writers and poets.

In the city of Basra, wrote an Italian Jewish traveller, Jacob d'Ancona in 1270,

'there are not only traders among the Jews, but also tailors, workers in wood, leather and iron, makers of shoes and saddles as well as many apothecaries and physicians, from the great skill and knowledge of the Jews in the healing of men and from the understanding of their nature'.

Starting in the 14th century, the Ottoman Turks created a vast Muslim empire, in which Jews were an accepted and integral part of the fabric of society. Jewish merchants were the principal tradesmen in Baghdad. In Tunis and Algiers, Jews served as the conduit for Ottoman trade with Christian countries across the Mediterranean.

Among the Jews who came to the Ottoman city of Edirne (in western Turkey) from Christian Europe was Rabbi Isaac Tzarfati, who was made Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman dominions in the 14th century. In a letter to the Jews of Germany, France and Hungary, he wrote to the Jews of Europe [about Ottoman Turkey] to 'inform you about how agreeable is this country'.

Here I found rest and happiness; Turkey can also become for you the land of peace ... Here the Jew is not compelled to wear a yellow hat as a badge of shame, as is the case in Germany, where even great wealth and fortune are a curse for a Jew because he therewith arouses jealousy among Christians ... Arise my brethren, gird up your loins, collect your forces, and come to us. Here you will be free of your enemies, here you will find rest ...

Self-government

From the first days of his conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II encouraged Jews to settle in the city and to govern themselves in their own religious-based community. Property was offered free to Jewish newcomers, with a substantial exemption in their taxes for an extended period and with permission to build synagogues – thus ignoring an age-old Muslim prohibition for dhimmis to build any new places of worship. By 1478 there were 1,647 Jewish households in Constantinople – 10,000 people – constituting 10 per cent of the total population.

Jews continued to fight as companions-in-arms with Muslim soldiers against the Christians. In 1431 they were an integral part of the army of Sultan Muhammad IX of Granada at the Battle of Higuera, where, unfortunately for both Jews and Muslims, Muhammad IX's forces were defeated by the army of King John II of Castile.

The expulsion of the Jews from Christian Spain in 1492 saw at least 130,000 move to Muslim lands. Joseph Hamon, who had fled from Spain, became court physician to two Ottoman sultans, Bayazid II and Selim I. His son Moses succeeded him as court physician and looked after the health of Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66), whom he accompanied on his military expedition against Persia. Moses Hamon

wrote several books on medicine, including an important one on dentistry, which is today in the Istanbul University Library.

Under the rule of Suleiman the Magnificent, Jews gained important positions in court. A document in the Topkapi Palace archive, dated 1527, mentions among the silversmiths in his service, 'Abraham the Jew', who specialised in laying gold and silver leaves under the sultan's precious stones in order to accentuate their brilliance.

When Abbas I became Shah of Persia in 1588 Jews were at first much favoured. During his military campaign against the Georgians in the Caucasus, Jewish soldiers fought in Abbas's army. In appreciation of their help, he allowed them to establish a new Jewish community, Farahabad – 'City of Joy' – on the shore of the Caspian Sea. When Abbas moved his capital from Kazvan to Isfahan many Jews went to live there.

Each succeeding century saw Jews living in Muslim lands discover opportunity and contentment, while at the same time being subjected to outbursts of fanaticism, attack and even massacre. No Muslim country was free from periods of anti-Jewish sentiment, or devoid of times of conciliation and peaceful coexistence.

Jews flourished in Egypt and Iraq, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s. But with the advent of Zionism and Britain's promise of a Jewish national home in Palestine, growing Arab nationalism – which Britain had also encouraged – began to champion the Palestinian cause and to demand an end to Jewish immigration into Palestine. At the same time, Islamic fundamentalism, inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, denounced all Jewish immigration to Palestine, even to those areas where Jews had been farming for many decades. They began to portray Jews in Muslim lands – few of whom were Zionists – as disloyal and alien.

Israel and Palestine

As anti-Zionist feeling intensified in the 1930s, inflamed by Nazi and Fascist radio propaganda and German emissaries, so the Jews living in Arab lands, their home throughout 1,400 years of Muslim rule, felt increasingly insecure.

Starting with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, more than half a million Jews fled or were driven out of the lands in which they had lived for so long with their Muslim neighbours. Their plight mirrored that of the more than half a million Palestinian Arab refugees fleeing or driven out of Israel.

Today, the large Jewish communities that existed a century ago in more than 15 Muslim nations are no more. When British troops entered the Iraqi port of Basra in 2003, at the beginning of the Second Gulf War, a single Jew lived there, 80-year-old Selima Nissin. She was found by a Scottish lieutenant. Fewer than a dozen Jews were living elsewhere in Iraq in 2003; in 1948 there had been more than 150,000. In 2005 the BBC reported that only one Jew remained in Afghanistan. His name was Zebulon Simantov, the last of an ancient Jewish community of many thousands. Only in Morocco has the monarch, King Muhammad VI, acted like the Ottoman sultans in earlier centuries, encouraging his country's 2,000 Jews; 80 years ago there had been more than a quarter of a million.

Will the 50,000 Jews who still live in Muslim lands, including the 25,000 in Iran, be able to achieve a security and a secure Jewish life that in so many ways was denied them in the past? There are good and bad precedents.

The history of the Jews living in Arab and Muslim lands has been a varied and remarkable one. Times of suffering and danger have alternated with times of achievement and fulfilment. Jews have been respected, admired and emulated; they have also been persecuted, robbed and killed. But they stayed and welcomed the times of good relations with their Muslim neighbours.

For 1,400 years Jews, in their different ways, made enormous contributions to the wellbeing and continuity of the umma – the worldwide community of Muslims. They had no subversive intentions and no desire to convert Muslims to Judaism, or in any way to subvert the Muslim religion.

A future from the past

The exodus and dispersal of the Jews in Arab and Muslim lands after 1948 was an irreversible interruption to a 1,400-year story of remarkable perseverance, considerable achievements and justifiable pride. For that reason, I dedicated my most recent study of Jewish populations in Muslim lands 'to the 14 million Jews and the 1,400 million Muslims in the world in the hope that they may renew in the 21st century the mutual tolerance, respect and partnership that marked many periods in their history'. This could be the aim of all Jews and Muslims and their friends on both sides of the existing divide, who want a peaceful, productive, fulfilling relationship in the remaining nine decades of the 21st century. It is my hope that, in some way, my work will encourage a better understanding of history and with it a future that emulates only the best of the past; and there is much of that.

Each month, despite the ongoing strife, sees new signs of hope. In June 2010, for example, the Premier of the Canadian province of Ontario, Dalton McGinty, was among the visitors to the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, located in Israel's Arava Valley, a place where Muslim and Jewish students – from Israel, the Palestinian West Bank and Jordan – work together on complex environmental issues, the solutions to which are crucial to the region's future prosperity and stability. Similar joint projects abound, in education, science, medicine and the arts. Each one is a beacon of light and a potential harbinger of harmony.

Sir Martin Gilbert (1936-2015) was a historian of Winston Churchill, the 20th Century, and Jewish history. He was a member of the Chilcot Inquiry into Britain's role in the Iraq War. His last book was *In Ishmael's House: A History of the Jews in Muslim Lands* (2010).

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

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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: Pre-State Israel

1897: FIRST ZIONIST CONGRESS

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 other prominent figures in the Zionist movement discussed and debated their vision for the establishment of a Jewish state.

WHY IT MATTERS:

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.

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

Why It Matters:

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

<p>establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.</p>	<p>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>
<p>1920: The League of Nations Mandate</p> <p>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>	<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>
<p>1920: Creation of the Haganah</p> <p>The Haganah was a Jewish paramilitary organization that played a significant role in the defense of Jewish communities in British Mandate Palestine.</p>	<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>
<p>1929: Hebron Massacre</p> <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>
<p>1930s: The Arab Revolt</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>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>The revolt involved widespread strikes, demonstrations, and acts of civil disobedience by Arab residents in the region. In response, the British authorities imposed curfews, conducted military operations, and arrested numerous Palestinian activists.</p>

<p>1936: Peel Commission</p> <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>
<p>1939: White Paper</p> <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 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>
<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 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>

EARLY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE ARABS AND JEWS

[WIKIPEDIA](#)

Demographics in Palestine^[12]

year	Jews	Arabs
1800	6,700	268,000
1880	24,000	525,000
1915	87,500	590,000
1931	174,000	837,000
1947	630,000	1,310,000

Gorny also distinguishes several important developments that had their bearing on the confrontation and the Zionists' attitude. Up to 1917, Zionism was tolerated as a national movement in the Ottoman Empire. After 1917, Palestine became a Mandate administrated by the British, and the right of the Jewish people to a national homeland in Palestine was recognised by the British and the League of Nations. In 1948, the state of Israel was established. Simultaneously, the Palestine problem became an ever more important subject for Jews, Arabs and the international

community. During this period the demographic balance changed from one Jew in every 23 inhabitants in 1880 to one Jew in every three inhabitants in 1947 (see table). Finally, Gorny says the uneven pace of Westernization gave the Jewish society a technological and organizational advantage. Jewish society was mainly urban, Arab society mainly rural.^[13]

In his book *Zionism and the Palestinians*, Flapan distinguishes six basic concepts of Zionism's policy toward the Arabs:

- (1) gradual build-up of an economic and military potential as the basis for achievement of political aims,
- (2) alliance with a great power external to the Middle East;
- (3) non-recognition of the existence of a Palestine national entity;
- (4) Zionism's civilising mission in an undeveloped area;
- (5) economic, social and cultural segregation as prerequisites for the renaissance of Jewish national life;
- (6) the concept of 'peace from strength'.^[14]

The [Franco-Syrian War](#) erupted in March 1920, as an attempt to establish an Arab Hashemite Kingdom in all of the Levant. In a number of notable incidents the war spilled into neighbouring [Mandatory Palestine](#), including the [Battle of Tel Hai](#) in March 1920. Further, in April 1920, Amin al-Husseini and other Arab leaders initiated the [1920 Jerusalem riots](#) where 10 people were killed and 250 others wounded. Several women were raped and two synagogues burned. Jews were particularly shocked by these events and viewed the events as a pogrom.^[18]

After the British had left Syria for the French, in July 1920, Faisal's [rule in Syria collapsed](#) and pan-Arab hopes in Palestine were dashed.^[19]

To review what happened go to

[*Timeline of intercommunal conflict in Mandatory Palestine*](#)

[*Intercommunal conflict in Mandatory Palestine*](#)

During the British rule in Mandatory Palestine, there was civil, political and armed struggle between [Palestinian Arabs](#) and the Jewish [Yishuv](#), beginning from the violent spillover of the [Franco-Syrian War](#) in 1920 and until the onset of the [1948 Arab–Israeli War](#). The conflict shifted from sectarian clashes in the 1920s and early 1930s to an armed [Arab Rebellion](#) against British rule in 1936, armed [Jewish Revolt](#) primarily against the British in mid-1940s and finally open [war](#) in November 1947 between Arabs and Jews.

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



Fact Check: AI Fakes in Israel's War Against Hamas

[DW News](#)

DW is a German Public Service



Israel-Gaza War: Fake News, Misinformation, Disinformation & How to Spot It | Explained

[ABC News in Depth](#)

ABC is an Australian Public Broadcast Service

THE HAMAS PREMISE

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.

(see [Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and the irredentist demand that Israel be destroyed](#))

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] (*From Jews, Muslims, and an “Origin Story” of the Arab-Israeli Conflict and ‘Doctrine of Hamas’*)

ISRAEL'S BRAVERY HAS EXPOSED THE LIE AT THE HEART OF STARMER'S FOREIGN POLICY

[TELEGRAPH](#) [Allister Heath](#) 18 September 2024 7:36pm

The battle Jerusalem faces is not just about defending the Jewish state. It is about upholding civilisation itself



Terrorist funerals
the Lebanese way:
Hezbollah bury four
of their dead
Wael Hamzeh/Shutterstock

Robbed of its moral bearings, bereft of any sense of right and wrong, incapable of distinguishing heroes from villains, the West can no longer celebrate when good triumphs over evil.

Israel's brilliantly audacious [booby-trapping of thousands of Hezbollah pagers](#), followed by the [blowing up of the terror group's walkie-talkies](#), is a stunning fillip for the forces of civilisation worldwide.

A tiny nation of just 9.3 million, of which 7.2 million are Jewish, living in a country the size of Wales, reeling from the worst anti-Semitic pogroms since the Holocaust, Israel is leading the war against barbarism, its young conscripts doing a job that would once have required intervention by a Western coalition acting as global policeman.

The fact that so many in Britain, Europe and America, especially the young, no longer take Israel's side in this existential combat exemplifies our cultural, intellectual and ethical degeneration.

The Biden administration is obsessed with preventing "escalation", even though that is what is required if Iran is to be stopped from gaining the means to wage a nuclear World War III. All too predictably, America, seemingly determined to ensure the survival of every regional terror group, appeared upset at the successful attack on Hezbollah. David Lammy, our foreign secretary, is delivering speeches claiming climate change is a worse threat than terrorism; in a rational world, Lammy would be privately congratulating his Israeli counterparts for the most successful surgical operation ever conducted against a terrorist organisation, with few civilian casualties, and pledging Britain's help.

Instead, Keir Starmer has turned against Israel, banning the sales of some weapons – a policy that Germany appears intent on following – and refusing to oppose lawsuits against the Jewish state, in an unforgivable moral inversion.

Labour has placed Britain on the side of those nihilists masquerading as human rights lawyers who negate the essential distinction between victims and aggressors, between rule-bound, democracies desperate to minimise civilian casualties, and bloodthirsty dictatorships for whom their people are pawns to be sacrificed.

Hezbollah is funded and controlled by the Iranian regime, an obscurantist, fascistic, millenarian tyranny that persecutes minorities, women and dissidents. Violating human rights and plotting war crimes is Hezbollah's *raison d'être*: its 150,000 missiles point towards civilian centres and, like Hamas and Iran itself, it seeks Israel's liquidation, guaranteeing the massacre, expulsion or subjugation of Jews. Hezbollah has forced some 63,473 Israelis to flee their homes since October 7. This is unsustainable and explains why a major Israeli response is looming; obscenely, this will trigger widespread condemnation of the Jewish state.

Western foreign policy is a mishmash of cowardice, delusion and contradictions. Iran is a threat to the world; its alliance with Russia is deepening. Turkey, led by the despot Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has threatened Israel with invasion, yet remains part of Nato. Qatar, which puts up senior Hamas terrorists in luxury hotels, is a major non-Nato ally of the US, home to a crucial Western military base and a major investor in London. Egypt, a recipient of US aid, has tolerated myriad tunnels to southern Gaza, refused to let in any Palestinians and, bizarrely, is not held responsible for supplying Gaza with provisions, that task falling to Israel. None of the three latter regimes face sanctions: global ire is reserved for Israel.

One reason Western elites have become so Israelophobic is that, infected by wokery, they increasingly loathe Europe's and America's history and traditions, and view the Jewish state as a standout example of a Western model they reject.

Winston Churchill would be convicted for crimes against humanity today, as would Franklin D Roosevelt and Harry Truman. D-Day would be ruled illegitimate because so many French civilians died during the Battle of Normandy.

Democracies might as well not bother with nuclear weapons, for detonating one, even in retaliation for an unprovoked attack, would be deemed a war crime. I'm in favour of much stricter rules than those governing World War II, of doing everything possible to protect civilians, but this is madness.

The Just War is a foundational principle. States have the right to defend themselves. Every civilian life lost as collateral damage is a tragedy, but pacifism is a deluded utopia that fails to grasp the reality of the human condition. It is madness to criminalise all warfare, and despicable to focus on that conducted by democracies and ignore that advanced by our enemies.

It is equally stupid to entrust so much power to legal activists. Much historic anti-Semitism has been ratified by kangaroo courts, including during the 1930s. The Trial of the Talmud took place in France in 1240, with rabbis forced to defend religious texts against trumped-up accusations of blasphemy and obscenity.

Other bigot-fests masquerading as ordinary trials include the Disputations of Barcelona and Tortosa, the Damascus Affair, the Dreyfus affair that prompted Emile Zola's seminal *J'accuse*, and the trial of Mendel Beilis in Ukraine in 1913. It is a well-established model that hasn't gone out of fashion in far-Left quarters. They no longer explicitly single out religious beliefs or individuals but leverage lawfare to delegitimise what just happens to be the only Jewish state.

The fact that the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice have the trappings of a legitimate legal setting does not mean they necessarily embody justice. The fact that their rulings are deemed legitimate by Left-wing elites doesn't automatically make them such. The fact that today's blood libels take on the language of "human rights" doesn't make them less monstrous. The fact that it is possible for a country as unjustly governed as South Africa to lead a genocide case against Israel proves that the entire system is rotten. The case is backed by Iran, Brazil's far-Left president, Ireland and Egypt: we must Israel is the supreme embodiment of law-bound national, democratic sovereignty, of peoplehood, of matching a nation to a state, of post-imperialism, of capitalism and technology, and of the continued relevance of the monotheistic religions. If you tear down Israel, you destroy the very ideas that underpin the West, the international order implodes and the autocracies triumph.

The stakes are thus unbelievably high. We must support Israel, and allow it to finish the job of annihilating Hamas and defeating Hezbollah.

PART A

INTRODUCTION

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

GO ALSO TO

TIMELINE (1881-1948) OF INTERCOMMUNAL CONFLICT IN MANDATORY PALESTINE [WIKIPEDIA](#)

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](#)

1897- 1947: PRE- STATE ISRAEL

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,

Why It Matters:

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

1897: First Zionist Congress	<p>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 other prominent figures in the Zionist movement discussed and debated their vision for the establishment of a Jewish state.</p>	<p>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>
1917: The Balfour Declaration	<p>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>	<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	<p>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>	<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	<p>The Haganah was a Jewish paramilitary organization that played a significant role in the defense of Jewish communities in British Mandate Palestine.</p>	<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>

<p>1936: Peel Commission</p>	<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>
<p>1939: White Paper</p>	<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 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>
<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>

1948: Israel's War of Independence	<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 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>
1956: Suez Crisis (Sinai War)	<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, event leading to the 1967 Six-Day War.</p>

1964: Creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization	<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 Palestinian movement until his death in 2004. Mahmoud Abbas succeeded him.</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>
1967: Six-Day War	<p>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>	<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	<p>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>	<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 1985 Achille Lauro hijacking, among others.</p>
1973: Yom Kippur War (October War)	<p>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>	<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>

<p>1979: Camp David Accords - Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel</p>	<p>Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty, leading to Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula.</p>	<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>
<p>1982-PRESENT: PEACE PROCESS AND TERRORISM</p> <p>1982: First Lebanon War</p>	<p>The First Lebanon War, also known as the 1982 Lebanon War, was a military conflict in 1982 between Israel and 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>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 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</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>

	political progress toward a Palestinian state.	
1991: Madrid Peace Conference	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>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>
1993: Oslo Accords	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>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>

1994: Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty	<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>
1995: Assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin	<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>
2000-2005: Second Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada)	<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</p>

		officially ended around 2005, but its consequences continue to shape the region's political landscape.
2005: Israel Withdraws from the Gaza Strip	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>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>
2006: Second Lebanon War	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 southern Lebanon.	<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, 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.</p>

<p>2007: Hamas Takes Control of Gaza</p>	<p>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>	<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>
<p>2007: Annapolis Conference</p>	<p>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 the conference.</p>	<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 given his side the equivalent of 100 percent of the disputed lands under discussion.</p>

2008-2009: Operation Cast Lead (Gaza War)	<p>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>	<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	<p>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>	<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	<p>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>	<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 missile defense system as well as bomb shelters and a civilian alert</p>

		system in Israel. It also renewed international criticism of Israeli policies, including questions over disproportionate force by human rights groups.
2014: Operation Protective Edge	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>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>
2020: Peace to Prosperity Plan	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 in June 2019 at a conference in Bahrain, that promised \$50 billion in new investment for Palestinians.	<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 decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017.</p>

<p>2020: Abraham Accords</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>2021: May Conflict in Gaza</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Why It Matters:</p> <p>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>
<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</p>

		continued into 2023 in both Gaza and the West Bank
2023: Operation Shield and Arrow	<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>
<p>Everything You Need to Know About Rafah, Its Importance to Hamas, and Protecting Its Civilian Population</p>	<p>May 24, 2024</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Latest Updates:</p> <p>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</p>	

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.”

GAZA WAR - FRIENDLY AND OPPOSITE COUNTRIES TO ISRAEL

ChatGPT AI 21 July 2024

ATTITUDES OF ARAB COUNTRIES TOWARD ISRAEL, INCLUDING BOTH FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AND THOSE MAINTAINING OPPOSITION, WITH DETAILED CONTEXT ON HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND PUBLIC SENTIMENT FACTORS.

FRIENDLY ARAB COUNTRIES

Egypt

- **Historical Context:** Egypt was the first Arab country to recognize Israel officially, signing the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in 1979, following the Camp David Accords mediated by US President Jimmy Carter. This landmark agreement ended the state of war that had existed since Israel's creation in 1948 and returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, which Israel had captured during the Six-Day War in 1967.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** Egypt and Israel maintain embassies in each other's capitals, and diplomatic relations are stable. Security cooperation is a key aspect of their relationship, especially in combating terrorism in the Sinai Peninsula and maintaining the peace treaty's provisions.
- **Economic Ties:** Trade between the two countries includes natural gas, agricultural products, and textiles. The Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) allow Egyptian companies to export products to the US duty-free if they contain a certain percentage of Israeli content. These economic ties are significant, though not as extensive as those with Western countries.
- **Public Sentiment:** Public opinion in Egypt remains largely negative toward Israel, influenced by historical conflicts and solidarity with Palestinians. Egyptian media and political discourse often reflect this sentiment. Nonetheless, the Egyptian government's pragmatic approach ensures the peace treaty and cooperation continue.

Jordan

- **Historical Context:** Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, making it the second Arab country to officially recognize Israel. This followed the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO, which paved the way for Jordan to negotiate its peace terms.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** The countries have embassies and cooperate closely on security matters, particularly in the Jordan Valley and along their shared border. The treaty includes provisions for economic cooperation and resource sharing, especially concerning water.
- **Economic Ties:** Economic cooperation includes joint tourism initiatives, energy agreements, and infrastructure projects. The Jordan Gateway industrial park is an example of joint economic ventures, promoting cross-border trade and investment.

- **Public Sentiment:** Despite official ties, many Jordanians oppose normalization due to the large Palestinian population in Jordan and ongoing tensions over Jerusalem and Palestinian rights. Public protests and political opposition highlight the underlying discontent.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- **Historical Context:** The UAE normalized relations with Israel in 2020 as part of the Abraham Accords, brokered by the US. This marked a significant geopolitical shift, driven by mutual concerns over Iran's influence and the potential for economic cooperation.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** The UAE and Israel quickly established embassies and consulates, with high-level diplomatic visits becoming routine. This normalization has been one of the most visible in terms of public diplomacy.
- **Economic Ties:** The countries have signed numerous agreements covering sectors like technology, healthcare, agriculture, and tourism. Trade between the UAE and Israel has surged, with joint ventures in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and renewable energy.
- **Public Sentiment:** While there is some opposition among the UAE's population, the government focuses on the economic and technological benefits of the relationship. The public sentiment is generally more accepting compared to other Arab countries.

Bahrain

- **Historical Context:** Bahrain normalized relations with Israel in 2020 under the Abraham Accords, driven by strategic interests, including security concerns about Iran.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** Diplomatic ties were quickly established, with embassies and regular high-level visits.
- **Economic Ties:** Cooperation includes financial services, technology, healthcare, and cybersecurity. Bahraini companies are increasingly exploring opportunities in Israel, and vice versa.
- **Public Sentiment:** Public opinion in Bahrain is mixed, with some segments of society opposing normalization due to solidarity with the Palestinians. The government, however, emphasizes the benefits of peace and cooperation.

Morocco

- **Historical Context:** Morocco established diplomatic relations with Israel in 2020. This move was partly incentivized by US recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** Diplomatic missions were opened, and high-level visits have facilitated bilateral cooperation.
- **Economic Ties:** Areas of cooperation include tourism, agriculture, water management, and renewable energy. There is significant interest in Israeli technology and innovation.

- **Public Sentiment:** The Moroccan public has mixed feelings about normalization. Historical ties due to the Moroccan Jewish community in Israel play a role, but there is also strong support for Palestinian rights.

Sudan

- **Historical Context:** Sudan agreed to normalize relations with Israel in 2020, part of a broader effort to reintegrate into the international community and secure economic aid, including removal from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** The process of establishing full diplomatic ties is ongoing, influenced by Sudan's complex political transition.
- **Economic Ties:** Potential areas of cooperation include agriculture, technology, and economic development. Sudan hopes to benefit from Israeli expertise and investment.
- **Public Sentiment:** There is significant opposition within Sudan to normalization, driven by support for the Palestinian cause and political factions resistant to change.

COUNTRIES SUPPORT TO HAMAS

IRAN

- **Historical Context:** Iran's support for Hamas dates back to the early 1990s, following Hamas' establishment in 1987 during the First Intifada. Iran views Hamas as a critical ally in its resistance axis against Israel and the United States.
- **Financial Support:** Iran provides substantial financial assistance to Hamas, which is crucial for its military operations and governance in Gaza. This funding helps Hamas pay salaries, procure weapons, and maintain its social services network.
- **Military Training and Weapons:** Iran supplies Hamas with advanced weaponry, including rockets, drones, and other military equipment. Iranian military advisors and members of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) provide training to Hamas fighters, helping them enhance their combat capabilities.
- **Political Support:** Iran supports Hamas politically by recognizing it as a legitimate resistance movement against Israeli occupation. This support includes diplomatic backing in international forums and media campaigns to bolster Hamas' image.
- **Strategic Implications:** Iran's support for Hamas is part of its broader strategy to extend its influence in the region and counter Israeli and US policies. By supporting Hamas, Iran also gains a foothold in the Palestinian territories, challenging rivals such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Countries Against Normalization with Israel

- **Historical Context:** Algeria has a long history of opposition to Israel, rooted in its anti-colonial stance and strong support for Palestinian self-determination. Algeria has consistently supported Palestinian militant groups and opposed any form of normalization.
 - **Diplomatic Relations:** No formal diplomatic relations exist between Algeria and Israel. Algeria strongly opposes normalization and supports Palestinian rights.
 - **Public Sentiment:** There is widespread support for the Palestinian cause and strong opposition to any form of normalization with Israel, influenced by historical anti-colonial sentiment.
-
- **Historical Context:** Lebanon and Israel have been technically at war since 1948, with no formal diplomatic relations. The presence and influence of Hezbollah, a powerful political and militant group in Lebanon, which opposes Israel, perpetuates hostilities.
 - **Diplomatic Relations:** Non-existent. Border tensions and periodic conflicts, especially in southern Lebanon, perpetuate hostilities.
 - **Public Sentiment:** Highly negative toward Israel, influenced by the presence of Palestinian refugees, historical conflicts, and the influence of Hezbollah.
-
- **Historical Context:** Syria and Israel have been in a state of conflict since Israel's establishment, primarily over territorial disputes including the Golan Heights, which Israel captured in 1967 and annexed in 1981.
 - **Diplomatic Relations:** No formal diplomatic relations. The Golan Heights remains a contentious issue, and Syria remains hostile toward Israel.
 - **Public Sentiment:** Public sentiment is largely hostile due to territorial disputes, historical enmity, and the ongoing civil war.
-
- **Historical Context:** Iraq has a history of hostility towards Israel, including participation in wars against Israel and support for Palestinian militant groups. The government maintains a policy of non-recognition.
 - **Diplomatic Relations:** No formal diplomatic relations and strong opposition to normalization.
 - **Public Sentiment:** Largely hostile, driven by historical conflicts, solidarity with the Palestinians, and regional political dynamics.
-
- **Historical Context:** Libya under Muammar Gaddafi was staunchly anti-Israel. Since Gaddafi's fall, the country's political fragmentation precludes any coherent foreign policy regarding Israel.
 - **Diplomatic Relations:** No formal relations. Different factions hold varying views, but overall, Libya remains opposed to normalization.
 - **Public Sentiment:** Varies among factions, but generally negative toward Israel, influenced by the country's political instability and historical positions.

- **Historical Context:** Tunisia has maintained a position of support for Palestinian rights and has not pursued normalization with Israel. Tunisia occasionally hosts multilateral meetings involving Israel but remains officially opposed to normalization.
 - **Diplomatic Relations:** No formal diplomatic relations. Tunisia has participated in international forums where Israel is present but remains opposed to formal normalization.
 - **Public Sentiment:** Strong opposition to normalization, influenced by historical and cultural solidarity with the Palestinian cause.
-
- **Historical Context:** While Qatar does not have formal diplomatic relations with Israel, it has maintained unofficial ties and pragmatic engagements, particularly involving humanitarian efforts in Gaza and indirect negotiations with Hamas.
 - **Diplomatic Relations:** Unofficial ties, primarily involving humanitarian aid and indirect negotiations.
 - **Public Sentiment:** Generally supportive of Palestinian rights, with opposition to formal normalization. Qatar balances its pragmatic engagements with strong public support for the Palestinian cause.
-
- **Historical Context:** Qatar's support for Hamas intensified in the mid-2000s after Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006 and took control of Gaza in 2007. Qatar's approach aligns with its broader foreign policy of supporting Islamist movements and expanding its regional influence.
 - **Financial Support:** Qatar provides significant financial aid to Gaza, including hundreds of millions of dollars for infrastructure projects, humanitarian aid, and direct cash assistance to families. This financial support is vital for maintaining basic services and rebuilding efforts in Gaza.
 - **Diplomatic and Political Support:** Qatar hosts several senior Hamas leaders, including political bureau members. The Qatari government facilitates international diplomacy on behalf of Hamas, including mediating ceasefire agreements with Israel.
 - **Humanitarian Assistance:** Qatar funds numerous humanitarian projects in Gaza, such as hospitals, schools, and housing. This aid improves living conditions in Gaza and indirectly strengthens Hamas' governance.
 - **Strategic Implications:** By supporting Hamas, Qatar aims to bolster its regional standing and counterbalance the influence of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. This support aligns with Qatar's broader strategy of backing various Islamist movements across the region.

Historical Context: Syria was a strong supporter of Hamas for many years, offering a haven for its leadership and logistical support. The relationship soured during the Syrian civil war, as Hamas opposed the Assad regime's brutal crackdown on opposition forces, leading to a temporary rupture.

- **Breakdown and Reconciliation:** Hamas' decision to support the Sunni opposition in Syria strained relations with the Assad regime. Recently, there have been reconciliation efforts, with Hamas leaders expressing a desire to restore ties with Syria, facilitated by Iran and Hezbollah.
- **Potential Future Support:** If fully reconciled, Syria could again provide a strategic base for Hamas operations and facilitate military and logistical support through its alliance with Iran and Hezbollah.
- **Strategic Implications:** Restoring relations with Hamas would strengthen the "axis of resistance" comprising Iran, Hezbollah, and Syria, enhancing their collective influence against Israel and US interests in the region.

LEBANON (HEZBOLLAH)

- **Historical Context:** Hezbollah, a Shia militant group and political party in Lebanon backed by Iran, has supported Hamas for decades. The relationship is based on mutual opposition to Israel and shared strategic goals.
- **Military Training and Weapons:** Hezbollah provides military training to Hamas fighters, leveraging its extensive experience in guerrilla warfare and asymmetric tactics. Hezbollah also facilitates the transfer of Iranian weapons to Hamas.
- **Political Alliance:** Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, frequently expresses solidarity with Hamas, highlighting their common struggle against Israel. This alliance is part of the broader Iran-led "axis of resistance."
- **Strategic Implications:** Hezbollah's support for Hamas strengthens the operational capabilities of both groups against Israel. This alliance also amplifies Iran's influence in the region, posing a strategic challenge to Israel and its allies.

TURKEY

- **Historical Context:** Turkey's support for Hamas has grown under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, particularly after the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations following the 2010 Gaza flotilla raid. Erdoğan's government views Hamas as a legitimate political actor and a key player in Palestinian politics.
- **Political Support:** Turkey provides political backing to Hamas, recognizing it as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Turkish leaders often criticize Israeli policies in Gaza and advocate for Hamas' inclusion in peace negotiations.
- **Diplomatic Haven:** Turkey hosts several Hamas leaders, providing them with a platform to conduct political and diplomatic activities. This support includes facilitating international travel and meetings with foreign diplomats.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** Turkey channels significant humanitarian aid to Gaza, supporting various projects in health, education, and infrastructure. This aid helps alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and indirectly supports Hamas' governance.

- **Strategic Implications:** Turkey's support for Hamas enhances its influence in Palestinian affairs and aligns with its broader regional ambitions. By backing Hamas, Turkey positions itself as a key player in the Middle East and strengthens its ties with other Islamist movements.

YEMEN, IRAQ, AND ISRAEL WITH FOCUS ON THE RED SEA

YEMEN

- **Historical Context:** Yemen has historically taken a strong stance against Israel, supporting the Palestinian cause and aligning with broader Arab nationalist movements. This hostility stems from Yemen's involvement in the broader Arab-Israeli conflict and its solidarity with Palestinian aspirations.
- **Houthis' Stance:** The Houthi movement (Ansar Allah), which controls significant portions of Yemen, including the capital Sanaa, maintains a vehemently anti-Israel stance. They regularly issue statements condemning Israel and express strong solidarity with the Palestinian cause. The Houthis' slogan, "Death to Israel," highlights their extreme opposition.
- **Iranian Influence:** Iran's backing of the Houthis has intensified Yemen's anti-Israel stance. Iran provides the Houthis with military training, weapons, and financial assistance, aligning their interests with Iran's broader regional strategy, which includes opposition to Israel.
- **Public Sentiment:** Public opinion in Yemen is overwhelmingly hostile to Israel, driven by a combination of historical conflicts, solidarity with the Palestinians, and pervasive anti-Israel propaganda in media and education.
- **Strategic Importance of the Red Sea:** The Red Sea is a critical strategic waterway for global maritime trade and regional security. Yemen's location along the Red Sea, particularly its control over parts of the Bab al-Mandab Strait, gives it significant strategic importance. The Houthis have used their position to threaten shipping routes, including through the use of missiles and maritime mines, which could affect Israeli interests and global trade routes. The Bab al-Mandab Strait is a key chokepoint between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, making it crucial for energy shipments and military logistics.
- **Red Sea Security:** The instability in Yemen poses a significant threat to the security of the Red Sea. The Houthis' control over parts of Yemen's coast and their ability to disrupt shipping routes impacts regional security dynamics. The Red Sea's strategic importance to Israel, particularly in terms of maritime security and trade routes, means that any instability in Yemen could have direct implications for Israeli security and economic interests.
- **Strategic Implications:** Yemen's opposition to Israel and its strategic location along the Red Sea align it with other anti-Israel actors, such as Iran and Hezbollah. This alignment enhances the Houthis' ability to project power in the region and disrupt Israeli and Western interests in the Red Sea.

IRAQ

- **Historical Context:** Iraq has maintained a hostile stance toward Israel since the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948. Iraq participated in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the 1973 Yom Kippur War, reflecting its long-standing opposition to Israel.
- **Government and Militia Stance:** The Iraqi government does not recognize Israel and maintains a policy of non-engagement. Various Shia militia groups in Iraq, backed by Iran, are staunchly opposed to Israel and support Palestinian militant groups. These militias, such as Kata'ib Hezbollah and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, have expressed willingness to confront Israel militarily. In 2022, the Iraqi parliament passed a law criminalizing normalization with Israel, reflecting strong legislative opposition to any form of engagement.
- **Public Sentiment:** Iraqi public opinion is predominantly hostile toward Israel, driven by historical conflicts, solidarity with Palestinians, and the influence of political and religious leaders who propagate anti-Israel rhetoric.
- **Strategic Importance of the Red Sea:** While Iraq does not have a direct coastline on the Red Sea, its regional alliances and geopolitical influence extend to the area. The stability and security of the Red Sea are of strategic importance to Iraq, particularly through its alliances with Iran and other regional actors who have interests in the Red Sea.
- **Regional Influence and Alliances:** Iraq's opposition to Israel aligns it with Iran and other anti-Israel factions in the region. This alliance strengthens the geopolitical axis against Israel and the United States, with implications for regional security and trade routes in the Red Sea.
- **Strategic Implications:** Iraq's anti-Israel stance, combined with its strategic alliances, impacts the broader Middle Eastern geopolitical landscape. The support of Iranian-backed militias in Iraq for Palestinian causes and opposition to Israel aligns with broader efforts to challenge Israeli and Western influence in the region.

Yemen's Opposition to Israel and Red Sea Security:

- **Houthi's Control:** The Houthis' control over parts of Yemen, including strategic coastal areas along the Red Sea, poses significant threats to maritime security and global trade routes.
- **Iranian Influence:** Iran's support for the Houthis enhances their military capabilities and their ability to disrupt shipping routes in the Red Sea, impacting Israeli interests.
- **Strategic Location:** Yemen's location along the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait gives it critical strategic importance, influencing regional security dynamics and international maritime trade.

Iraq's Opposition to Israel and Regional Alliances:

- **Government and Militia Stance:** Iraq's government and Iranian-backed militias maintain strong opposition to Israel, supported by legislative actions criminalizing normalization.

- **Public Sentiment:** Iraqi public opinion is overwhelmingly hostile toward Israel, influenced by historical conflicts and anti-Israel rhetoric.
- **Regional Influence:** Iraq's alliances with Iran and other anti-Israel actors extend its influence to the Red Sea region, impacting regional security and geopolitical dynamics.

The opposition of Yemen and Iraq to Israel is deeply rooted in historical, political, and ideological factors. Their strategic locations and regional alliances significantly influence the broader Middle Eastern geopolitical landscape, particularly in the context of the Red Sea's security and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.

Overland Transport to Israel Avoiding the Red Sea

Transporting goods to Israel while avoiding the Red Sea involves navigating through several countries in the Middle East. This route needs to take into account the political and security landscape of the region. Here's a detailed look at potential overland routes to Israel:

1. Via Jordan

- **Route:** Goods can be transported through various routes in the region, but one primary overland route to Israel involves moving goods through Jordan.
- **Steps:**
 1. **From the Gulf States (e.g., UAE, Saudi Arabia):** Goods can be transported by road from the Gulf States through Saudi Arabia to Jordan.
 2. **Saudi Arabia to Jordan:** The goods would travel northward through Saudi Arabia, entering Jordan.
 3. **Jordan to Israel:** The final leg involves crossing from Jordan into Israel. The most common entry point is the Allenby Bridge (King Hussein Bridge) which connects Jordan to the West Bank, and from there into Israel.

2. Via Lebanon

- **Route:** Given the current political and security situation, this route is less feasible, but theoretically, goods could pass through Syria into Lebanon, and then into Israel.
- **Steps:**
 1. **From Turkey:** Goods can be transported south through Turkey.
 2. **Turkey to Syria:** The goods would enter Syria.
 3. **Syria to Lebanon:** From Syria, goods would move west into Lebanon.
 4. **Lebanon to Israel:** Finally, goods would cross from Lebanon into northern Israel. This route, however, is highly unlikely due to the lack of diplomatic relations and ongoing hostilities between Israel and Lebanon.

3. Via Egypt (Avoiding Red Sea Ports)

- **Route:** Goods can be transported overland through Egypt to reach Israel.
- **Steps:**

1. **From Sudan:** Goods can be transported northward from Sudan into Egypt.
2. **Egypt to Israel:** The goods would then travel through Egypt's road networks to the Sinai Peninsula and cross into Israel at the Taba border crossing near Eilat.

Feasibility and Considerations

- **Security and Political Climate:**

- The primary and most feasible route is through Jordan, given the established peace treaty and trade agreements between Jordan and Israel.
- The routes involving Syria and Lebanon are currently impractical due to the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Lebanon's hostile stance towards Israel.
- The route through Egypt is possible but involves a long overland journey and requires navigating the Sinai Peninsula, which has had security concerns due to militant activity.

- **Logistical Challenges:**

- **Customs and Border Controls:** Cross-border trade involves navigating complex customs regulations and potential delays at border crossings.
- **Road Conditions:** The quality of roads and infrastructure can vary significantly, affecting transit times and the safety of goods.
- **Transport Costs:** Overland transport may be more expensive and time-consuming compared to maritime routes, particularly when traversing multiple countries.

Detailed Route Example: Gulf States to Israel via Jordan

1. **From the UAE or Saudi Arabia:**

- Goods are loaded onto trucks and transported northwest towards Saudi Arabia's border with Jordan.

2. **Saudi Arabia to Jordan:**

- The trucks travel through major highways in Saudi Arabia, such as the route passing through Riyadh towards the Jordanian border.
- Cross into Jordan at border points such as the Al-Haditha border crossing.

3. **Jordan to Israel:**

- In Jordan, goods travel via the desert highway towards Amman.
- From Amman, goods are transported west to the Allenby Bridge (King Hussein Bridge) border crossing.
- Cross into the West Bank and from there into Israel.

Conclusion

Transporting goods to Israel while avoiding the Red Sea primarily involves overland routes through Jordan, given the geopolitical realities and existing infrastructure. Routes through Lebanon and Syria are currently unfeasible due to security and political reasons. The Egyptian

route is an alternative but involves navigating through regions with security concerns. The route via Jordan remains the most viable option, balancing political feasibility, security, and logistical considerations.

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 & Betrayals](#)

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'.

YEMINI: JEWISH 'NAKBA' WAS WORSE THAN THE ARAB

[POINT OF NO RETURN](#) *between on 1 August 2024*

Jews lost property valued at \$9 billion, has declared Ben-Dror Yemini, who coined the expression 'Jewish *nakba*'. Speaking in May 2024 at Touro university during an international conference on Jews from Arab countries, the journalist, researcher and author of *The industry of lies* said that he doubted if Jewish refugees would get compensation under international human rights law. His presentation begins at 1:32 minutes into the recording:

"People who talk about the Palestinian *nakba* have no idea about the Jewish *nakba*", Ben Dror Yemini said. "It was worse in many respects."

Ben-Dror Yemini coined the expression 'Jewish *nakba*' about five years ago to refer to the persecution and pogroms which caused 850,000 Jews to flee Arab countries.

His Yemenite grandparents came to Israel not as 'colonists' but fleeing the Orphan's Decree after WWI.

This decreed that a child which lost its Jewish parents had to be brought up as a Muslim.

Some 70 million refugees worldwide were created as a result of nationalist wars in the 20th century, Yemini claimed. All refugee crisis were settled by an exchange of populations, except for one – the Palestinian.

Yemini gave several examples of Arab leaders declaring their intention to destroy Jews not just in Palestine, but across the Arab world. The lost Jewish property and assets were worth \$9 billion, as against \$6 billion in Palestinian losses.

There was a beginning of recognition for the rights of the Jewish refugees by President Jimmy Carter*, an unlikely Zionist.

Yemini said that Palestinian refugees did not deserve compensation because they had started a war of extermination. "People who attack do not have a right of compensation. Don't ask us to apologise," he said. Jews did not declare war – they did deserve compensation. "However, let's not delude ourselves", he said. The Jews would not get compensation because they had spent so many years outside their countries. He claimed that Turkish refugee from Cyprus had been deemed not entitled to compensation under international law.

Other speakers at the conference included Prof Michael Lasker, Haim Saadon, Sarina Roffe, Dr Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah, Dr Stanley Urman and Dr Henry Abramson.

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

(Editors Note

Noun **demonym** (*plural* demonyms) Wiktionary

A name for an inhabitant or native of a specific place, usually derived from the name of the place.

1. *Why is it that people from the United States use American as their **demonym**?*

Adjective Wiktionary

onomastic (*not* comparable)

1. Of or relating to a personal or place name.
2. Of or relating to onomastics.

Derived terms

- onomastics

Related terms

- onomastician)

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 *Millet*s, which is to say non-Muslim *Dhimmi* peoples or "lesser nations," living on sufferance in the "the abode of Islam." Those *Millet*s, 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 *Millet*s' 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."^[3] 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.^[4] 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.^[5]

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), Beiruti (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

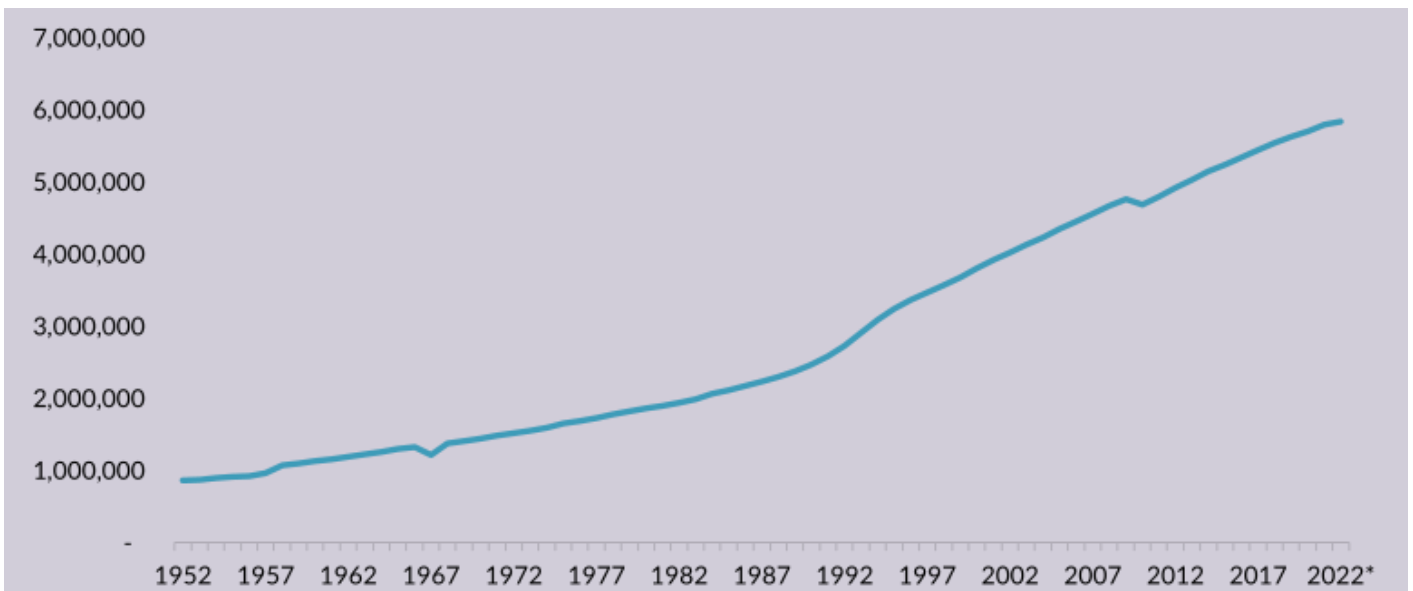
[**MPI \(MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE\)**](#) **MAY 3, 2023** By Nathan Citino, Ana Martín Gil, and Kelsey P. Norman

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.

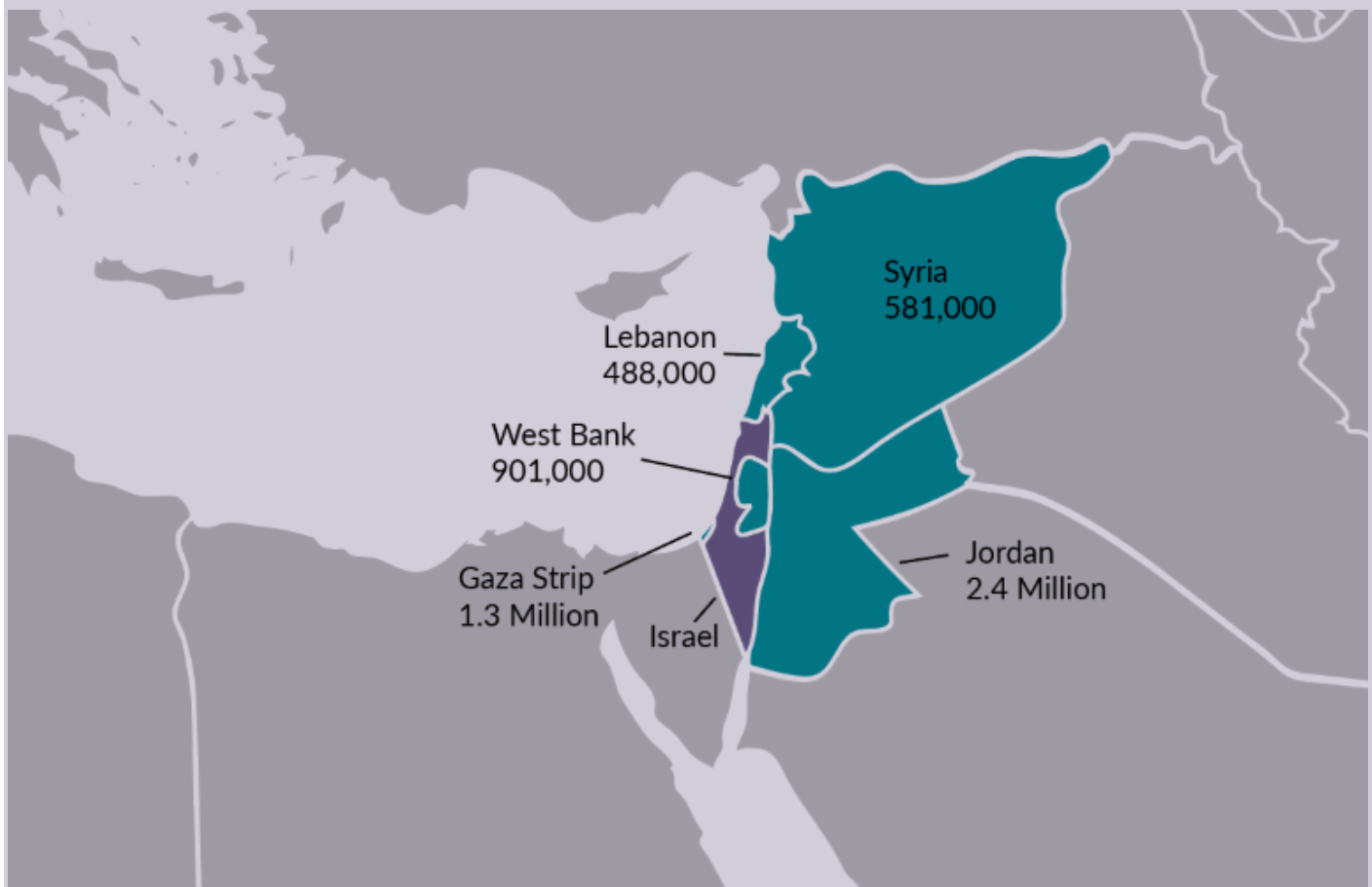
In the civil war that erupted following the partition vote, Arab and Jewish forces clashed in anticipation of British withdrawal. Palestinian Arabs lacked the Zionists' unity and resources and were reliant on an undersupplied Arab Liberation Army backed by regional states. In anticipation of an invasion, 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.

THE ROAD TO OCTOBER 7: HAMAS' LONG GAME, CLARIFIED

COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER AT WEST POINT

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2023, VOLUME 16, ISSUE 10 [DEVORAH MARGOLIN](#), [MATTHEW LEVITT](#)



Abstract: When Hamas took over the Gaza Strip by force of arms in 2007, it faced an ideological crisis. It could focus on governing Gaza and addressing the needs of the Palestinian people, or it could use the Gaza Strip as a springboard from which to attack Israel. Even then, Hamas understood these two goals were mutually exclusive. And while some anticipated Hamas would moderate, or at least be co-opted by the demands of governing, it did not. Instead, Hamas invested in efforts to radicalize society and build the militant infrastructure necessary to someday launch the kind of attack that in its view could contribute to the destruction of Israel. This article explores the road from Hamas' 2007 takeover of Gaza to the October 2023 massacre.

The brutal Hamas-led October 7 attack on Israeli communities near Gaza represented a tactical paradigm shift for the group, which was previously known for firing rockets at Israel, carrying out suicide bombings targeting city buses or cafes, and conducting roadside attacks and shootings on restaurants and bars. October 7 was something different. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, after viewing evidence of the attackers' brutality, said that it "brings to mind the worst of ISIS."¹ The Secretary was painfully blunt in

describing the attack: “Babies slaughtered. Bodies desecrated. Young people burned alive. Women raped. Parents executed in front of their children, children in front of their parents.”

The group’s explicit targeted killing and kidnapping of civilians baldly contradicts Hamas’ articulated revised political strategy since it took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007.¹ Ironically, Hamas’ sharp tactical shift only underscores that the group never abandoned its fundamental commitment to the creation of an Islamist state in all of what it considers historical Palestine and the destruction of Israel.²

Moreover, Hamas has always described itself as a resistance organization, pushing back firmly against the ‘terrorist’ designation Israel, the United States, the European Union, and many others apply to the group. But by any measure, the October 7 attack is one of the worst acts of international terrorism on record. Thousands of Hamas operatives, aided by small numbers of terrorists from other groups such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad, murdered some 1,200 people in Israel,³ wounded thousands, and took at least 240 hostages with nationals from more than 40 countries.³

As such, the Hamas massacre demands a re-examination of a critical point in Hamas history: its 2007 takeover of the Gaza Strip by force of arms aimed at fellow Palestinians, and its initiation of its governance project in Gaza. Despite wide-held beliefs that the shift to governance led to a more moderate Hamas, it is now clear that Hamas did not moderate—nor was it co-opted by the responsibility of providing public services to its constituents—but rather it prioritized building and maintaining its militant and terrorist capabilities. The October 7 attack obliterates all Hamas claims to legitimacy as a political actor.

This article will explore where Hamas came from, how the group used its governance to further its long-term goals, and how the group played a long game, obfuscating its commitment to employing violence to replace the State of Israel with an Islamist Palestinian state in all of what the group considers historic Palestine.

BACKGROUND: FOUNDED IN VIOLENCE, DRIVEN FROM THE BOTTOM UP

Founded in 1987, *Harakat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya*, commonly known as Hamas, emerged out of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine, where it gained popularity among Palestinians through its extensive social services.⁴ The group released its first official statement as Hamas on December 14, 1987,⁴ before publishing its organizational charter through the Islamic Association for Palestine, a Hamas front organization in Chicago, in August 1988.⁵ The group’s charter outlined its connection to the Muslim Brotherhood,⁶ highlighted its focus on Palestine, nationalism, and Islamic law (sharia),⁷ and underscored the group’s fundamental rejection of any negotiations with Israel. For Hamas, only through violence—specifically jihad—could the group achieve its goal: the complete destruction of Israel and creation in its place of an Islamist state in all of historic Palestine.⁸ Hamas’ charter also conflated Jews with Israel, and is ripe with historical anti-Semitic tropes.⁹ Hamas’ official debut corresponded with a growing discontent among many Palestinians with the failed Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), an umbrella organization dominating Palestinian politics at the time.¹⁰

Its Muslim Brotherhood roots are a vital part of understanding who Hamas is as an organization, and how it seeks to garner support—both internally and externally. Specifically, its *modus operandi* has focused on revolution-from-below, participating in aspects of the modern political systems, including its eventual participation in the 2006 Palestinian elections, in order to create a government one day ruled by sharia.¹¹ In

doing so, Hamas seeks to frame its “Islamization” of society as a “choice,” driven by the populous that lives under it. Despite this framing, Hamas has used violence and pressure countless times on civilian populations in order to achieve its goals of a ‘traditional’ Islamic society.

The spiritual founder of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, rejected the idea that Hamas’ political and social wings were separate from its military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades: “We cannot separate the wing from the body. If we do so, the body will not be able to fly. Hamas is one body.”¹² Hamas itself sees three areas of the group’s activity—political, social and charitable, and military—as mutually reinforcing. Each of these areas serve to benefit the other, and all are aimed at furthering the group’s overarching goal of creating a culture of resistance and destroying Israel.¹³ As such, Hamas deemed the mingling of funds given to the group as legitimate, as it considers the social services it provides a jihadi extension of its terrorist attacks. Hamas has a long history of raising funds through its charity, social welfare, and proselytizing organizations (collectively known as the Hamas *dawa*), including funds intended for terrorist and militant purposes. In a 1992 letter between two Hamas operatives that was seized by the FBI and later introduced as evidence in federal court, the two noted how when Hamas was still young, before the Hamas military wing had its own budget, Hamas operatives would “take not less than 50,000 from the monthly allowance of the *dawa*” for military expenses.¹⁴

Overseeing all of Hamas’ activities is its *Majlis al-Shura*, the group’s overarching political and decision-making body. Hamas also maintains geographically-based leadership structures representing the interests of the group in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, within Israeli prisons, and among the group’s external leadership. The Hamas external leadership was based in Jordan until authorities there expelled the group’s leaders in 1999.¹⁵ Hamas external headquarters then moved to Syria, where it remained until the group broke with the Assad regime over the Syrian civil war, after which Hamas leaders left Damascus for Turkey, Lebanon, Qatar, and (briefly, during the Morsi-led Muslim Brotherhood government) Egypt.¹⁶ Hamas also maintains representative offices and personnel running Hamas investments and companies throughout the Middle East and North Africa.¹⁷ Since the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007, the Gaza-based leadership has become the most prominent given its control of territory and the financial and military advantages that presents. Today, the leader of Hamas in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, working in tandem with Gaza-based Hamas militant leaders like Mohammed Dief, are in effect more powerful than the group’s overall leader, Ismail Haniyeh, who was once based in Gaza but moved to Qatar in late 2019.¹⁸ Since its foundation, violence has been a central part of Hamas and its goals.⁴ As Article 12 of the 1988 Hamas charter notes:⁹

Nationalism, from the point of view of the Islamic Resistance Movement, is part of the religious creed. Nothing in nationalism is more significant or deeper than in the case when an enemy should tread Muslim land. Resisting and quelling the enemy become the individual duty of every Muslim, male or female. A woman can go out to fight the enemy without her husband’s permission, and so does the slave: without his master’s permission.

Over time, Hamas released several other documents that explained its goals and ideals. For example, in the mid-1990s, the European Commission asked Hamas to clarify its “objectives, values and ideals,” which led Hamas to release a document titled “This is what we struggle for.”¹⁹ While this, and another

memorandum written in 2000 just before the Second Intifada, were written in an overall softer tone than the Hamas charter, both documents continued to acknowledge Hamas as a violent Islamist movement struggling for “the liberation of Palestine” that opposed Israel’s right to exist as a state.

Since its founding, Hamas has committed countless acts of violence against both military and civilian targets, including bombings, rocket and mortar attacks, shootings, stabbings, kidnappings and attempted kidnappings, and car ramming attacks. With the onset of the Second Intifada in 2000, Hamas attacks dramatically increased. Between 2000 and 2005, 39.9 percent of the 135 suicide attacks carried out during the Second Intifada were executed by Hamas.²⁰ According to the Global Terrorism Database, Hamas killed 857 people and injured 2,819 between 1987 and 2020.²¹ Intended to terrorize not only the targeted individuals but also the general Israeli population, Hamas attacks have been indiscriminate in nature.^f From its inception, Hamas attacks were intended to instill fear in the civilians who comprise the local population so that they will either leave the land Hamas claims belongs to the Palestinians or, at a minimum, pressure their leaders to give concessions to Hamas, such as obtaining the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons. For example, both before and after the so-called “Shalit deal” in which Israel released over 1,000 Palestinian security prisoners in exchange for one Israeli soldier captured in Gaza in 2006—Gilad Shalit²²—Hamas has ceaselessly engaged in kidnappings and attempted kidnappings in hopes of gaining a valuable bargaining chip to use in future negotiations with Israel.²³ For Hamas, eager to create a “culture of resistance,”²⁴ its bottom-up approach to shaping popular support for violence meant engaging with both men and women. While some parts of its charter were aimed at wide audiences, Articles 17 and 18 specifically note women’s unique role in Hamas. Stressing women as vital to the dissemination of their ideology, the Hamas charter calls Muslim women the “maker of men,” noting that “[w]oman in the home of the fighting family, whether she is a mother or a sister, plays the most important role in looking after the family, rearing the children and [imbuing] them with moral values and thoughts derived from Islam.” One of the reasons Hamas emphasizes women’s education is so that female supporters are knowledgeable enough to pass on Islam and the organization’s ideology to their children.^g Hamas has organized events on women’s issues since its inception, and these have been attended by the highest echelons of the organization.²⁵ The group even established the “Islamic Women’s Movement in Palestine” in 2003,²⁶ highlighting the strategic incorporation of women even prior to governance.^h

Despite Hamas’ transition into governance, most countries around the world do not engage in formal diplomatic relations with the group, due to the group’s continued engagement in violent activities.ⁱ The following section will explore Hamas’ governance project.

Members of Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Palestinian Hamas movement, march in Gaza City on May 22, 2021. (Emmanuel Dunand/AFP via Getty Images)

GOVERNANCE: PLAYING THE LONG GAME ON THEIR OWN TERMS

From its creation in late 1987 until its decision to participate in Palestinian elections held in early 2006, Hamas operated as a sub-state actor engaged in a spectrum of activities including terrorism, social welfare provision, charity, religious proselytization, and local political activities within professional syndicates and student groups on university campuses.²⁷

Active as a violent non-state actor for almost 20 years, Hamas entered legislative politics with support from local populations that benefited from its largesse and were frustrated with the corruption of the group's primary Palestinian political rival, Fatah. For Hamas, efforts to win local support can have a significant pay-off in its bid for international legitimacy.²⁸ Hamas' pivotal juncture came in the January 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections. The group won a majority 74 out of 132 seats in the PLC as part of the "Change and Reform" bloc, and, notably, ran with both men and women on the ballot.²⁹ For the first time since its formation, Hamas joined the Palestinian government. Election results led to the formation of a new government under Hamas' Ismail Haniyeh, which heightened tensions with its political rival, Fatah. Hamas' electoral success signified the first time an Islamist group democratically took power in the Arab world, with Hamas' governance style being described as an "Islamic democracy of sorts," in which the group saw compatibility between democracy and Islamism.³⁰

In 2006, Fatah and Hamas agreed to a short-lived national unity government to govern the areas of the West Bank under PA authority and all of the Gaza Strip.³¹ During this brief attempt at unity, Hamas tried to change the Palestinian political system from within and move the Palestinian Authority away from security cooperation with Israel and its pursuit of a two-state solution, and toward violent competition with Israel in pursuit of its destruction and the creation in its place of a single, Islamist, Palestinian state.³²

For some, the very fact that Hamas decided to participate in elections for seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council—itself a product of the Oslo peace process—was a sign that the group could, and maybe already was, moderating its hardline positions.³³ Indeed, more hardline jihadis such as Usama bin Ladin lambasted Hamas, saying the group had "forsaken their religion" by participating in elections.³⁴

As for Hamas, the group's leaders were crystal clear that Hamas' participation in elections did not mean the group had moderated its position calling for the destruction of Israel. Gaza was to be a launchpad to further this goal, not a distraction from it. In an interview with an Israeli newspaper (not buried in an obscure Arabic publication), senior Hamas official Manmoud Zahar explained: "Some Israelis think that when we talk of the West Bank and Gaza it means we have given up our historic war. This is not the case." And Hamas' idea of parliamentary participation was equally clear, Zahar continued: "We will join the Legislative Council with our weapons in our hands."³⁵

Perhaps, then, it should not have been a surprise when in 2007 Hamas turned its guns on its fellow Palestinians, took over the Gaza Strip by force of arms, and split the Palestinian polity in two.³⁶ Between January 2006 and June 6, 2007, more than 600 Palestinians were killed in factional fighting.³⁷ And in one week alone, between June 7, 2007, and June 14, 2007, more than 160 Palestinians in Gaza were killed in factional fighting, with at least 700 injured.³⁸ Tensions with Fatah continued, with reports that Hamas threw Fatah supporters off rooftops in 2009.³⁹

Hamas has been the de facto ruler in Gaza since mid-June 2007, running the administration of government and leveraging the same to build up its military capabilities to fight Israel. This resulted in two entities governing the Palestinian people: Hamas ruling Gaza and the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA) governing the West Bank. That said, Hamas in Gaza is not recognized as a legitimate government by the United Nations, other multilateral organizations, or the vast majority of countries around the world, including the United States. Hamas does not coin its own currency.⁴⁰ The legitimacy of Hamas' continued control of

Gaza is regularly questioned by the PA, Israel, and the international community as there have been no elections since 2007.

Since its formation, Hamas has received and continues to receive significant financial and other support from Iran.⁴¹ Ahmed Yousef, a Hamas leader and former advisor to Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Haniyeh, confirmed this in January 2016, when he stated that “the financial and military support Iran provides to the movement’s military wing has never stopped, it has been reduced over the past five years.”⁴² While the exact amount has fluctuated over the years, Iranian funds to Hamas have covered operational costs—weapons, intelligence, sanctuary, safe haven, operational space, and training—as well as long-term organizational costs, such as leadership, ideology, human resources and recruitment, media, propaganda, public relations, and publicity.⁴³ Even when as a result of the Syrian civil war Hamas broke with the Assad regime in Syria, where it long maintained its external headquarters, Iran cut some funding for the Hamas political bureau but maintained funding for Hamas military activities.⁴⁴

Iran is not the only state actor offering support to Hamas. For decades prior to the Syrian civil war, the Assad regime provided support to the group.⁴⁵ More recently, Qatar has publicly—with Israel’s knowledge and acquiescence—provided Hamas monthly stipends to pay for fuel for electricity and to help Hamas pay public sector wages.⁴⁶ Moreover, Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas’ top political leader, along with several other senior Hamas leaders, lives in luxury in Qatar.⁴⁷ Since October 7, Qatar has utilized its unique relationship with Hamas to facilitate hostage negotiations and has publicly indicated it is open to reconsidering Hamas’ continued presence in Doha.⁴⁸

Through its governance, Hamas developed the necessary bureaucracy to collect taxes, customs duties, and bribes, as well as extortion and racketeering schemes, through which the group raised significant funds.⁴⁹ Eventually, Hamas’ income from local governance of Gaza would dwarf its funding from Iran by a factor of about four to one.⁵⁰ Indeed, Hamas has used its governance to entrench its system of control and continue its military engagement.

ENTRENCHING THE SYSTEM OF CONTROL

Long before Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, the group invested in grassroots efforts to entrench its position within society and create broad public support for its goal of destroying Israel.¹ In the years that followed, Hamas took advantage of the benefits of governance to deliver educational and social service programs that instilled its “culture of resistance” in Gazan society.⁵¹ On Hamas’ payroll were Gazan men and women who worked in their police, and as teachers, doctors, administrators, and more. A critical component of Hamas’ ideology has been transforming the ethno-political Palestinian struggle into a religious conflict, which allows the group to inspire Palestinians to reject any sort of compromise or peaceful solution to the ongoing conflict.

Hamas emphasizes its campaign of radicalization targeting Palestinian youth. In 2010, on its Al-Qassam Brigades website in English, Hamas announced that it operated 800 youth summer camps, reaching over 100,000 male and female students. According to the group, the “Hamas summer games is an annual enterprise aim[ed] to convey joy and entertainment for Palestinian children and youth who suffer from cruelty of Israeli siege imposed after Hamas great democratic win.”⁵² Arguing that youth are the most vital part of Palestinian society, Hamas claims “[t]he Islamic ideology adopted in Hamas summer games, meets

with the Islamic values of the Palestinian people.” Hamas combines youth social services with its ideology, as seen by the fact that the theme of the summer camp that year was “Our Aqsa Mosque, Our Prisoners, Freedom Is Our Appointment,”⁵³ not the catchiest of summer camp names.

Hamas has used the tactic of exposing Gazan children to such radical messages at a young age in both recreational institutions and schools. In 2013, Hamas issued a new education law that excluded male teachers from girls’ schools and segregated classes by gender after age nine.⁵⁴ Hamas framed this as a decision to “codify conservative Palestinian values into law.”⁵⁵ Hamas has argued that women have agency to decide whether or not to wear a hijab, though the group has also noted that doing so is a religious obligation.⁵⁶ Hamas’ actions, however, did not always reflect this framing. To assist in the internalization of its ideals, Hamas exerted pressure mainly through “virtue” campaigns seeking to discourage “Western” behaviors.⁵⁷ In 2010, the group enforced the removal of “immodest” mannequins, which it argued was a policy derived from the complaints of ordinary Gazans.⁵⁸ While Hamas has not codified all of its behavioral strictures into law, in 2016, its police officers began to penalize driving instructors who did not have a chaperone for female students,⁵⁹ and in 2021 a Hamas-appointed judge sought to require a male guardian’s permission for women to travel outside of Gaza.⁶⁰

To be sure, Hamas leverages its position in Gaza to radicalize Palestinians to support its commitment to violence. After taking control of Gaza, Hamas embarked on a considerable public relations campaign, focusing on culture and the arts to glorify violence against Israel. For instance, in July 2009, Hamas premiered the feature-length film *Emad Akef*, celebrating the life of a leading Hamas terrorist killed by Israeli troops in 1993. Written by hardline Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar, the film was screened at the Islamic University in Gaza City and dubbed by Hamas interior minister in Gaza Fathi Hamad as the first production of “Hamaswood instead of Hollywood.”⁶¹

Similarly, Hamas’ Al Aqsa Television produced a children’s show featuring a Mickey Mouse lookalike named Farfur who praised “martyrs” and preached Islamic domination. After being roundly condemned, including being described as “pure evil” by Walt Disney’s daughter, Hamas ran one final skit in which Farfur refused to sell his land to an Israeli, who then murdered the Palestinian mouse.⁶² The young Palestinian girl presenting the skit commented, “Farfur was martyred while defending his land.” He was killed “by the killers of children.”⁶³ Farfur was quickly replaced with a new character, Nahoul the Bee: “I want to continue in the path of Farfur, the path of Islam, of heroism, of martyrdom and of the mujahedeen ... We will take revenge of the enemies of Allah.”⁶⁴ Most recently, the program introduced Nassur, a stuffed bear who called for “slaughter” of Jews “so they will be expelled from our land.”⁶⁵ Notably, in 2016, the U.S. State Department designated Fathi Hammad himself as a specially designated terrorist for his ongoing terrorist activities on behalf of Hamas.⁶⁶

Hamas has faced pushback to some of its politics, such as its promotion of “traditionalist” behaviors for men and women. For example, female lawyers fought back against a 2009 Hamas-appointed judge’s ruling which enforced a new uniform that mandated wearing a hijab and jilbab. In response to pressure, Hamas withdrew the decision, citing a misunderstanding.⁶⁷ Additionally, public protests erupted in February 2021 after a Hamas-appointed Higher Shari’a Council judge ruled that women required permission from a male guardian to travel outside of Gaza.⁶⁸ Gazan protests drove the court to amend the law, rewriting it to allow

male guardians to petition the court to prevent a woman from traveling.⁶⁹ Protests also arose in 2019 and 2023 against living conditions in Gaza under Hamas, both of which Hamas violently suppressed.⁷⁰ Notwithstanding such protests, Hamas has not tolerated any real challenge to its governing authority. In 2009, for example, Hamas security forces raided a mosque affiliated with a salafi-jihadi group that challenged Hamas' authority in Gaza, killing 24 and wounding 130.⁷¹

CONTINUED MILITARY ENGAGEMENT AND PREPARATION

Even as Hamas entrenched its political control of Gaza, it significantly expanded its security, militant, and terrorist cadre; developed domestic weapons production capabilities; dug tunnel networks to smuggle goods and covert weapons; and facilitated militant activities.⁷² Hamas continued to engage in terrorist activities targeting Israel, instigated rocket wars with Israel, and invested significant time, energy, and funds into militant infrastructure such as rocket production and tunnel networks in preparation for future military engagements with Israel.

Despite periodic talk of ceasefires with Israel and reconciliation with its Palestinian political rival, Fatah, Hamas continued to engage in a wide array of militant and terrorist activities targeting Israel.⁷³ Shooting attacks and launching incendiary balloons were not uncommon along the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip.⁷⁴ Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip became accustomed to the firing of rocket-propelled grenades and mortar shells from Gaza toward their communities.⁷⁵ From time to time, Hamas operatives placed explosives along the Gaza border fence.⁷⁶ And for years, Hamas invested millions of dollars in an underground tunnel network—used by the group to smuggle weapons from Egypt, carry out attacks into Israel, and hide its operations and weapons production from Israel's above-ground surveillance capabilities.⁷⁷ These were purposefully dug near and under schools, mosques, and U.N. facilities.⁷⁸ The placement of the tunnels near U.N. facilities was purportedly intended as a preventive measure, using these as human shields against an Israeli attempt to destroy the terror infrastructure.⁷⁹

Israeli and Palestinian Authority officials also point to Hamas' plots to target PA officials and instigate a coup to take over the PA. In 2009, for example, Palestinian security forces in the West Bank seized \$8.5 million in cash from arrested Hamas members who plotted to kill Fatah-affiliated government officials. Palestinian officials reported that some of the accused had "recently purchased homes adjacent to government and military installations, mainly in the city of Nablus" for the purpose of observing the movements of government and security officials. Security forces also seized uniforms of several Palestinian security forces from the accused Hamas members.⁸⁰ Israeli and PA authorities thwarted another Hamas coup attempt two months later, this one overseen by Hamas external leadership based in Turkey and operatives in Jordan.⁸¹ PA officials warned of still more Hamas coup plots in 2019.⁸²

Meanwhile, working closely with Hezbollah, Hamas also slowly developed a terrorist capability in Lebanon that it could use at some point in the future to target Israel from more than one front at a time. In 2017, not long after Hamas leader Salah al-Arouri relocated from Turkey to Lebanon, the head of Israel's Shin Bet security service warned that Hamas was setting up a base of operations in Lebanon. This was intended to complement the group's main center of gravity in Gaza, he added, where the group was continuing "to invest considerable resources in preparation for a future conflict [with Israel], even at the cost of its citizens' welfare."⁸³ Fast-forward to 2023, and Hamas' long-term planning in Lebanon paid off. In June 2023, Hamas

operatives fired rockets into Israel from Lebanon.⁸⁴ And in the weeks following the October 7 massacre, Hamas again fired rockets at Israel from Lebanon in an attempted effort to encourage Hezbollah to open a second front with Israel and draw Israeli troops away from Gaza.⁸⁵

Since Hamas took over the Gaza Strip by force in 2007, Hamas and Israel have had several ‘mini wars,’ including in 2008-2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, and now the most recent full-scale war sparked by the October 7 attack (see Figure 1). Hamas struggled to find ways to target Israel, despite the restraints of governance. The group evolved its strategy over time to employ new methods of targeting its primary threat—the Israeli state—but continued to make use of tried and trusted methods, including terror tunnels, rockets, and other hallmarks of the group’s decades-long history of violent action.



Figure 1: Israel-Hamas Conflicts Since 2007

Additionally, Hamas regularly sought to instigate violence in the West Bank, and periodically managed to carry out attacks there despite Israeli and PA security efforts to counter terrorism. Most notably, in August 2014, Hamas operatives kidnapped three teenage Israeli boys—one of whom was also an American citizen. The operation was led by Hamas operatives from the West Bank, but funded by Hamas operatives in Gaza through the al-Nour Association, a Hamas-affiliated charity in Gaza.⁸⁶ From a conference in Turkey, Hamas leader Salah al-Arouri took credit for the operation, explaining the goal had been to spark a new Palestinian uprising.⁸⁷

Al-Arouri has always been particularly focused on fanning the flames of violence in the West Bank, which is where he cut his teeth as a young Hamas operative himself.⁸⁸ This was especially true in the period following the summer 2014 war. Just in 2016, 114 local Hamas cells were apprehended in the West Bank, while only 70 were apprehended in 2015.⁸⁹ One cell, broken up near Hebron in February 2017, had been

receiving instructions online from Hamas commanders in Gaza to carry out shooting, kidnapping, and explosives attacks in the West Bank and Israel, including a bus station, a train station, and a synagogue.⁹⁰ Another attempted kidnapping plot was foiled a few weeks earlier, resulting in the seizure of large quantities of ammunition, two AK-47s, three pistols, and a shotgun from a West Bank cell.⁹¹

A SHIFT? SOFTENING THE LANGUAGE

Since wresting control of Gaza, Hamas has strived to portray itself as a legitimate political actor and representative of Palestinians in Gaza—one less focused on violence, even operating with a semblance of foreign policy objectives. The group also operated several social media accounts, including an official Twitter account, to engage with the general public. One academic study examining Hamas' Twitter account found that between 2015 and 2018, the group mostly tweeted about its internal governance and foreign policy, with the smallest focus on "resistance."⁹²

Even earlier, in 2009, Hamas leader Khaled Mishal offered to cooperate with U.S. efforts to promote a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁹³ Mishal stated that Hamas was willing to engage in a ceasefire with Israel and approve a new Israeli-Palestinian status quo, based on the 1967 borders, a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with its capital in East Jerusalem.⁹⁴ Such sentiments were echoed by Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in 2017, who stated that "while we are not opposed to the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the 1967 territories, we refuse settlements and we adhere to our strategic choice not to recognize Israel."⁹⁵

Yet at other times, Mishal, Haniyeh, and other senior Hamas leadership have outright refused to consider political compromise, instead asserting that violence is necessary for the group to achieve its stated goals. For example, at a 2009 speech in Damascus, Mishal insisted, "We must say: Palestine from the sea to the river, from the west to the occupied east, and it must be liberated. As long as there is occupation, there will be resistance to the occupation."⁹⁶ Violence, Mishal stressed, "is our strategic option to liberate our land and recover our rights."⁹⁷

The inconsistency in Hamas' messaging was, at least in part, a result of its internally conflicted nature. Hamas—the government—seems to recognize that it must at least appear moderate for political expediency in an effort to achieve near-term political goals, like opening border crossings into Gaza for trade. In particular, Hamas has been eager to gain access to building materials and financing to rebuild infrastructure destroyed during each round of fighting.⁹⁸

The sometimes-conciliatory tone of Hamas leaders public messaging is belied by the group's continued violent actions and radicalization on the ground, as well as the rise to prominence of violent extremist leaders within the group's local shura (consultative) councils.⁹⁹ Indeed, the discrepancy between Hamas' periodically softer messaging and its consistently hardline activities has underscored the group's discomfort with the ideological crisis presented by its governance project in Gaza.

This was further highlighted by the rhetorical shift in its May 2017 "Document of General Principles and Policies." Seen by some as an update to its 1988 charter, the document—which did not supersede the previous charter, despite the new language—adopted what seemed like a softer, more moderate tone. In the document, Hamas dropped reference to its Muslim Brotherhood roots and seemingly presented itself as a more "centrist" alternative to global jihadi organizations like the Islamic State and secular nationalist

groups like the Palestine Liberation Organization. Hamas also highlighted that it believed in “managing its Palestinian relations on the basis of pluralism, democracy, national partnership, acceptance of the other and the adoption of dialogue.” And for the first time, the group acknowledged in writing the possibility of a Palestinian state drawn along the borders that existed in 1967. But rhetoric aside, Hamas’ actions at that time also offered a clear indication of the group’s continued hardline militancy.

Hamas’ so-called moderation was aimed at widening its international appeal at a time when the group faced multiple challenges, including a dismal economic situation in Gaza—most recently underscored by the energy crisis in Gaza—and strained relations with Egypt, which has violently suppressed Hamas’ parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood. And despite being hailed as a sign of moderation, the document still included less friendly sections, including a rededication to armed resistance to liberate all of Palestine: “Resistance and jihad for the liberation of Palestine will remain a legitimate right, a duty, and an honor for all the sons and daughters of our people and our umma [global Islamic community],” the document stated.

Even as Hamas was trying to change its tune, its parallel militant activity spoke volumes about the group’s true intentions. After Yahya Sinwar became the group’s leader in Gaza in 2017, the internal balance of power shifted from Hamas external leadership to officials inside Gaza. At this time, Hamas weathered a period of diminishing foreign relationships with longtime partners, including a break with Syria’s Assad regime and the ouster of Mohamed Morsi’s Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt. Sinwar’s tenure has also seen mounting influence exerted by two overlapping Hamas constituencies: prisoners and the military wing, both of which Sinwar has belonged to.⁹⁹

In 2021, Palestinians were scheduled to vote for new legislators, and the Hamas list stood out for its sheer number of hardline militant candidates. These included Hamas members with known ties to deadly terrorist attacks, and several members who, like Sinwar, were released from Israeli prisons under the Shalit deal¹⁰⁰—once again highlighting that there is no distinction between the group’s political activities and its military wing. Some old-guard Hamas leaders appeared in the top ranks as well, including number-one candidate Khalil al-Hayya and Nazar Awadallah, who challenged Sinwar in the group’s recent internal elections. Yet, two-thirds of the candidates were under age 40, according to Al-Monitor.¹⁰¹

Hamas has demonstrated its staying power in a competitive and often unforgiving institutional environment, including numerous challenges to its governance from both the PA and violent Islamist groups, including PIJ and the Islamic State. It has maintained control and adapted when necessary to stay in power.¹⁰² For example, Hamas has previously accepted fragile calm with Israel, though reluctantly, to stabilize Gaza’s economic situation,¹⁰³ and in March 2021, the group appointed a woman, Jamila al-Shanti, to its Political Bureau for the first time.¹⁰⁴ Hamas has also attempted to expand its political footprint, encroaching on Fatah strongholds in the West Bank through participating in student elections.¹⁰⁵

As it turned 35 in 2022, Hamas unabashedly highlighted what it considers to be its most admirable traits in its continued attempt to gain international legitimacy. It brought attention to its self-proclaimed democratic rule allegedly supported by Gazans, alleged gender inclusivity, and its multi-language messaging aimed at local and international audiences.¹⁰⁶ Hamas hoped that by distracting Israeli and international attention away from its violent activities, it would be able to obfuscate its core, violent objectives. And yet, despite

changes in Hamas rhetoric, as the events of October 7 underlined, the group remained committed to its original goal of Israel's destruction by any means necessary, and establishing a Palestinian state in its place with itself as its leader.

CONCLUSIONS

The Hamas governance project in Gaza presented the group with a critical ideological and tactical crisis. Hamas was forced to choose between engaging in acts of violence targeting Israel or attempting to effectively govern the territory it took over by force of arms. For a short period of time after 2007, Hamas found itself forced by circumstance to suspend the tempo of resistance operations, for which it is named and by which it defines itself. For some, the cessation of violence, however temporary, was a sign of moderation within Hamas. Others expected Hamas to be co-opted by the day-to-day responsibilities of governance. However, Hamas' actions, including its continued radicalization and weapons smuggling into Gaza, better denoted the movement's true intentions and long-term trajectory. To be sure, Hamas is not a monolithic movement. But the one constant among its various currents is its self-identification as a resistance movement committed to Israel's destruction and the creation in its place of an Islamist state in all of what it considers historic Palestine.

Looking back at the Hamas governance project in Gaza, it is clear the group remained committed to engaging in terrorist activity, and indeed it prioritized militancy over other activities at the expense of the Gaza Strip's civilian population. Never co-opted, Hamas invested in efforts to inculcate its ideal of violent resistance against Israel throughout its time governing Gaza, and played a long game lulling Israeli and Western leaders into thinking it could be deterred with periodic nods to moderation. Meanwhile, it built tunnels and weapons production facilities, trained operatives, and prepared for the day it could finally act on its commitment to destroying Israel. As Hamas politburo member Khalil al-Hayya noted in the wake of the October 7 attack, "Hamas's goal is not to run Gaza and to bring it water and electricity and such. Hamas, the Qassam and the resistance woke the world up from its deep sleep and showed that this issue must remain on the table."¹⁰⁷ Al-Hayya aptly summed up the relative weight Hamas gives to addressing the needs of Palestinians and fighting Israel. Referring to the October 7 attack, he explained: "This battle was not because we wanted fuel or laborers. It did not seek to improve the situation in Gaza. This battle is to completely overthrow the situation."

Hamas' attack was designed to elicit a "disproportionate" response from Israel. While several Israeli leaders have said the stated war objectives is the destruction of Hamas, such an operation cannot be done by military force alone. Rather, what the war appears to be about is ending Hamas' governance project in Gaza. What comes next for the group is largely dependent on how the war goes. Most of Hamas' leadership remains, Israelis are still being held hostage in Gaza, and the scale of Israel's response could serve to radicalize a new generation. As Hamas leader Haniyeh said in the days after Israel began its retaliatory attacks on Gaza that have resulted in thousands of deaths, "[w]e are the ones who need this blood, so it awakens within us the revolutionary spirit, so it awakens within us resolve, so it awakens within us the spirit of challenge, and [pushes us] to move forward."¹⁰⁸ Questions remain about what is next for Hamas. While true supporters of Hamas will see the October 7 attacks as a victory, many in Gaza will see the attacks as a betrayal of Hamas' governance promise. **CTC**

Dr. Devorah Margolin is the Blumenstein-Rosenbloom Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University. Her research primarily focuses on terrorism governance, terrorism financing, the role of propaganda and strategic communications, countering/preventing violent extremism, and the role of women and gender in violent extremism. Dr. Margolin is the co-editor of Jihadist Terror: New Threats, New Responses (I.B. Tauris, 2019). X:

@DevorahMargolin

Dr. Matthew Levitt is the Fromer-Wexler fellow and director of the Reinhard Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Levitt teaches at the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and has served both as a counterterrorism analyst with the FBI and as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis at the U.S. Treasury Department. He is the author of Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad (Yale, 2006), and has written for CTC Sentinel since 2008. X: @Levitt_Matt

© 2023 Devorah Margolin, Matthew Levitt

SUBSTANTIVE NOTES

[a] Over 35 years, Hamas had never undertaken an operation of such scale, and it had not explicitly targeted vulnerable groups like children or the elderly. While the group has struck civilians over the years, before October 7 those attacks mainly targeted adults, whom the group sees as legitimate targets due to Israeli military draft laws. To Hamas, all Israeli adults are military targets. Hamas has also indiscriminately targeted civilians through rocket attacks or suicide bombings. The taking of children and elderly hostages into Gaza is a first for the group, which before October 7 had only taken male hostages over the age of 18.

[b] Regardless of Hamas' framing, the number killed on October 7 is similar to the number who died when al-Qa`ida crashed United Airlines Flight 175 into the World Trade Center's south tower two decades ago: 1,385 of the nearly 3,000 deaths caused on 9/11, according to the Global Terrorism Database. See "Incident Summary," GTD ID 200109110005, Global Terrorism Database; "Israel revises Hamas attack death toll to 'around 1200,'" Reuters, November 10, 2023.

[c] The Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine was active starting in the 1960s and 1970s. See Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Jerrold Post, *The Mind of the Terrorist: The Psychology of Terrorism from the IRA to Al-Qaeda* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[d] Article 8 of the group's charter, reflects the centrality of violent jihad—religiously sanctioned resistance against perceived enemies of Islam—to its objectives: "Allah is its target, the Prophet is its model, the Koran its constitution: Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes." Hamas, "The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement," August 18, 1988. This was also found in early leaflets produced by the group published in June 1988: "For our war is a holy war for the sake of Allah unto victory or death." Reproduced in Mishal and Sela, p. 51.

[e] Hamas' language in Article 12 is seemingly a nod toward Abdallah Azzam's notorious *fatwa* on the individual duty of jihad. Ideologue Azzam, a Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood member, inspired the likes of other terrorist groups such as al-Qa`ida and the Islamic State, as both organizations have cited nearly

indistinguishable language in their justifications for violence. See Devorah Margolin, “ Hamas at 35,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, December 21, 2022.

[f] While Hamas terror attacks may not explicitly target Westerners, the group’s terrorist attacks do not discriminate among their victims. As such, innocent civilians from around the world have been killed in Hamas attacks, including civilians from the United States, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Romania, China, the Philippines, and Sweden, among other nationalities. Hamas has purposely targeted many busy civilian venues, including buses, bus and light rail stops, discotheques, restaurants, markets, universities, and even a hotel hosting a Passover Seder. See “Chinese Worker, Palestinian killed in Gaza Settlement Attack,” Agence France-Presse, June 7, 2005; “The Family of Nations Under Fire: Victims of Palestinian Violence From 18 Countries,” Beyond Images, March 2, 2004; “Palestinian Suicide Bombings 1994-2004: Don’t Let the World Forget ...,” Beyond Images, September 2, 2004.

[g] For example, in two identical articles on Hamas’ Al-Qassam website, it is stated that: “More important than the role in armed resistance is women’s role in spreading Islamic teaching and principles inside the Palestinian society. Women are very active in teaching the Holy Quran and Islamic conduct in various life issues. Women as mothers who carry the burden of caring for children have been able to educate future mothers on how to lead their lives, and how to raise their children.” “Women’s Participation in the Palestinian Struggle for Freedom,” Al-Qassam website, December 3, 2006; “International Woman’s Day Is Different in Palestine,” Al-Qassam website, March 7, 2007; Gina Vale, Devorah Margolin, and Farkhondeh Akbari, “Repeating the Past or Following Precedent? Contextualising the Taliban 2.0’s Governance of Women,” International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), January 12, 2023.

[h] While Hamas highlighted women’s roles as wives, mothers, and supporters of the movement throughout the 1980s and 1990s, in the early 2000s, a shift occurred. In 2001, Ahlam Mazen Al-Tamimi was arrested for her support role in bombing a Sbarro restaurant in Jerusalem, and Hamas’ Al-Qassam website praised Al-Tamimi and called her “the first female member in Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas.” “Prisoners: Ahlam Mazen At-Tamimi,” Al-Qassam website, 2006 (online at time of collection in 2016, undated). Then, in 2004, Reem Riyashi became Hamas’ first female suicide bomber. While Hamas praised Riyashi, the group also continued to underscore its use of women as suicide bombers only under conditions of strategic necessity. See Sami Abu Zuhri and Faraj Shalhoub, “Debate, al-Majd TV, Clip No. 117,” MEMRI, June 13, 2004.

[i] Hamas has been variously designated as a terrorist group by countries around the world. Both the political and military wings of Hamas are designated as terrorist entities by Canada, the European Union, Israel, the United States, and the United Kingdom. In 1995, the U.S. government designated Hamas a Specially Designated Terrorist (“SDT”). In 1997, the U.S. government designated Hamas a Foreign Terrorist Organization (“FTO”), a designation that has been renewed every two years. In 2001, the U.S. government designated Hamas a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (“SDGT”), a designation Hamas has retained through the present. Additionally, several individuals and front organizations associated with Hamas have been designated SDTs and SDGTs. See Executive Order 12947, “Prohibiting Transactions with Terrorists Who Threaten to Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process,” Part IX, January 25, 1995; U.S. State Department Bureau of Counterterrorism, “Designation of Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” October 8,

1997; Executive Order 13224 – Blocking Property And Prohibiting Transactions With Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, Or Support Terrorism; “US Designates Five Charities Funding Hamas and Six Senior Hamas Leaders as Terrorists,” Office of Public Affairs, U.S. Treasury Department, August 22, 2003. In contrast, only the military wing of Hamas—Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, or more simply, Al-Qassam—has been designated by others, including Australia and New Zealand. In the Middle East, policies toward the group are mixed. Saudi Arabia’s designation of the Muslim Brotherhood led to cool relations with Hamas, while Egypt overturned its previous designation of Hamas in 2015. The governments of Jordan, Qatar, and Turkey have not overtly supported Hamas and its agenda, but they have met with its leaders and played bystander or intermediary roles. Elsewhere, the group’s complex relationship with Syria has just started to thaw, while Iran has financially and militarily supported Hamas for decades. See “Egypt court overturns Hamas terror blacklisting,” BBC, June 6, 2015; Ido Levy, “How Iran Fuels Hamas Terrorism,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 1, 2021.

[ii] Hamas has used its governance to run an extensive social service network in Gaza. These include food-based charities (feeding women and children), operating weddings and financial incentives to newlyweds, and supporting widows and families of “martyrs” or those who are killed or imprisoned while supporting Hamas’ cause. See “Zionists Resort to ‘black Propaganda’ to Counter Hamas,” Al-Qassam website, September 5, 2009; “Because of the Siege, Children Suffer in Gaza,” Al-Qassam website, February 23, 2008; “We Will Never Recognize the Occupation,” Al-Qassam website, July 17, 2009.

[k] In 2015, the group tweeted, “Hamas respects human rights; that is part of our ideology and dogma #AskHamas.” See Tweet 2720, March 15, 2015, cited in Devorah Margolin, “#Hamas: A Thematic Exploration of Hamas’s English-Language Twitter,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 34:6 (2020).

'THE HAJ' BY LEON URIS HELPS TO UNDERSTAND ARAB CONFLICT. LAND, LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT

IN PALESTINE BETWEEN THE JEWS, ARABS AND THE BRITISH IN 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.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR OCTOBER 2023-

[Britannica](#)



israel-Hamas War, war between [Israel](#) and Palestinian militants, especially [Hamas](#) and the [Palestinian Islamic Jihad](#) (PIJ), that began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched a land, sea, and air assault on Israel from the [Gaza Strip](#). The October 7 attack resulted in more than 1,200 deaths, primarily Israeli citizens, making it the deadliest day for Israel since its independence.

More than 240 people were taken [hostage](#) during the attack. The next day, Israel declared itself in a state of war for the first time since the [Yom Kippur War](#) in 1973. The war began with the [Israel Defense Forces](#) (IDF) conducting air strikes on the Gaza Strip, followed weeks later by the incursion of ground troops and armored vehicles. By early 2024 tens of thousands of Gazans had been killed and over half of the buildings in the Gaza Strip had been destroyed or damaged.

WHAT LED UP TO OCTOBER 7

In 1948 the State of Israel was created on land inhabited by both Jews and Arab Palestinians. Hostilities between the two [communities](#) that year led to a mass displacement of Palestinians. Many of them became refugees in the [Gaza Strip](#), a narrow swath of land roughly the size of [Philadelphia](#) that had come under the control of Egyptian forces in the [1948–49 Arab-Israeli war](#). The status of the Palestinians remained unresolved as the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict brought recurrent violence to the region, and the fate of the Gaza Strip fell into the hands of Israel when it occupied the territory in the [Six-Day War](#) of 1967.

In 1993 there was a glimmer of hope for a peaceful resolution when the Israeli government and the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO) reached an agreement on the creation of a Palestinian state alongside an Israeli state (see [two-state solution](#); [Oslo Accords](#)). Hamas, a militant Palestinian group founded in 1987 and opposed to the more [conciliatory](#) stance taken by the PLO, rejected the plan, which

included Palestinian recognition of the State of Israel, and carried out a terror campaign in an attempt to disrupt it. The plan was ultimately derailed amid [suicide bombings](#) by Hamas and the 1995 [assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin](#) by a Jewish extremist. In 2005, in the wake of the collapse of the peace process, Israel unilaterally [withdrew](#) from the [settlements](#) it had constructed in the Gaza Strip after 1967, and in 2007, after factional conflict within the [Palestinian Authority](#) (PA), Hamas emerged as the [de facto](#) ruler in the Gaza Strip. The takeover by Hamas prompted a blockade of the Gaza Strip by Israel and [Egypt](#) and set the stage for the next decade and a half of continued unrest.



[Gaza's underground tunnels](#)

Members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) keeping guard inside an underground tunnel in the Gaza Strip, on March 30, 2023. The first major conflict between Israel and Hamas, which included Israeli air strikes and a ground invasion, took place at the end of 2008. Hostilities continued to break out, most notably in 2012, 2014, and 2021. Among the factors complicating those hostilities were the high population density of the Gaza Strip and the proliferation of subterranean tunnels there. Those tunnels were used by Hamas and other Gazans to sidestep the blockade, to conduct operations, and to hide from Israeli forces, and they were difficult to detect or destroy, especially when constructed under urban dwellings.

These conflicts were devastating for the Gaza Strip and came at a high human cost for Gaza's civilians. But they usually lasted only weeks, resulted in few Israeli civilian casualties, and weakened Hamas's military capacity. Hostilities often resulted in [cease-fire](#) agreements that temporarily eased Israel's blockade and [facilitated](#) the transfer of [foreign aid](#) into the Gaza Strip. Many officials in Israel's defense establishment maintained that Hamas had been effectively deterred by years of conflict and that an occasional flare-up of violence would be manageable. On October 7 the error of that assumption became tragically clear.

Ongoing violence in the West Bank, political turmoil at home, and simmering tensions with [Hezbollah](#) in Lebanon were among the distractions that left Israel unprepared for the onslaught from the Gaza Strip.

In early 2022 militants from the PIJ and new, localized groups in the [West Bank](#), a territory northeast of the Gaza Strip that is also predominantly inhabited by Palestinians, conducted a string of attacks in Israel. The IDF responded with a series of raids in the West Bank, resulting in the deadliest year for the West Bank

since the end of the second Palestinian [intifada](#) (uprising; 2000–05). The IDF targeted PIJ militants in the Gaza Strip—but left Hamas alone. In turn, Hamas refrained from escalating the conflict, [bolstering](#) the assumption by Israeli officials that they could prioritize other threats over Hamas.

At the close of 2022, [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) returned to office as Israel's [prime minister](#) after cobbling together the most far-right cabinet since Israel's independence, which proved to be domestically destabilizing. The cabinet pushed for reforms to Israel's [basic laws](#) that would bring the judiciary under legislative oversight; the polarizing move led to unprecedented strikes and protests by many Israelis, including thousands of army reservists, concerned over the [separation of powers](#). In August 2023 senior military officials warned lawmakers that the readiness of the IDF for war had begun to weaken. All the while, provocations by [Hezbollah](#) were raising the risk of conflict along Israel's northern border. But while tensions were brewing at home, [Saudi Arabia](#)—which had long conditioned diplomatic relations with Israel on the conclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process—had begun negotiating with Israel and the [United States](#) on an [Israeli-Saudi peace deal](#). Although Saudi Arabia sought [concessions](#) on issues related to the Palestinians, the Palestinians were not directly involved in the discussions and the deal was not expected to satisfy the grievances of the Palestinians in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Many observers believed that disrupting those negotiations was one of the goals of Hamas's October 7 attack. That deal was part of a broader regional transformation. The United States, which had long been the driving force behind the peace process, sought a “pivot to Asia” in its [foreign policy](#) and hoped an Israeli-Saudi deal would reduce the resources it needed to devote to the [Middle East](#). [Iran](#), meanwhile, was consolidating an “axis of resistance” in the region that included [Hezbollah](#) in [Lebanon](#), Pres. [Bashar al-Assad](#) in [Syria](#), and [Houthi](#) rebels in [Yemen](#). Hamas, whose relationship with Iran had been [tumultuous](#) in the 2010s, had grown closer to Iran after 2017 and received significant Iranian support to build up its military capacity and capability.

THE OCTOBER 7, 2023, ATTACK



[Aftermath of the October 7, 2023,
attack](#)

Survivors of a Hamas rocket strike on Tel Aviv talking with rescuers on October 7, 2023.(more)

On October 7, 2023, [Hamas](#) led a stunning coordinated [attack](#), which took place on [Shemini Atzeret](#), a [Jewish holiday](#) that closes the autumn thanksgiving festival of [Sukkot](#). Many IDF soldiers were on leave, and the IDF's attention had been focused on Israel's northern border rather than on the [Gaza Strip](#) in the south.

The assault began about 6:30 AM with a [barrage](#) of at least 2,200 rockets launched into Israel in just 20 minutes. During that opening salvo, Hamas used more than half the total number of rockets launched from

Gaza during all of 2021's 11-day conflict. The barrage reportedly overwhelmed the [Iron Dome](#) system, the highly successful antimissile defense system [deployed](#) throughout Israel, although the IDF did not specify how many missiles penetrated the system. As the rockets rained down on Israel, at least 1,500 militants from Hamas and the PIJ infiltrated Israel at dozens of points by using explosives and bulldozers to [breach](#) the border, which was heavily fortified with smart technology, fencing, and concrete. They disabled communication networks for several of the Israeli military posts nearby, allowing them to attack those installations and enter civilian neighborhoods undetected. Militants simultaneously [breached](#) the maritime border by [motorboat](#) near the coastal town of Zikim. Others crossed into Israel on motorized [paragliders](#).

About 1,200 people were killed in the assault, which included families attacked in their homes in [kibbutzim](#) and attendees of an outdoor [music festival](#). That number largely [comprised](#) Israeli civilians but also included foreign nationals. A [March 2024 United Nations report](#) found evidence that some were victims of sexual violence before they were killed. Adding to the trauma was the fact that it was the deadliest day for Jews since the [Holocaust](#).



[Hostages taken on October 7, 2023](#)

Portraits of some of the hostages taken during the October 7, 2023, attacks, displayed on a wall during a rally in Tel Aviv calling for their release.

More than 240 others were taken into the Gaza Strip as hostages. Many of them were taken from their homes and some from the music festival. Including Israelis with dual citizenship, more than half of those taken hostage collectively held passports from about two dozen countries, effectively pulling several countries into the efforts to release their citizens.

AT WAR

OCTOBER 2023: AIR CAMPAIGN

At 8:23 AM on October 7 the [IDF](#) announced a state of alert for war and began mobilizing its army reserves (eventually calling up more than 350,000 reservists over the next several days). Two hours later, IDF fighter jets began conducting air strikes in the [Gaza Strip](#). On October 8 [Israel](#) declared itself in a state of war, and [Netanyahu](#) told residents of the blockaded [enclave](#) to “get out now. We will be everywhere and with all our might.” On October 9 Israel ordered a “complete siege” of the Gaza Strip, cutting off water, electricity, food, and fuel from entering the territory.



Israel's Iron Dome Defense System

The Iron Dome antimissile defense system intercepting rockets launched from the Gaza Strip

As Israel conducted air strikes, international efforts were made to secure the release of the hostages. [Qatar](#), which in years past had coordinated with Israel on the delivery of international aid packages to the Gaza Strip, became the key mediator, but in the first weeks of the war it managed to negotiate the release of only four of the people held by Hamas. Gaza's subterranean tunnels—forming an [intricate](#) web of passageways extending hundreds of miles—added to the difficulty of locating the hostages as well as targeting militants and their weapons caches: destroying the tunnels without high civilian cost proved difficult, and conducting military activity inside the tunnels presented a high risk for all those inside, especially for the IDF troops and the hostages who might be held there. Just three weeks after Hamas's assault on October 7, more than 1.4 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip had become internally displaced, and, with numbers of Palestinians killed still climbing by the thousands, it had already become the deadliest conflict for the Palestinians since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

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

[The Wall Street Journal](#) | 26 October 2023 5min

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.

WSJ's Rory Jones – who visited them in 2014 – explains how they pose a unique challenge to Israel and could make urban combat costly for both Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians.

OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2023: GROUND INVASION AND BEGINNING OF THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS



[Israel-Hamas War](#)

Destruction in the Jabalia refugee camp from an Israeli air strike in the Gaza Strip on November 1, 2023

At the end of October Israeli ground forces advanced into the Gaza Strip. Communications in the territory were initially cut, restricting the ability of militants to coordinate but also limiting the ability of paramedics and humanitarian organizations to [attend](#) to emergencies. Unlike in previous conflicts, the ground invasion was slow and the number of [armored vehicles](#) and personnel was increased gradually. On November 1 the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt was opened, under conditions agreed to by Egypt, Hamas, and Israel, to allow a limited number of foreign nationals to evacuate the territory for the first time since October 7.

On November 22 Israel's war cabinet agreed to a prisoner exchange with Hamas, which was mediated by Qatar and Egypt, that would coincide with a temporary pause in fighting. During the pause, which lasted seven days, 110 of the hostages were freed in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners. In the days after fighting resumed, Israeli forces moved into Khan Younis, the largest urban center in the south of the Gaza Strip and the location of the homes of senior Hamas leaders, including [Yahya Sinwar](#) and Mohammed Deif. A large number of civilians fled to [Rafah](#), one of the last areas in the enclave for civilians to shelter from the ground invasion, and within weeks more than half of the Gaza Strip's total population had crammed into the city along Egypt's border.

DECEMBER 2023–JANUARY 2024: PRESSURE MOUNTS FOR A CEASE-FIRE

By year's end international pressure weighed heavily on Israel amid the high number of civilian casualties and wide destruction in the Gaza Strip. In mid-December U.S. Pres. [Joe Biden](#), during a fundraising event for his reelection campaign, said that Israel was beginning to lose international support. In early January 2024, after nearly 23,000 Palestinians had been reported dead (a number that included mostly civilians but also Hamas fighters), Israel announced a change in strategy that would result in a more targeted approach. By the end of January the average number of daily deaths was one-third of what it had been in October but was still more than three times that of the 2014 conflict, the deadliest in the Gaza Strip until 2023. (By early May, the number of Palestinians reported dead exceeded 34,000.)

In late January a framework emerged through the mediation of Qatar, Egypt, and the United States for a potential three-phase pause in fighting during which a [comprehensive](#) agreement to end the war would be

negotiated. The pause would include the release, in stages, of hostages held in the Gaza Strip and Palestinian prisoners taken by Israel since the start of the conflict. But the framework remained [elusive](#) as Hamas insisted on guarantees that the hostage exchange would lead to a permanent cease-fire.

FEBRUARY–APRIL 2024:

INVASION OF RAFAH LOOMS

Israeli officials in February announced their intent to extend the war into [Rafah](#), leading to concerns internationally over the high humanitarian cost of such an operation. Netanyahu [insisted](#), however, that an invasion of Rafah would proceed to root out “the last bastion” of Hamas battalions. A rift between Netanyahu and Biden came out into the open as Biden mulled withholding military support if an invasion of Rafah were to go forward without a comprehensive plan in place to protect civilians. In mid-March the IDF said that it would evacuate a portion of the civilians in Rafah to “humanitarian islands” that it would set up in the center of the Gaza Strip. On March 25, for the first time since the outbreak of the war, the United States [refrained](#) from vetoing a resolution by the [United Nations \(UN\) Security Council](#) that called for an immediate cease-fire.

On April 1 several vehicles carrying aide workers for chef [José Andrés](#)’s World Central Kitchen were hit in an Israeli air strike. The seven workers were killed, and the deaths brought increasing scrutiny on the actions of the IDF in the wake of the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The IDF took responsibility for the deaths with a government spokesman describing the incident as “a terrible chain of errors.”

Early that same month, Hamas rejected a cease-fire proposal that would require it to release 40 living hostages who were female, children, older people, or sick in the initial stages, saying it did not have 40 such hostages. At the end of April, as the IDF readied the Gaza Strip for an evacuation of Rafah, Hamas released videos showing proof of life of three hostages.

MAY–JUNE 2024:

RAFAH INVASION, OPERATION ARNON, AND PRESSURE FOR A CEASE-FIRE

Although negotiations seemed to be progressing at the beginning of May, talks broke down on May 5. Hours later, Hamas fired rockets at Israeli soldiers who were stationed near the Kerem Shalom border crossing, the main avenue for humanitarian aid. The attack killed four soldiers and prompted Israel to close the crossing to aid convoys. The next day, Israel ordered the evacuation of 100,000 Palestinians from Rafah. That evening, Hamas accepted a cease-fire proposal tendered by mediators that included efforts toward a “permanent cessation” of hostilities, but Israel [reiterated](#) its stance that it would reject any proposal that insists on an end to the war.

Meanwhile, Israel’s war cabinet unanimously authorized the military to proceed with its plans for Rafah. Israeli forces began moving to take control of the Rafah border crossing and on May 14 they entered the city. Within days the number of people who had fled Rafah since May 6 exceeded 800,000, and the areas they escaped to were deemed inadequate by international observers. On May 17 a floating pier constructed by the United States for international humanitarian aid received its first shipment, but in its early weeks of operation the distribution of aid was repeatedly disrupted by safety concerns and weather damage.

On June 8 Israeli special forces rescued four of the hostages who had been kidnapped at the music festival in an operation that was conducted in central Gaza. The raid took place in two buildings in the Nuseirat

refugee camp in the middle of the day. When the four Israelis were recovered alive and unharmed, the Israeli officers gave word to their commanders by radio: “Ha-yahalomim be-yedeinu” (“The diamonds are on hand”). Heavy fighting took place as the special forces escaped with the rescued hostages, and more than 270 Palestinians in the [vicinity](#) were killed as air strikes aimed to shield the Israelis. The officer who led the mission, Arnon Zamora, was critically wounded and died shortly afterward; the operation was renamed Operation Arnon in his honor ex post facto.

When the rescued hostages revealed that they knew in captivity that protesters were fighting for their release, demonstrators took to the streets in major cities across Israel that night to celebrate the rescue, call on the government to do more to bring the remaining 120 hostages home, and call for Netanyahu to be replaced as prime minister. The following day [Benny Gantz](#), an opponent of Netanyahu who was also a key figure in his war cabinet, carried out a threat made weeks earlier to resign if Netanyahu had still not [articulated](#) a plan for the hostages to be released and end the war.

On June 10 the [UN Security Council](#) adopted Resolution 2735. It called for an immediate cease-fire, a release of hostages, and the safe distribution of humanitarian aid, followed by a permanent end to hostilities in exchange for the release of remaining hostages and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip. The resolution, which was drafted by the United States and followed a cease-fire plan outlined by Biden weeks earlier, was passed with 14 votes in favor; Russia abstained, saying it had questions about the details of the U.S.-drafted resolution.

CONFLICT OUTSIDE THE GAZA STRIP: WEST BANK, HEZBOLLAH, HOUTHİ FORCES, AND IRAN

Although the fighting was by and large centered on the Gaza Strip, it was not [confined](#) to that territory. The IDF also intensified its raids in the [West Bank](#), blockading several urban areas, and in October it conducted a strike by warplane in the territory for the first time since the second [intifada](#) (2000–05). Attacks on Palestinians by vigilante [Israeli settlers](#) increased as the number of gun permits and weaponry in the settlements proliferated. Skirmishes with [Hezbollah](#) near the Lebanese border threatened to open a second major front, although both the IDF and Hezbollah appeared hesitant to escalate the fighting. Attempts by [Houthi](#) forces to strike southern Israel—an unusual target for the [Yemen](#)-based movement—using both missiles and [drones](#) also indicated some level of coordination among the [Iran](#)-led “axis of resistance” during the war.

Israel and Iran entered into direct confrontation in April 2024. Israeli warplanes struck Iran’s embassy complex in [Damascus](#), killing, among others, senior officers of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps’ [Quds Force](#), which provides aid, support, and training for the Iran-led axis. Two weeks later, in a retaliation that *Politico Magazine* and other observers considered to be “[designed to fail](#)” in order to avoid escalation, Iran fired into Israel hundreds of [drones](#) and missiles, most of which were intercepted by Israel’s [Iron Dome](#) and Arrow 3 antimissile systems (along with help from American, British, and Jordanian forces). Israel retaliated days later with an attack near a military complex in the Iranian city of Isfahan ([Esfahān](#)), which includes facilities involved in its nuclear program; Iran downplayed the incident and claimed it had intercepted the strikes.

GLOBAL REACTION TO THE WAR

The October 7 Hamas attack drew widespread condemnation from around the world and was denounced for its terrorism against civilians by many, including the governments of many Western countries as well as [India](#), [Japan](#), and [South Korea](#). Some foreign ministries, especially those of several Arab countries as well as [Turkey](#), [Russia](#), and [China](#), refrained from condemning Hamas specifically and instead urged restraint. In the war's initial stages, U.S. Pres. [Joe Biden](#) pledged [unequivocal](#) support for Israel, and on October 18 he became the first U.S. president to visit Israel while it was at war.

Concerns were also raised over the potential of the war taking on a global consequence, particularly as attacks by [Houthi](#) fighters on ships passing through the [Red Sea](#) disrupted global shipping and U.S. troops in the region faced attacks that, at times, proved deadly.

But as the war led to a deepening humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, Israel faced significant international pressure to allow limited aid into the territory. Pressure for a cease-fire also intensified as the war dragged on. Some opponents of the war lodged accusations of [genocide](#) against Israel as the war moved to the southern half of the Gaza Strip, and in December 2023 [South Africa](#) sought an [injunction](#) from the [International Court of Justice](#) (ICJ) to prevent violations of international genocide conventions. The following month the court ordered Israel to take all measures within its power to prevent genocide, including enabling humanitarian assistance in the Gaza Strip. In May 2024 South Africa filed an urgent request to the ICJ over the Israeli offensive in [Rafah](#); two weeks later, the court ordered that Israel "immediately halt its military offensive" in Rafah.

The intense emotions surrounding the war led to a wave of [anti-Semitism](#), [Islamophobia](#), and anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism. In the first several weeks of the conflict, the [Anti-Defamation League](#) (ADL) recorded 312 anti-Semitic incidents in the United States, up from 64 incidents reported in the same period in 2022. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) recorded 774 complaints of Islamophobia in the United States during a similar period, up from 63 total reported incidents in August.

The atmosphere at American universities during the war was under particular scrutiny as protests prompted concerns about students' safety and [freedom of speech](#). In April 2024, as [Columbia University](#)'s president testified before the [U.S. Congress](#) about the university's handling of anti-Semitism, pro-Palestinian activists at the university erected an encampment on campus calling for the university to [divest](#) from Israel (see [Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions \[BDS\]](#)). Students at dozens of other universities followed suit in the weeks ahead, causing significant disruption as graduation season approached. Incidents of anti-Semitism at some of the encampments and confrontations with counterprotesters amplified concerns over safety and security, leading to the dismantlement of many of the encampments and disciplinary measures, including arrest and suspension, for some of the protesting students.

[The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica](#) This article was most recently revised and updated by [Tracy Grant](#).

22 JULY ISRAELI AIR STRIKES TARGET HOUTHI PORT, YEMEN SWORDS OF IRON

What's happened: On Saturday, Israel responded to last Friday's fatal Houthi drone attack on Tel Aviv by attacking the Yemeni port of Hodeida with F-15, F-16, and F-35 bombers, setting oil and gas depots on fire and disrupting port activity.

- The operation was codenamed "Long Arm", a reflection of the fact that Israeli planes had to travel over 1,800 kilometres to reach Yemen – longer even than the journey to Tehran.
- The approximately 20 planes involved in the mission required mid-air refuelling and flew at low altitude to avoid enemy radar. Israeli naval vessels in the Red Sea provided cover.
- The attack, which took place under the US CENTCOM umbrella, and is likely to have involved some level of coordination with both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, is thought to have reduced the Hodeida port's fuel storage capacity from 150,000 tonnes to 50,000.
- IDF Spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said about Operation Long Arm: "We attacked the area of the port because it is a supply route to deliver Iranian arms from Iran to Yemen." He added: "This was a complex attack, one of the longest-distance and longest-range attacks ever to be carried out by the Israel Air Force. It required meticulous planning and preparation for a range of possible threats in the area."
- Defence Minister Gallant said, "The fire that is now burning in Hodeida can be seen across the entire Middle East, and that has clear implications. The Houthis attacked us more than 200 times. The first time they hurt an Israeli citizen, we hit them, and we will do that in every place where doing so is necessary."
- Prime Minister Netanyahu put the attack in the wider context of Iran's "Axis of Resistance" and the threat it poses both to Israel and the world: "This axis is operating not only against Israel," he said. "It threatens the wellbeing of the entire world. And Israel expects the international community to intensify its efforts against Iran and its proxies to curb Iran's aggression and to defend international freedom of sailing. Anyone who wants to see a stable and safe Middle East needs to stand up to Iran's axis of evil and to support Israel's struggle against Iran and its proxies."
- On Sunday, the Houthis retaliated by launching multiple ballistic missiles towards the southern Israeli city of Eilat. Israel's long-range Arrow 3 defence system intercepted one missile outside of Israeli airspace. While sirens sounded in Eilat, there were no reports of impact in the area.
- Friday's drone attack on Tel Aviv was the latest act of Houthi aggression against Israel. In the last nine months, the Yemeni groups have fired over 220 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and drones, mostly at Eilat.
- The attack, by an Iranian-made Samad-3 drone, killed Tel Aviv resident Yevgeny Ferder, 50, the first time an Israeli civilian had been killed by a Houthi strike. Eight others were taken to hospital with

injuries. The IDF said that the drone had been tracked from Yemen to Israel but was not engaged by air defences due to human error.

Context: The Israeli attack came as a direct response to Friday's drone attack, but this was also the first Israeli strike on Yemen since they have launched over 200 missiles and drones towards Israel since October.

- Since October 7th, under Iranian direction, the Houthis have both targeted Israel directly but also Israel-affiliated vessels in the Red Sea. Over 200 attacks have been launched on international vessels, with the disruption to international shipping significantly impacting several economies. With vessels having to divert routes, Egypt, for example, is losing a significant amount of traffic which would usually travel through the Suez Canal.
- In response to this targeting, the US and UK have attacked Houthi military infrastructure, in a bid to defend global shipping and trade. Despite US and UK efforts, Houthi attacks have persisted. There is hope that Israel targeting key infrastructure may have more of a deterrent effect.
- Unlike strikes against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in the north which focus on military targets, this operation deliberately targeted the Houthis' port and infrastructure.
- The strike was carried out in the daytime to further highlight the Israeli decision to strike. By targeting the oil storage, it ensured the dramatic images of the fires raging were seen into the night.
- The IDF had planned for an operation of this nature for months, having simulated the requisite length of flight and refuelling over the Mediterranean. However, the quick turnaround to carry out the attack a day and a half after the drone struck Tel Aviv is an impressive operational accomplishment.
- This serves to further rehabilitate the image of the IDF and send a warning to Iran over the ability to carry out complex missions 1,800km away from Israel.
- The IDF struck 10 targets, along with the oil reserves. The port was also targeted as the main site for the importing and unloading of Iranian weapons. It is possible that the targets also included weapons storage, but this has not been confirmed.
- While Israeli officials have emphasised that Israel conducted this operation on its own, it would have coordinated the flight path with allies in the region, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia as they flew close to their airspace. This is the latest advantageous example of Israel being part of US CENTCOM, which aids regional coordination.
- The strike can also be perceived as a warning to Hezbollah that Lebanese state infrastructure could be targeted if escalation in the north persists.
- In the short term, the operation elicited criticism from northern residents who have been under constant attack for months and have been calling on the government to respond more forcefully. It gave the perception that a strike on Tel Aviv carries more weight than those in the north.

- Israeli officials, however, pointed out that it was the accumulative attacks emanating from the Houthis which caused Israel to take action, and that the response would have been similar if the fatality had been in Eilat or elsewhere.
- Hezbollah's threat is of a much greater order of magnitude, and due to Lebanon's proximity to Israel, many more factors need to be taken into consideration before Lebanese infrastructure is targeted.

Looking ahead: The Houthis have said that they intend to continue their attacks against Israel. Over the weekend, spokesperson Mohammed Abdulsalam told Al Jazeera there would be “no red lines... All sensitive institutions with all... levels will be a target for us.”

- It is the Israeli hope that the damage to the port will impede the Houthis efforts to import Iranian weapons.

Best wishes,

The We Believe in Israel team

"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 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

**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

**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

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]

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 lived in the six towns

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]}

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.^[108]

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

Demographics of Israel (including Israelis in West Bank)



Population pyramid of Israel, 2023 (numbers by age group)

Population	9,842,000 (ca. 95th)
• Year	December 2023
• Source	Israeli CBS ^[1]
Density	431/km ² (6th)
Growth rate	1.9%
Birth rate	21.5 births/1,000 (101st)
Death rate	5.2 deaths/1,000 population (174th)
Life expectancy	82.7 years (8th)
• male	80.7 years
• female	84.6 years
Fertility rate	3.01 children born/woman (59th)
Infant mortality rate	4.03 deaths/1,000 live births (25th)

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:

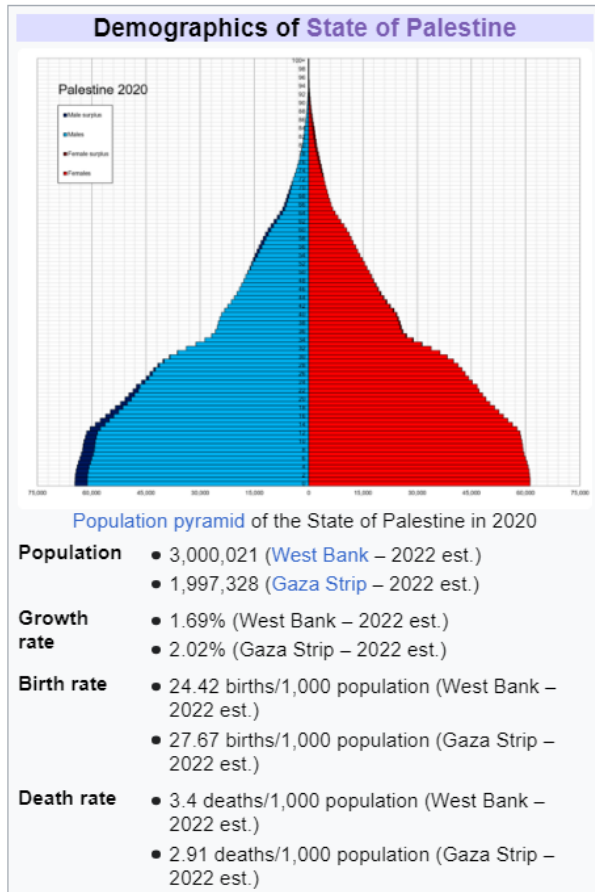
- 73.2% (about 7,208,000 people) are [Jews](#), including about 503,000 living outside the self-defined borders of the State of Israel in the [West Bank](#)
- 21.1% (around 2,080,000 people) are Israeli citizens classified as [Arab](#), some identifying as [Palestinian](#), and including [Druze](#), [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]}

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](http://JewishWikipedia.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 [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.

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.

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,
N 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.

SEARCHING FOR TEXT

1. Access the Search Function:

- **Keyboard Shortcut:**

Press **Ctrl + F** on Windows or **Command + F** on Mac. This opens the search bar.

- **Menu Option:**

In some PDF readers, you can also find the search option in the menu. Look for 'Edit' > 'Find'.

2. Enter the Search Term: Type the word or phrase you want to find in the search bar.

3. Navigate Through Results:

- **Next and Previous:**

Use 'Next' or 'Previous' buttons to navigate through occurrences of the term in the document.

- **Highlights:**

The PDF reader might highlight all instances of your search term in the document.

4. Refine Your Search

- **(if available):**

Some PDF readers offer advanced search options like case sensitivity or searching for whole words only.

Mark White
Project Leader

PART B

VIDEOS

Videos - Overview

WARFARE BETWEEN GAZA AND ISRAEL STARTED ON OCTOBER 7 2023 WITH THE INVASION OF ISRAEL BY GAZA

with a [barrage of at least 3,000 rockets](#) launched against Israel and vehicle-transported and [powered paraglider](#) incursions into Israel. The [IDF](#) estimated that about 3,000 militants invaded southern Israel, with additional waves of Gaza citizens entering through the breached fences later in the day.^[34] In total the attackers killed 1,139 people:^[1] 695 Israeli civilians (including 38 children),^[39] 71 foreign nationals, and 373 members of the [security forces](#).^{[41][40]} About 250 Israeli civilians and soldiers were [taken as hostages to the Gaza Strip](#), including 30 children, with the stated goal to force Israel to exchange them for [imprisoned Palestinians](#), including women and children.^{[41][42][43][44]} Many cases of [rape and sexual assault](#) reportedly occurred, but Hamas officials denied the involvement of their fighters.^{[45][46][47][48]}

[WIKIPEDIA](#)

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](#)

**VIDEOS BY [Israel Defence and Security Forum \(IDSF\)](#)
HAVE BEEN REGULARILY PUBLISHED SINCE NOVEMBER 28 2023**

THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT (MARATHON) VIDEO MARATHONS

PART 1

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.

[PRAGER U](#)

10 Oct 2023 58min 58sec

PART 2

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 second.

[PRAGER U](#)

10 Oct 2023 1hour 5min 3sec

ORIGINS OF THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

PART I: TO 1949

[Henry Abramson](#)

19 Nov 2023 29min 10sec

PART II: 1949 – 1993

[Henry Abramson](#)

26 Nov 2023 31min 29sec

PART III:

**FROM OSLO TO
OCTOBER 7 2023**

[Henry Abramson](#)

3 Dec 2023 30min 59sec

RESULT OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

HOW THE FIRST WORLD WAR CREATED THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICTS

[THE GREAT WAR](#)

8 December 2023 23min 26sec

The modern Middle East is a region troubled by war, terrorism, weak and failed states, and civil unrest. But how did it get this way? The map of today's Middle East was mostly drawn after the First World War, and the war that planted many of the seeds of conflict that still plague Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Syria and even Iran today.

HOW BRITAIN STARTED THE ARAB ISRAELI CONFLICT

[Free Documentary - History](#)

3 March 2021 52min 35sec

The bitter struggle between Arab and Jew for control of the Holy Land has caused untold suffering in the Middle East for generations. It is often claimed that the crisis originated with Jewish emigration to Palestine and the foundation of the state of Israel. Yet the roots of the conflict are to be found much earlier – in British double-dealing during the First World War. This is a story of intrigue among rival empires; of misguided strategies; and of how conflicting promises to Arab and Jew created a legacy of bloodshed which determined the fate of the Middle East

**ISRAEL SET TO DESTROY HEZBOLLAH, IRAN NEXT -
SEPTEMBER 30 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING. THE LIST STARTS ON NOV28 2023**

[IDSF Daily War Briefing](#)

**JEWISH LAND
BETWEEN THE JORDAN RIVER AND THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA**

[Children of the Jewish Holocaust](#) 30 Jan 2015 1hour 21min

Eli E. Hertz, one of the community's most learned experts on the Arab-Israeli conflict, examined the instruments that laid down the Jewish legal right to settle anywhere in Judea and Samaria, western Palestine, a 10,000 square mile area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, an entitlement unaltered in international law and valid to this day.

Eli Hertz discussed our rights to the Jewish homeland, and prepared us to challenge Arab myths surrounding Jewish rights to historical Palestine. Eli's lecture offered new insights into the challenges presently facing the Jewish people.

significance of these accords in [#ThePrintVideo](#)

HISTORY OF ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

[History on Maps](#) 30 July 2021 10min 55sec

This video presents the History of Israel-Palestine conflict that rooted a few thousand years ago.

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

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

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.

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

[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'.

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

[BBC News](#) 23 Oct 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

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.

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?

HORRORS OF HAMAS ATTACK ON ISRAEL INVESTIGATED

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

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**.^{[G][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)

FAILURE AT THE FENCE (FULL DOCUMENTARY)

[Frontline PBS](#) 20 Dec 2023 28min 3sec

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.

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

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

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.

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

[The Wall Street Journal](#) 25 Jan 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.

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.

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

[ILTV Israel News](#) 11 March 2024 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.

THE GREAT MISINTERPRETATION: HOW PALESTINIANS VIEW ISRAEL

[Shalem College](#) Haviv Rettig Gur 14 Mar 2024 1hr 43min

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>

This lecture was delivered in January 2024 at the Shalem College Fear No Evil Study and Solidarity Mission, a program which brought 36 North American college students to Israel for a 10-day intensive learning experience

THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT EXPLAINED ON A MAP

[Geo History](#) 18 May 2024 33min 45sec

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from the Ancient History of the Jews, until today.

WHY SOME ARAB STATES SIDE WITH ISRAEL | MAPPED OUT

[DW News](#) 22 Jun 2024 13min 50sec

Leaders of most Arab countries condemn Israel and the war in Gaza. Yet, some Arab governments maintain close ties with the state of Israel. They have a common enemy – and face an uneasy balancing act.

WHY THE MIDDLE EAST IS SO IMPORTANT TO THE US

[BBC World Service](#) 16 Jul 2024 10 min 23sec

In that time friends have become foes, enemies have become allies and the United States of America has maintained an eager interest in the region - but why? Here are three reasons why the US is so involved in the Middle East. [00:00](#) Introduction [00:39](#) Middle Eastern oil and American weapons [02:58](#) US allies in the Middle East [06:20](#) Security threats and war in the Middle East [09:43](#) Power and influence in the Middle East

HAMAS IN GAZA | JERUSALEM DATELINE - AUGUST 23, 2024

[CBN News](#) 23 Aug 2024 21min 49sec

IDF pounds Hamas and Hezbollah, Yahya Sinwar asks to not be killed. Analysis from John Waage re:U.S.& Israeli politics and Israel's war to exist. Iran's use of terror to control, without support of its people. Theodore Herzl, father of modern Zionism.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR: 11 MONTHS, 11 KEY MOMENTS 6 ISRAELI HOSTAGES KILLED, NO CEASEFIRE|

[WION Wideangle](#) 5 Sept 2024 23min 31sec

Israel has recovered bodies of six hostages killed by Hamas from Gaza. Who are these 6 hostages? Massive Protests have erupted across Israel demanding action to save other hostages. Will there be any Ceasefire? Lebanon and Israel continue to exchange heavy fire As the war enters 12th month, we look at some key moments

OPERATION ORCHARD: THE EXPLOSIVE RAID ON SYRIA'S NUCLEAR FACILITY

[Wonder](#) 7 Sept 2024 48min 16sec

The episode of Black Ops details a high-stakes Israeli operation to dismantle a secret Syrian nuclear reactor with the aid of Mossad and elite special forces, following intelligence that North Korea was assisting Syria. It describes the meticulous planning and execution of both an aerial strike, Operation Orchard (also known as Operation Outside The Box), and the subsequent assassination of General Muhammad Sulan to prevent Syria from reconstituting its nuclear program.

WHEN WILL HAMAS BE DESTROYED? - SEPTEMBER 9 IDSF DAILY BRIEFING

[IDSF](#) 9 Sept 2024 20min 55sec

Brigadier General Res. Amir Avivi talks about the progress in the war in Gaza and the timeline until Hamas ceases to operate as a military and governmental entity. He also discusses the extent of damage that the IDF has caused to Hezbollah in southern Lebanon as well as the uptick of terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria.

SKY NEWS ENTERS 'FLATTENED' RAFAH, WITNESSING TUNNELS UNDER KID'S BEDROOMS | ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

[Sky News](#) 14 Sept 2024 4min 55sec

Sky's Alistair Bunkall has visited Rafah in Gaza, where the city "is now a wasteland" after being "totally flattened" after months of war. Sky News was granted permission by the Israeli military to enter Gaza - though our team's movements were restricted and the material we gathered had to be authorised by the IDF. Read more here: <https://news.sky.com/story/tunnels-un...> [#skynews](#) [#israelhamaswar](#) [#middleeast](#) [#gaza](#)

NEW HOSTAGE DETAILS SHOCK ISRAEL; RELEASED HOSTAGES SPEAK OUT OF HORRIFIC HAMAS CRUELTY

[TBN Israel](#) 15 Sept 2024 10min 18sec

Yair Pinto reports on the Hamas hostage crisis inflicting national heartbreak upon Israelis and the uncertain path towards the release of the remaining hostages. Hear from released hostages as they speak about the cruel, inhumane conditions they suffered under Hamas captivity, and from the mother of 23-year-old murdered American-Israeli hostage Hersch Goldberg-Polin. Please join us in praying for the safe release of all remaining hostages.

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>

THE GREAT MISINTERPRETATION: HOW PALESTINIANS VIEW ISRAEL - HAVIV RETTIG GUR

[Shalem College](#) 14 Mar 2024 1 hour 44 min

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>

This lecture was delivered in January 2024 at the Shalem College Fear No Evil Study and Solidarity Mission, a program which brought 36 North American college students to Israel for a 10-day intensive learning experience.

EINAT WILF

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

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.

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

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

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.

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

[Traveller](#) 12June 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.

WHY SOME ARAB STATES SIDE WITH ISRAEL | MAPPED OUT

[DW News](#) 22June 2024 13min

Leaders of most Arab countries condemn Israel and the war in Gaza. Yet, some Arab governments maintain close ties with the state of Israel. They have a common enemy – and face an uneasy balancing act.

DECONSTRUCTING THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: AN IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION OF HISTORY AND ILLUSIONS

[Einat Wilf](#) 14 July 2024 1hour

The evolution of two key aspects over decades: the perpetuation of the Palestinian vision and the global mentality that led to the events of October 7, 2023. Dr. Wilf challenges prevailing illusions, addressing the roots of the conflict and the need for a radical vision to transform societies. Gain unique insights and confront the difficult questions surrounding the Middle East.

‘ASTONISHING’: DOUGLAS MURRAY BLASTS KAMALA HARRIS FOR ‘LECTURING’ ISRAELI PM ABOUT WAR

[Sky News Australia](#) 31 July 2024 15min [Transcript](#)

Author Douglas Murray has blasted Vice President Kamala Harris for “lecturing” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the war in Gaza.

Ms Harris has been criticised for her comments about the war in Gaza where she claimed the conflict is not a “binary issue” and encouraged people to acknowledge the “complexity” of the situation.

“What is her great expertise in warfare or indeed, in anything much, to start lecturing an ally that is at war with an enemy that wishes to annihilate it? It’s astonishing to me,” Mr Murray told Sky News host Rita Panahi.

HAMAS IN GAZA | JERUSALEM DATELINE - AUGUST 23, 2024

[CBN News](#) 23 Aug 2024 21min 49sec

IDF pounds Hamas and Hezbollah, Yahya Sinwar asks to not be killed. Analysis from John Waage re:U.S.& Israeli politics and Israel's war to exist. Iran's use of terror to control, without support of its people. Theodore Herzl, father of modern Zionism

IDSFISRAEL AT WAR: THE JEWISH PEOPLE'S PODCAST

[The Jewish People's Policy Institute](#) 29 Sept 2024 44min 28sec

In this special episode, we discuss the significance of the elimination of Hezbollah Chief Hassan Nasrallah and the implications for Israel and the region going forward.

GROUND INCURSION INTO LEBANON BEGINS

[CBN News](#) 2 Oct 2024 24min 44sec

The IDF in Lebanon, pushing Hezbollah away from Israel's border. A look at Hezbollah tunnels, blasted out of bedrock. CBN doc "The Genius of Israel", innovative trauma therapy by Israeli psychiatrist Gary Quinn and online series 'Israel Unfiltered'.

VIDEOS - GAZA AND HAMAS

ISRAEL'S DISENGAGEMENT FROM GAZA HISTORY OF ISRAEL EXPLAINED

[Unpacked](#) 1 August 2019 12min 9sec

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.

HAS LIFE IN GAZA BECOME UNLIVABLE?

[The Newsmakers](#) 11 Mar 2020 25min 57sec

The Gaza strip is one of the most densely populated places on earth, and one of the most impoverished. Existence there means unsafe drinking water, few jobs, even fewer basic necessities and almost no chance of leaving. So, has life in Gaza become unlivable? And what responsibility does Israel have? Efraim Inbar President of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, Mustafa Barghouti Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council. Dave Harden Former USAID Assistant for the West Bank and Gaza expose and prevent several Hamas terrorist attacks. He wrote a 2010 autobiography titled Son of Hamas.

VIDEO SHOWS ISRAELI MISSILES INTERCEPTING INCOMING ROCKETS NEAR GAZA

[CNN](#) 8 Oct 2023 10min 56sec

CNN's Nic Robertson reports from Zikim, Israel, as missiles from Israel's Iron Dome defense system intercept rockets fired from Gaza just miles away.

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

[Daily Mail](#) 12 October 2023 13min 2sec

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.

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.

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

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

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.

WHO IS HAMAS? | EXPLAINED

[Unpacked](#) 21 October 2023 15 min

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?

ISRAEL "SCREENS RAW, UNEDITED REAL-TIME FOOTAGE" OF HAMAS' OCT 7 MASSACRE, SCARRING PROOF SHOWS THIS

[TIMES NOW](#) 23 October 2023 5min 7sec

Israeli govt led by Benjamin Netanyahu released unseen footage of the deadly attacks launched by Hamas militants on October 7 in Israel. Israel released "raw and unedited footage" of Hamas' atrocities on the October 7 weekend as captured by Hamas militants' bodycams. Watch for details.

GAZA IN JEWISH HISTORY

[Henry Abramson](#) 9 Oct 2023 16min 3sec

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

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

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

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

WHERE DOES HAMAS GET ITS MONEY? A LOOK AT THE MILITANT GROUP'S FINANCIAL NETWORK

[CNA](#) 9 Nov 2023 2min 5sec

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.

ESTABLISHMENT OF GAZA STRIP THE GAZA STRIP CONFLICT EXPLAINED: THE ESCALATING TENSION BETWEEN GAZA & ISRAEL

[TBN Israel](#) 12 Dec 2023 11min 9sec

TBN Israel's Mati Shoshani breaks down the complex history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, beginning in 1947. Learn how the Gaza Strip was first established, the Oslo Accords' peacemaking effort and why Israel pulled its citizens and military from Gaza in 2005. Is the Gaza Strip truly the "biggest open prison in the world?" Watch now on TBN Israel!

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

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

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.

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

[CNA](#) 20 Jan 2024 23min
C

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>

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.

ISRAEL DAILY NEWS – WAR DAY 213 MAY 06, 2024

[I24News English](#) 6 May 2024 25min

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 8min

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

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

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR - WHAT HAS ISRAEL ACHIEVED? WHAT IS ITS END GOAL?

[Kings and Generals](#) 23 May 2024 19min 28sec

Kings and Generals animated historical documentary series on Modern Affairs continues with a video on the continuation of the conflict in Gaza, as the Israel-Hamas War goes on and Israel is attacking Rafah. Previously in this series we talked of the Israeli invasion of Gaza, as Israel invades south Gaza. The clashes between the IDF and Hezbollah continue in south Lebanon and the Houthi's attack the sea trade, leading to the operation Prosperity Guardian

OCTOBER 7TH SURVIVOR RECOUNTS HORRORS WITNESSED AT NOVA FESTIVAL BY HAMAS | YAIR PINTO

[TBN Israel](#) 8 Jun 2024 11min 39sec

Join Yair Pinto as he travels to Re'im forest, the site of the Nova Music Festival where Hamas killed hundreds of festival-goers and took at least forty hostages. Hear from terrorist attack survivor Rafaela Treistman as she recounts witnessing the savage attack and losing her boyfriend, Ranani Nidejelski Glazer. Please join us in praying for the release of the hostages, the truth about the war against Hamas to be told, and for the peace of Jerusalem.

TBN Israel is creating cutting-edge content that tells the continuing, multi-faceted narrative of Israel. And it all happens through partners like you. Your financial support enables TBN Israel to produce engaging, one-of-a-kind programming that educates viewers around the world about this land and people so loved by God. Donate today: <https://www.tbn.org/israel>

WHAT IS LIFE LIKE FOR PALESTINIANS IN GAZA?

[Unpacked](#) 17 July 2024 26min

Life for Palestinians in Gaza under Hamas has been extremely difficult. Palestinian civilians lack basic water, sanitation, and electricity infrastructures, as well as access to upward economic mobility and the rights to freedom of speech and self-expression. The constant suffering from rampant political and economic corruption has left civilians in Gaza with a sense of despair and a longing for a change in leadership.

WHAT IS LIFE LIKE FOR PALESTINIANS IN GAZA?

[UNPACKED](#) 17 July 2024 26min 40sec

Life for Palestinians in Gaza under Hamas has been extremely difficult. Palestinian civilians lack basic water, sanitation, and electricity infrastructures, as well as access to upward economic mobility and the rights to freedom of speech and self-expression. The constant suffering from rampant political and economic corruption has left civilians in Gaza with a sense of despair and a longing for a change in leadership.

THE NAZIS AND THE ARABS OF PALESTINE: THE UNTOLD (YET DOCUMENTED) CONNECTION

travellingisrael.com 7 Aug 2024 18min

The Nazis and the Arabs of Palestine: the Untold (yet Documented) connection

THE EXTRAORDINARY ASSASSINATION OF ISMAIL HANIYEH IF YOU'RE LISTENING

[ABC News In-depth](#) 16 Aug 2024 16min

In the early hours of July 31st this year, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in the Iranian capital Tehran. It's presumed Israel was behind the killing, with reports detailing a complex operation by its spy agency Mossad. So, if it was Israel that did this, why did they do it in such an extraordinary manner, and in Iran of all places? The answer tells us a lot about the complex political situation Israel finds itself in, where it feels the need for revenge, but only in a way that doesn't alienate its allies. Matt Bevan takes a look.

IDF STILL DESTROYING GAZA TUNNELS JERUSALEM DATELINE

[CBN News](#) 16 Aug 2024 25min

No surrender from Hamas, U.S. pressure on Israel to take hostage deal. Evidence of Oct. 7 atrocities & Hamas planning, intv. with Adele Raemer in destroyed home. Roundtable re: fallacy of Western thinking, Jerusalem Prayer Breakfast in Sept in NYC.

SINWAR ON THE RUN IN A BURQA?

[CBN News](#) 27 Aug 2024 24min

Israel plans no letup on Hezbollah & Yahya Sinwar reportedly evading capture in a burqa. Sheba Medical Center readies underground facilities, the US may be supporting Hezbollah with taxpayer dollars and UNIFIL fails to keep peace in Lebanon.

HAMAS ATTACK DEVASTATES ISRAEL

[TBN Israel](#) 3 Oct 2024 52min10sec

oin Yair Pinto and Mati Shoshani as they **reflect on a year of war, survival, and resilience in Israel** since the events of October 7th, 2023. They discuss the challenges, the unity of the nation, and the lessons learned with personal stories from the frontlines. Mati and Yair also explore the impact on Israeli society, politics, and the military's response while looking ahead to a future of hope and strength. Stay up-to-date with the latest developments here on TBN Israel.

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 & Purpose...](#) 14 Nov 2023 23min 50sec

(No Description)

WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH?

[Unpacked](#) 21 Sept 2022 11min

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.

HEZBOLLAH: THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL MILITANT GROUP?

[DW News](#) 12 Jun 2020 11min 15sec

A terrorist organization? A militant group? A political party? On this episode of Unpacked we explain everything you need to know about Lebanon's Hezbollah — Iran's ally, Israel's enemy and one of most powerful actors in the Middle East.

WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH AND HOW DIFFERENT ARE THEY FROM HAMAS?

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

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.

WITH WHAT CAN HEZBOLLAH THREATEN ISRAEL?

[Binkov's Battlegrounds](#) 8 Dec 2023 19min 41sec

This video explores what exactly could Hezbollah do, if it wanted to go into full-scale missile war with Israel? What sort of weapons and capabilities does it have? And what would be the final outcome of such a move against Israel? Watch the video to find out!

WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH AND HOW IS IT LINKED TO THE ISRAEL-GAZA WAR?

[Al Jazeera English](#) 1 Feb 2024 12min29sec

The war in Gaza has reignited the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah - and there fears it could escalate into a full-blown war. What is Hezbollah? How did the group emerge in Lebanon? And where does Iran fit in? [#AJStartHere](#) with Sandra Gathmann explains. (go to site to see topics covered

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

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

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

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.

UNMASKING HEZBOLLAH - WHO WAS BEHIND THE ASSASSINATION OF RAFIC HARIRI? (2/3)

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

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. This three-part series tells the story of "Project Cassandra" through the testimony of DEA agents and others who were directly involved. It is a story that helps explain the history and rise of Hezbollah and brings a complex geopolitical story to a wider audience. The assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri on February 14, 2005 sent Lebanon and the international community into shock. All eyes turned to Syria, which was accused of being behind the assassination. Bashar al-Assad's army, which had occupied part of the country, was forced to withdraw under pressure from the local population. With the Syrian withdrawal, Hezbollah lost a long-standing ally and protector. And it also found itself in the spotlight: suspected of complicity in the murder of Hariri.

UNMASKING HEZBOLLAH - MONEY LAUNDERING IN EUROPE (3/3)

[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 3-part series tells the story of the project.

France has been the country of choice for Hezbollah fighters seeking asylum since 2010. France offers several benefits, including the possibility of integrating into a large Lebanese community and freedom of movement on European territory. Paris became a center for laundering money from the cocaine trade.

The D.E.A., the American Drug Enforcement Agency, alerted the French police. Together they opened a new chapter of Operation Cassandra, named "Operation Cedar," after the tree that symbolizes Lebanon.

IS ISRAEL ON THE BRINK OF WAR WITH LEBANON?

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

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?

ISRAEL LAUNCHES STRIKES IN LEBANON AND HEZBOLLAH FIRES HUNDREDS OF ROCKETS

[BBC News](#) 25 Aug 2024 10min

Israel's military says it has conducted pre-emptive air strikes against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon after detecting plans for a significant attack against its territory.

Hezbollah also confirmed it had started "phase one" of an extensive attack on Israel, firing 320 Katyusha rockets and drones targeting 11 military sites.

About 100 fighter jets "struck and destroyed thousands of Hezbollah rocket launcher barrels" in more than 40 sites, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said.

At least one person was killed after an Israeli airstrike on a car in the southern Lebanese town of Khiam, according to the country's health ministry.

It is a major escalation in tensions, and follows the killing of a Hezbollah commander in Beirut almost a month ago.

HOW CLOSE ARE ISRAEL AND HEZBOLLAH TO AN ALL-OUT WAR?

[DW NEWS](#) 29 July 2024 14min

The rocket strike from Hezbollah has renewed fears of an all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah. We take a look at the military capabilities both sides could draw upon. And for more on this, we talk to Efraim Halevy. He is a former head of Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad. He assesses for us how likely an open conflict is. DW correspondent Tania Krämer is following developments from Jerusalem. We ask her what this "severe response" against Hezbollah – that Netanyahu announced today – might look like...

HOW AND WHY DID ISRAEL BLOW UP HEZBOLLAH'S PAGERS?

[The Telegraph](#) 18 Sept 2024 27min 25sec

It reads like something out of a spy thriller: thousands of pagers belonging to Hezbollah fighters exploded on Tuesday, killing at least 12 and wounding nearly 3,000 people. We bring you the remarkable story behind the attacks, believed to be caused by explosives planted in the devices by Israeli agents.

The Telegraph's Senior Foreign Correspondent Roland Oliphant tells us whether the plot against Iran-backed Hezbollah could trigger an all-out regional war. Plus, Jotam Confino reports from Israel on how local media are reacting to the audacious plot.

INSIDE THE 'GROUNDBREAKING' PAGER AND RADIO EXPLOSIONS TARGETING HEZBOLLAH

[CNN](#) 19 Sept 2024 24min 23sec

At least 20 people were killed and more than 450 were injured after walkie-talkies detonated in Lebanon, according to officials, a day after a wave of pager explosions killed at least 12 people and injured more than 2,800. Catch up on CNN's coverage

HEZBOLLAH LEADER CALLS WALKIE TALKIE AND PAGER ATTACKS 'A DECLARATION OF WAR'

[ITV News](#) 19 Sept 2023 10min 46sec

Nasrallah has accused Israel of two waves of attacks which 'crossed red lines', as Foreign Secretary David Lammy urges all British nationals to leave Lebanon.

ISRAEL ISSUES EVACUATION WARNING AS IT 'DEEPENS' ATTACKS ON LEBANON

[Al Jazeera English](#) 23 Sept 2024 18min 3sec

People in Lebanon are receiving text messages and phone calls from a Lebanese number, instructing them to immediately move away from any posts used by Hezbollah, Reuters reports. Earlier, an Israeli military spokesperson issued a similar warning in a televised statement, stating that the message was being "distributed in Arabic on all networks and platforms in Lebanon." The Israeli army has been urging Lebanese civilians to "move away" from Hezbollah sites it plans to target and announced that it will carry out more "extensive and precise" strikes against Hezbollah. This marks the first warning issued by Israel's

military to the Lebanese people since the Gaza war erupted nearly a year ago. Lebanese Minister of Information, Ziad Makary, reportedly received a call with a voicemail urging the evacuation of a building, according to the agency.

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz says the military will act with full force - and won't stop until the threat of Hezbollah is removed.

Al Jazeera is covering this story from various locations. Zeina Khodr is near Tyre, where large explosions have taken place, and Imran Khan is reporting from southern Lebanon, where Israeli airstrikes are ongoing. Dorsa Jabbari brings updates from the capital, Beirut, while Zein Basravi, reporting from Amman, covers the Israeli army's stance. Al Jazeera's defence editor, Alex Gatopoulos, is in the studio providing military analysis.

WHAT THE ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT MEANS FOR LEBANON

[DW News](#) 23 Sept 2024 14min 36sec

Israel's military began carrying out what it described as "extensive strikes" against Hezbollah, telling residents to evacuate areas close to buildings that are used by the militant group.

The new wave of airstrikes on Lebanon follow a weekend in which both sides exchanged hundreds of rockets. Some struck close to the Israeli port city of Haifa. Israel's defense minister says the operations will continue until residents can return to evacuated areas near the northern border with Lebanon. Hezbollah has said it will fight on until a cease-fire is secured in Gaza.

'IMMINENT CATASTROPHE' AS ISRAEL AND HEZBOLLAH RAMP UP RETALIATIONS

[Times Radio](#) 23 Sept 2024 16min 48sec

"This long-feared full out regional conflict between these actors and Israel could occur at any moment."

The UN has warned of 'imminent catastrophe' in the Middle East as attacks between Israel and Hezbollah continue to escalate, says journalist Hunter Williamson.

ISRAEL GOES ON THE OFFENSIVE NEWS ON THE 700 CLUB

[CBN News](#) 24 Sept 2024 5min 49sec

ISRAEL UNLEASHES HELLFIRE: 500 HEZBOLLAH TERRORISTS DECIMATED

[Briefly](#) 24Sept 2024 5min

Israel unleashed a devastating aerial assault on Hezbollah, eliminating 500 terrorists in a single day. With 1,300 targets hit and more strikes to come, the message is clear: Israel will not wait for threats—it will destroy them. As Hezbollah retaliates, tensions are skyrocketing, and the stakes couldn't be higher.

HEZBOLLAH FIRES MISSILE AT TEL AVIV

[BBC News](#) 25 Sept 2024 12min 55sec

Hezbollah has fired a missile towards the Israeli city of Tel Aviv early on Wednesday morning.

The Israeli military says air raid sirens sounded around Tel Aviv and central Israel, but the missile was intercepted and there were no reports of damage or casualties.

Hezbollah said the attack was directed at the headquarters of Israeli intelligence agency Mossad - in support of the "valiant and honourable resistance" of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, and "in defence of Lebanon and its people".

Israel has been blamed for the pager and walkie-talkie attacks which set off the fighting last week, but it has not claimed responsibility for them.

Israeli media said this is the first time that Hezbollah has targeted the Tel Aviv metropolitan area.

The Israeli military says it has launched a new wave of strikes in southern Lebanon and the Beqaa area, describing them as "extensive".

JOHN KIRBY WEIGHS IN ON DEATH OF HEZBOLLAH LEADER HASSAN NASRALLAH

[CNN](#) 29 Sept 2024 7min 38sec

White House national security communications adviser John Kirby responds to Israel's assassination of Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah

HEZBOLLAH FIRES 100+ ROCKETS IN MASSIVE ATTACK| ISRAEL ARMY HQ HIT SAFED, GALILEE, HAIFA STRUCK

[TIMES NOW](#) 30 Sept 2024 3min 33sec

Hezbollah has released a video of its rocket attack on Israeli Army's Northern Command HQ near Safed region in north Israel. The rocket barrage comes after Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah was killed in an Israeli strike in Lebanese capital Beirut. Hezbollah fired nearly a 100 rockets at Israel. Watch this video for more information.

IRAN ATTACKS ISRAEL AFTER LEBANON INVASION AND HEZBOLLAH KILLINGS

[Channel 4 News](#) 1 Oct 2024 49min 48sec

Israel is invading Lebanon and Iran is attacking Israel.

Every one of these countries now at war, with tens of millions of people braced for what comes next.

A massive attack of ballistic missiles targeted cities across Israel, the revenge Iran promised after Israel killed the Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. It came as Israeli forces crossed the border into Lebanon telling people across the south to evacuate.

So far there has been no fighting between Israeli forces and Hezbollah, but two waves of Iranian missiles have been launched into central and southern Israel. It's not known how many struck targets on the ground. Meanwhile Israeli airstrikes have struck across Lebanon all day, including in Beirut, and there has also been a suspected terror attack in Tel Aviv with at least six reported dead and nine injured.

There have also been attacks in Gaza, Syria and the Red Sea. The fighting that blew up almost a year ago is on the verge of becoming a full-blown regional war.

ISRAEL HEZBOLLAH LIVE | IDF ATTACKS HEZBOLLAH TUNNELS IN LEBANON, WHAT HAPPENED?

[MIRROR NOW](#) (when recorded watching now - 1 Oct 2024

Started streaming 11 hours ago)

Israel Hezbollah Live | IDF Attacks Hezbollah Tunnels In Lebanon, What Happened?

LIVE ISRAEL VS HEZBOLLAH WAR | IDF HITS HEZBOLLAH HARD, 1000 HEZBOLLAH ROCKET LAUNCHERS DESTROYED

[ET Now](#)

Started streaming 20 Sept 2024

Videos – Islamic Jihad

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

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

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

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.

GAZA'S MOST VIOLENT TERRORIST ORGANIZATION EXPLAINED

[Unpacked](#) 1 May 2024 12min 39sec

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

The Palestinian armed group Islamic Jihad has taken responsibility for the incursion into northern Israel, from Lebanon.

Earlier on Monday, the Israeli military said its soldiers, backed by helicopters, killed fighters who attempted to infiltrate from Lebanon.

Some residents on the Lebanon-Israel border have left their homes, out of fear of escalation on that front.

Al Jazeera's Ali Hashem joins us on the line from Southern Lebanon for the latest developments.

Videos – Gaza Tunnels

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

[The Wall Street Journal](#) | 26 October 2023 5min 43sec

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. WSJ's Rory Jones – who visited them in 2014 – explains how they pose a unique challenge to Israel and could make urban combat costly for both Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians.

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](#) | 11Nov 2023 4Min47sec

Hamas tunnels use different tunneling methods, ranging from simple manual strategies to slightly advanced methods like forepolling and drilling blasts. They also employ reinforced concrete to support the underground structures, which are divided into approximately 7 to 8 levels deep underground. These

tunnels are intentionally dug deep to protect against bunker-buster bombs like the one mentioned. The network comprises an estimated 1,300 tunnels, spanning a total length of around 500 kilometers which translates to 310 miles. Some of these tunnels delve as deep as 70 meters (230 feet) underground. Reports indicate that the majority of the tunnels are merely two meters high and two meters wide.

HOW ISRAEL'S FORCES PLAN TO DESTROY THE HAMAS-OPERATED TUNNEL SYSTEM

[DW News](#) 20 Oct 2023 7min 1sec

If Israel launches its ground offensive into Gaza, its forces will presumably have to deal with hundreds of kilometers of tunnels under the territory. The network is used by militant-Islamists Hamas and other jihadist groups. It is also believed to contain Hamas command centers

IDF UNCOVERS PROOF OF HAMAS HEADQUARTERS UNDER SHIFA HOSPITAL

[TBN Israel](#) 28 Oct 2023 3min1sec

TBN Israel's Yair Pinto reports from the frontlines of the Israel-Gaza War while on active duty with the IDF. Pinto breaks down how the IDF has uncovered irrefutable proof of the existence of a major HAMAS headquarters located under the Shifa Hospital compound. Pinto encourages believers to continue praying for the destruction of Hamas and the peace of Jerusalem. Stay up-to-date with the latest developments here on TBN Israel.

INSIDE THE HAMAS TUNNELS LYING UNDERNEATH AL SHIFA HOSPITAL IN GAZA

[Times Radio](#) 23 Nov 2023 8min 49sec

"The tunnel comes up in a mosque and goes back to the hospital, comes out in a school, goes back to the hospital - that's the system."

Israeli soldiers explain the tactics Hamas uses to carry out their attacks.

HOW DID HAMAS BUILD "HIGH-TECH" TUNNELS BELOW GAZA?

Vantage with Palki Sharma

[Firstpost](#) 21 Dec 2023 8min17sec

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.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR: 700 TERROR TUNNEL SHAFTS IN AFAH, 50 TO EGYPT ISRAEL SAYS

[LiveNOW from FOX](#) 18 May 2024 13.00min0sec

Nearly 700 tunnel shafts have been identified in Rafah with 50 tunnels leading directly from Gaza's southernmost city into Egypt, Israeli attorney Gilad Noam told the International Court of Justice on Friday. Noam was representing Israel during the two-day emergency hearing after South Africa had called for the ICJ to order a stop to Israel's full-scale operation into Rafah.

During the hearing, Noam explained that Hamas was using the tunnels to supply itself with weapons and ammunition, but that the tunnels could even be used to smuggle hostages out of Gaza.

More than 100 of the hostages kidnapped by Hamas and other terror groups from Israel on Oct. 7 are believed to still be in Gaza, more than seven months later.

Israel has said it will move forward with its full-scale operation into Rafah, in part, to rescue those remaining hostages.

Dr. Asaf Romirowsky, the Executive Director of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East joined LiveNOW from FOX's Josh Breslow to discuss the latest developments in the Middle East, including the newest information on the fight between Hezbollah and Israel.

ISRAEL RELEASES VIDEO OF GAZA TUNNEL WHERE IT SAYS HAMAS KILLED 6 HOSTAGES

[Associated Press](#) 10 Sept 2024 1min 26sec

The Israeli military has released video footage of a Gaza tunnel where it says six hostages were recently killed by Hamas. The discovery of the hostages' bodies last month sparked a mass outpouring of anger in Israel. Read more: <https://bit.ly/4gidHWq>

ISRAEL CUTS OFF HAMAS' OXYGEN, TAKES CONTROL OVER PHILADELPHI CORRIDOR

[Briefly](#) 30 May 2024 6min 33sec

Israeli Defence Force (IDF) announces control over the Philadelphi Corridor, a critical 14 km stretch along the Gaza-Egypt border known as 'oxygen for Hamas.' The Israeli military discovered at least 20 smuggling tunnels and numerous rocket launchers, revealing Hamas's extensive underground network. This strategic move will reshape the landscape of the conflict.

AIRSTRIKES IN GAZA KILL 14; ISRAELI FORCES SHOW TUNNEL SYSTEM

[CBS News](#) 14 Sept 2024 2min 31sec

Israeli airstrikes have hit southern Gaza overnight, killing at least 14 people. One strike was captured by the rooftop camera where a local CBS News team is based. Meanwhile, the Israeli military gave CBS News a glimpse of the extensive network of Hamas-built tunnels uncovered under Rafah.

Videos - Golan Heights

WHY IS THE GOLAN HEIGHTS SO IMPORTANT?

[The National News](#) 2 Aug 2018 2min 34sec

The Golan Heights is one of the most prized pieces of land in the Middle East and it has been that way for millennia. It officially belongs to Syria, but Israel has occupied it since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, a seizure considered illegal under international law. Here's a look at how and why it's such an important region.

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.

TRUMP ANNOUNCES RECOGNITION OF GOLAN HEIGHTS AS PART OF ISRAEL

[Fox News](#) 25 Mar 2019 12min 44sec

President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are expected to make an announcement on recognition of the Golan Heights as part of Israel.

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.

GOLAN HEIGHTS ATTACK: WHY THE GOLAN HEIGHTS IS A MIDDLE EAST FLASHPOINT

[WION](#) 29 July 2024 2min 55sec

A rocket attack on a football pitch in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights killed at least 12 young people. The attack has sparked fears of a wider regional Middle East conflict. Hezbollah denied taking responsibility, but Israel has blamed the Lebanese group for the deadly attack.

ISRAEL BOMBS BEIRUT IN REVENGE FOR GOLAN HEIGHTS ROCKET; STRIKES HEZBOLLAH STRONGHOLD

[Firstpost](#) 31 July 2024 12min 40sec

Almost 10 months after the Israel-Hamas war began, today, the spotlight has turned from Gaza to the Golan Heights. Twelve children were killed after a rocket strike hit a football pitch in the Golan Heights, an Israel-annexed territory disputed with Syria. Israel says it is the deadliest attack on its people since October 7. Israel has vowed revenge and has said the enemy will pay a heavy price. The attack forced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to shorten his US trip and return home. For a war with already widening fronts, why is the focus now on Golan Heights? What is the significance of this disputed territory? What is the Golan Heights dispute? Watch this video for details.

Videos – West Bank

ISRAEL SETTLEMENTS PART 1

[Unpacked](#) 10 Oct 2019 11min 13sec

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](#) 17 Oct 2019 `11min 52sec

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](#) 24 Oct 2019 11min 13sec

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](#) 31 Oct 2019 12min 10sec

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](#) 7 Nov 2019 8min 50sec

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](#) 11 Oct 2023 14min 21sec

[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

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

[CBN News](#) 18 Dec 2021 4min 10sec

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...>

WHO ARE THE HOUTHIS ATTACKING RED SEA SHIPS? 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.

[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: HOUTHİ FURY

[ARTE.TV Documentary](#) 11 Sept 2024 25min 18 sec

The Houthis rule a third of Yemen with an iron fist, after ten years of civil war. Their ideology is as ferociously anti-American and antisemitic, as it is pro-Palestine with young people indoctrinated into a strict religious view of the world that burns with anger.

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

[The New Africa Channel](#) 25 Dec 2023 10min 33sec

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)

HOW YEMEN IS WRECKING THE ENTIRE GLOBAL ECONOMY

[RealLifeLore](#) 17 Jan 2024 37min 27sec

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

[Times New World](#) 6 Feb 2024 4min 35sec

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.

THE WAR IN YEMEN, MAPPED

[Johnny Harris](#) 17 May 2024 22min 8sec

The war in Yemen has created one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, and it's been made worse by outside actors. Countries using the war in Yemen as a proxy to increase their own power and influence, but with a massive human cost.

YEMEN: HOUTHİ FURY

[ARTE.TV Documentary](#) 11 Sept 2024 25min 18 sec

The Houthis rule a third of Yemen with an iron fist, after ten years of civil war. Their ideology is as ferociously anti-American and antisemitic, as it is pro-Palestine with young people indoctrinated into a strict religious view of the world that burns with anger.

TORN APART - YEMEN IN THE GRIP OF THE HOUTHİ MILITIA

[DW Documentary](#) 24 Sept 2024 28min 26sec

The Houthi movement has established totalitarian rule in northern Yemen. Who are these militants who invoke the Prophet Mohammed, fire rockets at Israel and paralyze world trade with their attacks on Red Sea shipping?

Ten years of civil war have brought Yemen to its knees. In the north, Houthi militias have established a strictly isolated dominion in which oppression, displacement and hunger are rife. It's a police state, where the security apparatus monitors where people go and what they say. Meanwhile, international organizations describe the situation in Yemen as one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters.

Ten years ago, Yemen's capital, Sanaa, was captured by Houthi fighters, forcing the internationally recognized government to the south. Today, patched-together flags of both Yemen and Gaza fly over the walls of the old city center. The atmosphere is fueled by Houthi propaganda. Israel's attacks on Gaza bring back memories in Yemen, where thousands of civilians have died in airstrikes by the Saudi-led, Western-backed military alliance. Everywhere, there are pictures of militiamen who have been killed in the fighting — often, they look like children.

Recently, Houthi attacks on Israel and on ships in the Red Sea have brought the militia back into the public eye. Waging what they describe as a holy war helps them domestically, allowing them to divert people's dissatisfaction towards an external enemy.

This documentary provides a rare look at the Houthis and the territory they control. The filmmakers meet fighters, but also the victims of Houthi militias — Yemenis fighting desperately for their children's survival, who have almost given up hope of peace.

Videos – Teaching Palestinian Children

WHAT DOES THE UN TEACH PALESTINIAN CHILDREN AT UNRWA SCHOOLS?

[The Line of Fire](#) 8 Aug 2014 12min14sec

What does the UN teach Palestinian children at UNRWA schools? (H/T to Israel Resource News Agency, Center for Near East Policy Research) [Show transcript](#)

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.

WHAT ARE PALESTINIAN CHILDREN READING IN THEIR TEXTBOOKS?

[i24NEWS English](#) 16 May 2019 5min0sec

Articles: <https://www.i24news.tv/en> Live: <https://video.i24news.tv/page/live?cl...>
Replay: <https://video.i24news.tv/page/5a97b81...>

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.

WAR THROUGH THE EYES OF GAZA'S CHILDREN

[The New York Times](#) 30 Oct 2023 3min 17sec

At a U.N. camp in southern Gaza, children have been forced to flee their homes and live in squalid conditions while trying to make sense of a war with no end in sight.

'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.

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

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 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.

REJECTIONISM IN PALESTINIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION: HOW INFLUENTIAL? WITH ITAMAR MARCUS

[Middle East Forum Podcast](#) 22 May 2023 30min 36sec

The Palestinian Authority and Hamas ubiquitously spew murderous hatred of Israel: in the media, sermons, posters, and schools. How influential are these beliefs in coming generations? What are the implications? What can Israel do in response?

Itamar Marcus, founder and director of Palestinian Media Watch, writes on PA education, ideology, and media. He has presented PMW's findings to government officials, parliamentarians, and academics around the world. He has a BA from CCNY and an MA from NYU.

Videos – IRAN

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?

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?

THE REAL REASON

BEHIND THE CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAN AND ISRAEL | MAPPED OUT

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

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.

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.

HAMAS, HEZBOLLAH AND HOUTHIS: IRAN'S 'AXIS OF RESISTANCE,' EXPLAINED

[The Wall Street Journal](#) 5 Jan 2024 6min 33sec

Iran-backed groups connect to form a land bridge across the Middle East and form an alliance that Tehran calls the 'Axis of Resistance.' This land bridge can be used to transport equipment and personnel, but also allows for positions in Iraq and Syria to attack U.S. interests or threaten Israel closer to its borders. WSJ explains what to know about the alliance that includes Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen.

FIVE REASONS WHY IRAN IS INVOLVED IN SO MANY GLOBAL CONFLICTS

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

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.

ISRAEL IRAN MISSILES DRONE ATTACK EXPLAINED

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

IF ISRAEL AND IRAN GO TO WAR - WHO WINS?

[The Military Show](#) 26 Jun 2024

Imagine the Middle East's peace shattering in an instant! A bold Iranian strike against Israel in response to an April assault in Damascus sparks a crisis. As missiles arc over the sky, the first hour sets the tone for a major confrontation. Will Israel retaliate? Watch the conflict unfold and its global implications.

HOW POWERFUL IS IRAN REALLY? | MAPPED OUT

[DW News](#) 27 Jun 2024 14min 13sec

Iran is successfully projecting power across the Middle East, causing instability through its proxy militias such as Hezbollah and Hamas and disrupting trade routes. That's despite a failing economy and dwindling domestic support for the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Tehran. What are the key strategies it has mastered? And how powerful is Iran really?

ISRAEL PLANS RETALIATION AFTER IRAN MISSILE ATTACK

[TBN Israel](#) 2 Oct 2024 32min 10sec

Israel is responding with strength following yesterday's massive missile strike by Iran, marking one of the largest assaults on the country. The IDF has announced plans for retaliation, with airstrikes and military operations underway. Additionally, a terror attack in southern Israel has been reported, and the situation remains critical.

In a new development, Israeli forces have launched a ground invasion into southern Lebanon, targeting Hezbollah strongholds in response to escalated tensions in the region. The conflict is rapidly intensifying, and TBN Israel is here to provide real-time updates as these events unfold.

Join us in prayer for the safety of the Israeli people, the IDF soldiers on the front lines, and for a swift resolution to this conflict. Your continued support is crucial to helping us provide the latest updates and coverage during these dangerous times.

**IRAN ATTACKS ISRAEL LIVE | TEHRAN GEARING UP FOR 2ND ATTACK? |
WARNING ISSUED FOR NETANYAHU, ALLIES**

[MIRROR NOW](#) (2 Oct 2024)

STARTED STREAMING ON 2 Oct 2024 [#live](#) [#israel](#) [#iran](#)

Iran Attacks Israel Live | On October 1, Iran launched over 200 missiles at Israel, prompting nearly 10 million Israelis to seek refuge in bomb shelters. Iran warned of a larger attack if Israel retaliates and called on the U.S. and Europe to prevent Israel's response. The strikes were reportedly in retaliation for the recent killing of Hezbollah leader Nasrallah and Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh by Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu condemned the attack and hinted at strong retaliation. Watch the video for more.

Videos - UNWRA

HOW DOES UNRWA IMPACT PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS?

[Stand With Us](#) 12 Sept 2018 4min 14sec

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.

'THEY CELEBRATED': UNRWA STAFF CAUGHT PRAISING HAMAS FOR OCTOBER 7 MASSACRE

[Sky News Australia](#) 28 Jan 2024 6min 48sec

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."

HAMAS TERROR TUNNEL FOUND UNDER GAZA CITY HEADQUARTERS OF UN AGENCY

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

BENEATH UNRWA HQ IN GAZA

[TBN Israel](#) 11 Feb 2024 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.

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.

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

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

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

[UN Watch](#) 11Jun 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.

HAMAS COMMAND ROOM INSIDE UNRWA HQ IN GAZA; IDF FINDS DRONE, WEAPONS CACHES AND MORE

[The Economic Times](#) 12 July 2024 2min 38sec

IDF troops have located weapons and a command room used by Hamas at UNRWA's headquarters in Gaza City. The troops raided the compound on July 08 following intelligence indicating Hamas' presence inside the UNRWA HQ in Gaza City. The UNRWA HQ has not been in use in recent months. The IDF raided the compound earlier this year, discovering a major Hamas tunnel network that passed beneath it. In the latest operation, the IDF said the commandos captured Hamas operatives who attempted to flee the UNRWA facility. Commando Brigade troops also found parts of Hamas drone, a command room used to observe Israeli forces and dozens of weapons, including rockets, machine guns, mortars, explosive devices, grenades and drones that drop bombs. In a nearby university building, the IDF said the commandos located an underground bomb-making lab and additional weapons.

UN HEAD ADMITS HAMAS TUNNELS BUILT UNDER UN BUILDINGS!

[J-TV Jewish Idea...](#) 25 Sept 2024 3min 30sec

António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, admits there are Hamas tunnels under UNRWA buildings in Gaza - as if this is normal...

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*')

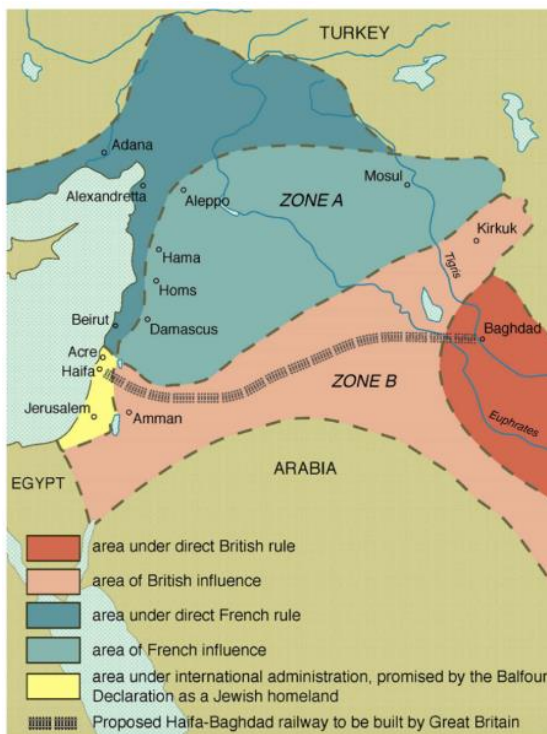
The Russian Jews were concentrated in the Russian Pale were [Pogroms](#) (a violent [riot](#) incited with the aim of [massacring](#) or expelling an ethnic or religious group, particularly [Jews](#)^[1]). This gave rise to a group called **Zionists** and led to '**Aliyah**' (Jewish emigration) (see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



++

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

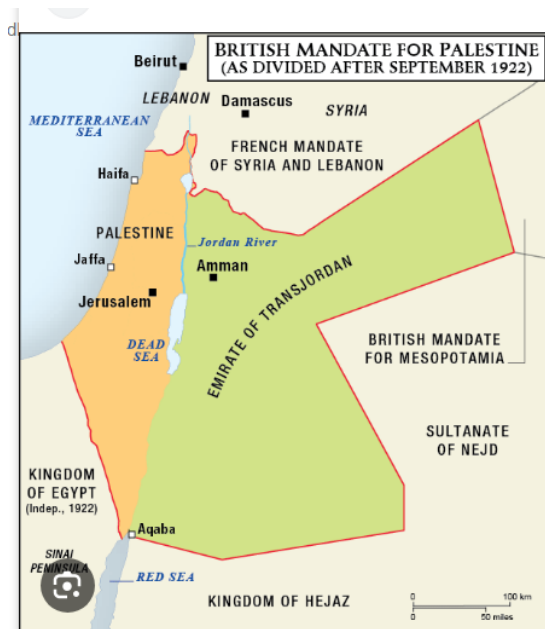
 [Balfour Declaration](#) at [Wikisource](#)

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 1920^[i]

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.



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.

ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF ZIONISM

[FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE](#) Liora Halperin January 9 2015

This essay is based on a lecture she delivered to FPRI's Butcher History Institute on "Teaching about Israel and Palestine," October 25-26, 2014. The Butcher History Institute is FPRI's professional development program for high school teachers from all around the country.

One of the key forces in shaping the history of Palestine was the Zionist movement. This movement emerged from and is rooted in political developments in Europe, but it changed and developed as it evolved from a political movement in Europe to a settlement and nation-building project in Palestine. Thus, we need to step outside the physical context of the Middle East to understand a force that ultimately changed the Middle East.

This article focuses on Jewish history and Jewish politics and thought; other texts in this collection complement and complicate the picture I give with perspectives from the Arab, Palestinian, and imperial perspectives. In what follows I will give an overview of the Jewish world at the time; will zoom in on the conditions in Western, Central, and Eastern Europe that eventually gave rise to the Zionist movement; will discuss the early evolution of the movement in Europe, before discussing how it evolved and changed as it focused on a settlement and nation-building project in Palestine. In addition, I'll look briefly at how local late Ottoman and then British trends enabled the movement's growth in Palestine despite local fear, concern, and growing opposition, and will finally turn to Zionist responses to increasingly evident local resistance. Zionism is a form of Jewish nationalism that posits Jews are a nation and that Jews should receive national rights on the basis of this identity. What distinguishes Zionism from other forms of Jewish nationalism is that Zionists, after a brief period of uncertainty and alternative proposals, believed that the location for these rights or sovereignty should be the Land of Israel, which religious Jewish tradition regarded as Jews' ancient and ultimate homeland.

OVERVIEW OF THE JEWISH WORLD AT THE TIME

Jews had originated in Palestine (ancient Canaan) but had begun to migrate outwards in ancient times, both because of expulsions and for economic reasons under the Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans. Under Roman rule, after the destruction of the Second Jerusalem Temple in 70 AD, they migrated farther, across North Africa and, particularly important for us, to Germany and France. In the late Middle Ages, in the wake of persecution and expulsions, many Ashkenazi Jews moved east from Germany to the lands of Poland and Russia.

Not all Jews migrated to Europe; when the Middle East came under the rule of Islam, some migrated across the Muslim world, including a very important population who went to Spain and flourished there and retained their identity as Spanish Jews even after they were expelled after the Christian Reconquista in 1492. Many of those Spanish (or Sephardi) Jews lived in Turkey, Greece, the Balkans and North Africa. And still others, dating to the times of the Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks, the Mizrahim, lived in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Iran, some of the longest lasting Jewish populations in the world.

A very small population of Jews remained in Palestine under Roman, Byzantine, and Muslim rule; their numbers grew after the Spanish expulsion of 1492 and again with migration of Jews from Eastern Europe to the holy land, often for religious reasons, or to study. By the end of the 19th century, Jews—nearly all religious—with a core of Mizrahi Jews, an influx of Sephardi Jews, and a later immigration of religious Ashkenazim, were about 5% of Palestine's population.

Back in Europe, with the expansion of the Russian Empire and the partition of Poland in the 1790s, much of Eastern Europe came under Russian rule. Catherine the Great established Russia's Western borderlands as the Pale of Settlement which, by the 19th century had, the highest concentration of Jews in the world. Most were religious, but increasingly were being influenced by the idea of learning secular sciences, alongside the maintenance of Jewish cultural identity. Much smaller, but often highly educated and influential populations of Jews lived in Western and central Europe, especially France, Germany, England, and Austria.

19TH CENTURY TRENDS IN WESTERN, CENTRAL, AND EASTERN EUROPE

To understand the emergence of Zionism we need to look at key trends taking place in Europe: enlightenment and emancipation in Western and central Europe and state centralization and enlightened absolutism in Eastern Europe. Both of these would lead some Jews toward Zionism, though not always for the same reasons.

In Eastern Europe, the debate was not about citizenship, but rather about state centralization and integration of Jews and other minorities into state languages and state educational institutions. But unlike in the West, where collective identities were dissolved in favor of individual rights, the Russian empire in particular was full of ethnic groups understanding themselves as distinct entities. The idea that Jews could be fully modern and maintain ethnic identities and institutions of their own was consistent with broader national trends in Russia. Within a large commitment to modernization, Jewish cultural movements, based on Yiddish and Hebrew, emerged.

But confidence in integration and modernization stalled in 1882, with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, the rollback of his more inclusive laws, and the outbreak of pogroms. The 1880s then saw the emergence of a slew of Jewish political alternatives to liberalism, from socialism to nationalism to nationally organized forms of socialism. Zionism emerged in this mix as a particular form of nationalism: the idea that Jews could be fully realized culturally and politically only in a homeland of their own. This thinking took shape in particular in the work of Leon Pinsker in his 1882 text "Autoemancipation."

In Western and Central Europe our story begins earlier than the Eastern European story, though Zionism emerged there slightly later. The enlightenment had introduced a belief in citizenship and individual rights. Jews were an important test case: if such a unique and traditionally insular group could be integrated, the very principle of enlightenment would be supported. Many, however, were unsure whether Jews could or should be integrated.

But rising ethnic nationalism and growing economic pressures compromised this trend. Debates raged throughout the late 1700s-1800s about whether Jews could be fully integrated. This came to be called the Jewish Question. And indeed the more Jews were integrated, the more grew the perception that they were a potential fifth column, that they would weaken the state.

Most Jews in Central and Western Europe continued at that time to believe that integration was possible and the best solution to rising anti-Semitism. But some secular Jews, initially committed to the principles of liberalism and integrated, came to feel that Jews could not be accepted as members of a host nation, but instead should cultivate their own identity as a nation of their own. Theodor Herzl, a Viennese Jewish journalist from Budapest, who, watching rising anti-Semitism (culminating in 1890 with the accusation of Alfred Dreyfus in France of treason), concluded that anti-Semitism would not end and that the solution was Jewish statehood.

This is the political mix that spawned Zionism: disenchantment with liberalism in Western Europe, combined with political upheaval and violence in Eastern Europe, a setting more generally conducive to thinking about identity in ethno-nationalist terms.

OPPOSITION TO ZIONISM

Though Zionism has a particular logic that emerged from the events surrounding it, not all Jews subscribed to that logic and in fact a majority of Jews initially did not. Their opposition stemmed from a number of directions. Jewish liberals, committed to the idea of Jewish integration, thought that Zionism, by conceding to the permanence of anti-Semitism, would in turn lead to more anti-Semitism. Orthodox Jews believed that Jews had been exiled in ancient times because of their sins and would return only with God's will and in messianic times. They believed that taking action to return to Palestine en masse was nothing short of heresy. This religious opposition would change as religious streams of Zionism emerged, but it is important to recall that Orthodoxy was initially deeply opposed to Zionism. Another Jewish group, Autonomists, believed in the national and cultural specificity of Jews, but believed that the solution to Jewish problems would be found within the places they lived, by demanding cultural autonomy. Many of them promoted Yiddish (not Hebrew) as the Jewish national language. Meanwhile, some Jews thought that the division by nationality was highly inappropriate and joined socialist movements not organized in national terms. To understand how this initially small movement evolved into a major political force, we need to look at it in stages, always understanding the tension between the national purpose Zionism would serve in Europe and the settlement project itself.

EVOLUTION OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

The earliest Zionist settlers, known as the first Aliyah (wave of immigration), emerge in Eastern Europe following the events of 1882. The "Lovers of Zion" sent tiny groups of Jews to purchase lands mostly in the Jaffa region and Galilee. But they were very disorganized. The major organization came from Central Europeans, and most importantly Theodor Herzl, who in 1897 convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. Still, though, they believed that the actual target population was those facing pogroms in Eastern Europe, most of them assumed they would not personally move.

If Central European Jews had provided the organizational impetus, and Eastern European Jews had provided the willing immigrants, the early Zionist settlements, places like Rehovot, Rishon LeZion, and Zikhron Yaakov, succeeded (after initial failures) only because of the investment of wealthy Western European Jews—most famously Baron Edmond de Rothschild of the noted banking family, who pumped capital into struggling wheat and grape plantations, which employed mainly native Arab labor.

With Central and Western European Jews providing much of the organizational backbone of the still tiny Jewish settlement movement, the ongoing tensions and violence in the Russian Empire—most notably the Kishinev Pogrom in 1903—drove further waves of Jews to Palestine. In the 10 years before World War I, this group, known as the second wave of Zionist immigration (Second Aliyah) arrived to find the plantation colonies of their predecessors. However, strongly influenced by the socialist trends and emphasis on labor of early 20th century Russia, they expressed concern at the tendency of Jewish colonists (so they called themselves at the time) to be uninvolved with physical labor, and to hire native Arab labor at a low cost. They were convinced that this path was bad for Jews (who were not properly connected to the soil) and to Palestine in general (because plantation owners would be seen as exploitative). They pushed for the separation of Jewish and Arab agricultural economies, and founded all-Jewish farming cooperatives called Kibbutzim.

There are two different ways to look at this development, both of which have truth in them. On the one hand, the members of the Second Aliyah who, because of their socialist focus would be called Labor Zionists, were convinced that their path was enlightened, non-exploitative, and sensitive to the needs of local Palestinian Arab peasants, who they assumed were at a lower stage of development. They believed that their new economic structure would work better for Jews, for Palestinian Arabs, and for the land as a whole. On the other hand, the model of a separate economy eliminated Palestinian Arabs from the picture. With Arabs no longer essential as workers, the Zionist movement began to imagine a more fully Jewish project, which would build an all-Jewish model society from scratch. Some scholars have compared this mindset to that of American settler colonists, who imagined creating a “city on a hill” that would take shape without any direct engagement with the Native American population. This thinking, though rooted in progressive values, introduced new challenges and conflicts.

The Second and Third Aliyot, Zionists from the Russian empire, were strongly influenced by the idea that national identity was rooted in Hebrew. They were people who, a generation before, had been promoting Hebrew and Yiddish literature as tools of modernization within the Russian empire; and they brought this focus on culture to Zionism. Herzl’s early Zionist Congresses did not emphasize culture, aiming instead for a political solution to a political problem of anti-semitism. They were conducted wholly in German. A group of Eastern European Zionists, however, were already working in Palestine to promote Hebrew as the national language. Why Hebrew? Hebrew was the language of the Hebrew bible and of the period of Jewish autonomy in the ancient Holy Land. It was mainly spoken and written in religious contexts but had become a language of modern literature. These Zionists saw it as the link tying Jews back to their essential and robust national existence. Many of them rejected Yiddish, the Germanic, but Hebrew-influenced language of most Eastern European Jews, as backwards.

In the early decades of the 20th century, advocates of Hebrew set up institutions to coin new words, built a complete Hebrew language school system, convened Jewish cultural performances, translated classic works of European literature into Hebrew and, increasingly, put social pressure on new immigrants to leave their mother tongues and adopt Hebrew. Those who grew up in the Hebrew school system were immensely proud of their fluency and policed the language use of their parents and other new immigrants. It should be noted that the pre-Zionist population of Palestine, that 5-8% I mentioned earlier, tended to be strongly

opposed to this secular Hebrew program. Eventually the immigrants of the Second and Third Aliyot, created a kind of political and cultural hegemony around the idea of Jewish labor and separate economic markets, and around Hebrew as a national symbol.

You may have noticed that it is possible to talk about early Zionism as a process of ideological and cultural development among European Jews in Europe and Palestine without mentioning native Palestinians even once. This was largely the mindset of most early Zionists, who were far more concerned about real challenges and threats in Europe and about Jews' internal cultural development, than about any potential for conflict in Palestine.

IMPERIAL INFLUENCE

But Zionism was not just about Jewish initiative; a set of local and regional circumstances were arraying themselves in Palestine that would both enable the continuation and growth of Zionist immigration and land purchasing efforts, and lead locals to be highly resistant to and suspicious of these very efforts.

The period between the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a period of imperial contest, contest that would lead ultimately to the First World War. As empires tried to strengthen themselves, they took actions that would be fateful for Palestine.[1]

The Ottoman Empire, seeing itself growing economically weaker, passed a series of reforms in the mid-19th century. Some of these gave rights to Europeans to migrate to and set up economic (and in some cases) religious institutions in Palestine, with the hope of spurring investment. This move was initially influential more for European Christians, but it allowed European Jews to immigrate as citizens or subjects of their European countries. The Ottoman Empire also tried to centralize and enacted land reforms aimed at collecting taxes more efficiently. These reforms led to many smaller landowners to sell to large, absentee landlords because they couldn't afford to pay taxes. This led to a situation where the sellers of land to Jews did not live on the land they were selling.

The British Empire, in turn, seeing the Ottoman Empire's demise and plotting its own plan to control parts of the Middle East, began making deals with several interested parties. In addition to promising Sharif Husayn of Mecca an Arab state in exchange for help in the Arab revolt against the Ottomans, and making tentative land arrangements with France, they issued the famous (and for some, infamous) Balfour Declaration, which expressed support for the establishment of a "Jewish national home" in Palestine.

When the British did indeed conquer Palestine in late 1917 and were awarded a mandate by the League of Nations, they incorporated the text of the Balfour Declaration into the terms of the mandate. Though this promise was vaguely worded, the Zionist movement took this as indication that they were justified in demanding British support for immigration and land purchase. Though the British quickly understood that such allowances would foment opposition of the local population they did not make significant efforts to curb Zionist immigration until 1939, by which point events in Europe put this policy under immense pressure.

But if conditions globally and regionally allowed for the continuation of Zionist immigration, other conditions ensured that this immigration would not be welcomed. Zionists, though leaving Europe, both thought of themselves as Europeans and were viewed as such. Growing nationalist sentiment in the Arab world, though initially anti-Ottoman, soon took the form of country-specific anticolonial advocacy. Zionist land

purchase, though normally conducted legally, led to the dispossession of Palestinian peasants. This, combined with a broader trend of urbanization that already began under Ottoman Rule, led to a sense that the traditional moorings of Palestinian society were being upended.

ARAB QUESTION BECOMES JEWISH QUESTION

The Zionist movement emerged as a proposed solution to “The Jewish Question,” the question of how and whether Jews could be integrated into their European host societies and, if not, what they should do. But with the shifting center of Zionism from Europe to Palestine, a new question, an Arab Question, loomed over the Zionist project: will Palestinian Arabs ever accept Zionist immigration and, if not, how should Zionists respond?

Internal disagreements about this question would define the political map of the Zionist movement, and later the Israeli government, until this day. The earliest Zionist stance on this issue was no stance at all: the First Aliyah colonists assumed that they would create jobs that natives would welcome. Second Aliyah colonists saw this employment as exploitation, and recommended separate economies, assuming that this change would eliminate any chance of conflict.

But with growing Palestinian Arab opposition and anti-British and anti-Zionist violence particularly in 1921, 1929, and 1936, Zionists split around how to respond to opposition. Labor Zionists for the most part believed the tension was based on a misunderstanding, that Palestinian peasants in particular did not understand the good that Zionism was bringing them, and were being influenced by bourgeois elites to oppose Zionism. The sincerely held belief that indeed Zionism was doing good (and that opposition was based either on misunderstanding or baseless hatred) would come to define a dominant strand of thinking. A new group of Zionist right-wingers, who called themselves Revisionists, opposed the socialist stance of labor Zionists and emphasized national strength over socialist unity. Influenced by the early versions of Italian fascism, the Revisionists encouraged military training and a non-conciliatory stance toward the British. Their leader, Vladimir Jabotinsky, held that conflict was an inevitable outgrowth of foreigners coming to Palestine and held that the only possible response was to fight back and win. This belief in the inevitability of conflict and the justness of using force to win when necessary has influenced the Zionist right, and at present the ruling Likud party.

These divides remained influential into the 1930s, but the nature of Jewish immigration to Palestine changed. While some Jews were still invested in the idea of Zionism as the best solution to anti-Semitism in Europe, or held to the economic and social principles of the founders, others came to Palestine because it was their best or only immigration option. This was true of many immigrants from Poland during the economic crisis of the 1920s and immigrants from Germany and Austria in the early 1930s, as Hitler and the Nazis rose to power. Some of these were denigrated as insufficiently committed to labor and excessively bourgeois.

If Zionism was one ideological response among many to questions about pathways to Jewish integration (or lack thereof in Europe), the events of World War II placed Zionism on a different course, as it drew more and more immigrants (with a variety of political backgrounds) many of whom were refugees. As the devastation of the Holocaust became clearer, Western opinion started coalescing around the idea of a Jewish state, even while the British were well aware of the opposition this would provoke locally. These

political developments gave those who had been ideologically Zionist all along a seeming confirmation that indeed Zionism was the only acceptable Jewish ideology. Tragedy and crisis made an ideological choice seem like an ideological imperative, and this sense of Zionism as the only sort of Jewish response became dominant among world Jews well into the late 20th century and indeed, for many, to this day.

But fundamentally, the same question that Jews asked about Zionism at its inception remained present as a pre-state nation-building ideology merged with pro-Israel nationalism after 1948: Can Jews truly integrate into the places they live, or are they always in danger of rejection and in need of a safe haven? Are Jews fundamentally a national group, or are they a religious group whose members can (and should) be part of multiple nations? Does separating Jews out into a separate unit or group reduce anti-Semitism or increase anti-Semitism? These questions are complex ones with multiple answers. They are ones that we, with our students, can ask, discuss and debate in light of the facts and details of the Jewish historical experience.

[1] See Adam Garfinkle, "The Origins of the Palestine Mandate," Footnotes, November 2014, and Bernard Wasserstein, "The Partition of Palestine," Footnotes, December 2014. Both are write-ups of lectures presented at FPRI's History Institute on Teaching about Israel and Palestine.

LAND OWNERSHIP IN PALESTINE, 1880–1948

[THE ROHR JEWISH LEARNING INSTITUTE](#) Moshe Aumann

A great deal has been spoken and written over the years on the subject of land ownership in Israel—or, before 1948, Palestine. Arab propaganda, in particular, has been at pains to convince the world, with the aid of copious statistics, that the Arabs “own” Palestine, morally and legally, and that whatever Jewish land ownership there may be is negligible. From this conclusions have been drawn (or implied) with regard to the sovereign rights of the State of Israel and the problem of the Arab refugees.

The Arab case against Israel, in the matter of Jewish land purchases, rests mainly on two claims: (1) that the Palestinian Arab farmer was peacefully and contentedly working his land in the latter part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th when along came the European Jewish immigrant, drove him off his land, disrupted the normal development of the country and created a vast class of landless, dispossessed Arabs; (2) that a small Jewish minority, owning an even smaller proportion of Palestinian lands (5 per cent as against the Arabs’ 95 per cent), illegally made itself master of Palestine in 1948.

Our purpose in this pamphlet is to set the record straight by marshalling the facts and figures pertaining to this very complex subject, on the basis of the most reliable and authoritative information available, and to trace the history of modern Jewish resettlement purely from the point of view of the sale and purchase of land.

PRE-1948 CONDITIONS IN PALESTINE

A study of Palestine under Turkish rule reveals that already at the beginning of the 18th century, long before Jewish land purchases and large-scale Jewish immigration started, the position of the Palestinian fellah (peasant) had begun to deteriorate. The heavy burden of taxation, coming on top of chronic indebtedness to money-lenders, drove a growing number of farmers to place themselves under the protection of men of wealth or of the Moslem religious endowment fund (*Waqf*), with the result that they were eventually compelled to give up their title to the land, if not their actual residence upon and cultivation of it.

Until the passage of the Turkish Land Registry Law in 1858, there were no official deeds to attest to a man’s legal title to a parcel of land; tradition alone had to suffice to establish such title—and usually it did. And yet, the position of Palestine’s farmers was a precarious one, for there were constant blood-feuds between families, clans and entire villages, as well as periodic incursions by rapacious Bedouin tribes, such as the notorious Ben Sakk’r, of whom H. B. Tristram (*The Land of Israel: A Journal of Travels in Palestine*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1865) wrote that they “can muster 1,000 cavalry and always join their brethren when a raid or war is on the move. They have obtained their present possessions gradually and, in great measure, by driving out the fellahin (peasants), destroying their villages and reducing their rich corn-fields to pasturage.” (p. 488.)

Tristram goes on to present a remarkable and highly revealing description of conditions in Palestine on both sides of the Jordan River in the middle of the 19th century—a description that belies the Arab claim of a

tranquil, normally developing Palestinian rural economy allegedly disrupted by Jewish immigration and settlement.

A few years ago, the whole Ghor was in the hands of the fellahin, and much of it cultivated for corn. Now the whole of it is in the hands of the Bedouin, who eschew all agriculture, except in a few spots cultivated here and there by their slaves; and with the Bedouin come lawlessness and the uprooting of all Turkish authority. No government is now acknowledged on the east side; and unless the Porte acts with greater firmness and caution than is his wont . . . Palestine will be desolated and given up to the nomads.

The same thing is now going on over the plain of Sharon, where, both in the north and south, land is going out of cultivation, and whole villages [are] rapidly disappearing from the face of the earth. Since the year 1838, no [fewer] than 20 villages have been thus erased from the map and the stationary population extirpated. Very rapidly the Bedouin are encroaching wherever horse can be ridden; and the Government is utterly powerless to resist them or to defend its subjects. (p. 490)

For descriptions of other parts of the country, we are indebted to the 1937 Report of the Palestine Royal Commission—though, for lack of space, we can quote but the briefest passages. In Chapter 9, para. 43 the Report quotes an eye-witness account of the condition of the Maritime Plain in 1913:

The road leading from Gaza to the north was only a summer track suitable for transport by camels and carts . . . no orange groves, orchards or vineyards were to be seen until one reached Yabna village. . . . Not in a single village in all this area was water used for irrigation. . . . Houses were all of mud. No windows were anywhere to be seen. . . . The ploughs used were of wood. . . . The yields were very poor. . . . The sanitary conditions in the village were horrible. Schools did not exist. . . . The rate of infant mortality was very high. . . .

The area north of Jaffa . . . consisted of two distinctive parts. . . . The eastern part, in the direction of the hills, resembled in culture that of the Gaza-Jaffa area. . . . The western part, towards the sea, was almost a desert. . . . The villages in this area were few and thinly populated. Many ruins of villages were scattered over the area, as owing to the prevalence of malaria, many villages were deserted by their inhabitants.

The Huleh basin, below the Syrian border, is described as “including a number of Arab villages and a large papyrus swamp draining south into Lake Huleh . . . a triangular strip of land some 44 sq. miles in area. . . . This tract is irrigated in a very haphazard manner by a network of small, primitive canals. It is, owing to over-irrigation, now the most malarious tract in all Palestine. It might become one of the most fertile.”

With regard to yet another region in Palestine—the Beisan (Beit Shean) area—we quote from the report of Mr. Lewis French, Director of Development appointed by the British Government in 1931:

We found it inhabited by fellahin who lived in mud hovels and suffered severely from the prevalent malaria. . . . Large areas of their lands were uncultivated and covered with weeds. There were no trees, no vegetables. The fellahin, if not themselves cattle thieves, were always ready to harbor these and other criminals. The individual plots of cultivation changed hands annually. There was little public security, and the fellahin's lot was an alternation of pillage and blackmail by their neighbours, the Bedouin.

This, then, was the picture of Palestine in the closing decades of the 19th century and up to the First World War: a land that was overwhelmingly desert, with nomads continually encroaching on the settled areas and its farmers; a lack of elementary facilities and equipment; peasants wallowing in poverty, ignorance and disease, saddled with debts (interest rates at times were as high as 60 per cent) and threatened by warlike nomads or neighbouring clans. The result was a growing neglect of the soil and a flight from the villages, with a mounting concentration of lands in the hands of a small number of large landowners, frequently residing in such distant Arab capitals as Beirut and Damascus, Cairo and Kuwait. Here, in other words, was a social and economic order that had all the earmarks of a medieval feudal society.

WHO DISPOSSESSED THE PALESTINIAN PEASANT?

The Palestinian peasant was indeed being dispossessed, but by his fellow-Arabs: the local sheikh and village elders, the Government tax-collector, the merchants and money-lenders; and, when he was a tenant-farmer (as was usually the case), by the absentee-owner. By the time the season's crop had been distributed among all these, little if anything remained for him and his family, and new debts generally had to be incurred to pay off the old. Then the Bedouin came along and took their "cut", or drove the hapless fellah off the land altogether.

This was the "normal" course of events in 19th-century Palestine. It was disrupted by the advent of the Jewish pioneering enterprise, which sounded the death-knell of this medieval feudal system. In this way the Jews played an objective revolutionary role. Small wonder that it aroused the ire and active opposition of the Arab sheikhs, absentee landowners, money-lenders and Bedouin bandits.

JEWISH LAND PURCHASES

It is important to note that the first enduring Jewish agricultural settlement in modern Palestine was founded not by European refugees, but by a group of old-time families, leaving the overcrowded Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. (According to the Turkish census of 1875, by that time Jews already constituted a majority of the population of Jerusalem and by 1905 comprised two-thirds of its citizens.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* of 1910 gives the population figure as 60,000, of whom 40,000 were Jews.)

In 1878 they founded the village of Petah Tikva in the Sharon Plain—a village that was to become known as the "Mother of Jewish Settlements" in Palestine. Four years later a group of pioneering immigrants from Russia settled in Rishon le-Zion. Other farming villages followed in rapid succession.

When considering Jewish land purchases and settlements, four factors should be borne in mind:

1. *Most of the land purchases involved large tracts belonging to absentee owners. (Virtually all of the Jezreel Valley, for example, belonged in 1897 to only two persons: the eastern portion to the Turkish Sultan, and the western part to the richest banker in Syria, Sursuk "the Greek.")*
2. *Most of the land purchased had not been cultivated previously because it was swampy, rocky, sandy or, for some other reason, regarded as uncultivable. This is supported by the findings of the Peel Commission Report (p. 242): "The Arab charge that the Jews have obtained too large a*

proportion of good land cannot be maintained. Much of the land now carrying orange groves was sand dunes or swamp and uncultivated when it was purchased . . . there was at the time at least of the earlier sales little evidence that the owners possessed either the resources or training needed to develop the land.” (1937)

3. *While, for this reason, the early transactions did not involve unduly large sums of money, the price of land began to rise as Arab landowners took advantage of the growing demand for rural tracts. The resulting infusion of capital into the Palestinian economy had noticeable beneficial effects on the standard of living of all the inhabitants.*
4. *The Jewish pioneers introduced new farming methods which improved the soil and crop cultivation and were soon emulated by Arab farmers.*

The following figures show land purchases by the three leading Jewish land-buying organizations and by individual Jews between 1880 and 1935.

JEWISH LAND PURCHASES, 1880–1935 (IN DUNAMS¹)

Organization	Total Land Acquired	Government Concessions	From Private Owners	Large Tracts² Dunams	Large Tract Percent (approx.)
PICA (Palestine Jewish Colonization Association)	469,407	39,520	429,887	293,545	70
Palestine Land Development Co.	579,492	66,513 ³	512,979	455,169	90
Jewish National Fund ⁴	836,396				
Until 1930			270,084	239,170	90
1931–1947			566,312		50
Individual Jews	432,100		432,100		50

From the above table it will be seen that the proportion of the land purchased from large (usually absentee) owners ranged from about 50 to 90 per cent.

“The total area of land in Jewish possession at the end of June 1947,” writes A. Granott in *The Land System in Palestine* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1952, p. 278), “amounted to 1,850,000 dunams, of this 181,100 dunams had been obtained through concessions from the Palestinian Government, and about 120,000 dunams had been acquired from Churches, from foreign companies, from the Government otherwise than by concessions, and so forth. It was estimated that 1,000,000 dunams and more, or 57 per

cent, had been acquired from large Arab landowners, and if to this we add the lands acquired from the Government, Churches, and foreign companies, the percentage will amount to seventy-three. From the fellaheen there had been purchased about 500,000 dunams, or 27 per cent, of the total acquired. The result of Jewish land acquisitions, at least to a considerable part, was that properties which had been in the hands of large and medium owners were converted into holding of small peasants."

When the League of Nations conferred the Mandate for Palestine upon Great Britain in 1922, it expressly stipulated that "The Administration of Palestine . . . shall encourage, in cooperation with the Jewish Agency . . . close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not acquired for public purposes" (Article 6), and that it "shall introduce a land system appropriate to the needs of the country, having regard, among other things, to the desirability of promoting the close settlement and intensive cultivation of the land." (Article 11)

British policy, however, followed a different course, deferring to the extremist Arab opposition to the above-mentioned provision of the Mandate. Of some 750,000 dunams of cultivable State lands, 350,000, or nearly half, had been allotted by 1949 to Arabs and only 17,000 dunams to Jews. This was in clear violation of the terms of the Mandate. Nor, ironically enough, did it help the Arab peasants for whose benefit these transactions were ostensibly carried out. The glaring examples of this policy are the case of the Besian lands and that of the Huleh Concession.

Under the Ghor-Mudawwarra Agreement of 1921, some 225,000 dunams of potentially fertile wasteland in the Besian (Beit Shean) area were handed over to Arab farmers on terms severely condemned not only by Jews but also by such British experts as Lewis French and Sir John Hope-Simpson. More than half of the land was irrigable, and, according to the British experts, eight dunams of irrigated land per capita (or 50–60 dunams per family) were sufficient to enable a family to maintain itself on the land. Yet many farmers received far more than that: six families, of whom two lived in Syria, received a combined area of about 7,000 dunams; four families (some living in Egypt) received a combined area of 3,496 dunams ; another received 3,450 and yet another, 1,350.

Thus the Ghor-Mudawwarra Agreement was instrumental in creating a new group of large landowners. Possessing huge tracts, most of which they were unable to till, these owners began to sell the surplus lands at speculative prices. In his 1930 Report, Sir Hope-Simpson wrote of the Agreement that it had deprived the Government of "the control of a large area of fertile land eminently suited for development and for which there is ample water for irrigation," and that "the grant of the land has led to speculation on a considerable scale."

For twenty years (from 1914 to 1934) the Huleh Concession—some 57,000 dunams of partly swamp-infested but potentially highly fertile land in north-eastern Palestine—was in Arab hands. The Arab concessionaires were to drain and develop the land so as to make additional tracts available for cultivation, under very attractive terms offered by the Government (first Turkish, then British). However, this was never done, and in 1934 the concession was sold to a Jewish concern, the Palestine Land Development Company, at a huge profit. The Government added several onerous conditions concerning the amount of

land (from the drained and newly developed tracts) that had to be handed over—without reimbursement for drainage and irrigation costs—to Arab tenant-farmers in the area.

All told, hundreds of millions of dollars were paid by Jewish buyers to Arab landowners. Official records show that in 1933 £854,796 was paid by Jewish individuals and organizations for Arab land, mostly large estates; in 1934 the figure was £1,647,836 and in 1935, £1,699,488. Thus, in the course of only three years £4,202,180 (more than 20 million dollars at the prevailing rate of exchange) was paid out to Arab landowners (Palestine Royal Commission Report, 1937).

To understand the magnitude of the prices paid for these lands, we need only look at some comparative figures. In 1944, Jews paid between \$1,000 and \$1,100 per acre in Palestine, mostly for arid or semi-arid land; in the same year rich black soil in the state of Iowa was selling for about \$110 per acre (U.S. Department of Agriculture).

In those instances where as a result of such transactions Arab tenant-farmers were displaced (on one year's notice), compensation in cash or other land was paid, as required by the 1922 Protection of Cultivators Ordinance; the Jewish land-buying associations often paid more than the law required (Pollack and Boehm, *The Keren Kayemeth Le-Israel*). Of 688 such tenants between 1920 and 1930, 526 remained in agricultural occupations, some 400 of them finding other land (Palestine Royal Commission Report, 1937, Chapter 9, para. 61).

Investigations initiated in 1931 by Mr. Lewis French disposed of the charge that a large class of landless or dispossessed Arab farmers was created as a result of Jewish land purchases. According to the British Government report (Memoranda prepared by the Government of Palestine, London 1937, Colonia No. 133, p. 37), the total number of applications for registration as landless Arabs was 3,271. Of these, 2,607 were rejected on the ground that they did not come within the category of landless Arabs. Valid claims were recognized in the case of 664 heads of families, of whom 347 accepted the offer of resettlement by the Government. The remainder refused either because they had found satisfactory employment elsewhere or because they were not accustomed to irrigated cultivation or the climate of the new areas (*Peel Report*, Chapter 9, para. 60).

Purchases of land by Jews in the hill country had always been very small and, according to the investigations by Mr. French, of 71 applications by Arabs claiming to be landless, 68 were turned down.

ARAB POPULATION CHANGES DUE TO JEWISH SETTLEMENT

Another Arab claim disproved by the facts is that Zionist "colonialism" led to the disruption and ruin of the Arab Palestinian society and economy.

Statistics published in the Palestine Royal Commission Report (p. 279) indicate a remarkable phenomenon: Palestine, traditionally a country of Arab emigration, became after World War I a country of Arab immigration. In addition to recorded figures for 1920-36, the Report devotes a special section to illegal Arab immigration. While there are no precise totals on the extent of Arab immigration between the two World Wars, estimates vary between 60,000 and 100,000. The principal cause of the change of direction was

Jewish development, which created new and attractive work opportunities and, in general, a standard of living previously unknown in the Middle East.

Another major factor in the rapid growth of the Arab population was, of course, the rate of natural increase, among the highest in the world. This was accentuated by the steady reduction of the previously high infant mortality rate as a result of the improved health and sanitary conditions introduced by the Jews.

Altogether, the non-Jewish element in Palestine's population (not including Bedouin) expanded between 1922 and 1929 alone by more than 75 per cent. The *Royal Commission Report* makes these interesting observations:

The shortage of land is, we consider, due less to the amount of land acquired by Jews than to the increase in the Arab population, (p. 242) We are also of the opinion that up till now the Arab cultivator has benefited, on the whole, both from the work of the British administration and from the presence of Jews in the country. Wages have gone up; the standard of living has improved; work on roads and buildings has been plentiful. In the Maritime Plains some Arabs have adopted improved methods of cultivation. (p. 241)

Jewish development served as an incentive not only to Arab entry into Palestine from Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and other neighbouring countries, but also to Arab population movements within the country—to cities and areas where there was a large Jewish concentration. Some idea of this phenomenon may be gained from the following official figures:

Changes in towns: The Arab population in predominantly Arab towns rose only slightly (if at all) between the two World Wars: in Hebron—from 16,650 in 1922 to 22,800 in 1943; Nablus—from 15,931 to 23,300; Jenin—from 2,737 to 3,900; Bethlehem—from 6,658 to 8,800. Gaza's population actually decreased from 17,426 in 1922 to 17,045 in 1931.

On the other hand, in the three major Jewish cities the Arab population shot up during this period, far beyond the rate of natural increase: Jerusalem—from 28,571 in 1922 to 56,400 (97 percent); Jaffa—from 27,437 to 62,600 (134 per cent); Haifa—from 18,404 to 58,200 (216 per cent).

Changes in rural areas: The population of the predominantly Arab Beersheba district dropped between 1922 and 1939 from 71,000 to 49,000 (the rate of natural increase should have resulted in a rise to 89,000). In the Bethlehem district the figure increased from 24,613 to about 26,000 (after falling to 23,725 in 1929). In the Hebron area it went up from 51,345 to 59,000 (the natural increase rate dictated a rise to 72,000).

In contrast to these declines or comparatively slight increases in exclusively Arab-inhabited areas, in the Nazareth, Beit Shean, Tiberias and Acre districts—where large-scale Jewish settlement and rural development was underway—the figure rose from 89,600 in 1922 to some 151,000 in 1938 (by about 4.5 per cent per annum, compared with a natural increase rate of 2.5–3 per cent).

In the largely Jewish Haifa area the number of Arab peasants increased by 8 per cent a year during the same period. In the Jaffa and Ramla districts (heavily Jewish populated), the Arab rural population grew

from 42,300 to some 126,000—an annual increase of 12 per cent, or more than four times as much as can be attributed to natural increase (L. Shimony, *The Arabs of Palestine*, Tel-Aviv, 1947, pp. 422–23).

One reason for the Arab gravitation toward Jewish-inhabited areas, and from neighbouring countries to Palestine, was the incomparably higher wage scales paid there, as may be seen from the following table.

DAILY WAGE SCALES, 1943 (IN MILS)⁵

	Unskilled Labour	Skilled Labour
Palestine	220–250	350–600
Egypt	30–50	70–200
Syria	80–100	150–200
Iraq	50	70–200

The capital received by Arab landowners for their surplus holdings was used for improved and intensive cultivation or invested in other enterprises. Turning again to the Report of the Palestine Royal Commission (p. 93), we find the following conclusions: “The large import of Jewish capital into Palestine has had a general fructifying effect on the economic life of the whole country. . . . The expansion of Arab industry and citriculture has been largely financed by the capital thus obtained. . . . Jewish example has done much to improve Arab cultivation. . . . The increase in Arab population is most marked in areas affected by Jewish development.”

During World War II, the Arab population influx mounted apace, as is attested by the *UNRWA Review*, Information Paper No. 6 (September 1962):

A considerable movement of people is known to have occurred, particularly during the Second World War, years when new opportunities of employment opened up in the towns and on military works in Palestine. These wartime prospects and, generally, the higher rate of industrialization in Palestine attracted many new immigrants from the neighbouring countries, and many of them entered Palestine without their presence being officially recorded.

LAND OWNERSHIP IN 1948

The claim is often made that in 1948 a Jewish minority owning only 5 per cent of the land of Palestine made itself master of the Arab majority, which owned 95 per cent of the land.

In May 1948 the State of Israel was established in only part of the area allotted by the original League of Nations Mandate. 8.6 percent of the land was owned by Jews and 3.3 per cent by Israeli Arabs, while 16.9 per cent had been abandoned by Arab owners who imprudently heeded the call from neighbouring countries to “get out of the way” while the invading Arab armies made short shrift of Israel. The rest of the land—over 70 per cent—had been vested in the Mandatory Power, and accordingly reverted to the State of

Israel as its legal heir. (Government of Palestine, *Survey of Palestine, 1946*, British Government Printer, p. 257.)

The greater part of this 70 per cent consisted of the Negev, some 3,144,250 acres all told, or close to 50 per cent of the 6,580,000 acres in all of Mandatory Palestine. Known as Crown or State Lands, this was mostly uninhabited arid or semi-arid territory, inherited originally by the Mandatory Government from Turkey. In 1948 it passed to the Government of Israel.

These lands had not been owned by Arab farmers—neither under the British Mandate nor under the preceding regime. Thus it is obvious that the contention that 95 per cent of the land—whether of Mandatory Palestine or of the State of Israel—had belonged to Arabs has absolutely no foundation in fact.

There is perhaps no better way of concluding and summing up this study than to quote from an article entitled *Is Israel a Thorn or a Flower in the Near East?* by Abdul Razak Kader, the Algerian political writer, now living in exile in Paris (*Jerusalem Post*, Aug. 1, 1969):

“The Nationalists of the states neighbouring on Israel, whether they are in the government or in business, whether Palestinian, Syrian or Lebanese, or town dwellers of tribal origin, all know that at the beginning of the century and during the British Mandate the marshy plains and stone hills were sold to the Zionists by their fathers or uncles for gold, the very gold which is often the origin of their own political or commercial careers. The nomadic or seminomadic peasants who inhabited the frontier regions know full well what the green plains, the afforested hills and the flowering fields of today’s Israel were like before.

“The Palestinians who are today refugees in the neighbouring countries and who were adults at the time of their flight know all this, and no anti-Zionist propaganda—pan-Arab or pan-Moslem—can make them forget that their present nationalist exploiters are the worthy sons of their feudal exploiters of yesterday and that the thorns of their life are of Arab, not Jewish, origin.”

Aumann, Moshe. “Appendix 2: Land Ownership in Palestine, 1880–1948”, from Leibler, Isi. *The Case for Israel*. Melbourne, Victoria: Executive Council of Australian Jewry, 1972.

Reprinted with permission from the publisher.

ENDNOTES

1. dunams = 1 acre.
2. The large tracts often belonged to absentee landlords.
3. Land situated in the sandy Beersheba and marshy Huleh districts.
4. “. . . created on December 25, 1901, to ensure that land would be purchased for the Jewish workers who were to be personally responsible for its cultivation.

“Since the J.N.F. was as concerned with conforming to socialist ideals as with intensive economic exploitation of land, its Charter was opposed to the use of lands purchased by it as private property. The J.N.F. retained the freehold of the lands, while the people working it are only life tenants. . . .

“The capital of the Jewish National Fund was essentially raised from small regular donations from millions of Jewish craftsmen, labourers, shop-owners and intellectuals in Central and Eastern Europe where the shadow of genocide was already apparent, who felt concerned about the return of Jews to Zion. . . .

“Contrary to colonialist enterprises, which were seeking an exorbitant profit from land extorted from the colonized peoples, Zionist settlement discouraged private capital as its enterprise was of a socialist nature based on the refusal to exploit the worker.” (Kurt Niedermaler, *Colonisation without Colonialism*, Youth and Hechalutz Dept., Jewish Agency, Jerusalem, 1969).

5. Source: A. Khoushy, *Brit Poali Eretz-Israel*, 1943, p. 25.

THE BRITISH MANDATE IN PALESTINE

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

By the early years of the 20th century, Palestine was becoming a trouble spot of competing territorial claims and political interests. The Ottoman Empire was weakening, and European powers were entrenching their grip on areas in the eastern Mediterranean, including Palestine. During 1915-16, as World War I was underway, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, secretly corresponded with Husayn ibn `Ali, the patriarch of the Hashemite family and Ottoman governor of Mecca and Medina. McMahon convinced Husayn to lead an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, which was aligned with Germany against Britain and France in the war. In letters exchanged from July 1915 to January 1916, McMahon promised that if the Arabs supported Britain in the war, the British government would support the establishment of an independent Arab state under Hashemite rule in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, including Palestine (Document 1). The Arab revolt, led by T. E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia") and Husayn's son Faysal, was successful in defeating the Ottomans, and Britain took control over much of this area during World War I.

But Britain made other promises during the war that conflicted with the HusaynMcMahon understandings. Britain and France concluded a secret agreement between themselves in May 1916 to carve up the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire and divide control of the region. A third promise was made in 1917, when the British Foreign Minister, Lord Arthur Balfour, issued a declaration (Document 2) announcing his government's support for the establishment of "a Jewish national home in Palestine."

After the war, Britain and France convinced the new League of Nations (precursor to the United Nations), in which they were the dominant powers, to grant them quasi-colonial authority over former Ottoman territories. The British and French regimes were known as 'mandates'. France obtained a mandate over Syria, carving out Lebanon as a separate state with a (slight) Christian majority. Britain obtained a mandate over the areas which now comprise Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jordan.

In 1921, the British divided this region in two: east of the Jordan River became the Emirate of Transjordan, to be ruled by Faysal's brother `Abdullah, and west of the Jordan River became the Palestine Mandate. This was the first time in modern history that Palestine became a unified political entity.

Throughout the region, Arabs were angered by Britain's failure to fulfill its promise to create an independent Arab state, and many opposed British and French control as a violation of their right to self-determination. In Palestine, the situation was more complicated because of the British promise to support the creation of a Jewish national home. The rising tide of European Jewish immigration, land purchases and settlement in Palestine generated increasing resistance by Palestinian Arab peasants, journalists and political figures. They feared that this would lead eventually to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Palestinian Arabs opposed the British Mandate because it thwarted their aspirations for self-rule, and opposed massive Jewish immigration because it threatened their position in the country.

In 1920 and 1921, clashes broke out between Arabs and Jews in which roughly equal numbers of both groups were killed. In the 1920s, when the Jewish National Fund purchased large tracts of land from absentee Arab landowners, the Arabs living in these 6 areas were evicted. These displacements led to increasing tensions and violent confrontations between Jewish settlers and Arab peasant tenants. In 1928, Muslims and Jews in Jerusalem began to clash over their respective communal religious rights at the Wailing Wall (al-Buraq in the Muslim tradition). The Wailing Wall, the sole remnant of the second Jewish Temple, is one of the holiest sites for the Jewish people. But this site is also holy to Muslims, since the Wailing Wall is adjacent to the Temple Mount (the Noble Sanctuary in the Muslim tradition). On the mount is the site of the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, believed to mark the spot from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven on a winged horse (Map 5).

On August 15, 1929, members of the Betar youth movement (Revisionist Zionists, see above) demonstrated and raised a Zionist flag over the Wailing Wall. Fearing that the Noble Sanctuary was in danger, Arabs responded by attacking Jews throughout the country. During the clashes, sixty-four Jews were killed in Hebron. Others were saved by their Muslim neighbors. The Jewish community of Hebron ceased to exist when its surviving members left for Jerusalem. During a week of communal violence, 133 Jews and 115 Arabs were killed and many wounded.

European Jewish immigration to Palestine increased dramatically after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, leading to new land purchases and Jewish settlements. Palestinian resistance to British control and Zionist settlement climaxed with the Arab revolt of 1936-39, which Britain suppressed with the help of Zionist militias and the complicity of neighboring Arab regimes. After crushing the Arab revolt, the British reconsidered their governing policies in an effort to maintain order in an increasingly tense environment. They issued a White Paper (a statement of political policy) limiting future Jewish immigration and land purchases. The Zionists regarded this as a betrayal of the Balfour Declaration and a particularly egregious act in light of the desperate situation of the Jews in Europe, who were facing extermination. The 1939 White Paper marked the end of the British-Zionist alliance. At the same time, the defeat of the Arab revolt and the exile of the Palestinian political leadership meant that the Palestinian Arabs were politically disorganized during the crucial decade in which the future of Palestine was decided.

WHAT IS ALIYAH?

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

THE MEANING OF ALIYAH

Aliyah is the Hebrew word used to describe immigration to Israel—bringing Jews from the “four corners of the earth” to their biblical homeland is the very backbone of the Jewish state. It’s the return of Jews to the land of Israel from the diaspora (Jewish communities outside of Israel). In Hebrew, aliyah means “to ascend” or “to go up.” This word was originally used to describe the pilgrimage that Jews made three times a year to the city of Jerusalem for the biblically mandated [holy days](#) of Passover, Shavuot (Pentecost), and Sukkot (Feast of the Tabernacles). Since Jerusalem is located on top of Mount Zion, the pilgrims literally ascended to the Holy Temple.

THE ORIGINS OF ALIYAH

The origins of aliyah can be traced back to ancient times, with a deep historical and religious significance for the Jewish people.

The concept of aliyah originates from the biblical narrative and the promise of the land of Israel to the Jewish people. In the Hebrew Bible, the Book of Genesis recounts the story of Abraham, who was commanded by God to leave his homeland and go to the land of Canaan, which is now modern-day Israel. This is considered an early form of aliyah, as Abraham’s journey represented the first step toward the establishment of a Jewish presence in the land.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALIYAH

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, [founder of The Fellowship](#), used to tell a story about the late Ariel Sharon, his friend and Israel’s 11th Prime Minister. When the Rabbi asked Sharon, “What are the three most important things we at The Fellowship can do for Israel?” the Prime Minister’s response was simple and succinct:

“Aliyah, aliyah, aliyah.”

As PM Sharon said, helping bring Jews from around the world to Israel is the most important task we can take on—not just in saving the lives of individuals living in poverty and oppression, but in strengthening the Jewish state as a whole. Many Israeli leaders have recognized this fact. In 2016, during a ceremony commemorating Israel’s first Aliyah Day holiday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remarked, “The democratic values of the Jewish state, our military might, our economic strength, our adherence to progress, our scientific and technological innovations, draw hundreds of new immigrants, each one of whom contributes to the bolstering of those values and strengths.”

Each Jewish person who makes the monumental decision to come to Israel brings their talents and professional skills to work for the betterment of the Jewish state. At The Fellowship, this is something we have heard repeatedly: when immigrants come home to Israel, they are put in an environment where they are able to develop their unique talents and practice them in service of their new country, and the entire Jewish state is better—and stronger—because of it.

HOW MANY PEOPLE MAKE ALIYAH?

Thousands of Jewish people move to Israel every year. Turns out, these numbers have been increasing year over year due to the rising anti-Semitism and religious persecution sweeping the world. According to [Jewish News Syndicate](#), approximately 70,000 people from 95 countries made aliyah in 2022. This was the largest wave of new olim in 23 years and a major jump compared to the 28,000 immigrants in 2021. Some of the countries Jews are moving from include Ukraine, Russia, France, Ethiopia, and South Africa. The spike in 2022 could have been the result of the devastating war in Ukraine that started on February 24, 2022. In response to this crisis, The Fellowship has been on the ground working to support the Jewish communities in Ukraine and have helped many children, families, and elderly Jewish people—many of them Holocaust survivors—make their return to the Holy Land.

Yael TELLS HER ALIYAH STORY

Fellowship President and CEO Yael Eckstein tells her story of making aliyah (immigrating to Israel) with her husband. At first, though, she was opposed to leaving everything that was familiar, all that she had known growing up in America. But when God changed her mind, there was no going back. Since then, Yael and her husband have made their home in the Holy Land, where they have raised their four children, all of whom were born in Israel.

WHY JEWS MAKE ALIYAH

These olim are also given the chance—many for the first time in their lives—to live freely as Jews. For Jews who have had to keep their Jewish identity secret for their entire lives—or who have lost touch with their Jewish identity through generations of anti-Semitic oppression and violence—the ability to reclaim that identity, and live and worship openly in a free and democratic Jewish state, is truly a dream come true. Aliyah also sends a powerful message to Israel's enemies, many of whom still do not accept the reality of a Jewish state in their midst. It is a message that, sadly, is still necessary to restate: Israel isn't going anywhere. Jews recognize the founding of the Jewish state for the miracle that it is and, having been denied their own sovereign country for so long, they are committed to keeping and protecting this one.

HISTORY OF ALIYAH: A PROPHETIC RETURN

When [the state of Israel was formed in 1948](#), Jews from all over the world—Holocaust survivors in Europe, refugees expelled from Arab lands where they had been living for generations, poor Jews from Africa and South America—eagerly took the opportunity to return to their biblical homeland. By 1955, the Jewish population of the Holy Land had more than doubled, to over 1.5 million.

Following the call of David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, to “make the desert bloom,” the Jews made something of their land. Israeli farmers turned barren desert into fertile land for crops. Industry boomed, and the new nation was greatly productive.

But aliyah did not stop with this first wave of settlers. Over the years, Jewish people returned to the land of Israel to escape poverty, to flee anti-Semitism... and simply to fulfill this dream of returning to the Holy Land that had so long been denied to them.

MAJOR WAVES OF ALIYAH

Throughout history, Jews have faced various periods of dispersion, persecution, and even genocide, leading to multiple waves of aliyah. Large waves of immigration to Israel started around the 1880s, almost

70 years prior to the establishment of Israel in 1948. Each wave brought thousands of Jews home to the Promised Land and radically changed the population and modernization of Israel. There have been [five major waves of aliyah](#) since the 1880s.

THE FIRST ALIYAH

In 1881, Russian Czar Alexander II was assassinated, which led to a rise in anti-Semitism and pogroms across Russia. Russian Jews were desperate to escape the violent attacks and began immigrating to Israel. Approximately 35,000 Russian Jews made aliyah between the years of 1882 and 1903. This wave was motivated by Zionist ideals, seeking to re-establish a Jewish homeland. Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and Russia settled in rural agricultural communities, known as “Moshavot” and “Kibbutzim,” and played a significant role in the early stages of building the infrastructure of what would become the State of Israel. These farming settlements eventually transformed into the existing towns of Zichron Yaakov, Rosh Pina, and Rishon Letzion.

THE SECOND ALIYAH

The Second Aliyah brought approximately 40,000 olim from Russia and Poland to the Holy Land. This wave began due to continued violence against Jewish people and the rise of socialist and labor movements. This major influx of immigrants took place from 1904 to 1914 and were mostly single young people seeking the national redemption of the Jewish people in Israel. Many of these Jewish immigrants settled in urban areas and contributed to the development of Tel Aviv.

THE THIRD ALIYAH

The [Third Aliyah](#) was a continuation of the Second Aliyah and occurred during the 1920s, following the end of World War I and the beginning of the British Mandate over Palestine. This wave of aliyah consisted of Jews fleeing persecution and economic difficulties in Eastern Europe. About 35,000 Jews arrived, most of them from Russia and Poland, with a small number also coming from Lithuania and Romania. They made significant contributions to various sectors, including education, healthcare, and industry, further shaping the emerging Jewish society.

THE FOURTH ALIYAH

The fourth major wave of aliyah brought more than 67,000 immigrants from Poland, Russia, Romania, and Lithuania, as well as a few other groups from Yemen and Iraq. Most of them consisted of middle-class families escaping anti-Semitism. The Fourth Aliyah took place between the years of 1924 to 1928 and led to rapid development in the major cities in Israel.

THE FIFTH ALIYAH

In 1929, an economic revival was on the rise which led to the beginning of the Fifth Aliyah. This wave of immigration continued with World War II and brought thousands of Jewish people from all parts of Europe. Hitler’s rise to power was the major driver for many immigrants, leading to approximately 250,000 olim arriving in Israel by 1939.

Aliyah continued after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, with subsequent waves of immigrants coming from different parts of the world. Notable examples include the mass immigration of Jews from North African and Middle Eastern countries in the 1950s and 1960s, known as the Mizrahi Aliyah, as well as the immigration of Ethiopian Jews in the 1980s and 1990s.

ON WINGS OF EAGLES

Family of Ethiopian immigrants arrive in Israel in 2020 after flying on a Fellowship Freedom flight.

Photo credit: IFCJ 2020

It was the plight of one of those groups of Jewish people that led to the formation of The Fellowship's flagship [On Wings of Eagles program](#). When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1990, the door to freedom opened for Soviet Jews, who under Communist rule had been greatly oppressed and denied the right to come to their biblical homeland. On Wings of Eagles provided aliyah Flights to these people who had suffered so greatly and for so long. Christians eagerly took part in this initiative, knowing that they were being used by God to fulfill the biblical prophecy: "See, I will beckon to the nations, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their hips" (Isaiah 49:22). Over the years, The Fellowship's aliyah efforts have grown and expanded to help suffering Jews come to Israel from Ethiopia, Arab lands, Europe, South America, and elsewhere. And when these Jews arrive in the Holy Land, they are also provided with klitah (resettlement) assistance, which helps them become full, productive citizens in their new home.

The formation of the modern state of Israel and the Jews' return to the Holy Land has truly been the fulfillment of God's promise to "gather the exiles of Israel... from the four quarters of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12). It has been our blessing and our privilege to be God's instrument in this work—to be part of helping His people return home.

ALIYAH IN THE BIBLE: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

The word aliyah was initially used to describe the pilgrimage all Jews made three times a year in biblical times to Jerusalem for the festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Sukkot.

In fact, Psalms 120—134 are often called "pilgrim psalms" or "songs of ascent." These psalms were typically sung by those who journeyed to the Temple in Jerusalem for the annual festivals. Each psalm is considered a step along the journey. It begins with Psalm 120 as the pilgrim sets out from a distant land, surrounded by enemies: "Woe to me that I dwell in Meshek, that I live among the tents of Kedar! Too long have I lived among those who hate peace" (vv.5–6).

The journey continues in Psalm 121 as the psalmist expresses the hope and trust he has in God's protection day and night. Read aloud these beautiful words of God's ever-present watchfulness: "indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (v.4). And in Psalm 122, the pilgrim acknowledges his entrance into Jerusalem itself, "Our feet are standing in your gates, Jerusalem" (v. 2). In the remaining psalms, the psalmist moves toward the Temple itself—the very spiritual center of Israel.

Biblical pilgrims on the Southern steps of the Temple Mount reading Psalms of Ascent.

When Jews return to Israel, they are returning to their spiritual center, to a land promised to them since the time of Abraham. They are returning home. God has been faithful to His promises to His people throughout time and throughout history. And He remains faithful today as Jews continue to make aliyah and return home.

[FIND OUT HOW MUCH YOU KNOW ABOUT ALIYAH.](#)

[SEE HOW MANY WORDS YOU CAN FIND IN OUR FELLOWSHIP WORD SEARCH.](#)

[HAVE FUN WITH OUR CROSSWORD PUZZLE WORD SEARCH ON ALIYAH.](#)

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.^[1] 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 (From 1979)

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.68; AJY v.71

³ AJY v.78

⁴ AJY v.101

⁵ AJY v.103

⁶ Saad Javad Qindari, 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: HUMAN RIGHTS* Vol.1, No.1

HOW ARABS STOLE JEWISH PROPERTY

[POINT OF NO RETURN](#) [bataween](#) 16 May 2011 5 Comments

Transit camp in Israel for Jewish refugees (Photo GPO)

Against the backdrop of Palestinian ‘Nakba Day’, Tani Goldstein, writing in *Ynet News* takes an unusually detailed look at the wholesale robbery suffered by Jews from Arab countries:

The Jews’ situation began deteriorating with the Arab national awakening, before the State of Israel’s establishment. “From a British mandate, Iraq turned into an autonomic state in 1932 and immediately began disinheriting the Jews,” says (Zvi) Yehuda (of the Babylonian Heritage Centre).

“They weren’t accepted to schools and universities and were dismissed from jobs with all sorts of claims.”

“The Arab nationalists and the militant Muslims. The establishment was not happy with the situation but was dragged into it, and most of the population was ambivalent: In day-to-day life they had friendly relations with the Jews, but when a Jew was appointed as a judge or government worker it bothered them, because according to their perception, a Jew is not supposed to control Muslims.”

Upon the establishment of the State of Israel, the Arab world was flooded with violent riots, massacres and plunder against the Jews. Some of the Arab governments defended the Jews, while others – mainly in Iraq and Yemen – inflamed the riots and looting.”The Iraqi government confiscated property, as if to compensate the Palestinian refugees,” says Yehuda. “Government workers would arrive at a business and ask the Jewish owner how much he would like to ‘donate’ to the refugees. If he wouldn’t – that was the end of the business. Most of the property reached people with ties to the government.”In 1951, the Iraqi government quietly agreed to let Jews immigrate to Israel, and almost all of them did. At the same time, it enacted a law stating that the entire Jewish property – houses, factories, goods, jewelry and bank accounts – would be nationalized.

Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser enacted similar laws after the Lavon Affair and the Sinai war. Libya’s Jews were expelled and their property was nationalized in the 1960s. “(Libya leader Muammar) Gaddafi promised to return everything within 30 years,” notes Hajaj, “but at the moment he’s busy with other stuff.” Syria, Tunisia and Algeria did not nationalize property, but the Jews fled those countries when they gained independence (1946, 1959 and 1962, respectively), and the Muslims looted the remaining property. That is what happened to the property of Yemeni Jews who made aliyah in Operation Magic Carpet as well.

“Some of Morocco’s Jews ‘got off easy’: They immigrated with the money and property and ‘only’ left the homes,” says Hajaj. “Jews from other countries immigrated with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. My father was one of Libya’s biggest billionaires and immigrated with a suitcase weighing 20 kilos.”

Researchers and organizations are at odds over the scope of the lost property.

Economist Sidney Zabudoff, a former American government worker, estimated that the property totalled some \$700 million in the 1950s and reached some \$6 billion in 2007. The Pensioner Affairs Ministry puts the sum at about 2 billion pounds. One organization says \$30 billion and another says \$100 billion in Iraq alone.

Will the Jews be compensated for the looted property? And can it, and should it, be deducted from the property Israel took from the Palestinians?

The scope of the Palestinian property is also a matter of controversy. Economist John Barncastle evaluated the Palestinian property the 1950s at some \$450 million. Zabludoff said it stood at some \$4 billion today. The Camp David peace talks discussed \$20 billion, while Arab organizations spoke of some \$200 billion. The disagreement stems from the re-evaluation method.

The number of people who escaped on both sides was similar: About 730,000 Palestinians and about 700,000 Jews (excluding those who immigrated to France). Most of them lived in their own homes. The Jews, in general, were much richer and possessed many assets in addition to the houses. But real estate is the main thing, and it is customary to add to the original value the rising prices in the places the refugees lived in. Israeli housing prices, as we all know, have gone up much more.

Israel earned a lot from the Jewish property looted in Europe and used the funds to help Holocaust survivors, although insufficiently. But until recently, the State ignored the Jewish property in Arab countries. "Until recently, there was a lot of fear," says Yehuda. "During the peace talks, Egypt's Jews demanded that (then-Israeli Prime Minister) Menachem Begin include a clause requiring compensation, but he wouldn't listen. I think the government was afraid that it would have to pay the Palestinians more.

"They changed their mind when (former US President) Bill Clinton stated that an international fund would be established to compensate both sides. Since then, they are hoping that the arrangement won't be at their expense."

The property in Israel is worth more thanks to the Jews' knowledge and capital. Why should it increase the compensation to the Palestinians?

"These things are not determined according to logic. Here's something even more absurd: Rich Jews from Iraq bought lands in Israel in the 1930s and 1940s before immigrating. Whoever bought lands within the Green Line received them. But some bought lands in Judea and Samaria, and the Jordanians nationalized them.

After the Six-Day War, the Jews demanded their lands back and the military government said, 'We are acting in accordance to Jordanian law, and therefore they aren't yours.' But settlements of other Jews were established on those same lands." Americans demanded compensation first: The United States recognized Jews' right for compensation from Arab countries in the 1990s. Former Justice Minister Meir Sheetrit stated in 2006 that Israel would demand compensation. In 2010, the Knesset enacted the "law for compensating Jewish refugees from Arab countries," which obligates the government to demand compensation as part of any future peace negotiations.

How will Arab countries respond to the Israeli demand? In the past, London-based Arabic-language newspaper *al-Sharq al-Awsat* quoted an Iraqi lawyer named Hasem Muhammad Ali as saying he supports compensation.

But the Iraqi government, according to the newspaper, is against it, claiming that the Jews left out of their own free will and could get their property back if they returned.

The public discourse in Israel focuses on the distress of Oriental Jews. Most books and articles, speeches and protests dealt with the discrimination and injustice they suffered in Israel by the Ashkenazi establishment, and only few dealt with the robbery they suffered in their homelands.

"I think our situation would have been better had we remained in Libya," says Hajaj. "But I don't know if the only one to blame is Israel, which took care of our livelihood and provided education, or the countries which robbed us and sent us away stark naked."

[Read article in full](#)

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.

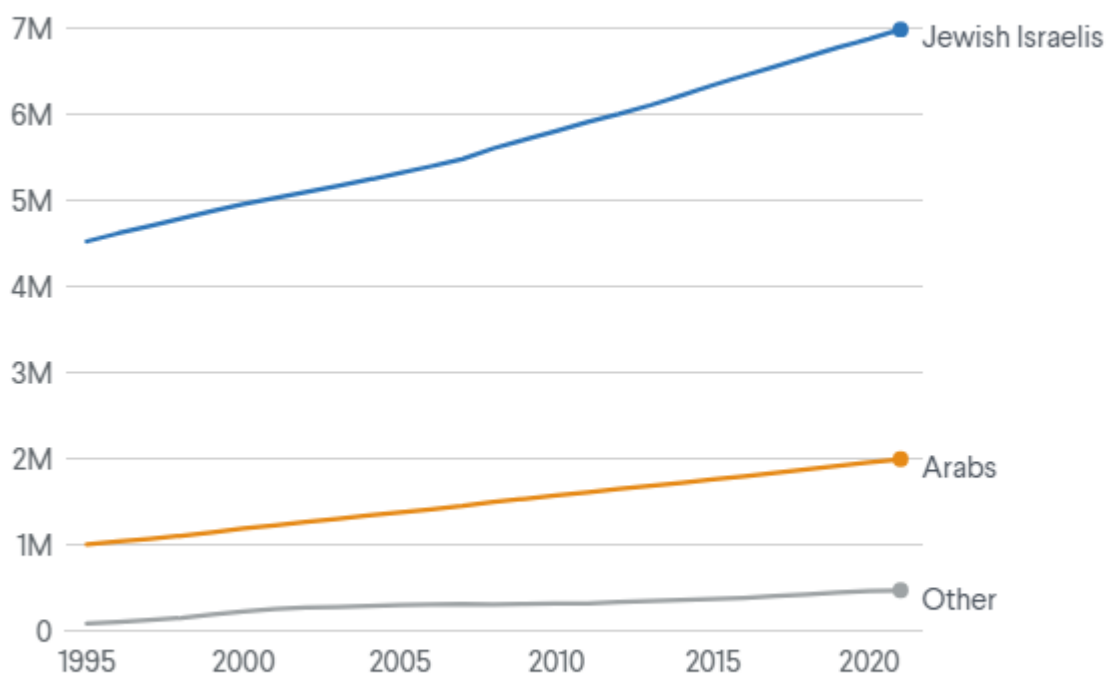
WHO ARE THE ARAB CITIZENS OF ISRAEL?

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.

COUNCIL ON
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

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
FOREIGN
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.

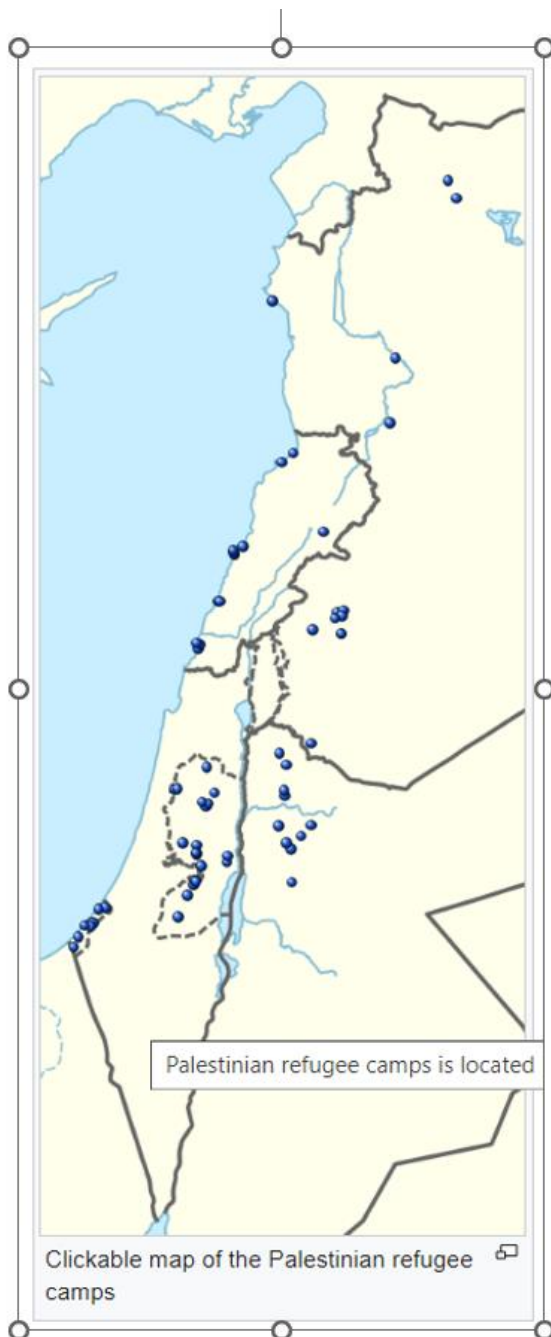
On *The President's Inbox* podcast, CFR's Steven A. Cook and James M. Lindsay discuss the causes of the 2021 [turmoil in Jerusalem](#).

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]

The total number of registered Palestine refugees has grown from 750,000 in 1950 to around 5 million in 2013.^[6]

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 INDEPENDENT?

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.

PEACE TREATY AND ATTEMPTED PEACE TREATIES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND OTHERS

Resources on the Israel-Hamas War

Learn the Israel-Hamas war and the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with educational resources from the Council on Foreign Relations. [CFR Education](#)

Arab-Israeli Normalisation [Wikipedia](#)

Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process [Wikipedia](#)

The many, many times Israelis and Palestinians tried to make peace — and failed

A timeline of the decades-long peace negotiations that came before the Israel-Hamas war. [VOX](#) 2023

ABRAHAM ACCORDS

ChatGPT said:

The Abraham Accords represent a watershed moment in Middle Eastern geopolitics, shifting the region's dynamics by normalizing relations between Israel and several Arab countries. Each member of the accords had unique motivations, reactions, and domestic implications. Below is a deeper dive into the reactions of each member:

1. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

Official Government Reaction:

The UAE's decision to normalize relations with Israel, announced in August 2020, was presented as a move that would halt Israeli plans to annex parts of the West Bank. This allowed the UAE to position itself as a key player in Middle Eastern peace efforts while advancing its own national interests, particularly in technology, defense, and trade.

- **Leadership Response:** Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ) characterized the agreement as a pragmatic step toward de-escalating tensions in the region. The UAE maintained that the accords aligned with their long-term vision for promoting stability, economic prosperity, and modernization in the Gulf.
- **Strategic and Economic Motivation:** The UAE saw normalization as an opportunity to enhance its strategic alliances, particularly in defense and technology sectors. Both countries are among the most technologically advanced in the region, and their collaboration is expected to bring economic growth, particularly in fields such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, healthcare, and tourism.

Public and Domestic Reaction:

Public sentiment within the UAE was generally mixed:

- **Pro-Normalization View:** A portion of the Emirati public, particularly the business and elite classes, supported the accords for the economic and diplomatic benefits they would bring. These benefits included increased tourism, investment, and tech exchange.
- **Pro-Palestinian Concerns:** However, a sizable segment of the population, particularly those with ties to the Palestinian cause, expressed unease. Many viewed the agreement as a betrayal of longstanding Arab solidarity with Palestinians and a deviation from the Arab Peace Initiative, which stipulated normalization only after Israel withdrew from the occupied territories.

The government largely controlled the public discourse around the accords, and dissent was mostly subdued. The media promoted the accords as a positive step, reflecting the UAE's controlled political environment where criticism of government decisions is rare.

2. BAHRAIN

Official Government Reaction:

Bahrain followed the UAE, signing the Abraham Accords in September 2020. Bahrain's government, led by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, hailed the move as a way to promote regional stability and security. Bahrain's leadership framed the agreement as an extension of its historical commitment to coexistence and religious tolerance, pointing to the country's small but significant Jewish community as evidence of its pluralism.

- **Strategic Interests:** Bahrain has close ties with the United States, and its decision to normalize relations with Israel was seen as partly motivated by its strategic dependence on U.S. security guarantees, particularly in the face of tensions with Iran. Bahrain hosts the U.S. Fifth Fleet, and this military presence was a factor in Bahrain's decision-making, as the accords align with U.S. policy in the region.

Public and Domestic Reaction:

The domestic reaction in Bahrain was more contentious than in the UAE:

- **Government Support:** The Bahraini monarchy framed the agreement as a way to safeguard national security and maintain Bahrain's alliances, especially with the U.S. and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.
- **Protests and Opposition:** However, the country has a significant Shia Muslim population, which historically has been marginalized by the Sunni-led government. Shia groups, along with many Sunni citizens, opposed normalization with Israel, seeing it as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. Protests erupted in various parts of Bahrain, though they were limited due to the government's tight control over dissent.

The opposition to the accords in Bahrain was also rooted in wider regional dynamics, particularly Bahrain's rivalry with Iran. Many Shia Bahrainis perceive normalization with Israel as aligning the country more closely with Israel and the U.S. against Iran.

3. MOROCCO

Official Government Reaction:

Morocco's decision to normalize relations with Israel, announced in December 2020, was tied to U.S. recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over the contested Western Sahara. For decades, Morocco had sought international recognition of its claim to this region, making the accord a diplomatic win for the Moroccan monarchy.

- **Strategic Benefit:** The U.S. recognition of Morocco's Western Sahara claims was a significant geopolitical gain, and in return, Morocco agreed to re-establish diplomatic ties with Israel, which had been suspended since 2000 during the Second Intifada. King Mohammed VI emphasized Morocco's historical connection with Jewish communities and positioned the agreement as part of a broader peace process that could benefit Palestinians.

Public and Domestic Reaction:

Morocco has one of the largest Jewish diaspora communities in the Arab world, and this historical connection was used to justify the deal. However, the reaction within Morocco was more critical compared to the Gulf states.

- **Government Messaging:** The Moroccan government presented the agreement as pragmatic, focusing on the strategic benefits related to the Western Sahara. King Mohammed VI also reassured the public that the deal would not affect Morocco's support for Palestinian statehood, attempting to balance the normalization with Israel and domestic pro-Palestinian sentiments.
- **Public Opposition:** Despite these assurances, many Moroccans, particularly Islamists and left-wing parties, condemned the agreement. Large segments of the population view the Palestinian cause as central to Arab identity and solidarity. Protests were held across Morocco, with demonstrators accusing the government of abandoning the Palestinians in exchange for geopolitical gain in Western Sahara.

The Moroccan leadership has sought to navigate this opposition carefully, emphasizing the cultural and historical ties between Morocco and the Jewish community while maintaining its rhetorical support for Palestinian rights.

4. SUDAN

Official Government Reaction:

Sudan's decision to join the Abraham Accords in January 2021 was a significant shift in its foreign policy. For decades, Sudan had been one of Israel's fiercest opponents, and it had hosted the infamous 1967 Arab League summit that produced the "Three No's" resolution: no peace, no recognition, and no negotiations with Israel.

- **Economic Motivation:** Sudan's transitional government, led by Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, pursued normalization as a pathway to economic relief. Sudan was struggling under the weight of sanctions and a severe economic crisis. The U.S. offered to remove Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism—a move that opened the door for much-needed international aid and debt relief—in exchange for Sudan agreeing to normalize ties with Israel.

Public and Domestic Reaction:

Sudan's decision was controversial and triggered widespread opposition, particularly among Islamist groups and pro-Palestinian factions.

- **Opposition to Normalization:** Many Sudanese viewed the normalization agreement as imposed by external pressure, particularly by the U.S., rather than a genuine desire for peace with Israel. Political factions, including the military, civilian leaders, and Islamist groups, were divided on the issue.
- **Economic Imperatives:** Sudan's leadership defended the move as a necessary step to reintegrate the country into the global economy. The transitional government emphasized that without normalization, Sudan would remain isolated and impoverished. Nonetheless, protests erupted in

several cities, with many Sudanese accusing their government of betraying the Palestinian cause for financial incentives.

The transitional government was particularly fragile during this period, and the normalization deal added another layer of complexity to Sudan's volatile political landscape.

5. ISRAEL

Official Government Reaction:

Israel viewed the Abraham Accords as a historic and strategic achievement. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu championed the deals as a breakthrough in Israel's longstanding efforts to gain regional recognition without resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict first. Israel's official narrative emphasized that the accords shattered the traditional Arab consensus that peace with Israel could only come after a resolution to the Palestinian issue.

- **Strategic and Economic Gains:** The accords were seen as validating Netanyahu's foreign policy approach. They opened up new opportunities for trade, investment, and security cooperation with the Arab world. Israel hoped to further isolate Iran diplomatically by forging closer ties with Arab states, particularly the Gulf countries.

Public Reaction:

The Israeli public largely supported the Abraham Accords:

- **Widespread Approval:** Many Israelis celebrated the accords as a sign of growing acceptance of Israel in the Arab world. The agreements with the UAE and Bahrain, in particular, promised new economic opportunities, and Israelis were quick to take advantage of new travel and business links.
- **Criticism from the Left:** Some on the Israeli left expressed concern that normalization with Arab states without resolving the Palestinian issue would perpetuate the status quo of occupation and conflict. However, these voices were in the minority, as the accords enjoyed broad political support across the Israeli spectrum.

The accords also strengthened Netanyahu's domestic position at the time, as he could point to concrete foreign policy achievements amid domestic political challenges.

6. UNITED STATES

Official Government Reaction:

For the Trump administration, the Abraham Accords were framed as a signature foreign policy success. The administration argued that it had reshaped the Middle East by advancing peace between Israel and Arab states without needing to resolve the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

- **A New Approach:** President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo presented the accords as part of a new paradigm in the Middle East. Instead of focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the Trump administration prioritized countering Iranian influence and promoting security cooperation between Israel and the Sunni Arab states.

Public and Political Reaction:

- **Bipartisan Praise:** The accords were generally well-received in the U.S., with bipartisan praise for promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. Even critics of Trump's foreign policy acknowledged that the agreements represented a positive step forward.
- **Criticism:** However, some critics argued that the accords neglected the Palestinian issue and could deepen Palestinian isolation. They also pointed out that the agreements were transactional in nature, with the U.S. offering significant incentives—such as arms sales to the UAE and recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara—in exchange for normalization.

The Biden administration, while more focused on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, continued to support the Abraham Accords, seeing them as a foundation for future peace efforts in the region.

7. PALESTINIAN REACTIONS

While the Palestinians were not a direct party to the Abraham Accords, their reaction was significant and underscored the continued complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Palestinian Authority (PA):

The Palestinian Authority (PA), led by President Mahmoud Abbas, vehemently opposed the accords, condemning them as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause and the Arab Peace Initiative. The PA argued that by normalizing relations with Israel without resolving the issue of Palestinian statehood, the Arab signatories had undermined the prospects for a two-state solution.

- **Diplomatic Fallout:** The accords exacerbated tensions between the PA and the Arab states involved. Abbas recalled Palestinian ambassadors from the UAE and Bahrain in protest, and Palestinian officials warned that the agreements would weaken the Arab world's leverage in negotiations with Israel.

Hamas:

The Gaza-based militant group Hamas, which has governed the Gaza Strip since 2007, also rejected the Abraham Accords, accusing the Arab states involved of betraying the Palestinian cause. Hamas warned that the accords would embolden Israeli policies of settlement expansion and occupation.

- **Public Protests:** In Gaza and the West Bank, protests erupted against the accords, with demonstrators condemning the normalization agreements as a stab in the back by fellow Arabs.

Broader Arab Public Reaction:

Across the Arab world, public opinion was largely negative, especially in countries that did not participate in the accords. In countries like Jordan and Egypt, which already had peace agreements with Israel, there were fears that the Abraham Accords would marginalize the Palestinian cause and normalize the status quo of occupation and settlement.

CONCLUSION:

The Abraham Accords marked a historic shift in the Middle East's political landscape, with Israel normalizing relations with several Arab countries for the first time in decades. The reactions from each member reflected a mix of pragmatic geopolitical considerations and domestic pressures. While the accords were celebrated by some as a breakthrough for peace and cooperation, they also deepened divisions, particularly with regard to the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The broader implications of the Abraham Accords continue to unfold, as more countries may consider normalization with Israel, while the Palestinian issue remains a deeply contentious and unresolved factor in regional politics.

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] <div><div><div><div>• President</div></div><div><div>• Prime Minister</div></div><div><div>• Speaker of the Parliament</div></div></div><div><div>Mahmoud Abbas^[c]</div><div>Mohammad Mustafa Aziz Dweik</div></div></div>
Legislature	National Council
Formation	<div><div><div>• Declaration of Independence</div><div>• UNGA observer state resolution</div><div>• Sovereignty dispute with Israel</div></div><div><div>15 November 1988</div><div>29 November 2012</div><div>Ongoing^[d]^[5]^[6]</div></div></div>
Area	<div><div><div>• Total</div><div>• Water (%)</div><div>• West Bank</div><div>• Gaza Strip</div></div><div><div>6,020^[7] km² (2,320 sq mi) (163rd)</div><div>3.5^[8]</div><div>5,655 km²</div><div>365 km²^[9]</div></div></div>
Population	<div><div><div>• 2023 estimate</div><div>• Density</div></div><div><div>5,483,450^[10] (121st)</div><div>731/km² (1,893.3/sq mi)</div></div></div>

Palestine (Arabic: فلسطين, romanized: *Filasṭīn*^[e]), officially the **State of Palestine** (دولة فلسطين, *Dawlat Filasṭīn*),^[f] 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 [Hammas](#). 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 Hammas](#). 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]

WHO IS A REFUGEE?

POINT OF NO RETURN

Jewish refugees arriving in Israel were sent to ma'abarot, or transit camps.

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 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 from Arab countries 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.

The American aid earmarked to solve the issue of Middle East refugees was supposed to have been split evenly between Israel and the Arab states, with each side receiving \$50 million to build infrastructure to absorb refugees. The money to take in the Arab refugees was handed over to the U.N. agency founded to address the issue of Palestinian refugees, and the Americans gave Arab countries another \$53 million for “technical cooperation.” In effect, the Arab side received double the money given to Israel, even though Israel took in more refugees, including ones from Arab nations – Jews who had been displaced by the regional upheavals. The bills presented to Congress in 1951 included a bill to send Israel aid to take in refugees. It was the first and last time that any mechanism was established for the Jewish refugees. The amount Congress allocated to provide for Middle East refugees – Jewish and Arab – at the request of then-President Harry Truman was equal to \$1.5 billion today.

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. UNRWA is dedicated 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.

In contrast to the \$17.7 billion allocated to the Palestinian refugees, no international aid was 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.

The post [UNRWA was set up as a temporary measure](#) first appeared on [Point of No Return](#).

DO PALESTINIANS

HAVE THE LOWEST STANDARD OF LIVING IN THE WORLD?

It is not fair that you enjoy a good life while our brothers in Gaza endure the worst standard of living. Therefore, God willing, our attacks against you will continue as long as you maintain your support to Israel.

– Osama Bin Laden ¹

ISRAEL ADVOCACY

OVERVIEW OF THE TRUTH

One of the most frequently heard claims about Palestine is that they suffer from a standard of living comparable to the poorest of African states. To validate whether this is true we will explore four key areas:

- Health of the Palestinians
- Quality of life
- Average income
- Aid to Palestine

HEALTH OF THE PALESTINIANS

One way to measure the standard of living is by seeing how long people live on average – healthy people tend to live longer. When we explore life expectancy it would seem that Palestinians live to a ripe old age – Palestinian born today are expected reach 75 years of age. In terms of life expectancy Palestine ranks tenth out of twenty two Arab states. In contrast the average Somali Arab is unlikely to see their 52nd birthday. There are 132 countries in the world with lower life expectancies – so life expectancy is not a problem for the Palestinians.

Another indicator of standard of living is infant mortality rates (IMR) as this is a strong measure of the healthcare provided. Thankfully the overwhelming majority of Palestinian babies live beyond the age of one, as only 15 out of 1,000 die before the age of one. This gives Palestine the ninth lowest infant mortality rate in the Arab world. Tragically 100 out of 1,000 Somali babies are lost in their first year of life.

Country	Life expectancy	Infant mortality rate
Bahrain	78.6	9.7
Qatar	78.4	6.4
Kuwait	77.6	7.5
Lebanon	77.2	8

UAE	77.1	10.9
Morocco	76.5	24.5
Algeria	76.4	21.8
Libya	76	11.9
Tunisia	75.7	23.2
Palestine	75	15
Oman	75	14
Saudi Arabia	74.8	14.6
Jordan	74.1	15.7
Egypt	73.4	22.4
Iraq	71.4	37.5
Syria	68.4	15.8
Yemen	64.8	50.4
Comoros	63.6	65.3
Sudan	63.3	52.9
Djibouti	62.4	50.2
Mauritania	62.3	50.1
Somalia	51.6	100.1

Now it is no secret that there are some incredibly wealthy Arab states, so we'd expect long lives and low infant mortality rates. But what happens when we compare Palestine to some of the world's most impoverished states?

Country	Life expectancy	Infant mortality rate
Palestine	75	14.9
Yemen	64.8	50.4
Comoros	63.6	65.3
Eritrea	63.5	38.4
Mauritania	62.3	56.1
Guinea	59.6	55.2
Burundi	59.5	63.4
Liberia	58.2	69.2
Sierra Leone	57.4	73.3
Somalia	51.6	100.1
Chad	49.4	90.3

There are 116 out of 224 countries in the world with a worse IMR, so it seems pretty conclusive that in terms of health the Palestinians are not even close to having lowest living standards.^{2, 3}

QUALITY OF LIFE

Perhaps you might argue that they may have their health, but the Palestinians live a miserable existence. Again the facts don't agree, according to the 2012 Happy Planet Index, which is a survey conducted by the New Economics Forum to measure happiness around the world – Palestine was the third happiest Arab country and the 30th happiest in the world. Making Palestine happier than many developed countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Australia and Canada.⁴

1. Algeria – 52.2
2. Jordan – 51.7
3. **Palestine – 51.2**
4. Iraq – 49.2

5. Tunisia – 48.3
6. Morocco – 47.9
7. Syria – 47.1
8. Saudi Arabia – 46.0
9. Yemen – 43.0
10. Lebanon – 42.9
11. Libya – 40.8
12. Egypt – 39.6
13. Sudan – 37.6
14. Djibouti – 37.2
15. Comoros – 36.5
16. Mauritania – 32.3
17. UAE – 31.8
18. Kuwait – 27.1
19. Qatar – 25.2
20. Bahrain – 26.6

Another measure could be the Human Development Index (HDI), which is the United Nations comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education, standards of living, and quality of its member states. In this study 36% of the states perform worse than Palestine – including Egypt, South Africa, Indonesia and Pakistan.⁵

AVERAGE INCOME

An obvious measure of the standard of living is the economy (GDP) of a country, particularly when divided by how many people live in that country. If two people generate £100, they are richer than 10 people people that generate £100. In economics this calculation at a national level is called the GDP per-capita. When we compare the GDP per-capita of impoverished nations with Palestine, it is clear that at an individual level Palestine is far more affluent than many states.⁶

1. Palestine – \$4,422
2. Yemen – \$2,518
3. Mauritania – \$2,061
4. Chad – \$1,687
5. Sierra Leone – \$1,407
6. Comoros – \$1,237
7. Guinea – \$1,080
8. Eritrea – \$729
9. Liberia – \$649
10. Somalia – \$578
11. Burundi – \$566

In fact when we look at the Palestinian economy it dwarves many nations. 40% of countries around the world have a lower GDP than Palestine (such as Kosovo, Iceland, Haiti, Moldova, Monaco, etc.). Some people mistakenly have a mental image of Palestine as an impoverished nation, which simply isn't true. It is not rich, but it is disingenuous to compare it to the poverty of nations like Ethiopia and Eritrea – as the images below demonstrate.



Al-Mashtal Luxury Hotel in Gaza



Bank of Palestine in Ramallah



Intercontinental Hotel in Bethlehem



Grand Palace Hotel in Gaza



A Palestinian village in the West Bank



Movenpick Luxury Hotel in Ramallah



Former Headquarters of the PLO in East Jerusalem



Construction of the billion dollar Palestinian city of Rawabi

AID TO THE PALESTINIANS

Incredibly despite the relatively high Palestinian living standards, they are one of the largest recipients of international aid. Each year over a billion dollars flows across its borders, while nations living in abject poverty are all but ignored by the international community. Tragically nations like Eritrea which has a GDP PPP Per-Capita of a meager \$729 receives a measly \$134 million in aid – despite suffering from decades of war, mass poverty and a dictatorship accused of extrajudicial executions, torture, forced labour, rape and sexual servitude.⁷

Country	Aid	Aid per person
---------	-----	----------------

Palestine	\$1.8 billion	\$396
Liberia	\$571 million	\$136
Mauritania	\$408 million	\$107
Comoros	\$69 million	\$96
Somalia	\$905 million	\$89
Sierra Leone	\$440 million	\$74
Burundi	\$522 million	\$53
Chad	\$477 million	\$38
Yemen	\$660 million	\$28
Guinea	\$296 million	\$26
Eritrea	\$134 million	\$22

SUMMARY

The purpose of this article is not to suggest the Palestinians have the highest standard of living in the world, such a claim would be a absurd. However, it is important to note that relative to the rest of the world the Palestinians benefit from a good standard of living. Unfortunately a disproportionate amount of international aid flows into Palestine, taking it away from far needier countries that are largely ignored by the international community.

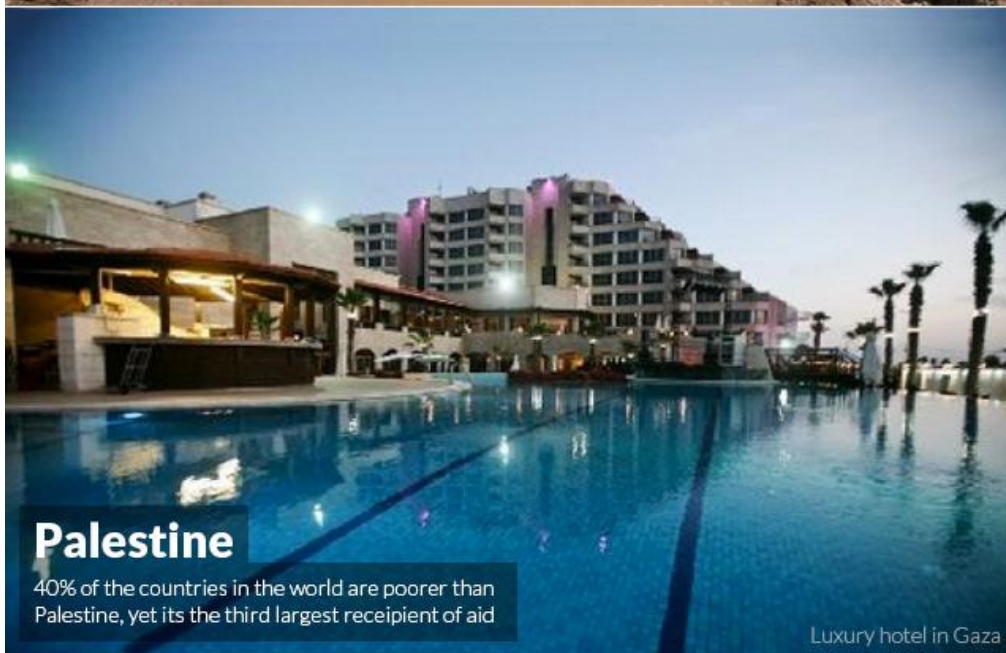
- Palestinians live very long lives and have access to great healthcare
- Palestinians are happier than citizens of superpowers like the UK and USA
- Palestine is one of the world's largest recipients of aid – receiving approximately \$2 billion each year
- 40% of the world's countries are poorer than Palestine
- According the UN 36% of their member states have a worse development index



Eritrea

Palestine is 4 times richer than Eritrea, yet Eritrea receives 13 times less aid than Palestine

Water hole in Eritrea



Palestine

40% of the countries in the world are poorer than Palestine, yet it's the third largest recipient of aid

Luxury hotel in Gaza

Aid and GDP per person

Palestine	<div><div></div></div>	\$396 / \$4,422
Chad	<div><div></div></div>	\$38 / \$1,687
Comoros	<div><div></div></div>	\$96 / \$1,237
Guinea	<div><div></div></div>	\$26 / \$1,080
Liberia	<div><div></div></div>	\$136 / \$649
Eritrea	<div><div></div></div>	\$22 / \$729
Somalia	<div><div></div></div>	\$89 / \$578
Burundi	<div><div></div></div>	\$53 / \$566

■ Aid per person ■ GDP per person

Aid and GDP per country

Palestine	<div><div></div></div>	\$1.8 b / \$20.1 b
Chad	<div><div></div></div>	\$447 m / \$21 b
Guinea	<div><div></div></div>	\$296 m / \$12.4 b
Somalia	<div><div></div></div>	\$905 m / \$5.9 b
Burundi	<div><div></div></div>	\$522 m / \$5.6 b
Eritrea	<div><div></div></div>	\$134 m / \$4.7 b
Liberia	<div><div></div></div>	\$571 m / \$2.7 b
Comoros	<div><div></div></div>	\$69 m / \$887 m

■ Aid ■ GDP

The economy of Comoros is 23 times poorer than Palestine, yet Palestine receives 26 times more aid.

The average income in Liberia is 7 times smaller than in Palestine, yet Palestine receives 15 times as much aid per person.

EXPOSE MORE LIES OF ISRAELI DISCRIMINATION:

- [Do Palestinians have the lowest standard of living in the world?](#)
- [Is Israel a racist or apartheid state?](#)
- [Is the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions movement just?](#)

Sources

1. Osama Bin Lade, Reported in the Al Arabiya News, 24/1/10
2. [CIA World Factbook, 2014, Life expectancy at birth](#)
3. [CIA World Factbook, 2014, Infant mortality rate](#)
4. [2012 Happy Planet Index, New Economics Forum](#)
5. [UN 2014 development report](#)
6. [GDP PPP, 2012 CIA Factboook](#)
7. [Global Humanitarian Assistance 2012](#)

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)

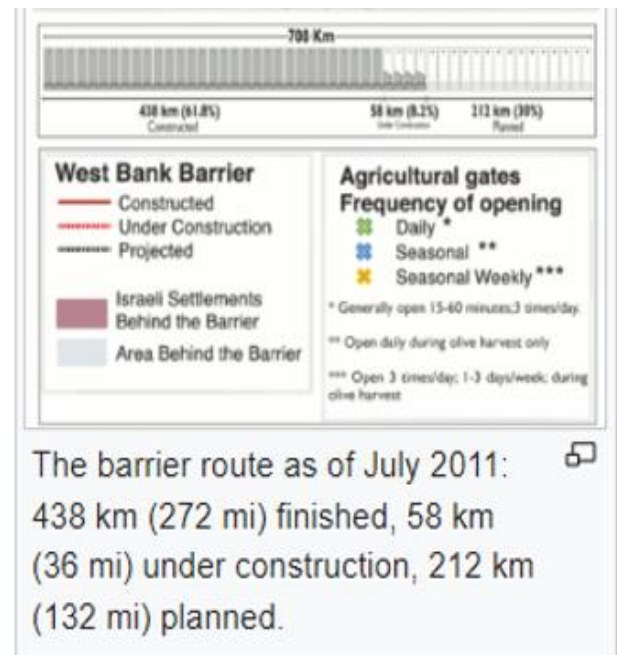
The Arab League established the PLO in 1964 in an effort to control Palestinian nationalism while appearing to champion their cause. Although it was supposed to represent the Palestinians, the PLO really represented the views of President Nasser of Egypt. Some major PLO attacks and actions against Israel 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.

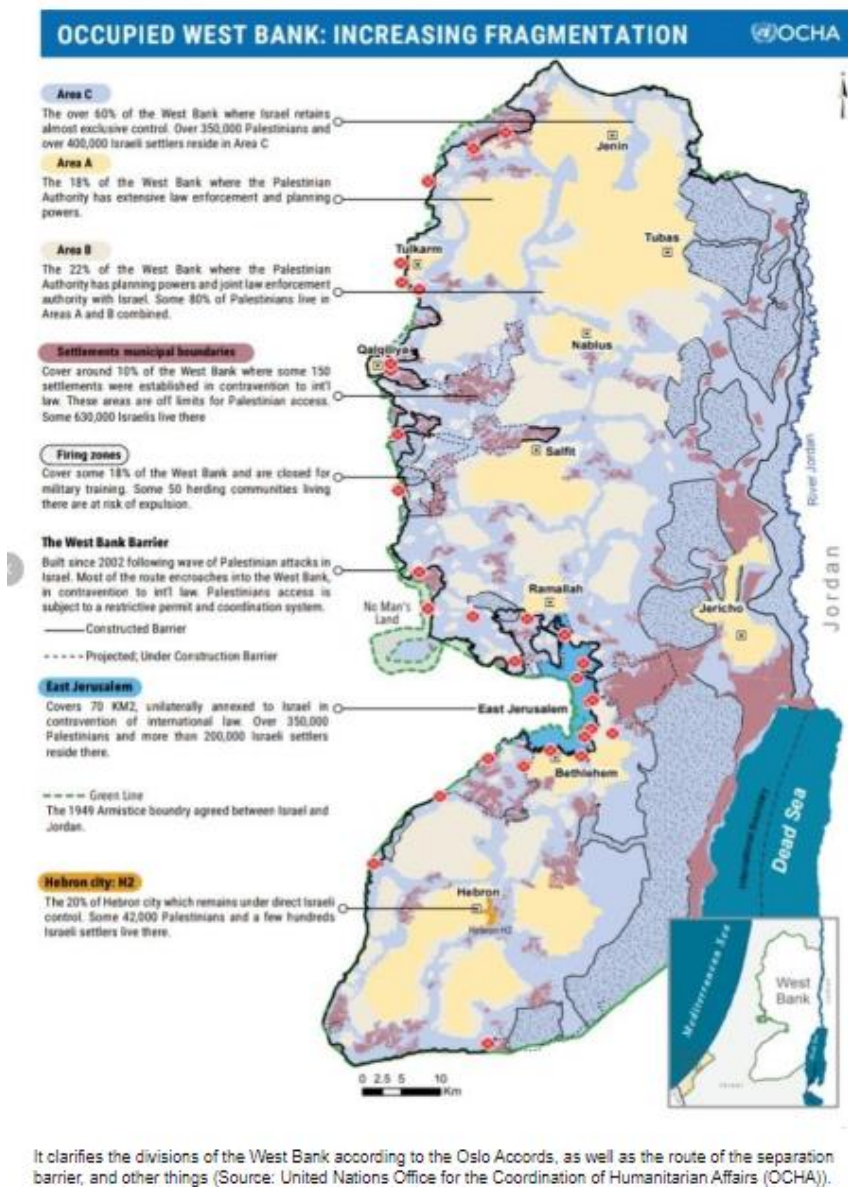
Black September also known as the **Jordanian Civil War**, was an armed conflict between Jordan, led by **King Hussein**, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), led by chairman **Yasser Arafat**. The main phase of fighting took place between 16 and 27 September 1970, aspects of the conflict continued until 17 July 1971 when they went to Lebanon.

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



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](#),**

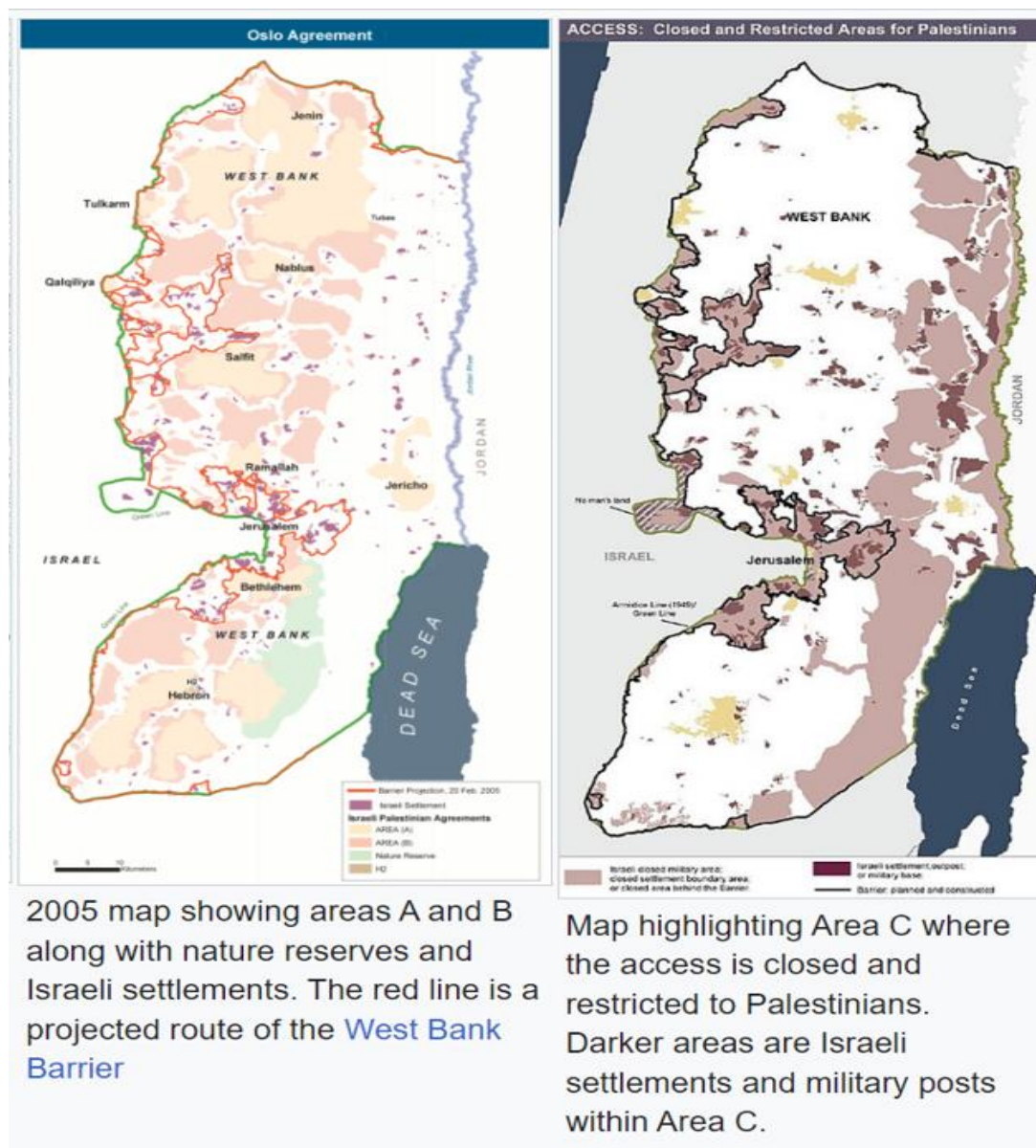
which was tasked with the responsibility of conducting limited Palestinian self-governance over parts of the [West Bank](#) and the [Gaza Strip](#); and the international acknowledgement of the PLO as Israel's partner in permanent-status negotiations about any remaining issues revolving around the Israeli–Palestinian 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**

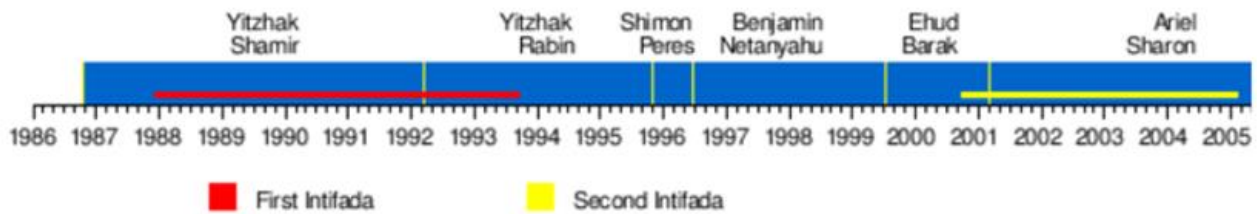
of negotiations on a final settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. The Accord was officially signed on 28 September 1995.

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.



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 • Britain officially assumes control • Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel 	25 April 1920 29 September 1923 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
Occupied Enemy Territory Administration	Israel  Jordanian annexation of the West Bank All-Palestine Protectorate 
Today part of	Israel Palestine 

Gaza Strip قطاع غزة <i>Qitā' Ghazza</i>	
1959–1967	
	
Flag	Coat of arms
 <p>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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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– Hamas conflict** ([Arabic](#): النزاع بين فتح وحماس *an-Nizāʿ bayna Fataḥ wa-Ḥamās*) is an ongoing political and strategic conflict between [Fatah](#) and [Hamās](#), the two main Palestinian political parties in the Palestinian territories, leading to the [Hamās 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]}

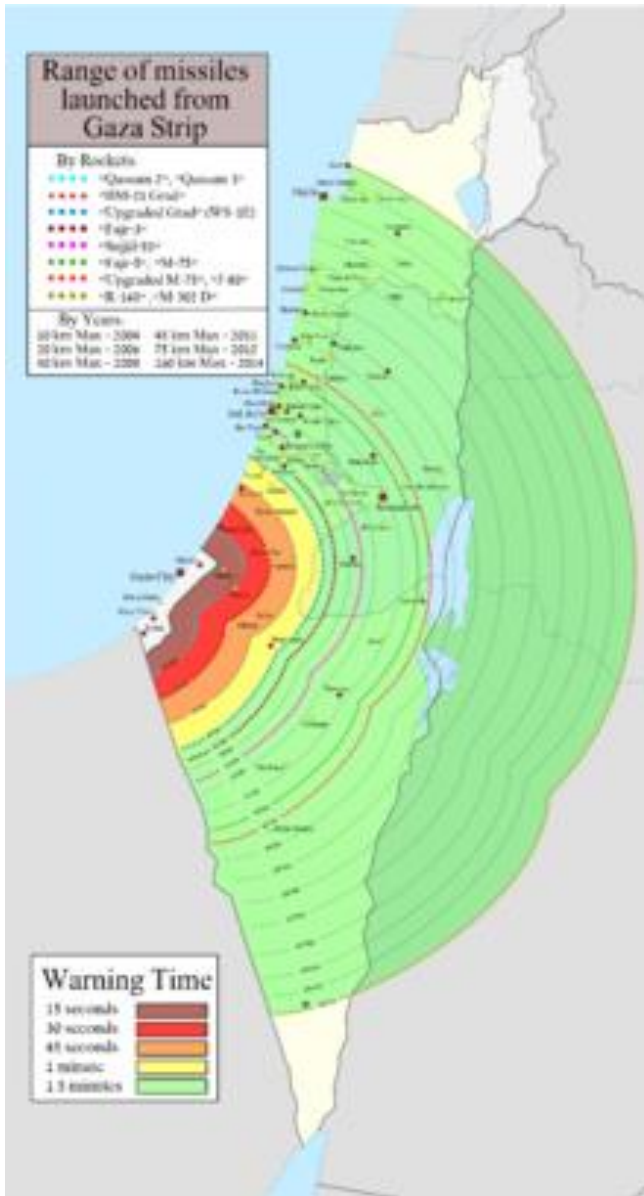
Tensions between Fatah and Hamas began to rise in 2005 after the death of [Yasser Arafat](#) in November 2004. After the [legislative election on 25 January 2006](#), which resulted in a Hamas victory, relations were marked by sporadic factional fighting. This became more intense after the two parties repeatedly failed to reach a deal to share government power, escalating in June 2007 and resulting in [Hamās' 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 AT

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

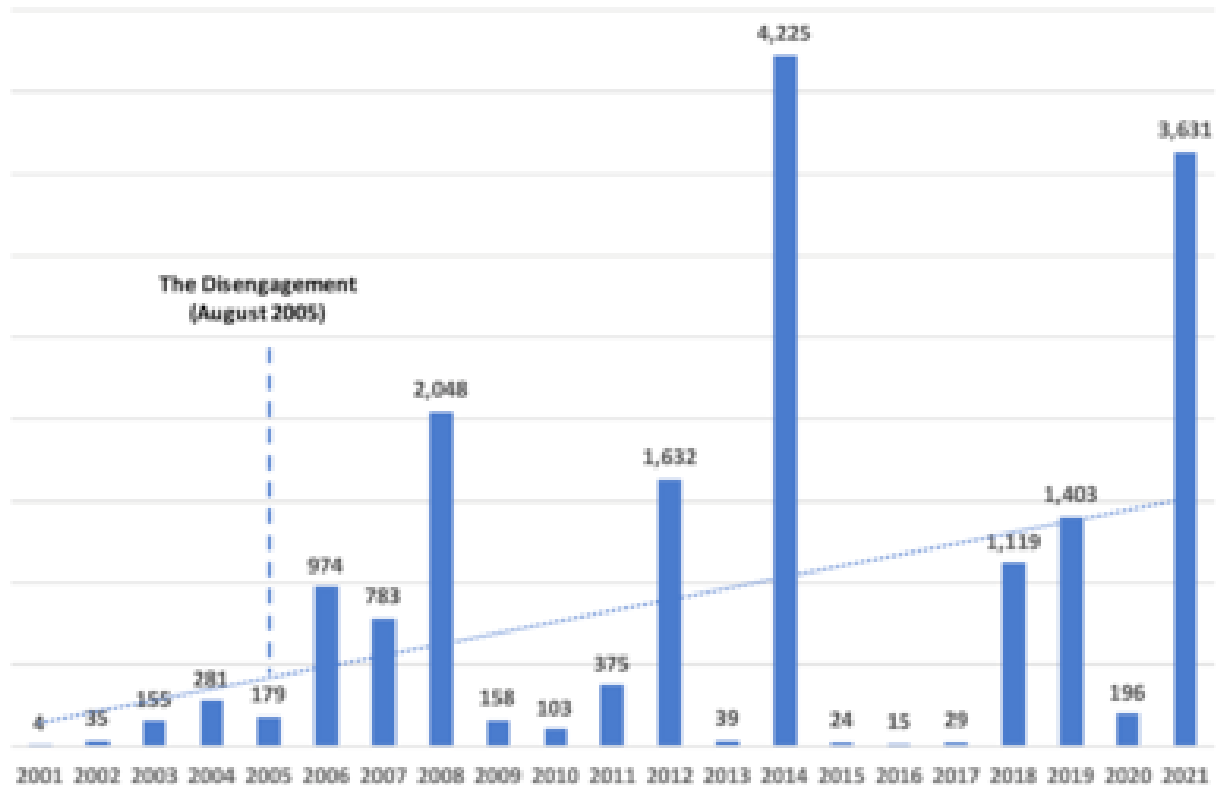


Figure 2. Number of rockets fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip by year.

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-Qiq](#), was a science teacher and headmaster at a United Nations school. Christopher Gunness, 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^{[182][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, 'Amúd 'Anán, literally: "[Pillar of Cloud](#)")^[23] which was an eight-day campaign in the [Hamis-governed Gaza Strip](#), which began on 14 November 2012 with the killing of [Ahmed Jabari](#), chief of the Gaza military wing of [Hamis](#) 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 Tzuk Eitan, lit. 'Operation Strong Cliff'),^{[note 3][26][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 [Hamis](#)-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 [Hamis](#) 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]}

ISRAEL GAZA WAR: HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT EXPLAINED

[BBC NEWS](#)



The Palestinian militant group Hamas launched an unprecedented assault on Israel on 7 October, with hundreds of gunmen infiltrating communities near the Gaza Strip.

About 1,200 people were killed, and more than 250 were taken to Gaza as hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

More than 33,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed in air and artillery strikes carried out by the Israeli military in response, Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry says.

More On Israel-Gaza War

- Why there is a war: [What is Hamas and why is it fighting Israel?](#)
- Gaza Strip mapped: [Life in Gaza under siege](#)
- Explained: [The faces of hostages taken from Israel](#)

What Was Israel Before 1948?

Britain took control of the area known as Palestine following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled that part of the Middle East, in World War One.

The land was inhabited by a Jewish minority and Arab majority, as well as other, smaller ethnic groups.

Tensions between the two peoples grew when the international community gave the UK the task of establishing a "national home" in Palestine for Jewish people.

This stemmed from the Balfour Declaration of 1917, a pledge made by then Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour to Britain's Jewish community.

The declaration was enshrined in the British mandate over Palestine and endorsed by the newly-created League of Nations - forerunner of the United Nations - in 1922.

To Jews Palestine was their ancestral home, but Palestinian Arabs also claimed the land and opposed the move.



A Haganah (Jewish Underground) fighter just before the start of the Israeli War of Independence 1948

GETTY IMAGES

Between the 1920s and 1940s, the number of Jews arriving there grew, with many fleeing from persecution in Europe, especially the Nazi Holocaust in World War Two.

Violence between Jews and Arabs, and against British rule, also increased.

In 1947, the UN voted for Palestine to be split into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem becoming an international city.

That plan was accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by the Arab side and never implemented.



The soldiers of allied Arab Legion forces fire on fighters of the Haganah, the Jewish Agency self-defence force, in March 1948

Getty Images

HOW AND WHY WAS ISRAEL CREATED?

In 1948, unable to solve the problem, Britain withdrew and Jewish leaders declared the creation of the State of Israel.

It was intended to be a safe haven for Jews fleeing persecution, as well as a national homeland for Jews. Fighting between Jewish and Arab militias had been intensifying for months, and the day after Israel declared statehood, five Arab countries attacked.

1949 Armistice Lines

■ Jordanian occupied ■ Egyptian occupied □ Armistice lines



BBC

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were forced out of their homes in what they call Al Nakba, or **the "Catastrophe"**

By the time the fighting ended in a ceasefire the following year, Israel controlled most of the territory.



- **9.8 million** Population
- **73.6%** Jews
- **21.1%** Arabs
- **5.3%** Other

Source:

Israel Central Bureau of Statistics

Getty Images

Jordan occupied land which became known as the West Bank, and Egypt occupied Gaza. Jerusalem was divided between Israeli forces in the West, and Jordanian forces in the East. Because there was never a peace agreement there were more wars and fighting in the following decades.

- **Israel's borders explained in maps**

THE MAP OF ISRAEL

Israel's boundaries today



In a war in 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as most of the Syrian Golan Heights, Gaza and the Egyptian Sinai peninsula.

Most Palestinian refugees and their descendants live in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as in neighbouring Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Neither they nor their descendants have been allowed by Israel to return to their homes - Israel says this would overwhelm the country and threaten its existence as a Jewish state.



Israeli military commanders arrive in East Jerusalem during the Six Day War in 1967

Israel still occupies the West Bank and claims the whole of Jerusalem as its capital, while the Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a hoped-for future Palestinian state. The US is one of only a handful of countries to recognise the city as Israel's capital.

In the past 50 years Israel has built settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, where more than 700,000 Jews now live.

Settlements are held to be illegal under international law - that is the position of the UN Security Council and the UK government, among others - although Israel rejects this.

WHAT IS THE GAZA STRIP?

Gaza is a narrow strip of land sandwiched between Israel and the Mediterranean Sea, but with a short southern border with Egypt.

Just 41km (25 miles) long and 10km wide, it has more than two million inhabitants and is one of the most densely populated places on Earth.

In the wake of the 1948-49 war, Gaza was occupied by Egypt for 19 years.

Israel occupied Gaza in the 1967 war and stayed until 2005, during that time building Jewish settlements.

Israel withdrew its troops and settlers in 2005, though it retained control over its airspace, shared border and shoreline. The UN still considers the territory to be occupied by Israel.

WHERE IS THE GAZA STRIP?



- **Gaza Strip in maps: What it's like for the people who live there**

WHAT ARE THE MAIN PROBLEMS BETWEEN ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS?

There are a number of issues which the two sides cannot agree on.

These include:

- What should happen to Palestinian refugees
- Whether Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank should stay or be removed
- Whether the two sides should share Jerusalem
- And - perhaps most tricky of all - whether a Palestinian state should be created alongside Israel

WHAT EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO RESOLVE THESE PROBLEMS?

Israel-Palestinian peace talks were held on and off between the 1990s and 2010s, interspersed with outbreaks of violence.

A negotiated peace did seem possible in the early days. A series of secret talks in Norway became the Oslo peace process, forever symbolised by a ceremony on the White House lawn in 1993 presided over by President Bill Clinton.

In a historic moment, the Palestinians recognised the State of Israel and Israel recognised its historical enemy, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. A self-governing Palestinian Authority was set up.

Cracks soon appeared, though, with then opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu calling Oslo a mortal threat to Israel. The Israelis accelerated their project to settle Jews in the occupied Palestinian territories. The recently emerged Palestinian militant group Hamas sent suicide bombers to kill people in Israel and wreck the chances of a deal.



Peace seemed possible in the early 1990s when the Oslo accords were signed

Reuters

The atmosphere in Israel turned ugly, culminating in Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination by a Jewish extremist on 4 November 1995.

In the 2000s attempts were made to revive the peace process - including in 2003 when a roadmap was devised by world powers with the ultimate goal of a two-state solution, but this was never implemented. Peace efforts finally stalled in 2014, when talks failed between the Israelis and Palestinians in Washington.

The most **recent peace plan - prepared by the US** when Donald Trump was president - was called "the deal of the century" by Prime Minister Netanyahu, but was dismissed by the Palestinians as one-sided and never got off the ground.

WHY ARE ISRAEL AND GAZA AT WAR NOW?



Gaza is ruled by Hamas, an Islamist group which is committed to the destruction of Israel and is designated as a terrorist group by the UK and many other countries.

GETTY Images

Hamas won the Palestinians' last elections in 2006, and seized control of Gaza the following year by ousting the rival Fatah movement of West Bank-based President Mahmoud Abbas.

Since then, militants in Gaza have fought several wars with Israel, which along with Egypt has maintained a partial blockade on the strip to isolate Hamas and try to stop attacks, particularly the indiscriminate firing of rockets towards Israeli cities.

Palestinians in Gaza say Israel's restrictions and its air strikes on heavily populated areas amount to collective punishment.

This year has been the deadliest on record for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, the UN says. Palestinians also complain of the restrictions and military actions being carried out there in response to deadly attacks on Israelis.

These tensions could have been one of the reasons for Hamas's latest attack.

But the militants may also have been seeking to boost their popularity among ordinary Palestinians, including by using hostages to pressure Israel to free some of the estimated 4,500 Palestinians held in its prisons.

WHO SUPPORTS WHO IN THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR?

The US, the European Union and other Western countries have all condemned the Hamas attack on Israel. The US, Israel's closest ally, has over the years given the Jewish state more than \$260bn in military and economic aid, and has promised additional equipment, air defence missiles, guided bombs and ammunition.

- **Where does Israel get its weapons?**

It also sent two aircraft carrier strike groups to the eastern Mediterranean to deter Israel's enemies, particularly Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, from opening a second front in the war.

The US has however criticised Israel over the scale of the Palestinian death toll and sharp differences have emerged between the two allies over the war.

Russia and China have both refused to condemn Hamas, and say they are maintaining contact with both sides in the conflict. Russian President Vladimir Putin has blamed US policy for the absence of peace in the Middle East.

Iran, Israel's arch-enemy, is a key supporter of Hamas, as well as Hezbollah, whose militants have been exchanging fire with Israeli forces almost daily since Hamas's attack.

Questions have been asked about Iran's role in the Hamas' attack, after reports said it gave the go-ahead days before. Tehran has, however, **denied any involvement**.

HAMAS, FATAH SIGN DECLARATION ON PLANS TO SEEK JOINT GOVERNMENT; ISRAEL SLAMS FATAH

China upbeat on agreement made in Beijing, though previous efforts to end rift have failed; Israel's Katz: 'Instead of rejecting terrorism, Abbas embraces the murderers and rapists'

TIMES OF ISRAEL Agencies and TOI Staff 23 July 2024



Moussa Abu Marzouk (R), senior member of the Hamas terror group (R) signs a document as China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi (C) and Mahmoud al-Aloul, Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of Palestinian organization and political party Fatah, look on during the signing of the 'Beijing declaration' at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing on July 23, 2024 (Pedro PARDO / AFP)

The Hamas terror group and the Palestinian Authority's Fatah movement signed a declaration in Beijing on ending a years-long rift, Chinese state media said Tuesday, as the war in Gaza rages on.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who hosted senior Hamas official Moussa Abu Marzouk, Fatah envoy Mahmud al-Aloul and emissaries from 12 other Palestinian groups, said they had agreed to set up an "interim national reconciliation government" to govern postwar Gaza.

The declaration is the result of the latest in a series of talks meant to unite the sides. But previous declarations have failed, including a similar deal in 2011, casting doubt over whether the China-sponsored negotiations will actually lead to a resolution. It also comes as Israel and Hamas are weighing an internationally backed ceasefire proposal that would wind down the nine-month war and potentially free 120 Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

"Today we sign an agreement for national unity and we say that the path to completing this journey is national unity. We are committed to national unity and we call for it," Abu Marzouk said after meeting Wang and the other envoys.

Israel lambasted Fatah for agreeing to reconciliation with the terror group.

"Instead of rejecting terrorism, Mahmoud Abbas embraces the murderers and rapists of Hamas, revealing his true face," Foreign Minister Israel Katz wrote on X, referring to the PA president.

"In reality, this won't happen because Hamas's rule will be crushed, and Abbas will be watching Gaza from afar," he wrote in English. "Israel's security will remain solely in Israel's hands."

The declaration comes as negotiations continue between Israel and Hamas for a hostage-ceasefire deal to end the war in Gaza, which began on October 7 when thousands of Hamas-led terrorists invaded southern Israel from the Gaza Strip, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages.

It is believed that 120 hostages are currently held in Gaza, including the bodies of over 40 confirmed dead by the IDF. A framework endorsed by both sides would see Hamas release the remaining hostages in stages, in exchange for a permanent ceasefire and the release of hundreds of Palestinian security prisoners.

A previous Israel-Hamas deal in November saw 105 civilian hostages released in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian security prisoners, during a weeklong truce.

Since October 7, Hamas officials have said that the group does not want to return to ruling Gaza as it did before the conflict, and have called for the formation of a government of technocrats to be agreed upon by the various Palestinian factions, which would prepare the way for elections in both Gaza and the West Bank with the intention of forming a unified government.

The agreement underscored China's growing role in Middle East diplomacy, after success in the restoration of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Also present at Tuesday's meeting were envoys from Egypt, Algeria and Russia, according to Wang.

A joint statement issued after the most recent talks in Beijing gave no details on how or when a new Palestinian government might be formed, saying only that it would be done "by agreement among the factions."

According to the joint statement, the two groups are committed to the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, which Israel captured from Jordan and Egypt, respectively, in 1967, during the Six Day War.

Fatah and Hamas have been rivals since Hamas violently routed forces loyal to Abbas's Fatah in Gaza in 2007, taking over the coastal enclave.

The deadly internal fighting happened after Hamas won a Palestinian legislative election in 2006, following Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza the previous year.

The Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority, headed by Abbas, administers parts of the West Bank. It is widely viewed by the Palestinian public as corrupt and out of touch, and many resent its security coordination with Israel.

Repeated attempts at mending the rift between Fatah and Hamas have failed, wrecked by the factions' bitter rivalry over power.

US President Joe Biden's administration envisions a revamped Palestinian Authority to rule postwar Gaza and has sought a series of reforms that might make it a viable presence in the war-ravaged territory. Israel has rejected that idea, but has not put forward a credible alternative for who will govern Gaza.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a smaller terror group allied with Hamas, issued a statement Tuesday after the talks saying that it still "rejects any formula that includes recognition of Israel explicitly or implicitly" and that it had "demanded the withdrawal of the Palestine Liberation Organization's recognition of Israel."

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](https://www.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



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.

SEE ALSO



[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.

ISRAEL FACES 'LONG, DIFFICULT WAR' AFTER HAMAS ATTACK FROM GAZA

BBC NEWS Paul Kirby 8 October 2023



Watch:
A day of violence and fear
BBC News

Israel's military has warned that Hamas militants from Gaza are still fighting inside Israel after they infiltrated southern communities and left a reported 300 people dead.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has told Israelis they are going into a "long and difficult war".

Hundreds of gunmen burst into southern Israel, killing soldiers and civilians, and taking into Gaza what the army said was a "significant number" of hostages.

Israel has responded with air strikes.

These have continued on Sunday morning, with the Israeli Air Force saying it was targeting "operational infrastructure" in Gaza.

The Israeli military also carried out artillery strikes in southern Lebanon after mortars were fired from there towards Israeli positions in the disputed Mount Dov/Shebaa Farms area.

Lebanon's militant Hezbollah movement claimed it had carried out the attack "in solidarity with the Palestinian resistance".

More than 300 people have been killed by Israeli strikes in Gaza since Palestinian militants infiltrated Israel from Gaza on Saturday morning, according to Palestinian health officials.

Gazans received Israeli text messages overnight telling them to leave their homes and move to city centres or take refuge in shelters.

The Israeli prime minister said in an overnight message that the war had been "forced on us by a murderous attack by Hamas", and the first stage would end in the coming hours when most of the militants on Israeli territory had been wiped out. Israel would restore security to its citizens and win, he added.

The Israeli government also said it would cut off electricity, fuel and goods supplies to Gaza.

Israel's nightmare scenario - armed Palestinian militants at large in the south of the country - began early on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath and festival of Simchat Torah.

Gunmen cut through the Gaza perimeter fence, storming into Israel on motorbikes, paragliders and by sea. The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) spokesman said they numbered in the high hundreds, while more than 3,000 rockets were fired across Israel across the day.

"They attacked dozens of Israeli communities and IDF bases and went door to door, house to house," said Lt Col Jonathan Conricus.

"They executed Israeli civilians in cold blood in their homes and then continued to drag into Gaza Israeli civilians and military personnel. I'm talking women, children, elderly, disabled."

Distressing videos emerged of Israeli civilians running for their lives from a festival in the desert, and of women being bundled into vehicles and kidnapped.

Media caption,

Watch: Party-goers recall militant attack

Israelis rang into news channels saying they were hiding in their homes and scared for their lives. The town of Netiv HaAsara said 15 of its residents were shot dead by Hamas militants.

In the town of Sderot, a resident called Shlomi described seeing a "sea of bodies, inside Sderot along the road".

MORE ON ISRAEL-GAZA ATTACKS

- Follow LIVE: [Latest updates](#)
 - Hostages: [What we know about Israelis taken by Hamas](#)
 - Analysis: [Israel blindsided, says Jeremy Bowen](#)
 - Explained: [What's going on in Gaza and Israel, and why now?](#)
-

Gradually the Israeli military began to reassert control over most of the southern communities. Hostages held in a dining room in Kibbutz Be'eri were eventually freed after 18 hours, Israeli media reported. Shortly afterwards further reports said troops had freed hostages in the town of Ofakim and the attackers holding them had been killed.

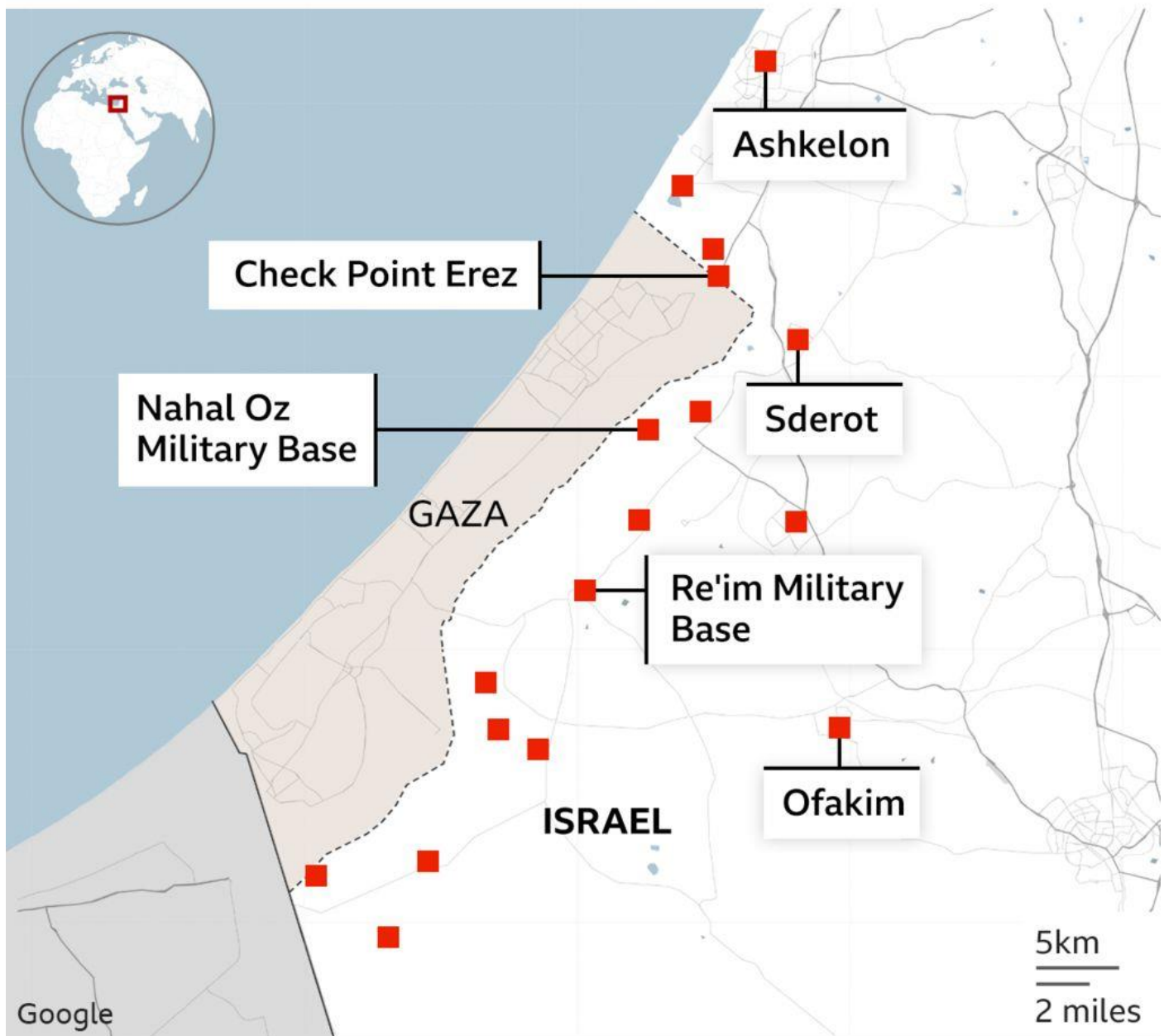
US President Joe Biden spoke of America's "rock-solid and unwavering" support for Israel which was "under attack orchestrated by a terrorist organisation".

Hamas's military wing said the number of Israelis captured was several times greater than dozens and they included senior military officers.

By the end of Saturday, more than 1,500 people had been wounded in Gaza and 1,500 more in Israel, officials said.

The army said Hamas's unprecedented level of violence would be met with an unprecedented response. Tens of thousands of reservists have been mobilised and are now expected to launch a ground operation in Gaza.

Palestinian infiltrations near the Gaza strip



B B C

On Saturday Israeli strikes destroyed the 11-storey Palestine Tower in downtown Gaza City, which houses Hamas radio stations in the rooftop.

The Israeli air force said it struck "military infrastructure in two multi-storey buildings used by senior Hamas terrorist operatives for carrying out terrorist activity", and that it had warned occupants to evacuate before the attack.

- **Bowen: Israel blindsided by most serious attack in a generation**
- **How did Israeli intelligence fail to stop major attack?**

There was also violence in several locations in the West Bank on Saturday. Palestinian medics reported that six Palestinians were shot dead during confrontations with Israeli forces.

Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif called on Palestinians everywhere to join the group's operation.

"We have decided to put an end to these Israeli offences with God's help, so the enemy understands that the time of wreaking havoc without being held accountable is over," he said.

Ismail Haniyeh, the leader-in-exile of Hamas, claimed that Palestinian factions intended to expand the violence to the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem.

Ghazi Hamad, a Hamas spokesman, meanwhile told the BBC that the group had direct backing for the attack from Iran.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas - a political rival of Hamas - said the Palestinian people had the right to defend themselves against the "terror of settlers and occupation troops".

There has been strong international condemnation of the Hamas attacks.

UN Secretary General António Guterres said he was "appalled by reports that civilians have been attacked and abducted from their own homes", while the UK's Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly, said it "unequivocally condemns the horrific attacks by Hamas on Israeli civilians".

However Saudi Arabia called for an immediate halt to the escalation, saying it had warned repeatedly about the dangers stemming from "continued occupation" and "the deprivation of the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights".

PART H

GAZA AND HAMAS

GAZA STRIP

BRITANNICA



Gaza Strip, territory occupying 140 square miles (363 square km) along the [Mediterranean Sea](#) just northeast of the [Sinai Peninsula](#). The Gaza Strip is unusual in being a densely settled area not recognized as a [de jure](#) part of any [extant](#) country. The first accurate census, conducted in September 1967, showed a population smaller than had previously been estimated by the [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East](#) (UNRWA) or by [Egypt](#), with nearly half of the people living in refugee camps. Pop. (2017) 1,899,291; (2023 est.) 2,226,544.

GEOGRAPHY

Arabic Qitāʿ Ghazzah Hebrew: Rezuʿat ʿAzza Population: (2024 est.) 2,229,0

Official Name(S): Gaza Strip; Qitāʿ Ghazzah (Arabic); Rezuʿat ʿAzza (Hebrew)

Total Area (Sq Km): 365 Total Area (Sq Mi): 141

[See all facts & stats →](#)

The Gaza Strip is situated on a relatively flat coastal plain. Temperatures average in the mid-50s F (about 13 °C) in the winter and in the upper 70s to low 80s F (mid- to upper 20s C) in summer. The area receives an average of about 12 inches (300 mm) of precipitation annually.

Living conditions in the Gaza Strip are typically poor for a number of reasons: the region's [dense](#) and rapidly increasing population (the area's growth rate is one of the highest in the world); inadequate water, sewage, and electrical services; high rates of unemployment; and, from September 2007, sanctions imposed by [Israel](#) on the region.

Agriculture is the economic mainstay of the employed population, and nearly three-fourths of the land area is under cultivation. The chief crop, citrus fruit, is raised on irrigated lands and is exported to Europe and other markets under arrangement with Israel. Truck crops, wheat, and olives also are produced. Light industry and handicrafts are centred in [Gaza](#), the chief city of the area.

In politically stable times, as much as one-tenth of the Palestinian population travels daily to Israel (where they are not allowed to stay overnight) to work in menial jobs. Political tension and outbreaks of violence often led Israeli authorities to close the border for extended periods, putting many Palestinians out of work. As a result, a thriving smuggling industry emerged, based on a network of subterranean tunnels linking parts of the Gaza Strip with neighbouring Egypt. The tunnels provided Palestinians with access to goods such as food, fuel, medicine, electronics, and weapons.

HISTORY

Occupation

After rule by the [Ottoman Empire](#) ended there in [World War I](#) (1914–18), the Gaza area became part of the [League of Nations mandate](#) of [Palestine](#) under British rule. Before this mandate ended, the General Assembly of the [United Nations](#) (UN) in November 1947 accepted a plan for the Arab-Jewish partition of Palestine under which the town of [Gaza](#) and an area of surrounding territory were to be allotted to the Arabs. The British mandate ended on May 15, 1948, and on that same day the first [Arab-Israeli war](#) began. [Egyptian](#) forces soon entered the town of Gaza, which became the headquarters of the Egyptian expeditionary force in Palestine. As a result of heavy fighting in autumn 1948, the area around the town under [Arab](#) occupation was reduced to a strip of territory 25 miles (40 km) long and 4–5 miles (6–8 km) wide. This area became known as the Gaza Strip. Its boundaries were demarcated in the Egyptian-Israeli armistice agreement of February 24, 1949.

The Gaza Strip was under Egyptian [military rule](#) from 1949 to 1956 and again from 1957 to 1967.

From the beginning, the area's chief economic and [social problem](#) was the presence of large numbers of Palestinian Arab [refugees](#) living in extreme poverty in squalid camps. The Egyptian government did not consider the area part of Egypt and did not allow the refugees to become Egyptian citizens or to migrate to Egypt or to other Arab countries where they might be [integrated](#) into the population. Israel did not allow them to return to their former homes or to receive compensation for their loss of property. The refugees were maintained largely through the aid of the [UNRWA](#). Many of the younger refugees became fedayeen (Arab guerrillas operating against Israel); their attacks on Israel were one of the causes precipitating the Sinai campaign during the [Suez Crisis](#) of 1956, when the strip was taken by [Israel](#). The strip reverted to Egyptian control in 1957 following strong international pressures on Israel.

In the [Six-Day War](#) of June 1967, the Gaza Strip was again taken by Israel, which occupied the region for the next quarter century. In December 1987 rioting and violent street clashes between Gaza's Palestinians and occupying Israeli troops marked the birth of an uprising that came to be known as the [intifada](#) (Arabic *intifāḍah*, "shaking off"). In 1994 Israel began a phased transfer of governmental authority in the Gaza Strip to the [Palestinian Authority](#) (PA) under the terms of the [Oslo Accords](#) that were signed by Israel and the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO). The [fledgling](#) Palestinian government, led by [Yasser Arafat](#), struggled with such problems as a stagnant economy, divided popular support, stalled negotiations with Israel over further troop withdrawals and territoriality, and the threat of terrorism from militant Muslim groups such as [Islamic Jihad](#) and [Hamas](#), which refused to compromise with Israel and were intent on derailing the peace process. Beginning in late 2000, a breakdown in negotiations between the PA and Israel was followed by a further, more extreme outbreak of violence, termed the [second, or Aqsā, intifada](#). In an effort to end the fighting, Israeli Prime Minister [Ariel Sharon](#) announced in late 2003 a plan that centred on [withdrawing](#) Israeli soldiers and settlers from the Gaza Strip (see [Israel's disengagement from Gaza](#)). In September 2005 Israel completed the pullout from the territory, and control of the Gaza Strip was transferred to the PA, although Israel continued to patrol its borders and airspace.

UNDER HAMAS'S GOVERNANCE

In the 2006 PA parliamentary elections, [Fatah](#)—which had dominated Palestinian politics since its founding in the 1950s—suffered a decisive loss to [Hamas](#), reflecting years of dissatisfaction with Fatah's governance, which was criticized as corrupt and inefficient. Hamas's victory prompted sanctions by Israel, the [United States](#), and the [European Union](#), each of which had placed the organization on its official list of terrorist groups. The Gaza Strip was the site of escalating violence between the competing groups, and a short-lived [coalition government](#) was ended in June 2007 after Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip and a Fatah-led emergency cabinet took control of the [West Bank](#). Despite calls by PA Pres. [Mahmoud Abbas](#) for Hamas to relinquish its position in the Gaza Strip, the territory remained under Hamas's control.

ATTEMPTS AT RECONCILIATION WITH FATAH

A number of attempts were made to [reconcile](#) with the Fatah-led PA. An initial deal was reached in 2011 but did not bring about much change. A new deal was achieved in 2014, in which Hamas agreed to hand over administration of the Gaza Strip to the PA and recognize the prime ministership of [Rami Hamdallah](#). As such, the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip resigned, including the [prime minister](#), [Ismail Haniyeh](#).

The PA was not allowed to resume control of public institutions in the Gaza Strip until late 2017, however, after implementation of a new agreement. The PA failed to gain full governance in the area, though, and decided to cut funding to the Gaza Strip in 2018. As disagreements continued to [escalate](#), the PA ceased operating the [Rafah](#) border crossing with Egypt in January 2019. Later that month Hamdallah resigned, ending the unity government.

BLOCKADE OF GAZA STRIP

In autumn 2007 [Israel](#) declared the [Gaza](#) Strip under [Hamas](#) a hostile entity and approved a series of sanctions that included power cuts, heavily restricted imports, and border closures. In January 2008, facing sustained rocket assaults into its southern settlements, Israel broadened its sanctions, completely sealing its border with the Gaza Strip and temporarily preventing fuel imports. Later that month, after nearly a week of the intensified Israeli blockade, Hamas's forces demolished portions of the barrier along the Gaza Strip–Egypt border (closed from Hamas's mid-2007 takeover until 2011), opening gaps through which, according to some estimates, hundreds of thousands of Gazans passed into Egypt to purchase food, fuel, and goods unavailable under the blockade. Egyptian Pres. [Hosni Mubarak](#) temporarily permitted the [breach](#) to [alleviate](#) civilian hardship in Gaza before efforts could begin to restore the border.

In the years after the Israeli blockade on Gaza was instated, an organization known as the Free Gaza Movement made a number of maritime efforts to breach it. The first such mission—which consisted of a pair of vessels bearing medical supplies and some 45 activists—was permitted to reach Gaza in August 2008, and four missions in subsequent months were also successful. In May 2010 a flotilla bound for Gaza was the scene of a clash between activists and Israeli commandos in which 9 of the more than 600 activists involved were killed.



[Rapha Border Crossing](#)

Civilians crossing into Egypt from the Gaza Strip during the Israel-Hamas War through the Rafah border crossing, December 20, 2023

Under Mubarak, Egypt's cooperation in enforcing the blockade was deeply unpopular with the Egyptian public. In May 2011, four months after a [popular uprising in Egypt](#) forced Mubarak to step down as president, Egypt's [interim](#) government announced that it would permanently reopen the [Rafah](#) border crossing, allowing Palestinians to pass between Egypt and Gaza. About 1,200 people were allowed to cross the border daily, though it remained closed for trade. However, in the turmoil following the ouster of Egyptian Pres. [Mohamed Morsi](#) in the summer of 2013, traffic through the border crossing was reduced to 50 people per day because of security concerns and was later closed altogether.

After the [PA](#) took control of the Rafah border crossing in late 2017, Egypt began allowing 200 people per day to cross the border in May 2018. The border was closed briefly after the PA quit the Gaza Strip in

January 2019, but it was reopened weeks later by Hamas. During this rare and prolonged easing of the border, tens of thousands of Gazans were reported to have permanently emigrated from the Gaza Strip. After months of violence between Israel and Hamas in mid-2018, Israel began to ease restrictions on its blockade as a part of an effort to incentivize a more long-term cease-fire agreement between the two. In 2019 Israel allowed the flow of additional goods into and out of the territory, expanded the permitted fishing zone for Gazans to its largest extent in more than a decade, and began allowing thousands of Gazans to cross the border to work in Israel.

[Qatar](#), meanwhile, began offering tens of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip at the end of 2018, after both Israel and Egypt agreed to allow the aid. By 2021 it had disbursed nearly \$400 million to the territory.

CONFLICT WITH ISRAEL

In June 2008, after months of back-and-forth strikes and incursions, Israel and Hamas agreed to [implement](#) a truce scheduled to last six months. However, this was threatened shortly thereafter as each accused the other of violations, which escalated in the last months of the agreement. When the truce officially expired on December 19, Hamas announced that it did not intend to extend it. Broader hostilities erupted shortly thereafter as Israel, responding to sustained rocket fire, mounted a series of air strikes across the region—among the strongest in years—meant to target Hamas. After a week of air strikes, Israeli forces [initiated a ground campaign](#) into the Gaza Strip amid calls from the international [community](#) for a cease-fire. Following more than three weeks of hostilities—in which perhaps more than 1,000 were killed and tens of thousands were left homeless—Israel and Hamas each declared a unilateral cease-fire.

Beginning on November 14, 2012, Israel launched a series of air strikes in Gaza, in response to an increase in the number of rockets fired from Gaza into Israeli territory over the previous nine months. The head of the military wing of Hamas, Ahmed Said Khalil al-Jabari, was killed in the initial strike. Hamas retaliated with increasing rocket attacks on Israel, and fighting continued until the two sides reached a cease-fire agreement on November 21.

In June 2014 three Israeli teenagers were kidnapped; Israel conducted a massive crackdown in the [West Bank](#) and increased air strikes in the Gaza Strip, prompting retaliatory rocket fire from Hamas. As fighting continued to [escalate](#), Israel launched a 50-day offensive into the Gaza Strip on July 8. Some 2,100 Palestinians and more than 70 Israelis were killed in the ensuing conflict, with about 5,000 targets hit in the Gaza Strip. Despite the devastation, Hamas's handling of the conflict was viewed positively by Palestinians and boosted the group's popularity.

In the spring of 2018 a series of protests along the border with Israel, which included attempts to cross the border and flying flaming kites, was met with a violent response from Israel. Both the protests and the violence reached a peak on May 14 when about 40,000 Gazans [attended](#) the protests. When many of them tried to cross the border at once, Israeli troops opened fire, killing about 60 people and wounding 2,700 others. The violence escalated into military strikes from Israel and rocket fire from Hamas and continued for several months.

Amid the occasional skirmishes, and as Egypt tried to mediate a long-term truce between them, Israel and Hamas appeared to make some effort to de-escalate tense situations. In October, when rocket fire from the Gaza Strip hit Israel, Israel concluded that the rockets had been set off by a lightning strike. In November a [covert](#) Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip was exposed, and Hamas responded by firing hundreds of rockets into Israel. Israel retaliated with more than 100 air strikes. The two sides quickly agreed to a truce, however, and, throughout 2019 and into 2020, they continued to negotiate a long-term “understanding” for the maintenance of peace and easing of the blockade. The discussions, though occasionally interrupted by brief outbreaks of tit-for-tat violence, were reinforced by halted border protests and a loosening of the restrictions on trade and travel through the Gaza border.

A major escalation took place in May 2021. Weeks of simmering [tensions](#) in Jerusalem boiled over when Israel’s Supreme Court was set to rule on the eviction of dozens of Palestinian residents in the Jerusalem neighbourhood of [Sheikh Jarrah](#). Confrontations between Israeli police and Palestinian demonstrators prompted Hamas to launch rockets into Jerusalem and parts of southern Israel; Israel responded with air strikes in the Gaza Strip.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a coordinated land, sea, and air assault that took Israel by surprise. At least 1,200 Israelis were killed in the attacks—the deadliest day for Israel since its independence—and about 240 were taken hostage. Israel’s response led to hundreds of deaths in the Gaza Strip on that same day. On the following day, Israel declared war for the first time since the [Yom Kippur War](#) in 1973.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GAZA'S 75 YEARS OF WOE

REUTERS Writing by Stephen Farrell, Nidal al-Mughrabi and Rosalba O'Brien; Editing by Chris Reese
October 11 2023

Gaza is a coastal strip of land that lay on ancient trading and maritime routes along the Mediterranean shore. Held by the Ottoman Empire until 1917, it passed from British to Egyptian to Israeli military rule over the last century and is now a [fenced-in enclave, opens new tab](#) inhabited by over 2 million Palestinians. Here are some of the major milestones in its recent history.

1948 - End of British rule

As British colonial rule came to an end in Palestine in the late 1940s, violence intensified between Jews and Arabs, culminating in war between the newly created State of Israel and its Arab neighbors in May **1948**.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians took refuge in Gaza after fleeing or being driven from their homes. The invading Egyptian army had seized a narrow coastal strip 25 miles (40 km) long, which ran from the Sinai to just south of Ashkelon. The influx of refugees saw Gaza's population triple to around 200,000.

1950s & 1960s - Egyptian military rule

Egypt held the Gaza Strip for two decades under a military governor, allowing Palestinians to work and study in Egypt. Armed Palestinian "fedayeen," many of them refugees, mounted attacks into Israel, drawing reprisals.

The United Nations set up a refugee agency, UNRWA, which today provides services for 1.6 million registered Palestine refugees in Gaza, as well as for Palestinians in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank.

1967 - War and Israeli military occupation

Israel captured the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Middle East war. An Israeli census that year put Gaza's population at 394,000, at least 60% of them refugees.

Destroyed Egyptian armour lines the sides of a Sinai road after it was hit by Israeli jet fighters

With the Egyptians gone, many Gazan workers took jobs in the agriculture, construction and services industries inside Israel, to which they could gain easy access at that time. Israeli troops remained to administer the territory and to guard the settlements that Israel built in the following decades. These became a source of growing Palestinian resentment.

1987 - First Palestinian uprising. Hamas formed

Twenty years after the 1967 war, Palestinians launched their first intifada, or uprising. It began in December 1987 after a traffic accident in which an Israeli truck crashed into a vehicle carrying Palestinian workers in Gaza's Jabalya refugee camp, killing four. Stone-throwing protests, strikes and shutdowns followed.

Seizing the angry mood, the Egypt-based Muslim Brotherhood created an armed Palestinian branch, Hamas, with its power base in Gaza. Hamas, dedicated to Israel's destruction and restoration of Islamic rule in what it saw as occupied Palestine, became a rival to Yasser Arafat's secular Fatah party that led the Palestine Liberation Organization.

1993 - The Oslo Accords, and Palestinian semi-autonomy

Israel and the Palestinians signed an historic peace accord in 1993 that led to the creation of the Palestinian Authority. Under the interim deal, Palestinians were first given limited control in Gaza, and Jericho in the West Bank. Arafat returned to Gaza after decades in exile.

The Oslo process gave the newly created Palestinian Authority some autonomy, and envisaged statehood after five years. But that never happened. Israel accused the Palestinians of reneging on security agreements, and Palestinians were angered by continued Israeli settlement building.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad carried out bombings to try to derail the peace process, leading Israel to impose more restrictions on movement of Palestinians out of Gaza. Hamas also picked up on growing Palestinian criticisms of corruption, nepotism and economic mismanagement by Arafat's inner circle.

2000 - Second Palestinian intifada

In 2000, Israeli-Palestinian relations sank to a new low with the outbreak of the second Palestinian intifada. It ushered in a period of suicide bombings and shooting attacks by Palestinians, and Israeli air strikes, demolitions, no-go zones and curfews.

Palestinian police exchange fire with Israeli soldiers during clashes near Netzreem Jewish settlement in Gaza Strip,

One casualty was Gaza International Airport, a symbol of thwarted Palestinian hopes for economic independence and the Palestinians' only direct link to the outside world that was not controlled by Israel or Egypt. Opened in 1998, Israel deemed it a security threat and destroyed its radar antenna and runway a few months after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

Another casualty was Gaza's fishing industry, a source of income for tens of thousands. Gaza's fishing zone was reduced by Israel, a restriction it said was necessary to stop boats smuggling weapons.

2005 - Israel evacuates its Gaza settlements

In August 2005 Israel evacuated all its troops and settlers from Gaza, which was by then completely fenced off from the outside world by Israel.

Palestinians tore down the abandoned buildings and infrastructure for scrap. The settlements' removal led to greater freedom of movement within Gaza, and a "tunnel economy" boomed as armed groups, smugglers and entrepreneurs quickly dug scores of tunnels into Egypt.

But the pullout also removed settlement factories, greenhouses and workshops that had employed some Gazans.

2006 - Isolation under Hamas

In 2006, Hamas scored a surprise victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections and then seized full control of Gaza, overthrowing forces loyal to Arafat's successor, President Mahmoud Abbas.

Much of the international community cut aid to the Palestinians in Hamas-controlled areas because they regarded Hamas as a terrorist organization.

Israel stopped tens of thousands of Palestinian workers from entering the country, cutting off an important source of income. Israeli air strikes crippled Gaza's only electrical power plant, causing widespread blackouts. Citing security concerns, Israel and Egypt also imposed tighter restrictions on the movement of people and goods through the Gaza crossings.

Ambitious Hamas plans to refocus Gaza's economy east, away from Israel, foundered before they even started.

Viewing Hamas as a threat, Egypt's military-backed leader Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who took power in 2014, closed the border with Gaza and blew up most of the tunnels. Once again isolated, Gaza's economy went into reverse.

CONFLICT CYCLE

Gaza's economy has suffered repeatedly in the cycle of conflict, attack and retaliation between Israel and Palestinian militant groups.

Before 2023, some of the worst fighting was in 2014, when Hamas and other groups launched rockets at heartland cities in Israel. Israel carried out air strikes and artillery bombardment that devastated neighbourhoods in Gaza. More than 2,100 Palestinians were killed, mostly civilians. Israel put the number of its dead at 67 soldiers and six civilians.

2023 - Surprise attack

While Israel was led to believe it was containing a war-weary Hamas by providing economic incentives to Gazan workers, the group's [fighters were being trained](#) and drilled in secret.

On Oct.7, Hamas gunmen launched a surprise attack on Israel, rampaging through towns, killing hundreds, and taking dozens of hostages back to Gaza. [Israel took revenge](#), hammering Gaza with air strikes and razing entire districts in some of the worst blood-letting in the 75 years of conflict.

Get the latest news and expert analysis about the state of the global economy with Reuters Econ World. Sign up [here](#).

HASSAN AL-BANNA, FOUNDER OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AND THE IRREDENTIST DEMAND THAT ISRAEL BE DESTROYED

Progressive western historians have a marked tendency to ignore the millennium and a half-long history of [Islamic and Arab imperialism](#).

This spread through the imposition of the Arabic language.

The core of the Arab-Muslim irredentist demand that Israel be destroyed is a direct expression of this imperialist Islam from its first century, argues Richard Landes in [Fathom](#):

[POINT OF NO RETURN](#) [bataween](#) 28 July 2024



*Hassan al-Banna,
founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.
He planned to revive true Islam*

“The reason why the Arab world, and the Muslim-Arab world in particular, find Israel categorically unacceptable goes back to the doctrine of *Dar al-Harb*, *Dar al-Islam*. *The land between the river and sea became a key part of the exploding Arab-Muslim empire – Dar al-Islam – in the 7th century*. Fast forward some 14 centuries, and the dissolution of the Caliphate in 1924 (the first ‘*Nakba*’) put an end to *Dar al-Islam* formally. In the eyes of the West, Islam, the millennia-long foe, had been put in its place.

But this triumphalist vision of a world ultimately entirely submitted to Allah (through Islam) lived on, taking on a more modern form, more powerful and effective than the Ottoman basket case. Hassan al-Banna formed the Muslim Brotherhood (1927), a multi-generational plan to revive true Islam, fight the forces of secular modernity making inroads in the Arab world whose progress al-Banna saw as a regression to the ‘*Jahaliyya*,’ i.e. the ‘Ignorance’ of the pre-Islamic Arab world. He sought a long-term, multi-generational goal of a new salvific and eventually global Caliphate in which Muslims ruled according to Sharia: Where there was *Dar al-Harb*, there shall be *Dar al-Islam*.

For al-Banna, his triumphalist followers and sympathisers, the demotion of Islam in the eyes of the nations that had occurred through the military and cultural success of Western imperial-colonialists, threatened the very religion itself: ‘[a declaration of war on all shapes of Islam](#).’ For them, Islam must dominate. Few forces today that seek global hegemony are so open about their imperial ambitions.

In the minds of supremacists like al-Banna, therefore, the creation of Israel was a further catastrophe in this long war on Islam, the loss of territory in the heart of what was *and should be* dar al-Islam, and a denial of

Muslim imperial claims. The core of the Arab-Muslim irredentist demand that Israel be destroyed, is a direct expression of this imperialist Islam from its first century. Free infidels are anathema to Islam's triumphalist sovereignty. 'We cannot concede a grain of sand to Jews.' For Abul A'la al-Maududi, the most systematic thinker of modern Islam explained, Jews must exist in the state of submission. 'The purpose for which the Muslims are required to fight is ... to put an end to their sovereignty and supremacy.'^[1] To have the dissolution of the Caliphate followed two decades later by a *Jewish* state in the heart of what should be Dar al-Islam was a continuation of the same war 'against all shapes of Islam.' For triumphalist Muslims like al-Banna, Islam *necessitated* dominion. Its demotion on the world stage was an existential threat. Hence, losing the battle with the Jews threatened to be an unmitigated disaster, utter humiliation on a global scale in response to which, in complete confidence in their impending victory, the Arab League [promised historic massacres](#). To lose would fatally wound triumphalist Islam's need for visible dominion. To Muslims such as these, Israel was a blasphemy against the Prophet (PBUH). An intolerable degradation. Another *nakba*. Indeed, The Muslim Brotherhood, initially a weak movement, only came into its own in the fight against Zionism.^[2]

This hard zero-sum mentality – if you win (anything) I lose; in order for me to win you must lose (everything) – has characterised one of the dominant currents in Arab attitudes towards Jews in the modern period.”

WHAT IS DAR AL-ISLAM (FROM CHATGPT - AI)

Dar al-Islam (Arabic: دار الإسلام) is a classical Islamic legal and theological concept that refers to territories where Islam is the dominant religion and where Islamic law, or **Sharia**, prevails. It has played a crucial role in the development of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), as well as in political and social theory within the Islamic world.

The term "Dar al-Islam" can be understood by breaking down its two key components:

1. **Dar:** This means "house" or "abode" in Arabic.
2. **Islam:** Refers to the religion of Islam, encompassing both the faith and its legal and social system, particularly Sharia law.

Historical and Classical Significance

In Islamic jurisprudence, particularly during the **classical period** (7th to 15th centuries), Muslim scholars used Dar al-Islam to distinguish areas that were governed by Islamic law from those that were not. Its counterpart is **Dar al-Harb** (the Abode of War), which describes territories not ruled by Muslims and where Islamic law does not apply.

Islamic scholars from different schools of thought generally agreed on the following characteristics of Dar al-Islam:

1. **Governance by Sharia:** A territory is considered Dar al-Islam if it is governed by a Muslim ruler or government that applies Sharia law as the foundation of governance.
2. **Religious Freedom for Muslims:** In Dar al-Islam, Muslims are free to practice their religion openly and are guaranteed protection under Islamic governance. This includes public worship, religious education, and the observance of Islamic practices.

3. **Protection of Non-Muslims (Dhimmi):** Non-Muslim residents, especially Christians and Jews (referred to as **dhimmis**), are granted protection under the governance of Dar al-Islam as long as they agree to certain conditions, such as paying the **jizya** (a tax for non-Muslims). They are free to practice their own religions under these terms.
4. **Security and Military Defense:** Historically, Dar al-Islam was seen as a place that offered security and protection for Muslims against external threats. Islamic governments were responsible for defending their lands from non-Muslim forces, whether they were local threats or foreign invaders.
5. **Territorial Expansion:** During the early centuries of Islamic expansion (7th–9th centuries), the concept of Dar al-Islam motivated the spread of Islam into new territories. As Muslim empires grew, particularly under the Rashidun, Umayyad, and Abbasid Caliphates, newly conquered lands were considered part of Dar al-Islam once Islamic law was established.

Modern Interpretations of Dar al-Islam

In modern times, the concept of Dar al-Islam has evolved. Today, Islamic scholars and political thinkers are divided over how relevant or applicable the distinction between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb is in contemporary geopolitics. Modern nation-states, international law, and the concept of sovereignty have complicated traditional classifications. However, in certain religious, academic, and political contexts, Dar al-Islam retains significance.

Key Views in Modern Contexts:

1. **Traditionalist View:** Some scholars continue to uphold the classical distinction between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb. In this view, territories that apply Islamic law or are governed by Muslims are still considered part of Dar al-Islam. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, and historically the Ottoman Empire were often regarded as part of Dar al-Islam because they applied Islamic law at various levels of governance.
2. **Reformist View:** Others argue that the traditional concept is outdated in a world of nation-states, international law, and globalization. They claim that Muslims can live and practice Islam in non-Muslim-majority countries without conflict. In this sense, the boundaries between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb are blurred or irrelevant. Some reformers assert that peaceful coexistence with non-Muslims in pluralistic societies should be a priority.
3. **Islamist Movements:** For some Islamist movements, like **Hamas** or the **Taliban**, Dar al-Islam remains a critical ideological concept. They seek to establish Islamic states in specific territories by applying Sharia law, often through political struggle or armed resistance. For these groups, reclaiming or establishing Dar al-Islam means liberating lands that they view as rightfully belonging to the Muslim community from non-Muslim rule or secular governance. This is a motivating factor for resistance against Israel (in the case of Hamas) or against foreign influence (in the case of the Taliban).
4. **Non-Territorial Dar al-Islam:** In some contemporary theological interpretations, the notion of Dar al-Islam is no longer tied to geography but is seen more as a spiritual or legal state of affairs. Some scholars suggest that Dar al-Islam can exist wherever Muslims can freely practice their religion,

even in secular or non-Muslim countries. This approach aligns with more pluralistic and globalized understandings of Islam.

Dar al-Islam in Practice

Historically, the **Islamic Caliphate** represented the largest and most prominent manifestation of Dar al-Islam. Under the Abbasid Caliphate, for example, territories spanning from Spain to India were part of Dar al-Islam. These regions were united under Islamic law, and Muslims could travel, trade, and practice their religion freely across these lands.

However, over time, as Muslim empires fragmented and colonialism divided the Islamic world, the political and territorial unity of Dar al-Islam weakened. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century, which had been the last major caliphate, marked a significant end to the historical concept of Dar al-Islam as a political entity.

Contrasting Terms

To fully understand Dar al-Islam, it is important to know the contrasting terms:

1. **Dar al-Harb** (The Abode of War): Refers to territories not governed by Muslims, where Islamic law is not in force, and where Muslims might face hostility or persecution.
2. **Dar al-Sulh** or **Dar al-Ahd** (The Abode of Treaty): This term refers to non-Muslim lands with which Muslim territories have a peace treaty. These areas are neither Dar al-Islam nor Dar al-Harb but are in a state of peaceful coexistence.
3. **Dar al-Kufr** (The Abode of Disbelief): Sometimes used to describe non-Muslim lands that are not necessarily hostile but where Islamic law does not govern.

Conclusion

The concept of Dar al-Islam has been central to Islamic thought, defining the relationship between Islamic governance, law, and society. While its application and relevance have evolved over time, it remains a key framework in understanding historical Islamic civilization and certain modern political ideologies. Its interpretation varies, from a geographical reality to a more abstract or spiritual idea, reflecting the diversity of perspectives within the Muslim world.

WHAT IS DAR AL-ISLAM TO HAMAS (FROM CHATGPT - AI)

For Hamas, Dar al-Islam plays a central role in their religious, political, and ideological worldview. Hamas is an Islamist Palestinian militant organization and political party that was founded in 1987 as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood. Its core objective is the establishment of an Islamic state in the historic land of Palestine, which it views as part of Dar al-Islam. The group sees the territory as a sacred Islamic land that must be governed by Islamic law (Sharia) and liberated from Israeli control, which they view as an occupation of Muslim land.

Key Aspects of Dar al-Islam to Hamas:

1. **Islamic Sovereignty** Over Palestine: Hamas believes that all of Palestine, including present-day Israel, is Islamic land, part of Dar al-Islam, and must be ruled according to Islamic principles. They reject any Jewish sovereignty over the land, which they view as an occupation that must be resisted.

2. **Religious Obligation of Jihad:** Hamas sees the liberation of Palestine as a religious duty, grounded in their interpretation of jihad (struggle) against non-Muslim rule. In their view, since Palestine is part of Dar al-Islam, its occupation by Israel constitutes an attack on Islamic territory, justifying armed resistance. The group's Charter (1988) emphasizes this religious obligation, tying the conflict to a broader vision of Islamic governance.
3. **Political and Religious Unity:** For Hamas, Dar al-Islam represents not only a political goal but also the religious unity of the Muslim community (Ummah) under Islamic rule. They reject secular or nationalist frameworks for governing Palestine, opposing groups like Fatah, which pursue a more secular approach to Palestinian statehood.
4. **Opposition to Peace with Israel:** Hamas opposes permanent peace agreements or recognition of Israel's right to exist, as they view any concession of land that they consider part of Dar al-Islam to be illegitimate. This ideological stance is a major reason for their rejection of the Oslo Accords and other peace initiatives that involve compromises over land.
5. **Implementation of Sharia:** Hamas seeks to establish a state in which Sharia law governs all aspects of life, including legal, political, and social systems. They view the establishment of such a state in Palestine as fulfilling the requirement of Dar al-Islam, ensuring that the land is ruled in accordance with God's will.

Conclusion:

For Hamas, Dar al-Islam is not just a religious concept but a political framework that shapes their vision for the future of Palestine. They believe the land is part of the Islamic realm and must be governed by Sharia law, rejecting secular governance and opposing Israel's existence. This vision drives both their political strategy and their justification for armed resistance against Israel.

THE ENDURING LEGACY OF ISLAMIC IMPERIALISM

HAMAS: THE PALESTINIAN MILITANT GROUP THAT RULES GAZA

[BBC 1 July 2021](#)



**Hamas was formed in 1988
after the outbreak of the first
Palestinian uprising**

Anadolu Agency

HAMAS IS THE LARGEST OF SEVERAL PALESTINIAN MILITANT ISLAMIST GROUPS.

Its name is an Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, originating as it did in 1988 after the beginning of the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising, against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Under its charter, it is committed to the destruction of Israel.

Hamas originally had a dual purpose of carrying out an armed struggle against Israel - led by its military wing, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades - and delivering social welfare programmes.



**Hamas set up the
Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades
to pursue its political goals
militarily**

AFP

But since 2005, when Israel withdrew its troops and settlers from Gaza, Hamas has also engaged in the Palestinian political process. It won the legislative elections in 2006, before reinforcing its power in Gaza the following year by ousting the rival Fatah movement of President Mahmoud Abbas.

Since then, militants in Gaza have fought four major conflicts with Israel, which along with Egypt has maintained a blockade on the strip to isolate Hamas and to pressure it to stop attacks.

Hamas as a whole, or in some cases its military wing, is designated a terrorist group by Israel, the United States, European Union and United Kingdom, as well as other powers.

SUICIDE BOMBINGS

Hamas came to prominence after the first intifada as the main Palestinian group opposed to the Oslo peace accords signed in the early 1990s between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the body representing most Palestinians.

Despite numerous Israeli operations against it and clampdowns by the Palestinian Authority (the main governing body of the Palestinians) Hamas found it had an effective power of veto over the process by launching suicide attacks.



**Hamas has carried out
multiple deadly bus bombings
in Israel**

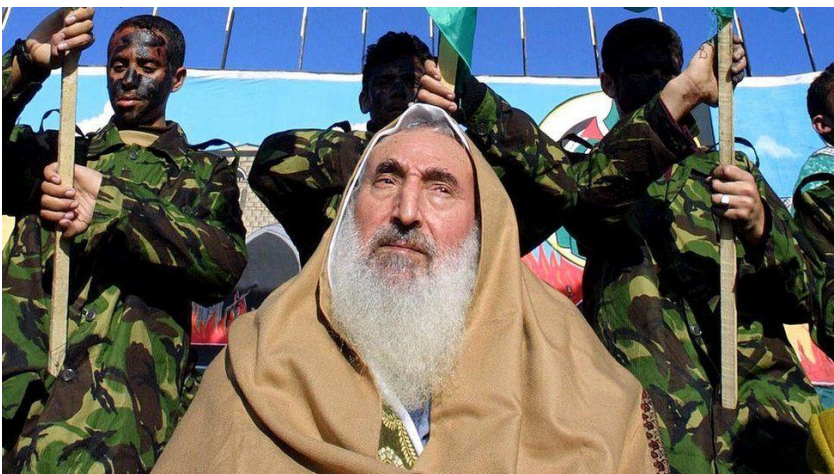
AFP

It carried out multiple bus bombings, killing scores of Israelis, and stepped up its attacks after Israel assassinated its chief bomb maker Yahya Ayyash in December 1995.

The bombings were widely blamed for turning Israelis off the peace process and bringing Benjamin Netanyahu - a staunch opponent of the Oslo accords - to power in 1996.

In the post-Oslo world, most particularly following the failure of US President Bill Clinton's Camp David summit in 2000 and the second intifada which followed shortly thereafter, Hamas gained power and influence as Israel clamped down on the Palestinian Authority, which it accused of sponsoring deadly attacks.

Hamas organised clinics and schools, which served Palestinians who felt let down by the corrupt and inefficient Palestinian Authority, dominated by the Fatah faction.



**Hamas spiritual leader
Sheikh Ahmed Yassin
was killed
in an Israeli missile strike in 2004**

Getty Images

Many Palestinians cheered the wave of Hamas suicide attacks in the first years of the second intifada. They saw "martyrdom" operations as avenging their own losses and Israel's settlement-building in the West Bank, territory wanted by Palestinians for a future state of their own.

In March and April 2004, Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and his successor Abdul Aziz al-Rantissi were assassinated in Israeli missile strikes in Gaza.

The death of Fatah leader Yasser Arafat that November saw the Palestinian Authority newly led by Mahmoud Abbas, who viewed Hamas rocket-fire as counter-productive.



**Ismail Haniyeh (L), seen here
with Palestinian President
Mahmoud Abbas, is
the overall leader of Hamas**

Getty Images

When Hamas scored a landslide victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, the stage was set for a bitter power-struggle with Fatah.

Hamas resisted all efforts to get it to sign up to previous Palestinian agreements with Israel, as well as to recognise Israel's legitimacy and to renounce violence.

THE 1988 CHARTER

Hamas's charter defines historic Palestine - including present-day Israel - as Islamic land and it rules out any permanent peace with the Jewish state.

[The document, external](#) also repeatedly makes attacks on Jews as a people, drawing charges that the movement is anti-Semitic.

In 2017, Hamas produced a [new policy document, external](#) that softened some of its stated positions and used more measured language.

There was no recognition of Israel, but it did formally accept the creation of an interim Palestinian state in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem - what are known as pre-1967 lines.

The document also stresses that Hamas's struggle is not with Jews but with "occupying Zionist aggressors". Israel said the group was "attempting to fool the world".

SANCTIONS

As a result, the new Hamas-led government was subjected to tough economic and diplomatic sanctions by Israel and its allies in the West.

After Hamas ousted forces loyal to Fatah from Gaza in 2007, Israel tightened its blockade on the territory, and Palestinian rocket-fire and Israeli air strikes continued. Egypt also closed its border crossing with Gaza and has only opened it intermittently since.



**Hamas wrested control of Gaza
from forces loyal to
Palestinian Abbas during ~
a bloody conflict in 2007**

AFP

Israel holds Hamas responsible for all attacks emanating from the strip, and the two sides have been in a constant state of conflict ranging from deadly incidents around the border to full-scale hostilities.

GAZA STRIP IN MAPS: HOW LIFE HAS CHANGED

BBC News 22 Mar 2024 by the Visual Journalism Team

People in Gaza are facing desperate living conditions and food shortages as the conflict between Israel and Hamas continues.

Almost two million people - most of the population - are reported to have fled their homes and those who remain in northern Gaza are on the brink of famine, according to the United Nations.

The Strip has been under the control of Hamas since 2007 and Israel says it is trying to destroy the military and governing capabilities of the Islamist group, which is committed to the destruction of Israel.

Much of the small enclave of Gaza, only 41km (25 miles) long and 10km wide, bounded by the Mediterranean Sea on one side and fenced off from Israel and Egypt at its borders - has become uninhabitable.



Source: Ocha

BBC

And people are starving. Half the population is struggling with catastrophic hunger and famine is imminent in northern parts of Gaza, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the global body responsible for declaring famine.

Save the Children says families are struggling to find enough food and water and children are dying because of malnutrition and disease.

Even before the current conflict, about 80% of the population of Gaza was in need of humanitarian aid. Aid deliveries halted at the start of the latest conflict have resumed, but at much lower levels - with about 164 aid lorries a day crossing into southern Gaza from Egypt.

How many humanitarian aid lorries are going into Gaza daily*?

 = 10 lorries

Prior to conflict:
500 lorries a day



20-26 October:
11 lorries a day



Gaza would require
100 lorries each day to
supply essential needs

8-14 Mar:
164 lorries a day



*Daily average calculated per week

Source: United Nations, 20 Mar

B B C

The World Food Programme says that addressing the simple food needs would require at least 300 trucks a day to enter Gaza and distribute food.

Agencies say distribution is hampered by the lack of infrastructure as the area endures intense bombardment, movement restrictions, interrupted communications and fuel shortages.

There have also been reports of crowds looting aid lorries.

The WFP's chief operating officer, Carl Skau said: "The complicated border controls, combined with the high tensions and desperation inside Gaza, make it nearly impossible for food supplies to reach people in need, particularly in the north."

Some countries, including the US, Belgium and Jordan, have delivered aid by air - parachuting crates of aid from planes into coastal areas.

Aid charity [World Central Kitchen](#) built its own jetty on the coast and delivered 200 tonnes of food by sea in its first shipment. The cargo includes beans, carrots, canned tuna, chickpeas, canned corn, parboiled rice, flour, oil, salt and pallets of dates.

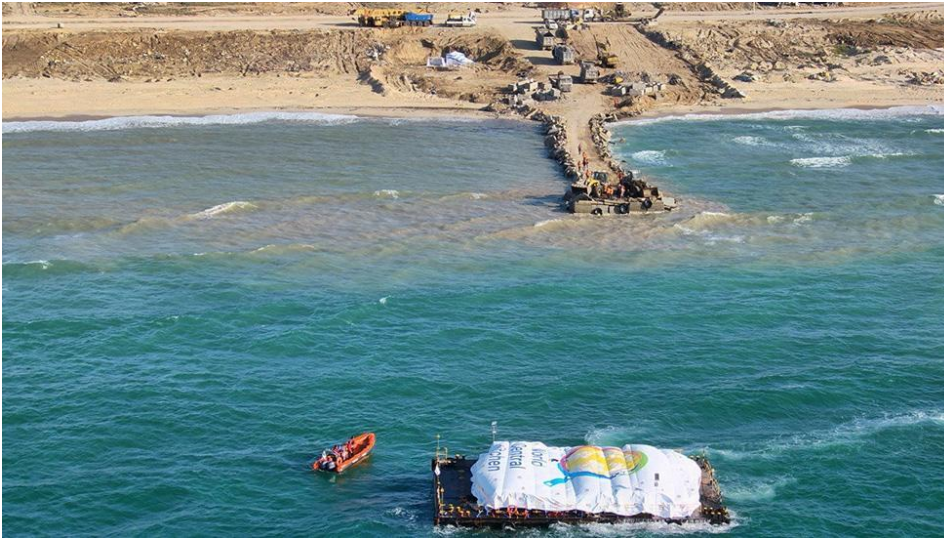


Image source, Reuters

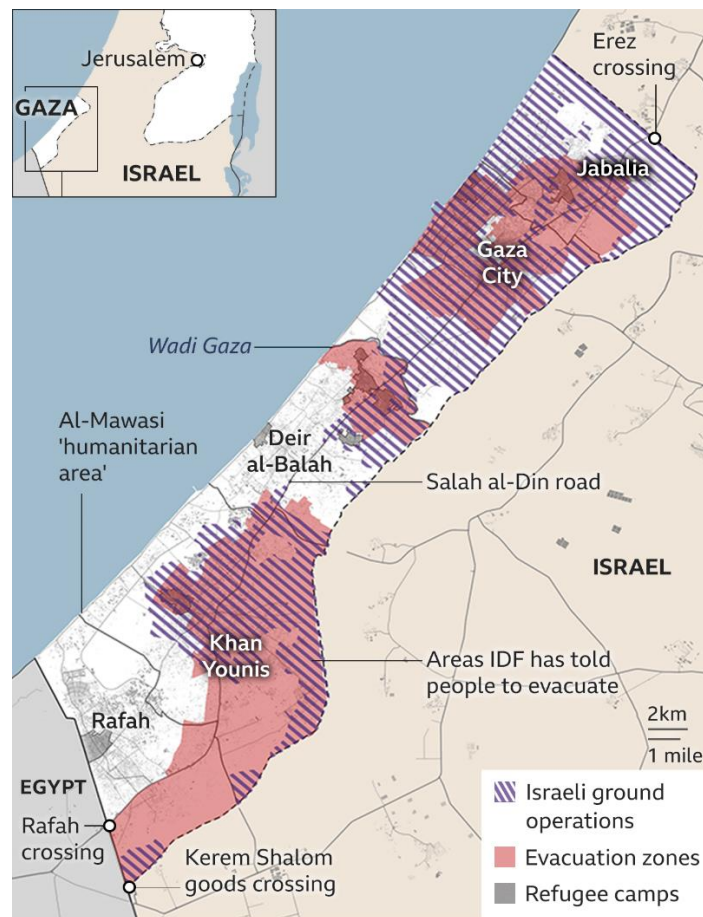
The US military is also planning to [build a temporary dock](#) and pier for deliveries by sea.

ISRAEL'S GROUND OFFENSIVE

The desperate food situation comes after six months of conflict.

Israel responded to the 7 October attacks by Hamas with an intense bombing campaign, followed by a ground invasion.

Armoured bulldozers created routes for tanks and troops, as the Israeli forces tried to clear the area of Hamas fighters based in northern Gaza.



Source: IDF, ISW 20 Mar

BBC

Having cut Gaza in two, the Israelis pushed further into Gaza City, where they faced resistance from Hamas. While Israeli forces have since conducted ground operations across much of northern Gaza, there are still clashes in some areas, according to analysts from the Institute for the Study of War.

Whole districts in Gaza City have been razed to the ground and swathes of agricultural land and greenhouse areas have been returned to sand under the tracks of heavy vehicles and tanks as part of clearing operations by Israeli troops.



Image source, Getty Images

Civilians living in the area north of the Wadi Gaza riverbed, including the densely populated Gaza City, were warned to evacuate in October.

The Erez border crossing into Israel in the north was closed, so those living in the evacuation zone had no choice but to head towards the southern districts.

MILLIONS SEEK SHELTER IN SOUTHERN GAZA

After establishing a strong position in the north, Israeli forces focused their attention on the southern cities. The main urban areas - Khan Younis and Rafah - have been bombed and Israeli troops have clashed with Hamas fighters on the ground.

The local population, now including thousands who fled fighting in the north, have been told to move to a so-called "safe area" at al-Mawasi, a thin strip of mainly agricultural land along the Mediterranean coast, close to the Egyptian border.



Image source, Reuters

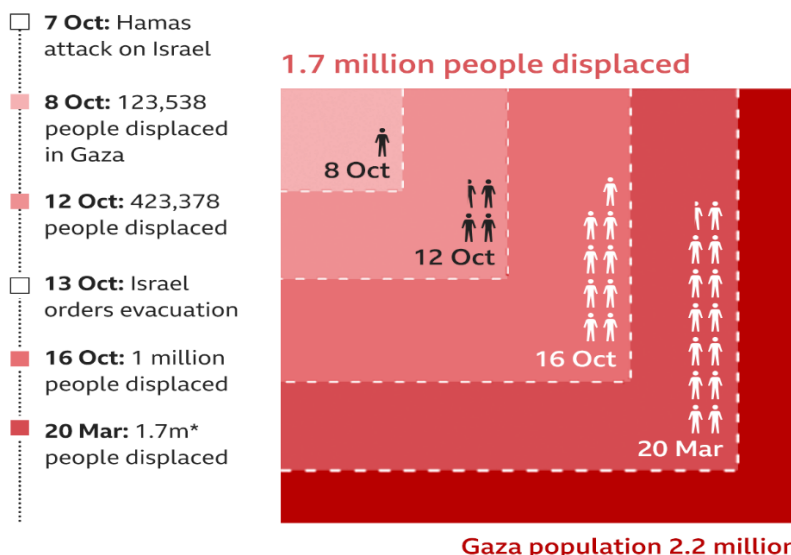
Fighting in Khan Younis and the central Deir al Balah area has also pushed tens of thousands of people to flee to the southern district of Rafah, the UN said, where more than a million people "are squeezed into an extremely overcrowded space".

According to the UN, just over 75% of Gaza's population - some 1.7 million people - were already registered refugees before October 2023.

Palestinian refugees are defined by the UN as people whose "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 War". More than 500,000 of the refugee population lived in eight crowded "camps" which became densely packed built-up areas, located across the Strip.

Following Israel's warnings after 7 October, many of those refugees joined the hundreds of thousands of people forced to flee their homes, the UN says.

Most of Gaza's population have been forced to leave their homes



Source: UNWRA

On average, before the conflict, there were more than 5,700 people per sq km in Gaza - very similar to the average density in London. The UN says more than half of Gaza's population is now crammed into Rafah - previously a town of 250,000 people.

"Their living conditions are abysmal - they lack the basic necessities to survive, stalked by hunger, disease and death," according to the UN's relief co-ordinator Martin Griffiths.

Overcrowding has become a major concern in UN emergency shelters in central and southern Gaza, with some far exceeding their capacity. Other families are living in tents or makeshift shelters in compounds or on open areas of waste ground.

Areas of new tents that sprung up close to the Egyptian border between the start of December and middle of January cover roughly 3.5 sq km, equivalent to nearly 500 Premier League football pitches.

The satellite images, captured on 15 October and 14 January, show a dramatic change - now nearly every patch of accessible, undeveloped ground in an area of north-west Rafah has been turned into a refuge for displaced people.

DISPLACED GAZANS HAVE GATHERED IN CAMPS ACROSS RAFAH

Drag the button to see the new camp sites

15 October 2023

14 Jan 2024



Images: Planet Labs PBC

B B C

Israel has already launched hundreds of airstrikes across Gaza. US intelligence assessments seen by CNN in December said Israel had used more than 29,000 bombs and missiles since the start of the conflict, causing extensive damage to buildings and infrastructure.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says up to 80% of civilian infrastructure - including homes, hospitals, schools, water, and sanitation facilities - have been destroyed or severely damaged and will take billions of dollars of investment over decades to recover.

The UN's environmental programme says it could take between three and 12 years just to clear the debris and explosive remnants of war.

Gazan officials warn more than 500,000 people will have no homes to return to, and many more will not be able to return immediately after the conflict because of damage to surrounding infrastructure.

The map below - using analysis of satellite data by Corey Scher of CUNY Graduate Center and Jamon Van Den Hoek of Oregon State University - shows which urban areas have sustained concentrated damage since the start of the conflict.

They say at least 160,000 buildings across the whole Gaza Strip have suffered damage. North Gaza and Gaza City have borne the brunt of this, with at least 70% of buildings in the two northern regions believed to have been damaged, but their analysis now suggests up to 54% of buildings in the Khan Younis area have also been damaged.

15 October 2023

14 Jan 2024



Israel has already launched hundreds of airstrikes across Gaza. US intelligence assessments seen by CNN in December said Israel had used more than 29,000 bombs and missiles since the start of the conflict, causing extensive damage to buildings and infrastructure.

The World Health Organization (WHO) says up to 80% of civilian infrastructure - including homes, hospitals, schools, water, and sanitation facilities - have been destroyed or severely damaged and will take billions of dollars of investment over decades to recover.

The UN's environmental programme says it could take between three and 12 years just to clear the debris and explosive remnants of war.

Gazan officials warn more than 500,000 people will have no homes to return to, and many more will not be able to return immediately after the conflict because of damage to surrounding infrastructure.

The map below - using analysis of satellite data by Corey Scher of CUNY Graduate Center and Jamon Van Den Hoek of Oregon State University - shows which urban areas have sustained concentrated damage since the start of the conflict.

They say at least 160,000 buildings across the whole Gaza Strip have suffered damage. North Gaza and Gaza City have borne the brunt of this, with at least 70% of buildings in the two northern regions believed to have been damaged, but their analysis now suggests up to 54% of buildings in the Khan Younis area have also been damaged.



Source: Damage analysis of Copernicus Sentinel-1 satellite data by Corey Scher of CUNY Graduate Center and Jamon Van Den Hoek of Oregon State University, UN Ocha, OpenStreetMap, European Commission GHSL

Many healthcare facilities have been left unable to function as a result of bomb damage or lack of supplies and fuel.

The UN says hospital capacity is overstretched and only 12 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are still partially functioning.

Some hospitals have also become the target of Israeli operations as they say Hamas use the buildings.

Medics working at Khan Younis's Nasser hospital were shot at and detained during an Israeli raid in February. Israeli forces say they killed a number of Hamas "terrorists" and detained dozens of suspects in an operation at Gaza City's al-Shifa hospital this week.

[Trapped by gunfire at Gaza hospital, people risked death to help injured](#)

[Gaza medics tell BBC that Israeli troops beat and humiliated them](#)

More than 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed during the Hamas attacks on 7 October. More than 31,000 Palestinians - including about 13,000 children - have been killed in Israeli airstrikes and operations since then, according to Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry.

It is difficult for the BBC to verify exact numbers, but the UN's World Health Organization (WHO) WHO has said it has no reason to believe the figures are inaccurate.

The images below indicate just how much Gaza has changed. One image, released by the IDF, shows tanks and armoured bulldozers on the beach near Gaza City.

A photo of the same beach from last summer shows people making the most of a hot day in Gaza, families splashing in the sea or sitting on fanning out along the beach.

Gaza beach now Israeli military stronghold

August 2022



Gaza beach now Israeli military stronghold

August 2022



November 2023



Image credits: Getty, IDF

BBC

Are you personally affected by the issues raised in this story? If it is safe to do so, please get in touch by emailing haveyoursay@bbc.co.uk.

Please include a contact number if you are willing to speak to a BBC journalist. You can also get in touch in the following ways:

- WhatsApp: **+44 7756 165803**
- Tweet: **@BBC_HaveYourSay**
- **Upload pictures or video**
- Please read our [terms & conditions](#) and [privacy policy](#)

THE DILEMMA OF REBUILDING GAZA WITHOUT REARMING HAMAS

[BBC News](#) Yolande Knell 10 June 2021



Thousands of Palestinians saw their homes destroyed or damaged

With long-range rockets, missile launchers and drones, Hamas fighters in camouflage gear have held parades across the Gaza Strip since the recent deadly fighting with Israel.

They underscore the challenge for international donors wanting to help rebuild Gaza without rearming what is seen by the US, EU, Israel and others as a terrorist group.

On his recent visit to Jerusalem and the West Bank, the UK's Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, told me it was "crucially important" to ensure funds went to "the Palestinian people, to alleviate their plight, and do not drift into the pockets of Hamas".

The Islamist organisation, which governs Gaza, does not recognise Israel's right to exist.



Image source, Reuters

Hamas's military wing held parades in Gaza following the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire

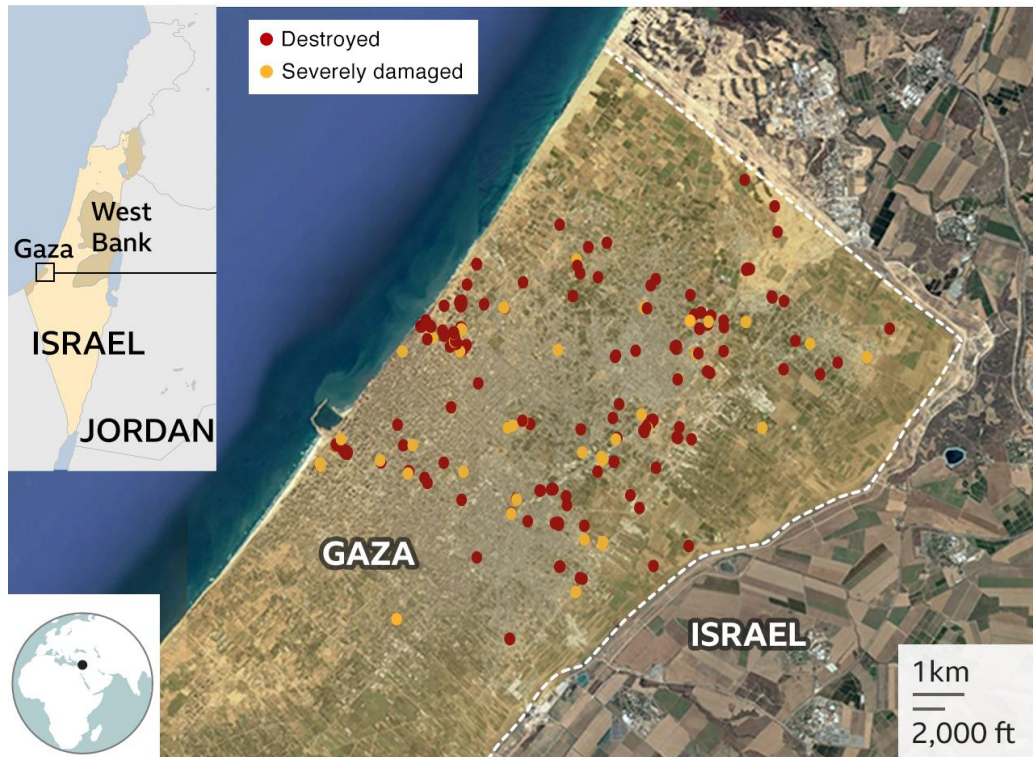
According to the UN, in Gaza this conflict destroyed or damaged more than 16,000 homes, along with 58 schools and training centres, nine hospitals, 19 clinics and vital infrastructure.

The Israeli military says it attacked more than 1,000 militant targets.

The Khalidi family in Gaza City are among the thousands left homeless. When Israeli war planes targeted their neighbours' building, their apartment was caught in the blast.

UN damage assessment of northern Gaza

Buildings destroyed or severely damaged in May 2021 conflict



Source: UNITAR-UNOSAT, 26 May 2021

BBC

"I found glass all over my son's toys. I cried a lot when I saw the damage," says Waad al-Khalidi, who is now staying at a relative's house with her husband and baby.

"The war ended but we don't have money for repairs. I just want our beautiful home back."

At least 256 people were killed in Gaza, according to the UN, and 13 people were killed in Israel during the hostilities.

The UN said at least 128 of those killed in Gaza were civilians. Israel's military said 200 were militants; Hamas's leader there, Yahya Sinwar, put the number of fighters killed at 80.



Two children from Gaza City and Israel describe their experience of the Israel-Gaza conflict

A land and sea blockade of Gaza, which is imposed by Israel and Egypt, looks set to make reconstruction slow and complicated.

This was introduced after Hamas seized full control of the tiny territory from the Palestinian Authority (PA) in a bloody internal battle in 2007, a year after it won the last general election.

It has crippled the economy but has only partly succeeded in its stated security aim: to stop weapons and other supplies from reaching militants.

- [A conflict on pause as both sides claim victory](#)
- [The children who have died in the conflict](#)
- [Life in the Gaza Strip](#)

During the 11 days of violence in May, the Israeli military says that more than 4,300 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israeli towns and cities, damaging or destroying homes and other infrastructure.

The intensity with which they were fired and their range were greater than in the last serious outbreak of hostilities in 2014.

"They've replenished themselves and added a few longer-range rockets to their arsenal with a heavier payload so obviously they've advanced their capabilities," says Michael Herzog, a retired Israeli brigadier-general at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.



Homes in southern and central Israel were struck by rockets fired from Gaza

Image source, Reuters

Back in 2014, Egypt completed the destruction of smuggling tunnels under its border with Gaza, stopping missiles being brought in from Iran.

However, militants from Hamas and Islamic Jihad, a smaller group, increasingly use Iranian expertise to manufacture their own rockets in secret workshops.

Last year, an Al Jazeera documentary showed Hamas commanders claiming they had made missiles from water pipes for abandoned Israeli settlements in Gaza and unexploded munitions from Israeli air strikes and a sunken British WW1 warship off the coast.



Damage to housing and services in Gaza

- **16,250** housing units sustained some degree of damage
- **1,165** destroyed housing and commercial units in 331 buildings
- **58** education facilities damaged
- **9** hospitals partially damaged
- **19** clinics damaged
- **400,000** people with no regular access to safe piped water

Source: UN OCHA

REUTERS

"As they say, necessity is the mother of all invention," comments Michael Herzog who saw the report, "but on top of that, I think what was not disclosed, was that Hamas put its hands on a lot of 'dual-use' materials and used them for its own military purposes."

Israel heavily restricts imports of "dual-use" goods - including pipes, cement and iron - that can have military or civilian purposes. Egypt has allowed a limited supply of building materials to enter.

Yet, the Israeli military says that in its recent bombardment of Gaza, it destroyed more than 100km (62 miles) of a vast underground militant tunnel network that it called "the Metro", which Hamas had built at a cost of millions of dollars.



The use of all building supplies entering Gaza is supposed to be checked by the UN

Image source, Reuters

The UN is under pressure to reform an elaborate mechanism that it set up to supervise the entry of building materials to Gaza after the 2014 conflict.

"We're working on that right now with the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli side to determine how we can make it faster," says Lynne Hastings, the UN Resident Co-ordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She told journalists checks were also being carried out "to see whether or not any mistakes by any of the parties involved may have been made over the past several years, to ensure that the aid is not diverted". All supplies entering Gaza are supposed to be carefully stored by approved importers and monitored with cameras while UN inspectors check they are only used for legitimate repairs. Their data is shared with Israeli intelligence.

Palestinian officials estimates that up to 270,000 tonnes of rubble need to be cleared in Gaza. The US and other foreign donors insist that the internationally accepted PA must continue to be their partner in rebuilding Gaza.

There are also demands for Qatari funds - which have previously gone directly to the Palestinian territory - to be channelled through it - something Hamas vehemently opposes.

The US wants to work with the PA to ensure Hamas will not benefit from any reconstruction assistance. Some commentators express concern at the way aid is being used as a diplomatic tool to boost and legitimise the PA leadership.

Just prior to the Gaza fighting, the PA President Mahmoud Abbas had postponed the first parliamentary election in 15 years. He said this was because Israel was blocking voting in Jerusalem, but many believe it was because his Fatah faction looked set to lose to Hamas.

"It's hugely problematic," says prominent Palestinian lawyer, Diana Butto.

"It's effectively trying to impose the results of an election without having elections. They're saying to the people of Gaza: if you want things to be rebuilt, we're not going to push for elections, but we're going to push for these people who we like to be in charge."

Cairo is continuing to mediate talks on aid between the Palestinian factions and with Israel, in an effort to bolster the fragile ceasefire in Gaza.

Egypt has sent engineering crews to Gaza to help clear the rubble of destroyed buildings.

Adding to the complex picture, there are Israeli demands for two missing Israeli civilians and the bodies of two Israeli soldiers held by Hamas to be returned.

Amid the devastation, Hamas leaders have sought to reassure ordinary Palestinians that all homes that need repairs will be fixed.

But in Gaza City, Ms Khalidi knows she is in for a long wait.

"I don't care much about politics and I don't care who pays," she says, "but I want Hamas to abide by its pledge."

A PHOENIX' AND A 'MAGICAL CITY': HOW RESIDENTS REMEMBER GAZA BEFORE THE WAR

~

Residents of the Gaza Strip have long endured hardship, but amid their struggle, many enjoyed aspects of a 'normal' life. As Israel's war against Hamas continues, much of Gaza has now been reduced to rubble. Dateline spoke to three current and former residents about what life used to be like in the tiny enclave.



Palestinians at a Gaza beach before the latest war seek respite from summer heat and humidity amid persistent electricity shortages.

Source: NurPhoto / Ezz al-Zanoun/via Getty Images

It's been more than two months since Israel declared war on the Palestinian militant group Hamas in retaliation [for its shock 7 October attack](#) and invaded the Gaza Strip.

Destruction is enveloping Gaza as the latest escalation in a decades-old conflict reaches unprecedented extremes.

Even before the current conflict, Gaza has long rested in the shadow of violence and hardship.

Some 2.2 million people called the tiny enclave – just 365 square kilometres or [less than half the size of Canberra](#) – home, making it one of the most densely populated places in the world.

Blockaded by Israel and Egypt since 2007 after Hamas seized control of the territory, two-thirds of its inhabitants were living in poverty and 80 per cent relied on international aid. Its unemployment rate was one of the highest in the world.

And yet, despite seemingly insurmountable odds, glimmers of hope and normality have persisted within this conflict-riven area.

Dateline spoke to three current and former residents about what life was like inside the Gaza Strip.

Their accounts tell of a place defined by paradox: a territory flanked by the glittering Mediterranean Sea on one side and barbed wire on the other; a culture of hospitality, warmth, and benevolence that is regularly fractured by the sound of gunshots, fighter planes, and bombs; a people who are desperate for peace, and yet improbably accustomed to war.

'Gaza is like a magical city'

Amal Zaout was born in Gaza, but it was in 2007 that it became her long-term home.

Having left the territory at the age of two, first for Egypt and then Yemen, the 51-year-old mother of two returned to her birthplace following the death of her husband. She had travelled extensively and had the opportunity to emigrate elsewhere, but something about Gaza beckoned.

"Gaza is like a magical city," Zaout told SBS Dateline. "After I went back in 2007, I made my memories, I made my friends. I made a life here. Sixteen years. I brought up my boys here in Gaza."

Zaout is now in Rafah, a city at the southern end of Gaza near the Egyptian border, where she fled in October after being evacuated from her home in the north. Even here she says she is not safe, with bombardments battering the area each night and telecommunications being almost completely cut off. But amid the mayhem, she speaks warmly of her memories of life in Gaza before the siege: memories of the sea, where she would go with friends every weekend; of eating barbecued lamb and chicken under the fruit trees at her brother's house; of playing cards and, at least once a week, visiting the animal shelter near the beach where she could spend time with the resident cats and dogs.

"We had funny days and a peaceful life," she said. "It was difficult to live due to the blockade, but you find good people. You can adapt. I believe you can create your happiness."

The resources for happiness, however, were not always at hand. Zaout lived in Gaza at a time when Israel restricted the importation of food, fuel, building materials, and batteries for medical devices, claiming that "dual-use goods" could be exploited or weaponised by militant groups inside the territory.

After the blockade began, groups such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provided basic supplies to over a million refugees.

"We managed to live with what's available in Gaza," Zaout said.

Such resilience was pushed to breaking point in late October when bombs started falling over the Gaza Strip - not on empty plots or fields, as would sometimes happen before the latest conflict, but on hospitals, schools, and densely-populated neighbourhoods.

We just want to build our life, to raise our kids in a proper way, to give them a happy and peaceful life. But at the end of the day, [it's] out of our control, what happened.

Amal Zaout

Now every time she opens Facebook Zaout discovers someone else who has died, whose house was destroyed, or who lost a member of their family. She cries for them every night.

Zaout also cried when she learned her home had been destroyed. The apartment, which had saddled her with a debt that took nine years to pay off, was where she had lived with her two sons, now 22 and 24 years old, while they studied science and business at the university in Gaza. Israeli forces reduced the entire building to rubble.

"Every single angle in my home has a memory, and it's destroyed," she says. "A lot of people like me, we have memories everywhere. It's unfair to spend years building your life and someone comes in minutes and destroys it."

"It's like hell when you see it after and before."



Palestinian farmers work on a strawberry field in Beit Lahia, a city in the northern Gaza Strip near the border with Israel, in November 2021.

Source: NurPhoto / Majdi Fathi/via Getty Images

The UN estimates 1.9 million Gazans have been displaced and 20,000 killed since Israel started its intense bombing of the enclave, shortly after Hamas' attack on 7 October.

About 1,200 people were killed and 240 hostages taken, according to the Israeli government, in that attack, in what was a significant escalation of a long-running conflict between Hamas and Israel. Israel has vowed to continue military action until all hostages are released.

Hamas is a Palestinian political and military group, with a stated aim to establish a Palestinian state and stop Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, illegal under international law.

The group has governed the Gaza Strip since the most recent elections in 2006, and in its entirety, is listed as a terrorist organisation by the European Union and seven other countries, including Australia. But the UN Assembly rejected classifying Hamas as a terrorist group in 2018.

In 2021 the International Criminal Court opened an investigation into alleged Israeli war crimes in the Palestinian territories dating back to 2014, including the recent attacks of both Israel and Hamas.

Zaqout says there is no word in English for what Gazans are currently going through, but one that she keeps coming back to is 'unthinkable.' The scale and brutality of the siege are more than she can comprehend. Yet she refuses to be overcome by it.

"I insist to start again," she says. "I will not leave Gaza. Even [if I am] one hundred [years old] and they destroyed it, I will rebuild it again, because this is my homeland."

'We are experts in war now'

Before she left Gaza for the first time at 17, Asil Ziara didn't think the outside world, past the border fence and across the sea, was much different to the one she'd spent her whole life learning to tolerate.

She'd seen photographs and movies of places other than the Gaza Strip but had always assumed that these were not quite accurate representations of how people lived their lives.

Asil Ziara grew up in Gaza and remains hopeful her homeland will endure. Source: Supplied

"When I got out of Gaza, I discovered there is another world," Ziara said. "There are actually people who are living and everything is fine with them."

She also discovered she was traumatised. After moving to Cyprus to attend university, Ziara spent more than a year seeing a therapist. Now 21, she travelled to Egypt at the end of September to meet her mother and brother and prepare for her return to Gaza. As she puts it, "There was a war telling me 'welcome back.'"

There is a sea, a big beautiful sea, but at the same time you can't breathe. You feel you're living in a prison.

Asil Ziara

In Gaza, Ziara explains, the consistency of war has come to signify a perverse kind of normality—as unstoppable as the tides or the phases of the moon.

"People in Gaza believe they have to have a war every two or three years," she explained. "We got used to it. And before October 7th, we were expecting there was a war coming."

"We feel it. We are experts in war now. We are experts in things we don't actually want to know."

Ziara's father, a journalist with American media outlet ABC News, along with seven of her eight siblings, remain trapped in Gaza. He has relocated about 16 times, she said, to avoid Israeli attacks.

As a child, she remembers him teaching her to swim and ride horses; taking her to karate lessons; or letting her sit up until midnight with him and his friends, talking.

he remembers these people but doesn't know whether any of them are alive. She does know that two of her uncles, one of her aunties, and a cousin have all been killed by Israeli forces.

"I'm not going to lie," she says. "I'm not fine at all."

Even as people who have become conditioned to the inevitability of war, Gazans have never experienced anything as bad as this, Ziara says. Yet she remains hopeful her homeland will endure.

Despite centuries of wars, conflict, and oppression, the Gaza Strip has demonstrated a tendency towards survival that Ziara describes as being "something like a miracle."

"Gaza is a phoenix," she says. "[But] us in Gaza, we are not sure of anything. There is always hope that it's going to be fine one day. But we don't know if we will stay in it, or if we will be alive."

A very warm and strange place to live'

Nicole Johnston remembers Rafah as the place to go for seafood in Gaza. Living and working in the enclave as a foreign correspondent for 12 months in 2011, the Australian-born journalist would spend her downtime there, with her Palestinian friends, at one of the cafes or fish restaurants by the sea.

"Gaza's got beautiful beaches, really rich culture, great seafood, and just very hospitable people who are desperate to have connection with foreigners," Johnston told SBS Dateline.

"They invite you into their homes and share their food, and they want you to know their families and their children. It's a very warm place to live."

Having said that," she added, "there's always this sort of strange tension."

Johnston has several anecdotes to illustrate this tension, and the surreal, everyday contradictions that simmer just below the surface of Gazan life.

At one point she remembers doing yoga on a friend's rooftop when she heard Israeli air force jets swooping overhead. In another memory, she recalls driving along a road that skirted the Mediterranean Sea, looking one way to see the surf-combed beach and the other to see a Hamas training ground.

"It's a very strange place to live, calm and welcoming on one hand and on the other, this incredibly unique

situation where practically no one inside Gaza can leave,” she said.

“That’s why the people there and human rights groups call it an open-air prison: because that’s what it feels like inside.”

In more peaceful times, however, she also remembers Gaza as a vibrant, densely-packed community with markets, mosques, schools, and an abundance of children - unsurprising, for an area whose population is one of the youngest globally, with an average age of 18.

“Palestinian people are like people anywhere else in the world: they just want to be able to go to work, educate their children, spend time with their families on the weekend and go to the beach,” Johnston said.

“They’re no different to people in Australia, but they’re stuck with this situation of living under a blockade for over 16 years.”

Do you want to learn more about the life of ordinary Palestinians in the Gaza Strip? Watch this Dateline documentary from 2016.

ISRAEL'S BRAVERY HAS EXPOSED THE LIE AT THE HEART OF STARMER'S FOREIGN POLICY

DAILY TELEGRAPH 18 September 2024 [Allister Heath](#)

Israel's bravery has exposed the lie at the heart of Starmer's foreign policy

The battle Jerusalem faces is not just about defending the Jewish state. It is about upholding civilisation itself



Terrorist funerals
the Lebanese way:
Hezbollah bury
four of their dead

Wael Hamzeh/Shutterstock

Robbed of its moral bearings, bereft of any sense of right and wrong, incapable of distinguishing heroes from villains, the West can no longer celebrate when good triumphs over evil.

Israel's brilliantly audacious [booby-trapping of thousands of Hezbollah pagers](#), followed by the [blowing up of the terror group's walkie-talkies](#), is a stunning fillip for the forces of civilisation worldwide.

Advertisement

A tiny nation of just 9.3 million, of which 7.2 million are Jewish, living in a country the size of Wales, reeling from the worst anti-Semitic pogroms since the Holocaust, Israel is leading the war against barbarism, its young conscripts doing a job that would once have required intervention by a Western coalition acting as global policeman.

The fact that so many in Britain, Europe and America, especially the young, no longer take Israel's side in this existential combat exemplifies our cultural, intellectual and ethical degeneration.

The Biden administration is obsessed with preventing "escalation", even though that is what is required if Iran is to be stopped from gaining the means to wage a nuclear World War III. All too predictably, America, seemingly determined to ensure the survival of every regional terror group, appeared upset at the successful attack on Hezbollah. David Lammy, our foreign secretary, is delivering speeches claiming climate change is a worse threat than terrorism; in a rational world, Lammy would be privately congratulating his Israeli counterparts for the most successful surgical operation ever conducted against a terrorist organisation, with few civilian casualties, and pledging Britain's help.

Instead, Keir Starmer has turned against Israel, banning the sales of some weapons – a policy that Germany appears intent on following – and refusing to oppose lawsuits against the Jewish state, in an unforgivable moral inversion.

Labour has placed Britain on the side of those nihilists masquerading as human rights lawyers who negate the essential distinction between victims and aggressors, between rule-bound, democracies desperate to minimise civilian casualties, and bloodthirsty dictatorships for whom their people are pawns to be sacrificed.

Hezbollah is funded and controlled by the Iranian regime, an obscurantist, fascistic, millenarian tyranny that persecutes minorities, women and dissidents. Violating human rights and plotting war crimes is Hezbollah's *raison d'être*: its 150,000 missiles point towards civilian centres and, like Hamas and Iran itself, it seeks Israel's liquidation, guaranteeing the massacre, expulsion or subjugation of Jews. Hezbollah has forced some 63,473 Israelis to flee their homes since October 7. This is unsustainable and explains why a major Israeli response is looming; obscenely, this will trigger widespread condemnation of the Jewish state.

Advertisement

Western foreign policy is a mishmash of cowardice, delusion and contradictions. Iran is a threat to the world; its alliance with Russia is deepening. Turkey, led by the despot Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has threatened Israel with invasion, yet remains part of Nato. Qatar, which puts up senior Hamas terrorists in luxury hotels, is a major non-Nato ally of the US, home to a crucial Western military base and a major investor in London. Egypt, a recipient of US aid, has tolerated myriad tunnels to southern Gaza, refused to let in any Palestinians and, bizarrely, is not held responsible for supplying Gaza with provisions, that task falling to Israel. None of the three latter regimes face sanctions: global ire is reserved for Israel.

Advertisement

One reason Western elites have become so Israelophobic is that, infected by wokery, they increasingly loathe Europe's and America's history and traditions, and view the Jewish state as a standout example of a Western model they reject.

Winston Churchill would be convicted for crimes against humanity today, as would Franklin D Roosevelt and Harry Truman. D-Day would be ruled illegitimate because so many French civilians died during the Battle of Normandy.

Democracies might as well not bother with nuclear weapons, for detonating one, even in retaliation for an unprovoked attack, would be deemed a war crime. I'm in favour of much stricter rules than those governing World War II, of doing everything possible to protect civilians, but this is madness.

The Just War is a foundational principle. States have the right to defend themselves. Every civilian life lost as collateral damage is a tragedy, but pacifism is a deluded utopia that fails to grasp the reality of the human condition. It is madness to criminalise all warfare, and despicable to focus on that conducted by democracies and ignore that advanced by our enemies.

It is equally stupid to entrust so much power to legal activists. Much historic anti-Semitism has been ratified by kangaroo courts, including during the 1930s. The Trial of the Talmud took place in France in 1240, with rabbis forced to defend religious texts against trumped-up accusations of blasphemy and obscenity.

Other bigot-fests masquerading as ordinary trials include the Disputations of Barcelona and Tortosa, the Damascus Affair, the Dreyfus affair that prompted Emile Zola's seminal *J'accuse*, and the trial of Mendel Beilis in Ukraine in 1913. It is a well-established model that hasn't gone out of fashion in far-Left quarters. They no longer explicitly single out religious beliefs or individuals but leverage lawfare to delegitimise what just happens to be the only Jewish state.

The fact that the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice have the trappings of a legitimate legal setting does not mean they necessarily embody justice. The fact that their rulings are deemed legitimate by Left-wing elites doesn't automatically make them such. The fact that today's blood libels take on the language of "human rights" doesn't make them less monstrous. The fact that it is possible for a country as unjustly governed as South Africa to lead a genocide case against Israel proves that the entire system is rotten. The case is backed by Iran, Brazil's far-Left president, Ireland and Egypt: we must have been transported into an alternative, Kafkaesque universe.

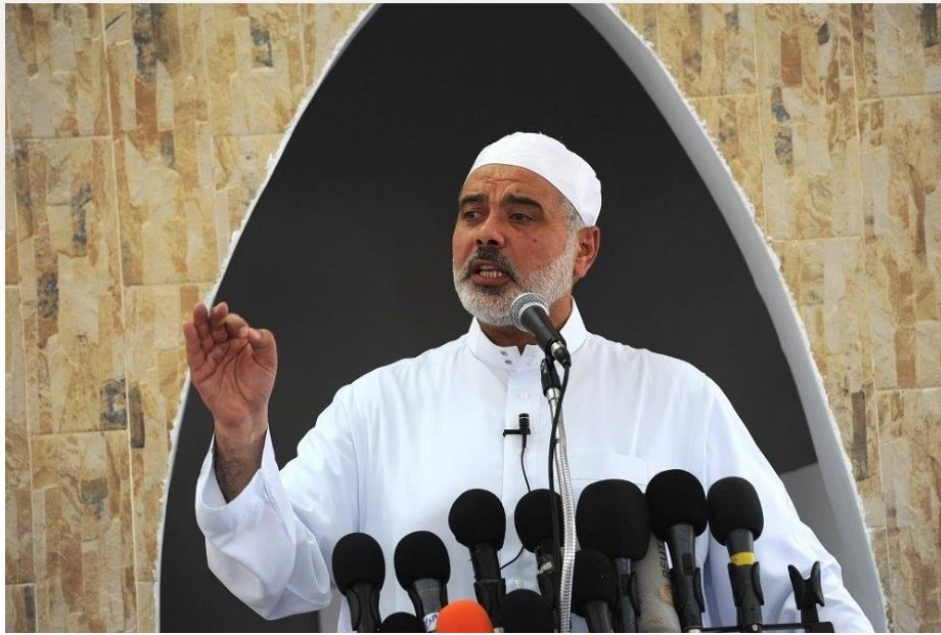
Israel is the supreme embodiment of law-bound national, democratic sovereignty, of peoplehood, of matching a nation to a state, of post-imperialism, of capitalism and technology, and of the continued relevance of the monotheistic religions. If you tear down Israel, you destroy the very ideas that underpin the West, the international order implodes and the autocracies triumph.

The stakes are thus unbelievably high. We must support Israel, and allow it to finish the job of annihilating Hamas and defeating Hezbollah.

DOCTRINE OF HAMAS - THE ISLAMISTS

[WILSON CENTER](#) October 20, 2023

GO TO THIS LINK FOR CHARTER LIST



*Hamas leader
Ismail Haniyeh*

IMAGE CREDIT

Since its creation in December 1987, Hamas has invoked militant interpretations of Islam to spearhead a Sunni extremist movement committed to destroying Israel. Hamas distanced itself from the longstanding Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—an umbrella organization for disparate Palestinian factions that ranged from Marxist to secular nationalists—by propagating resistance in the religious context of jihad, or a holy struggle and martyrdom. “Jihad is its path and death for the sake of Allah is the loftiest of its wishes,” Hamas said in its first [statement](#) in the late 1980s. Predominantly Shiite Iran has armed, trained and funded Hamas since the late 1980s largely due to its opposition to Israel and Islamic ideology.

Hamas is an Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement. It has called on members of the other two Abrahamic faiths—Judaism and Christianity—to accept Islamic rule in the Middle East. “It is the duty of the followers of other religions to stop disputing the sovereignty of Islam in this region, because the day these followers should take over there will be nothing but carnage, displacement and terror,” it decreed. Hamas also rejected any prospect of peace or coexistence with the state of Israel. “Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors. The Palestinian people know better than to consent to having their future, rights and fate toyed with.”

Hamas was founded—in the early days of the first Intifada uprising—amid growing Palestinian fury over the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The Hamas Covenant was largely crafted by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a quadriplegic and partially blind cleric who was the founder and spiritual leader of the militant militia in Gaza. The first Intifada [raged](#) sporadically until 1993, when Yasser Arafat of the PLO signed a partial peace agreement with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at the White House. Hamas rejected the so-called Oslo Accords. As the peace process deadlocked, Hamas deployed suicide bombers

against Israeli civilian and military targets. A second Intifada erupted in 2000 after Ariel Sharon, the right-wing opposition leader and former general, made a trip to the Temple Mount to declare Israel's [sovereignty](#) over the third holiest site in Islam. In 2004, Israel assassinated Yassin in a [missile strike](#). The second Intifada [ended](#) in 2005, and Israel opted to unilaterally end its military occupation of Gaza, which it had captured during the 1967 war.

In 2006, Hamas ran openly for the first time in legislative [elections](#) and won the largest number of seats—over Arafat's Fatah and other secular parties—in the Palestinian Authority's legislature. It [wrested](#) physical control of Gaza away from the PA a year later, thereby cementing its political and military control of an area that is about the size of Philadelphia. Its statements since then have often sounded contradictory—in one moment calling for liberation of all the lands that were part of historic Palestine and in another moment claiming Hamas could live alongside another state based on the 1967 borders, when Israel seized Gaza from Egypt. In December 2012, Khaled Mashaal, a leader in exile, reflected the traditional Hamas hardline, "The state will come from resistance, not negotiation. Liberation first, then statehood. Palestine is ours from the river to the sea and from the south to the north," he said in a [speech](#). "There will be no concession on any inch of the land. We will never recognize the legitimacy of the Israeli occupation, and therefore there is no legitimacy for Israel... We will free Jerusalem inch by inch, stone by stone. Israel has no right to be in Jerusalem."

In 2017, a revised Hamas manifesto included three departures from the 1988 charter, former U.S. diplomat Aaron David Miller told [The Islamists](#). First, Hamas accepted the establishment of a Palestinian state separate from Israel —although only provisionally. Its statement on principles and policies said, "Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea. However, without compromising its rejection of the Zionist entity and without relinquishing any Palestinian rights, Hamas considers the establishment of a fully sovereign and independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital along the lines of the 4th of June 1967, with the return of the refugees and the displaced to their homes from which they were expelled, to be a formula of national consensus." Second, it attempted to distinguish between Jews or Judaism and modern Zionism. Hamas said that its fight was against the "racist, aggressive, colonial and expansionist" Zionist project, Israel, but not against Judaism or Jews. The updated platform also lacked some of the anti-Semitic language of the 1988 charter. Third, the document did not reference the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, from which Hamas was originally an offshoot. After the deadly offensive by Hamas against Israel in October 2023, Ismail Haniyeh, who replaced Mashaal as head of the Hamas political bureau in exile, again invoked religious rhetoric. "Today, the enemy has had a political, military, intelligence, security and moral defeat inflicted upon it, and we shall crown it, with the grace of God, with a crushing defeat that will expel it from our lands, our holy city of al Quds, our al Aqsa mosque, and the release of our prisoners from the jails of the Zionist occupation," he [said](#). The following are excerpts from the manifestos and statements by Hamas leaders.

[Hamas Covenant](#) in August 1988

Out of the midst of troubles and the sea of suffering, out of the palpitations of faithful hearts and cleansed arms; out of the sense of duty, and in response to Allah's command, the call has gone out rallying people together and making them follow the ways of Allah, leading them to have determined will in order to fulfill

their role in life, to overcome all obstacles, and surmount the difficulties on the way. Constant preparation has continued and so has the readiness to sacrifice life and all that is precious for the sake of Allah. Thus it was that the nucleus (of the movement) was formed and started to pave its way through the tempestuous sea of hopes and expectations, of wishes and yearnings, of troubles and obstacles, of pain and challenges, both inside and outside

WHAT IS HAMAS

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS Kali Robinson, April 18 2024



A parade for the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's militant arm, is held in Gaza.

Ashraf Amra/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Summary

- Hamas is an Islamist militant group that spun off from the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in the late 1980s. It took over the Gaza Strip after defeating its rival political party, Fatah, in elections in 2006.
- Governments including the United States and European Union have designated Hamas a terrorist organization over its attacks against Israel, which have included suicide bombings and rocket attacks.
- Israel has declared war on Hamas following its surprise assault on the country's south in October 2023, the deadliest attack in Israeli history.

INTRODUCTION

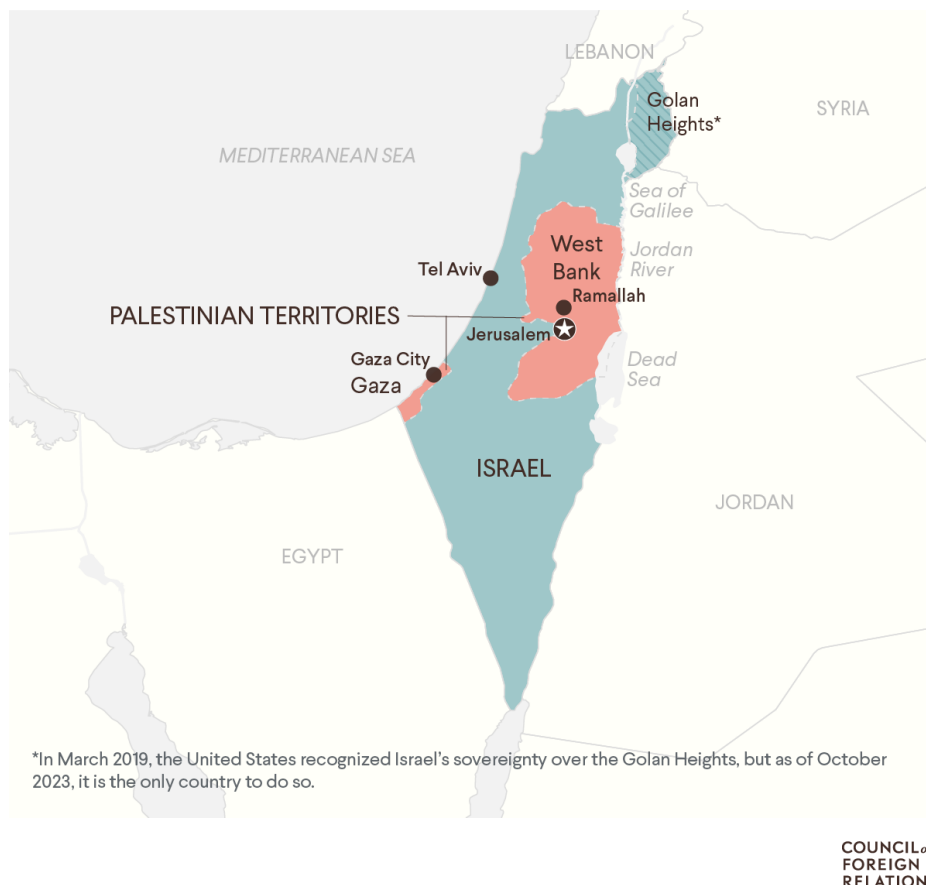
Hamas is an Islamist militant movement that has controlled the Gaza Strip for nearly two decades. It also violently rejects Israel's existence. In October 2023, Hamas infiltrated southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people and taking dozens more hostage. In response, the Israeli military has attempted to eradicate the group, an effort that had reportedly killed more than thirty-three thousand Palestinians as of mid-April 2024. With Hamas's regional partners—known as the “axis of resistance”—now targeting Israel, the war threatens to embroil much of the Middle East.

Dozens of countries have designated Hamas a terrorist organization, though some apply this label only to its military wing. Iran provides it with materiel and financial support, counting it **among a**

coalition of regional allies that includes Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Lebanon's Hezbollah, Yemen's Houthis, and various pro-Tehran militias in Iraq and Syria, among other groups. Along with Qatar, Turkey harbors some of Hamas's top leaders, who have used the Turkish financial system to help fund the organization's activities. Hamas's rival party, Fatah, which dominates the Palestinian Authority 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 diminished prospects for stability in Gaza ahead of the ongoing war, which has only cast the territory into further despair.

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 engage in violence against Israelis as a means of restoring Palestinian backing for the Brotherhood, which was losing political support to Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), a Gaza-based, Iran-sponsored organization that had begun pursuing terrorist operations against Israel.

Hamas **published its charter** in 1988, calling for the murder of Jews, the destruction of Israel, and in Israel's place, 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 removed explicit references to killing Jews but still refused to recognize Israel. The revised charter also hinted that Hamas could accept a future Palestinian state along the borders established before the Six-Day War, which are generally recognized internationally as the borders of the West Bank and Gaza. The new document says only that the matter should depend on "national consensus."

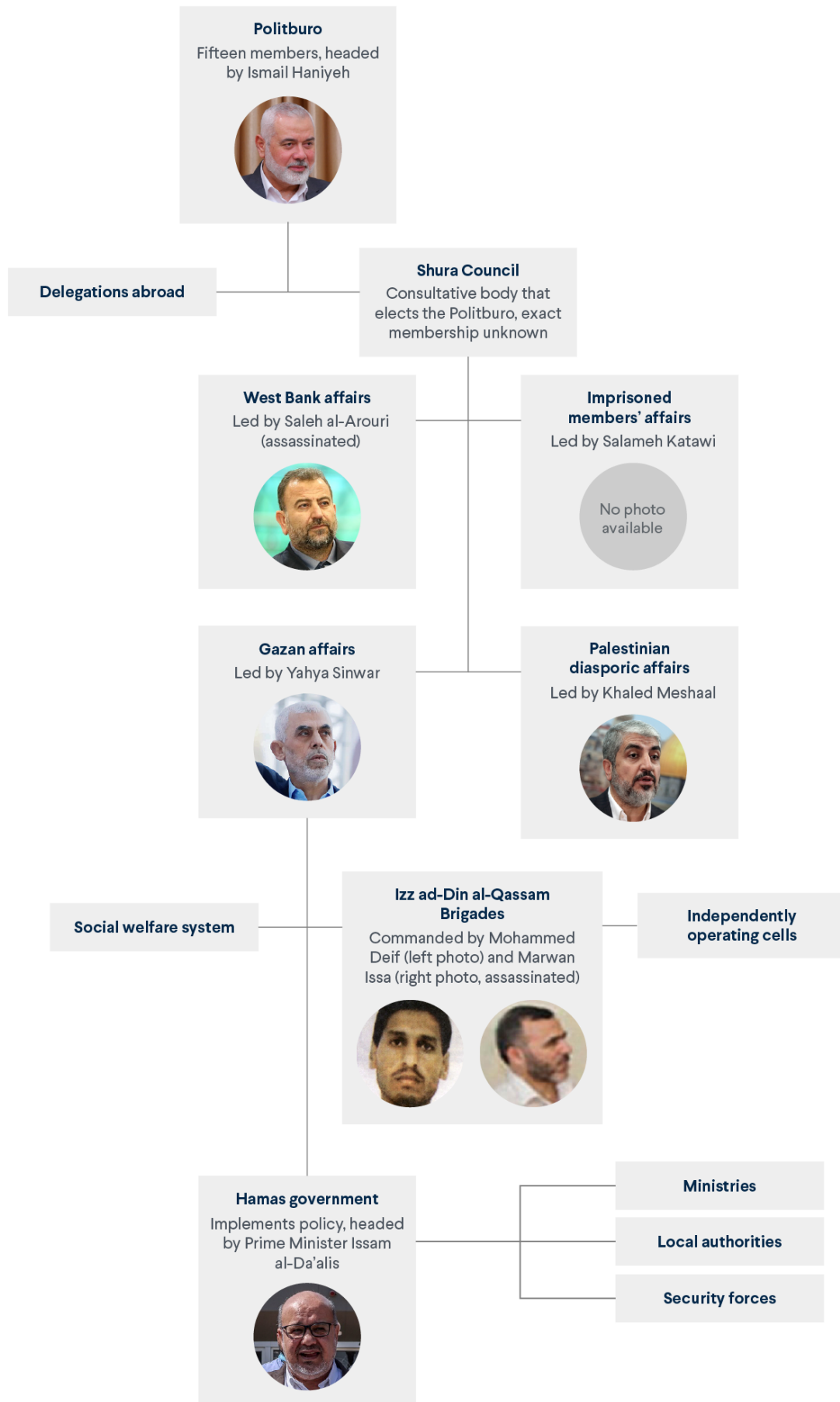
Hamas first employed suicide bombing in April 1993, five months before Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin signed the Oslo Accords. The historic pact established limited self-government for parts of the West Bank and Gaza under a newly 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



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 in 1988. 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.

Internal elections that **concluded in 2021** gave Meshaal leadership of Hamas's diaspora office, while Salameh Katawi was elected to manage the affairs of imprisoned members. Deputy politburo chairman and Lebanon affairs director Saleh al-Arouri was voted leader of the group's West Bank branch, a post he held until his January 2024 death by a suspected Israeli drone strike.

Marwan Issa and Mohammed Deif jointly commanded Hamas's military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, until Issa was reportedly killed by an Israeli air strike in March 2024, though his death is not yet confirmed. Israeli forces killed Yassin, Hamas's founder, in 2004.

HOW IS HAMAS FUNDED?

Historically, Palestinian expatriates and private donors in the Persian Gulf provided much of the movement's funding. 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 **provides some \$100 million annually** [PDF] to Hamas, PIJ, and other Palestinian groups designated as terrorist organizations by the United States, according to 2021 U.S. State Department estimates. 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.

Egypt and Israel **closed their borders** with Gaza in 2006–07, restricting the movement of goods and people into and out of the territory. 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. Egypt shut down most of the tunnels breaching its territory but 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.

DOES FOREIGN AID FOR GAZA GO THROUGH HAMAS?

Before the current war, Israel allowed Qatar to provide Gaza with hundreds of millions of dollars in annual assistance through Hamas. But foreign aid generally reaches Gaza via the PA and UN agencies, namely the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), though Hamas has reportedly **diverted some of this aid**. As a designated terrorist entity, Hamas and its government are cut off from official assistance that the United States and European Union (EU) provide to the West Bank. Some Islamic charities in Western countries have channeled money to Hamas-backed social service groups, prompting the U.S. Treasury to freeze their assets. The latest Israel-Hamas war has exacerbated the **already extreme poverty** in Gaza, where more than one million people needed aid before the fighting broke out. The Egyptian-Israeli blockade keeps Gaza mostly cut off from the world, reliant on the little international assistance allowed past Israeli inspectors. UNRWA remains the primary aid distributor, but it suffered a **massive funding cut** following accusations that it employed Hamas members involved in the October 7 massacre. Its top donor, the United States, paused funding for a year in March 2024, while around a dozen other countries issued their own, open-ended pauses or announced that future UNRWA funding would depend on the results of investigations into the allegations.

HOW HAS HAMAS GOVERNED GAZA?

Hamas became the de facto authority in Gaza 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 has governed in accordance with the PA's **sharia-based** Palestinian Basic Law; but it has generally been **more restrictive** than the law requires, including by controlling how women dress and enforcing gender segregation in public. 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 HAS HAMAS CHALLENGED ISRAEL?

For decades, Hamas's attacks on Israel mostly involved rocket and mortar strikes, mass shootings, and suicide bombings. Iranian security officials say that Tehran has provided Hamas with some weapons, but that Hamas gained the ability to build its own missiles after training with Iran's **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps** (IRGC) and proxies. Israeli security officials **estimate** that Hamas had about twenty thousand rockets and mortars in its arsenal at the start of its current war with Israel. 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. The United States and Egypt brokered a cease-fire to the conflict.

HOW WAS HAMAS'S ATTACK ON ISRAEL IN 2023 DIFFERENT?

Hamas's 2023 assault on southern Israel, "Operation al-Aqsa Storm," was extraordinary in its strategy, scale, and secrecy, analysts say. It began early 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 nearly 1,200 people and wounding and kidnapping scores more. Fighters livestreamed videos of their actions, showing that the attack was especially brutal, with some militants appearing to perpetrate what experts say could be **ruled war crimes**; in March 2024, **UN investigators said** there were "reasonable grounds to believe" some Hamas members committed sexual violence against hostages and those killed on October 7. Military leader Mohammed Deif said Hamas **undertook its assault** in response to Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands and its various "crimes" against the Palestinian people.

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. "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.

The operation also showcased an unprecedented level of support for coordination with Hamas by Iran and its network of regional allies, an anti-West, anti-Israel coalition known as the axis of resistance. The *Wall Street Journal* reports that Hamas likely planned the October 7 attack with Iran’s knowledge, if not its direct authorization, though U.S. and Israeli officials have said they have no evidence of this. The axis’s subsequent attacks on Israel-linked targets, particularly by Lebanon’s Hezbollah and Yemen’s Houthis, have raised fears that the war in Gaza will balloon into a regional conflagration.

HOW DO PALESTINIANS VIEW HAMAS?

Palestinian opinions of Hamas are mixed. Before October 7, the group had been unpopular [PDF] in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, though Palestinians in both territories preferred Hamas to other political factions. Many experts say that PA President Mahmoud Abbas canceled the 2021 Palestinian national elections to prevent a likely Hamas victory.

After October 7, support for Hamas in Gaza rose four percentage points and nearly quadrupled in the West Bank, according to a December 2023 survey, though this was not enough for it to gain majority support in either territory. “Palestinians believe that diplomacy and negotiations are not an option available to them, that only violence and armed struggle is the means to end the siege and blockade over Gaza, and in general to end the Israeli occupation,” West Bank–based pollster Khalil Shikaki told CNN. However, he added that “no one should see this as support for any atrocities that might have been committed by Hamas on that day.”

WHAT’S NEXT FOR HAMAS?

Israel is seeking to eradicate the group and free around 130 hostages still held in Gaza, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warning of a “long and difficult war.” After the first five months of fighting, the Israeli military had “certainly done considerable damage to Hamas, which is no longer capable of firing rockets into Israel and has seen thousands of its fighters either killed, wounded, or captured,” writes CFR Senior Fellow Steven A. Cook. Israeli officials say Hamas no longer constitutes an organized fighting force in northern Gaza, while its Gaza-based leaders, such as Sinwar, are thought to be hiding below ground in the south.

Despite these setbacks, Hamas leaders have yet to concede to Israeli demands to cease fighting and free the remaining hostages, and they reportedly envision a role for themselves in Gaza’s postwar leadership. Hamas and Palestinian Authority negotiators have held talks on cooperating in a technocratic government that administers Gaza once the fighting ends. But some experts say that the Israeli government is unlikely to accept such an outcome, having so far rejected temporary cease-fires that could have given Hamas time to regroup. “The Israelis are clearly willing to countenance international opprobrium for rejecting what they regard as a bad cease-fire deal that will allow Hamas to survive and fight another day,” Cook writes.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

For *Foreign Affairs*, CFR Distinguished Fellow Martin Indyk discusses [why Hamas attacked Israel](#) in 2023 and why Israel was taken by surprise.

These Backgrounders by CFR's Kali Robinson explain what to know about [Palestinian governance](#) beyond Gaza and about U.S. policy on the [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](#).

Palestinian economist Raja Khalidi [makes a case](#) for establishing a Palestinian state amid the war in Gaza in this *Foreign Affairs* article.

The Israeli NGO Gisha [maps access to the Gaza Strip](#) [PDF] and documents restrictions on the movement of people and goods enforced by Israel and Egypt.

The European Council on Foreign Relations [maps Palestinian politics](#).

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.

RELATED ARTICLES

[Two wounded as Hezbollah fires 150 rockets at northern Israel](#) June 13, 2024

[IDF chief talks security with Arab counterparts in Manama](#) June 13, 2024

[Blinken: Hamas response to hostage proposal is unworkable](#) June 12, 2024

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 Husseini 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 CLASSED AS A TERRORIST GROUP?

(This is the AI response from ChatGPT)

Hamas is classified as a terrorist group by several countries and organizations due to its use of violence and tactics targeting civilians, as well as its broader political and ideological objectives. Here is a detailed explanation of the reasons behind this designation:

1. Violent Attacks on Civilians

One of the primary reasons Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization is its long history of attacks targeting civilians, both Israeli and foreign. These attacks include:

- Suicide Bombings:** During the Second Intifada (2000–2005), Hamas carried out numerous suicide bombings in buses, restaurants, and public spaces within Israel, killing and injuring hundreds of civilians.
- Rocket Attacks:** Hamas regularly launches indiscriminate rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israeli cities and towns. These rockets often target civilian areas without differentiation between combatants and non-combatants, a violation of international humanitarian law.
- Kidnappings:** Hamas has been involved in high-profile kidnappings, including the 2006 capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, which they used as leverage for a prisoner exchange.

2. Indiscriminate and Asymmetric Warfare

Hamas is frequently criticized for using tactics that violate international laws of war, particularly the principles of distinction and proportionality, which require combatants to distinguish between military and civilian targets and to avoid excessive force. Hamas:

- Fires rockets indiscriminately from civilian areas in Gaza into Israel, often targeting civilian populations.
- Uses tunnels for cross-border attacks, often to launch surprise raids on civilian or military targets.
- Carries out urban warfare in heavily populated areas, sometimes escalating violence during periods of conflict, leading to civilian casualties.

3. Human Shields and Civilian Use in Conflict

Hamas has been accused of using civilians as human shields, positioning military infrastructure such as rocket launchers and weapons caches in schools, hospitals, and residential buildings. This strategy increases the risk of civilian casualties and has drawn widespread condemnation from international human rights organizations. It complicates Israel's military response, as any retaliation risks civilian harm.

4. Refusal to Recognize Israel and Calls for Its Destruction

Hamas has consistently refused to recognize the state of Israel and has called for its destruction. The Hamas Charter (1988) explicitly rejects Israel's right to exist and advocates for the establishment of an Islamic state in all of historic Palestine, including Israel. This ideological position fuels Hamas' violent resistance against Israel, rather than participating in peace negotiations or recognizing international agreements like the Oslo Accords.

5. Connections to Other Terrorist Organizations

Hamas has historical ties to other groups labeled as terrorist organizations, such as Hezbollah and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). These connections are viewed as part of a broader network of militant Islamist groups that engage in asymmetric warfare and terrorism. Hamas has received financial, military, and logistical support from Iran, enabling it to develop a more sophisticated arsenal of weapons.

6. Political Control and Armed Wing

Hamas is unique among many terrorist organizations in that it also functions as a political party, governing the Gaza Strip since 2007 after a violent conflict with the Palestinian Authority's Fatah faction. Despite its political role, Hamas maintains an armed wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, which is responsible for carrying out many of the attacks and military operations against Israel. This dual nature—political and military—complicates the group's classification, but its armed actions remain the focus of its terrorist designation.

7. International Terrorist Designations

The following countries and organizations officially classify Hamas as a terrorist group:

United States: Designated Hamas as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in 1997 due to its attacks on civilians and its opposition to peace efforts.

European Union (EU): Hamas has been on the EU's terrorist list since 2003, following a wave of suicide bombings and attacks during the Second Intifada.

Canada, Australia, and Japan have similarly designated Hamas as a terrorist entity.

Israel: As the primary target of Hamas' attacks, Israel considers the group a direct threat to its existence and has consistently labeled it as a terrorist organization.

8. Human Rights Violations

Hamas has been accused of committing serious human rights violations, not only in its attacks on Israel but also in its governance of Gaza. This includes suppressing dissent, executing alleged collaborators, and violating the rights of political opponents within the Gaza Strip. Such practices contribute to Hamas' negative international image.

CONCLUSION

Hamas is classified as a terrorist group primarily due to its targeting of civilians, its use of violence and asymmetric warfare, and its rejection of Israel's right to exist. The group's tactics—including suicide bombings, rocket attacks, kidnappings, and the use of civilians as human shields—are widely seen as violations of international law, leading to its designation as a terrorist organization by many governments and international bodies. Despite its political role in Gaza, Hamas' violent activities and ideological stance continue to drive its classification as a terrorist entity.

HAMAS DIPLOMACY: FROM HANIYEH TO SINWAR

[THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY](#) Aaron Y Zelin Aug 28 2024

The group has sought to build legitimacy and prepare for a postwar role in Gaza by engaging with various countries since October, but the death of Ismail Haniyeh will complicate those efforts.

[Go to Site](#)



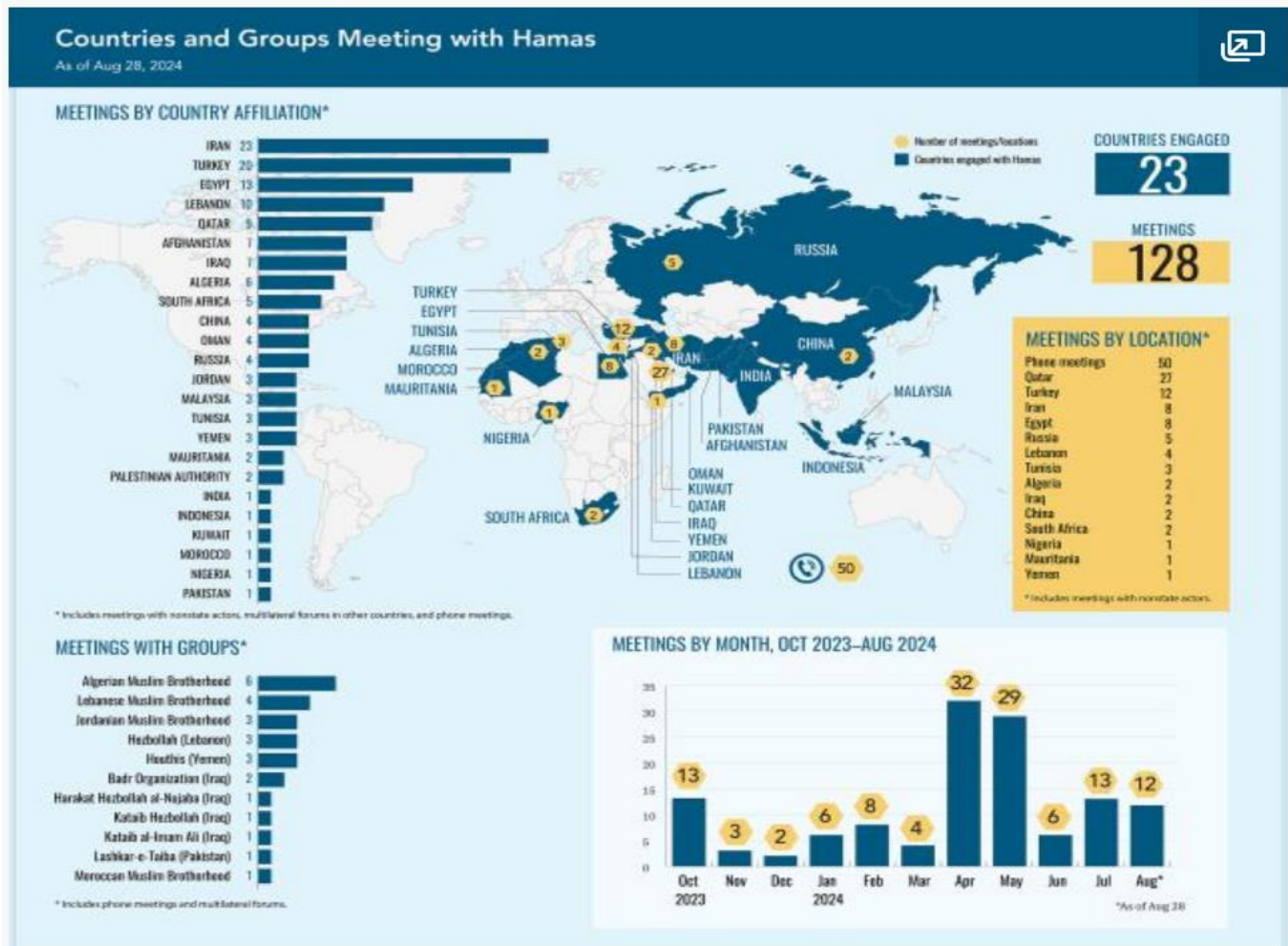
Listen to this article now

Powered by **Trinity Audio**

00:00

09:32

After conducting the world's largest terrorist attack since 9/11 and sparking a tragically destructive war in Gaza, Hamas has spent months conducting a diplomatic campaign to garner support and gain political cover on the world stage. These efforts increase the chances that the group will remain a key actor in the Palestinian arena after the war, potentially undermining Israel's pledge to eradicate or at least defang it. Yet the recent assassination of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh—who took part in nearly three-fourths of its diplomatic engagements during the war—will likely complicate its future charm offensives.



WHO IS MEETING WITH HAMAS?

Since the October 7 attack, Hamas has regularly promoted its diplomatic meetings with foreign officials, political parties, local NGOs, and other groups via its official Telegram channels and website. As of August 28, it had engaged in 128 such meetings either in person or via phone (or 134 if one includes each country's presence at a multilateral engagement). Twenty-three countries were involved in these meetings, whether in the form of government officials, political parties, or nonstate actors that operate within their borders. In contrast, Hamas had only 37 diplomatic engagements in the year prior to the October 7 attacks, meaning it is on pace for a fivefold annual increase.

All of Hamas' encounters served various purposes: congratulating Hamas for the October 7 attack, publicly supporting its claims, as well as calling for an end to Israel's military campaign, greater humanitarian access to Gaza, and a ceasefire agreement. In other cases, Hamas appeared to avoid heavily publicizing certain engagements due to apparent political sensitivities—for example, when it [opened](#) a political office in Iraq in June or [met with](#) the Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba in August.

Unsurprisingly, the meetings also show that Iran is the group's biggest diplomatic backer, not just its main military patron. The Islamic Republic was the first country to congratulate Hamas on the October 7 attack and has steadfastly supported it via numerous phone conversations and in-person meetings in Tehran and Qatar. Among other issues, the two allies have discussed broad strategic matters and specific responses to Israel's actions in Gaza and regionally.

Elsewhere, Qatar and Turkey have served as key venues for supporting Hamas diplomacy. Doha also provides a safe space for the group to meet with other Palestinian militants fighting Israel, most recently hosting talks between members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad on August 22. Egypt has played an important role in Hamas diplomacy as well—but as an intermediary in negotiations with Israel, not as an ally of the group.

In other countries, Hamas has often met with a range of actors, from elected officials and groups that have representation in the government to designated terrorist groups (in some cases, all of these labels apply). For example, meetings in Iraq and Lebanon have included the Badr Organization, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, Kataib Hezbollah, Kataib al-Imam Ali, Lebanese Hezbollah, and the [Lebanese Muslim Brotherhood](#) (notably, most of these groups are backed by Iran). In Jordan and Morocco, Hamas did not meet with royal officials, just members of local Muslim Brotherhood branches (which hold parliamentary seats). In Pakistan and Yemen, it only engaged with Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Houthis, respectively.

Beyond its traditional allies, Hamas has also engaged politicians and civil society actors in various parts of Africa to garner greater international support:

- During a week-long diplomatic marathon in Algiers this February, Hamas described meeting with “thirty political parties and ten associations, and holding meetings with media outlets and Algerian notables.”
- In Tunis, Hamas participated in group forums in January and May while meeting with political actors and unions across the spectrum, from leftists to Islamist factions like Ennahda.
- In Mauritania, Hamas leader Khaled Mashal gave a speech at a November festival in support of the Palestinian cause.

- In Nigeria, Hamas conducted a four-day visit in February that included meeting with political officials and religious actors to explain the situation in Gaza.
- In South Africa, Hamas officials conducted multiple trips to Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, and Johannesburg, meeting with various political actors (e.g., the African National Congress), local NGOs, and religious figures. The aim of these visits was twofold: to share details on the Gaza war, and to link the group's cause to South Africa's experience under apartheid. In April, Haniyeh met with Nelson Mandela's grandson—Zwelivelile "Mandla" Mandela, a convert to Islam—in Istanbul to further link their causes.

Notably, a large proportion of the group's diplomatic meetings in recent years have been conducted by phone rather than in person (e.g., 40 percent during the war, 33 percent the previous year). Although the restrictions on travel to or from Gaza may partially explain this trend (especially during wartime), it also suggests that questions persist about the group's legitimacy. Despite its claims to the contrary, Hamas is not the officially recognized leader of the Palestinian national movement; that role still belongs to Fatah via the Palestinian Authority. In contrast, another nationally focused jihadist actor—the Taliban's Islamic Emirate—[conducts](#) most of its diplomacy in person and inside its territory, despite lacking formal UN recognition as the government of Afghanistan. The differences are clear: the Taliban controls all of Afghanistan, has a monopoly over national politics, and is not restricted by a de facto blockade on its territory.

Thus, even as Hamas measurably expands its diplomatic activity during the war, there remains a ceiling on how far this engagement can potentially go for now. Haniyeh's death will likely lower this ceiling, and quite literally—his role as head of the Hamas Political Bureau has been taken over by military commander Yahya al-Sinwar, who continues to prosecute the war from bunkers and tunnels beneath Gaza.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

In addition to meetings abroad, Hamas has sought to sway public opinion about the October 7 attack in writing, most prominently with a January publication it titled "This Is Our Narrative: Why al-Aqsa Flood?" This document attempts to justify the group's mass murder of civilians and underplay its involvement in rape and other war crimes. To make sure the message reached as large an audience as possible, Hamas promptly translated the document from Arabic to English, French, Farsi, Russian, Malay, Urdu, Chinese, Turkish, and Spanish.

The group has also attempted to situate itself as the sole voice on Palestine, in part by praising countries for taking actions it perceives as beneficial to the Palestinian cause. For example, Hamas has:

- Thanked the [African Union](#) and [Arab League](#) for backing its struggle;
- Thanked [Armenia](#), [the Bahamas](#), [Ireland](#), [Norway](#), [Slovenia](#), [Spain](#), and [Trinidad and Tobago](#) for recognizing a Palestinian state post-October 7;
- Praised [Bolivia](#), [Brazil](#), [Chad](#), [Chile](#), [Colombia](#), [Honduras](#), [South Africa](#), and [Turkey](#) for breaking ties with Israel post-October 7;
- Congratulated [South Africa](#) for opening a "genocide" case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, and praised [Egypt](#), [Libya](#), [Spain](#), and [Turkey](#) for subsequently joining the case.

After Haniyeh

In the months after the October 7 attack, Haniyeh took part in 73 percent of Hamas's publicly announced diplomatic engagements. How will the group fill this gap now that he is gone?

Of course, at least some Hamas engagements are likely conducted out of the public view, so Haniyeh's outsized role may not represent the full picture. As noted above, however, naming Sinwar as his successor will necessarily complicate the group's diplomatic activities—meeting with the commander in person will likely be impossible even if officials wanted to take that risk, and speaking with him by phone is likely difficult as well because it could reveal where he is hiding. Some diplomacy could plausibly be done via couriers, but that is no substitute for the in-person legitimacy that Haniyeh was seemingly helping Hamas rebuild with certain constituencies.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Biden administration can and should continue pushing for a Gaza ceasefire regardless of who is representing Hamas. Yet the group's decision to situate its political and military power in one person could impede such efforts, making the war more likely to drag on.

Washington should also do more to curb the major increase in Hamas diplomatic engagement on the world stage—otherwise, the group could wind up being legitimized as the sole voice of Palestine despite starting a destructive war and losing much of its infrastructure in Gaza. For example, the State Department could exert far more pressure on U.S. allies and partners that host or meet with Hamas. If private conversations or official demarches do not have the desired effect, the administration may need to call these countries out publicly.

About the Authors



[Aaron Y. Zelin](#)

Aaron Y. Zelin is the Gloria and Ken Levy Senior Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy where his research focuses on Sunni Arab jihadi groups in North Africa and Syria as well as the trend of foreign fighting and online jihadism.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

[CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION](#) (Go to link For More on Conflict) Aug 15 2024

Hamas launched its deadly attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, prompting the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to engage in aerial campaigns and ground operations within the Gaza Strip. On June 8, the IDF undertook an operation in central Gaza to rescue four hostages while Gazan authorities reported that 274 Palestinians were killed, and hundreds of others were injured. Other efforts to free the more than one hundred remaining Israeli and foreign [hostages](#) taken by Hamas on October 7 have been largely unsuccessful, and their location and health status are unknown. Almost two million Gazans—more than 85 percent of the population—have [fled](#) their homes since October 2023. Recent casualty estimates from the Hamas-run Gazan Health Ministry place the [death toll](#) in Gaza at around 40,000, though such numbers are challenging to verify due to limited international access to the strip. On July 13, Israel conducted a [major strike](#) on south Gaza, targeting two top Hamas commanders that killed at least seventy-one people. Meanwhile, neither Hamas nor Israel have [agreed to the terms](#) laid out by U.S. President Joe Biden for a ceasefire and hostage release.

The conflict has sparked increased regional tensions across the Middle East. Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon have engaged in cross-border skirmishes with the IDF, Yemen's Houthi rebels have [shot](#) missiles at Israel and commercial ships in the Red Sea, and other Iran-backed groups have [launched](#) dozens of attacks on U.S. military positions in Iraq and Syria. (For more on the direct confrontation between Iran and Israel and the role of the United States, visit the "[Confrontation with Iran](#)" page. For more on the direct confrontation between Hezbollah and Israel, visit the "[Instability in Lebanon](#)" page.)

BACKGROUND

The [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](#) dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. In 1947, the United Nations adopted [Resolution 181](#), known as the Partition Plan, which sought to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was created, sparking the first Arab-Israeli War. The war ended in 1949 with Israel's victory, but 750,000 Palestinians were displaced, and the territory was divided into 3 parts: the State of Israel, the West Bank (of the Jordan River), and the Gaza Strip.

Over the following years, tensions rose in the region, particularly between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Following the [1956 Suez Crisis](#) and Israel's invasion of the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria signed mutual defense pacts in anticipation of a possible mobilization of Israeli troops. In June 1967, following [a series of maneuvers](#) by Egyptian President Abdel Gamal Nasser, Israel preemptively attacked Egyptian and Syrian air forces, starting the Six-Day War. After the war, Israel gained territorial control over the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt; the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan; and the Golan Heights from Syria.

Six years later, in what is referred to as the Yom Kippur War or the October War, Egypt and Syria launched [a surprise two-front attack](#) on Israel to regain their lost territory; the conflict did not result in significant gains for Egypt, Israel, or Syria, but Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat declared the war a

victory for Egypt as it allowed Egypt and Syria to [negotiate over previously ceded territory](#). Finally, in 1979, following a series of cease-fires and peace negotiations, representatives from Egypt and Israel signed the [Camp David Accords](#), a peace treaty that ended the thirty-year conflict between Egypt and Israel. Even though the Camp David Accords improved relations between Israel and its neighbors, the question of Palestinian self-determination and self-governance remained unresolved. In 1987, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip rose up against the Israeli government in what is known as the first intifada. The 1993 [Oslo I Accords](#) mediated the conflict, setting up a framework for the Palestinians to govern themselves in the West Bank and Gaza, and enabled mutual recognition between the newly established Palestinian Authority and Israel's government. In 1995, the [Oslo II Accords](#) expanded on the first agreement, adding provisions that mandated the complete withdrawal of Israel from 6 cities and 450 towns in the West Bank.

In 2000, sparked in part by Palestinian grievances over Israel's control over the West Bank, a stagnating peace process, and former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's [visit](#) to the al-Aqsa mosque—the third holiest site in Islam—in September 2000, Palestinians [launched](#) the second intifada, which would last until 2005. In response, the Israeli government approved the [construction of a barrier wall](#) around the West Bank in 2002, despite [opposition](#) from the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Factionalism among the Palestinians flared up when [Hamas](#) won the Palestinian Authority's parliamentary elections in 2006, deposing longtime majority party Fatah. This gave Hamas, a political and militant movement inspired by the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, control of the Gaza Strip. Gaza is a small piece of land on the Mediterranean Sea that borders Egypt to the south and has been under the rule of the semi-autonomous Palestinian Authority since 1993. The United States and European Union, among others, did not acknowledge Hamas' electoral victory, as the group has been considered a terrorist organization by western governments since the late 1990s. Following Hamas' seizure of control, [violence broke out](#) between Hamas and Fatah. Between 2006 and 2011, a series of failed peace talks and deadly confrontations culminated in an agreement to reconcile. [Fatah entered into a unity government](#) with Hamas in 2014.

In the summer of 2014, [clashes](#) in the Palestinian territories precipitated a [military confrontation](#) between the Israeli military and Hamas in which Hamas fired nearly three thousand rockets at Israel, and Israel retaliated with a major offensive in Gaza. The skirmish ended in late August 2014 with a [cease-fire](#) deal brokered by Egypt, but only after 73 Israelis and 2,251 Palestinians were [killed](#). After a wave of violence between Israelis and Palestinians in 2015, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah [announced](#) that Palestinians would no longer be bound by the territorial divisions created by the [Oslo Accords](#).

In March of 2018, Israeli troops [killed](#) 183 Palestinians and wounded 6,000 others after some Palestinians stormed the perimeter fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel and threw rocks during an otherwise peaceful demonstration. Just months later, Hamas militants fired over one hundred rockets into Israel, and Israel [responded](#) with strikes on more than fifty targets in Gaza during a twenty-four-hour flare-up. The tense political atmosphere resulted in [a return to disunity](#) between Fatah and Hamas, with Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party controlling the Palestinian Authority from the West Bank and Hamas *de facto* ruling the Gaza Strip.

The Donald J. Trump administration reversed longstanding U.S. policy by [canceling](#) funding for the UN Relief and Works Agency, which provides aid to Palestinian refugees, and [relocating the U.S. embassy](#) from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The Trump administration also helped broker the [Abraham Accords](#), under which Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates normalized relations with Israel, becoming only the third and fourth countries in the region—following Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994—to do so. Similar deals followed with [Morocco](#) [PDF] and [Sudan](#). Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah [rejected](#) the accords, [as did Hamas](#).

In early May 2021, after a court [ruled](#) in favor of the eviction of several Palestinian families from East Jerusalem properties, protests erupted, with Israeli police [employing](#) force against demonstrators. After several consecutive days of violence, Hamas, the militant group which governs Gaza, and other Palestinian [militant groups](#) launched hundreds of [rockets](#) into Israeli territory. Israel responded with artillery bombardments and airstrikes, [killing](#) more than twenty Palestinians and hitting both [military](#) and non-military infrastructure, including residential buildings, [media headquarters](#), and [refugee](#) and [healthcare facilities](#). After eleven days, Israel and Hamas agreed to a [cease-fire](#), with both sides claiming victory. The fighting [killed](#) more than 250 Palestinians and at least 13 Israelis, wounded nearly 2,000 others, and [displaced](#) 72,000 Palestinians.

The [most far-right and religious government](#) in Israel's history, led by Benjamin 'Bibi' Netanyahu and his Likud party and comprising two ultra-Orthodox parties and three far-right parties, was inaugurated in late December 2022. The coalition government [prioritized](#) the expansion and development of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, [endorsed discrimination](#) against LGBTQ+ people on religious grounds, and voted to [limit](#) judicial oversight of the government in May 2023 after a [delay](#) due to nationwide protests in March.

CONCERNS

Following the outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas on October 7, 2023, President Joe Biden made a [strong statement of support](#) for Israel. On the same day that Israel declared war against Hamas, the United States announced that it would send renewed shipments of arms and move its Mediterranean Sea warships closer to Israel. While the UN Security Council called an emergency meeting to discuss the renewed violence, the members [failed to come to a consensus](#) statement. Given the history of brutality when Israel and Palestinian extremist groups have fought in the past, [international groups quickly expressed concern](#) for the safety of civilians in Israel and the Palestinian territories as well [as those being held hostage](#) by militants in Gaza. In the first month of fighting, approximately [1,300 Israelis](#) and [10,000 Palestinians](#) were killed. Increasing loss of life is of primary concern in the conflict.

While the United States [said](#) there was “no direct evidence” that Iranian intelligence and security forces directly helped Hamas plan its October 7 attack, Iran has a [well-established patronage relationship](#) with Hamas and other extremist groups across the Middle East. Israel has exchanged artillery fire with Iran-backed [Hezbollah](#) almost daily and [struck](#) Syrian military targets and airports, prompting concern that the war could expand north. To the south, [Yemen's Houthi rebels](#) have launched multiple rounds of missiles at Israel as well. Meanwhile, the Islamic Resistance of Iraq, a coalition of Iranian-backed militias, has [claimed responsibility](#) for dozens of attacks on U.S. military targets in Iraq and Syria since the war began.

A 2023 effort by the United States to help broker a normalization accord between Israel and Saudi Arabia was [thrown into chaos](#) by the October conflict. Saudi Arabia has long advocated for the rights and safety of Palestinian Arab populations in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Especially in Gaza, those populations are now in the path of IDF operations, jeopardizing the progress the Israelis and Saudis made toward a common understanding. However, the United States [says](#) the Saudis have indicated they are still interested in the deal.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In early October 2023, Hamas fighters [fired](#) rockets into Israel and stormed southern Israeli cities and towns across the border of the Gaza Strip, [killing](#) more than 1,300 Israelis, injuring 3,300, and [taking](#) hundreds of hostages. The attack took Israel by surprise, though the state quickly [mounted](#) a deadly retaliatory operation. One day after the October 7 attack, the Israeli cabinet formally [declared war](#) against Hamas, followed by a [directive](#) from the defense minister to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) to carry out a “complete siege” of Gaza. It is the most significant escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in several decades.

Israel [ordered](#) more than one million Palestinian civilians in northern Gaza to evacuate ahead of a ground invasion that began on October 27th. The ground invasion began in the north in conjunction with Israel’s continued aerial assault. The first stage of the ground invasion [ended](#) on November 24 with the hostage-for-prisoner swap that also allowed more aid into Gaza. After seven days, the war resumed—particularly in [Khan Younis](#), the largest city in southern Gaza that Israel claims is a Hamas stronghold.

Under pressure from its principal ally, the United States, Israel announced it would begin to withdraw soldiers from the Gaza Strip in January 2024. Since then, military analysts speculate that the IDF has [pulled out](#) at least 90 percent of the troops that were in the territory a few months ago, leaving one remaining brigade. Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, however, is unwavering in his [position](#) that an Israeli offensive in Rafah, the southernmost city in the Gaza Strip where over one million Palestinians have taken refuge, is essential to eradicating Hamas.

In mid-March, Israel conducted a two-week raid on al-Shifa Hospital, the largest medical center in Gaza. Israel claimed Hamas was operating out of al-Shifa, and it reportedly killed 200 fighters and captured an additional 500. The U.S. intelligence community later [determined](#) that Hamas had used al-Shifa as a command center and held some hostages there, but the Islamist group evacuated the complex days prior to the Israeli operation. In late April, two mass graves were [discovered](#) at al-Shifa and Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, another target of an Israeli operation. More than 300 bodies were found among the two sites; the United Nations has called for an independent investigation.

On April 1, Israel launched an airstrike on an Iranian consular building in Damascus, Syria, killing multiple senior Iranian military officers. In response, Iran engaged directly in the war by [launching](#) over 300 drones and missiles at Israel on April 13. Though Israel was able to ward off the attack and only sustained minor damage to an air base, the escalation marked Iran’s first-ever direct attack on Israel. As Israel weighed an extensive counterstrike on multiple military targets in Iran, the United States and other allies [advised](#) against actions that they feared would further widen the war. Israel ultimately launched a

more limited [aerial strike](#) on military bases in Isfahan and Tabriz on April 19. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi later [downplayed](#) the response, suggesting Iran aimed to avoid further escalation.

Gaza is desperately low on water, fuel, and supplies as Hamas has rejected the most recent cease-fire proposals mediated by the United States and Egypt, while Israel has [limited](#) the amount of aid that can enter. Many humanitarian agencies [suspended](#) their operations after Israel killed seven World Center Kitchen employees in an airstrike. The World Food Programme warns famine is now [imminent](#) in Gaza. Only eleven out of thirty-five hospitals in the strip [remain](#) partially functional due to attacks on medical infrastructure and a lack of basic supplies. The World Health Organization has [warned](#) of disease spread in addition to mounting civilian casualties.

The displacement of millions more Palestinians presents a [challenge](#) for Egypt and Jordan, which have absorbed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the past but have resisted accepting anyone during the current war. They fear that Gazans, many of whom were already displaced from elsewhere in Israel, will not be allowed to [return](#) once they leave. Egypt also [fears](#) that Hamas fighters could enter Egypt and trigger a new war in the Sinai by launching attacks on Israel or destabilizing the authoritarian regime of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi by supporting the Muslim Brotherhood. So far, negotiations have resulted in only 1,100 people [exiting](#) Gaza through the Rafah border crossing to Egypt. The other 1.5 million displaced Gazans—70 percent of the territory's population—remained [confined](#) to southern Gaza and face increasingly dire living conditions and security risks.

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

[The Wall Street Journal](#) | 26 October 2023 5min

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.

WSJ's Rory Jones – who visited them in 2014 – explains how they pose a unique challenge to Israel and could make urban combat costly for both Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians.

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.

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.

"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.

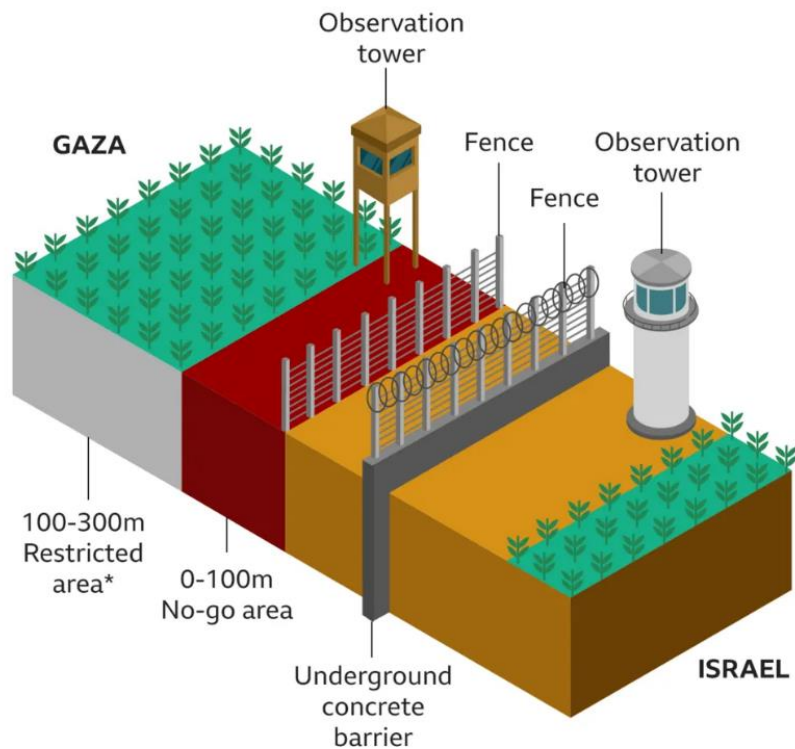
It is possible that a cross-border tunnel was used by Hamas militants during last weekend's attacks in Israel, in which at least 1,300 people were killed, most of them civilians, and more than 150 others were taken as hostages. There were reports that a tunnel exit was discovered near the kibbutz of 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

B B C

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.



IMAGE SOURCE,AFP

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.

GAZA'S UNDERGROUND: HAMAS'S ENTIRE POLITCO-MILITARY STRATEGY RESTS ON ITS TUNNELS

[Modern War Institute](#) 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.

USE OF HUMAN SHIELDS BY HAMAS

WIKIPEDIA

[Israel](#) has accused [Hammas](#) 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.

HAMAS OFFICIALS ADMIT ITS STRATEGY IS TO USE PALESTINIAN CIVILIANS AS HUMAN SHIELDS - V E R Y I M P O R T A N T

FDD Natalie Ecanow Nov 1 2023

An interviewer recently posed a logical question to Mousa Abu Marzouk, a senior member of the Hamas politburo: “Since you have built 500 kilometers of tunnels, why haven’t you built bomb shelters where civilians can hide during bombardments?”

Abu Marzouk said the tunnels are “meant to protect us” from Israeli aircraft and facilitate attacks on Israeli targets.

“Us” meaning Hamas. Not civilians.

Hamas chooses not to build bomb shelters in Gaza because that would undercut its ability to [use the population as human shields](#).

By putting civilians in or above its military positions, Hamas knows it cannot lose.

Either it will prevent Israel from attacking, since the Israeli military tries to minimize harm to civilians, or if Israel does attack, the use of human shields will ensure high civilian casualties.

Hamas can then hold the death toll against Israel while generating sympathy for itself.

[Hamas uses its hundreds of miles of tunnels](#) for military purposes: to transport weapons and ammunition, store supplies and train its members without exposing them to enemy surveillance and fire.

Equally important, the tunnels are a convenient way for Hamas to hide its military assets underneath civilian infrastructure. That is a textbook use of human shields, which international law prohibits.

Reliant on civilians to protect it from Israeli counterattacks, Hamas cannot afford to let Gaza’s civilian population seek refuge from clashes with the Israel Defense Forces.

Accordingly, Hamas leadership ordered civilians in northern Gaza to defy the IDF’s advice to “evacuate south for your own safety” in advance of Israel’s ground invasion.

Eyad al-Bozom, a spokesman for Hamas’ interior ministry, encouraged Gaza’s residents to “stay put in your homes and your places.”

To its credit, the Biden administration has called out Hamas for employing a strategy whose essence is the commission of war crimes against the same people Hamas supposedly represents.

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby explained on CNN, “Hamas actually gave a counterorder telling Palestinians in Gaza to stay at home. Why? Because having human shields, they think, protects them.”

Hamas’ use of human shields is not new. Hamas has come close to confessing its exploitation of civilians before.

During an organized 2016 uprising at the Gaza border, Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar admitted the group “decided to turn that which is most dear to us — the bodies of our women and children — into a dam blocking the collapse in Arab reality.”

After acknowledging Hamas builds tunnels to protect fighters but not civilians, Abu Marzouk ventured that it is the job of the United Nations, not Hamas, to protect civilians.

It might have been hard to say that with a straight face, since Hamas also has a long record of turning UN facilities into part of its wall of human shields.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), whose mission is to provide relief for Palestinians, has repeatedly found stores of Hamas rockets hidden in tunnels beneath its schools.

In 2018, Congress passed the Sanctioning the Use of Civilians as Defenseless Shields Act, which has lain dormant since becoming law.

The Shields Act, which specifically calls out Hamas, requires the president to impose sanctions on individuals determined to be using human shields, but neither Biden nor his predecessor designated any Hamas leaders. Now would be a good time to start.

Doing so is unlikely to change Hamas' behavior, but it would send an important message both to Americans and leaders in other democratic nations.

It is not Israel but Hamas that bears moral responsibility for the [death of civilians in this war](#).

Hamas seeks to win by generating enough pressure on Israel from its allies to [force an end to Israel's military operations](#). Washington should make clear it will never fall for this ruse; nor should anyone else.

Natalie Ecanow is a research analyst at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

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

[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

WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH?

Military experience gained fighting in Syria's civil war and generous support from Iran have made the Shiite militant group a formidable foe for Israel. But at the same time, its political clout among Lebanon's populace may be waning.

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS Kali Robinson Sept 20 2024

SUMMARY

- Hezbollah wields significant power in Lebanon, where it operates as both a Shiite Muslim political party and militant group.
 - It violently opposes Israel and Western powers operating in the Middle East, and it functions as a proxy of Iran, its largest benefactor.
- The group has faced unprecedented scrutiny from the Lebanese public amid the country's political and economic crisis.

INTRODUCTION

Hezbollah is a Shiite Muslim political party and militant group based in Lebanon, where it has fostered a reputation as "a state within a state." Founded during the chaos of the fifteen-year Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), the Iran-backed group is driven by its violent opposition to Israel and its resistance to Western influence in the Middle East.

Hezbollah is considered a terrorist organization by the United States and many other countries, and has deep-rooted military alliances with repressive, anti-Israel regimes in Iran and Syria. Cross-border clashes between Hezbollah and Israel have escalated in recent years, particularly amid Israel's ongoing war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip. An expanded war between the two longtime adversaries appeared closer than ever following a [string of major Israeli attacks](#) on Hezbollah in the summer of 2024.

1943: After twenty-three years as a French mandate, Lebanon gains independence. Its new leaders sign the National Pact, which creates a government system dividing power among the major religious groups.

1970

1971: The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) relocates its headquarters from Jordan to Lebanon.

1975–1990: Lebanon's civil war rages as the country's religious, political, and ethnic sects vie for control, leading to invasions by Israel and Syria and the involvement of the United States and other Western forces, as well as the United Nations.

1980

1983: In April, Beirut's U.S. embassy is bombed, killing 63 people. In October, suicide attacks on barracks housing U.S. and French troops kill 305 people. A U.S. court decides Hezbollah is behind the attacks.

1984: A car bombing attributed to Hezbollah kills dozens of people at the U.S. embassy annex in Beirut.

1985: Hezbollah releases its first manifesto.

1992: In March, the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires is bombed in an attack attributed to Hezbollah. Later this year, Hassan Nasrallah becomes Hezbollah's secretary-general after Israeli forces assassinate his predecessor. Hezbollah wins eight seats in Parliament after participating in national elections for the first time.

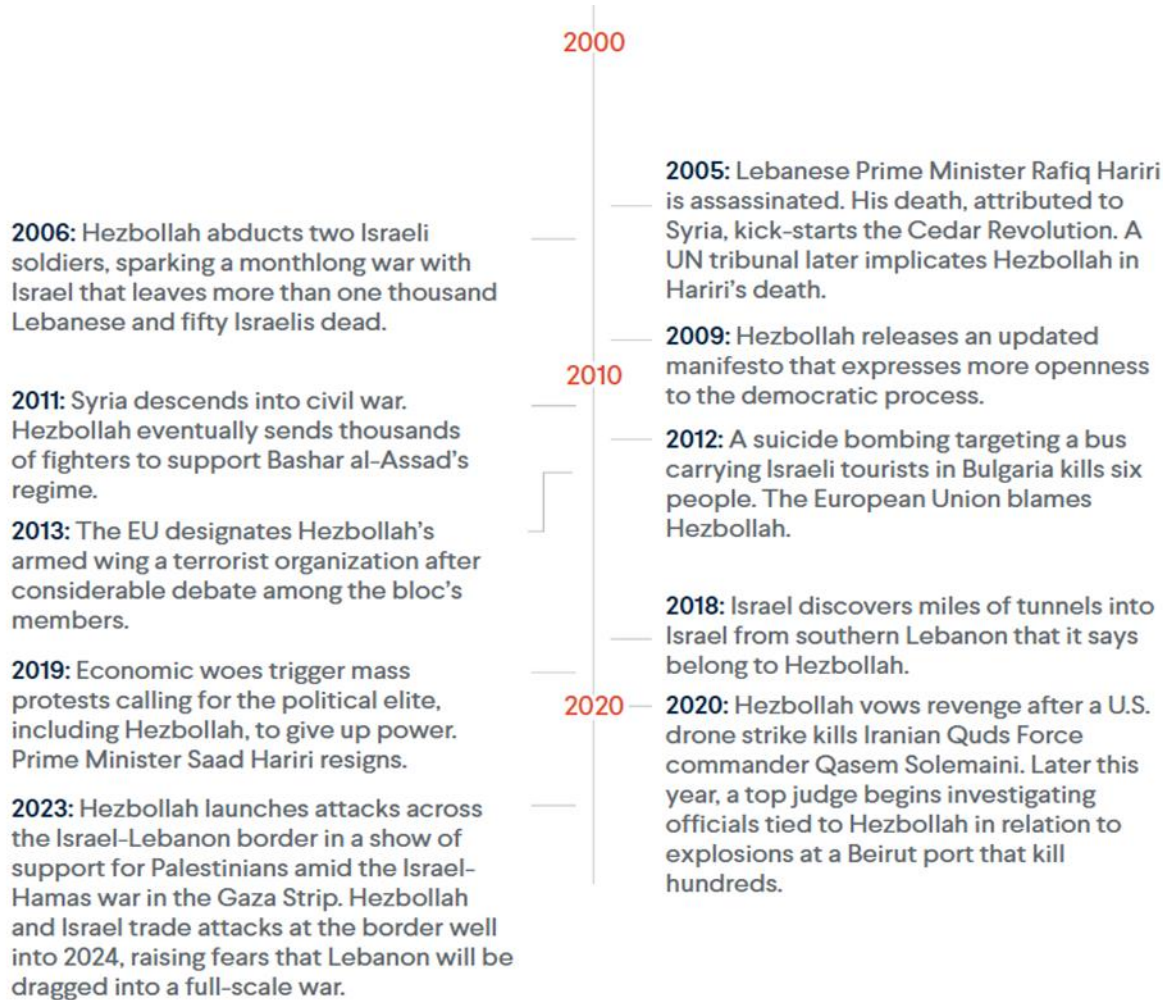
1990

1989: Lebanon's parliamentarians meet in Taif, Saudi Arabia, and sign an agreement to end the civil war and grant Syria guardianship over Lebanon. The agreement also orders all militias except for Hezbollah to disarm.

1997: The United States designates Hezbollah a foreign terrorist organization.

1994: Car bombings at Israel's London embassy and a Buenos Aires Jewish community center are attributed to Hezbollah.

2000



Source: CFR research.

COUNCIL on
FOREIGN
RELATIONS

HOW DID HEZBOLLAH ORIGINATE?

Hezbollah emerged during Lebanon's civil war, which broke out in 1975 when long-simmering discontent over the large, armed Palestinian presence in the country reached a boiling point. Various Lebanese sectarian communities held different positions on the nature of the Palestinian challenge.

Under a 1943 political agreement, political power is divided among Lebanon's predominant religious groups—a Sunni Muslim serves as prime minister, a Maronite Christian as president, and a Shiite Muslim as the speaker of Parliament. Tensions among these groups evolved into civil war as several factors upset the delicate balance. The Sunni population had grown with the [arrival of Palestinian refugees](#) in Lebanon, while Shiites felt increasingly marginalized by the ruling Christian minority. Amid the infighting, Israeli forces invaded southern Lebanon in 1978 and again in 1982 to expel Palestinian guerrilla fighters that used the region as their base to attack Israel.

A group of Shiites influenced by the theocratic government in Iran—the region's major Shiite government, which came to power in 1979—took up arms against the Israeli occupation. Seeing an opportunity to

expand its influence in Arab states, Iran and its [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](#) (IRGC) provided funds and training to the budding militia, which adopted the name Hezbollah, meaning “The Party of God.” It earned a reputation for extremist militancy due to its frequent clashes with rival Shiite militias, such as the Amal Movement, and its attacks on foreign targets, including the 1983 suicide bombing of barracks housing U.S. and French troops in Beirut, in which more than three hundred people died. Hezbollah became a vital asset to Iran, [bridging Shiite Arab-Persian divides](#) as Tehran established proxies throughout the Middle East.

Hezbollah bills itself as a Shiite resistance movement, and it enshrined its ideology in a [1985 manifesto](#) that vowed to expel Western powers from Lebanon, called for the destruction of the Israeli state, and pledged allegiance to Iran’s supreme leader. It also advocated an Iran-inspired Islamist regime, but emphasized that the Lebanese people should have the freedom of self-determination.

HOW IS IT ORGANIZED?

Hezbollah is led by Hassan Nasrallah, who took over as secretary-general in 1992 after Israel assassinated the group’s cofounder and previous leader, Abbas al-Musawi. Nasrallah oversees the seven-member Shura Council and its five subcouncils: the political assembly, the jihad assembly, the parliamentary assembly, the executive assembly, and the judicial assembly. The [U.S. State Department estimates](#) [PDF] that there are tens of thousands of Hezbollah members and other supporters worldwide.

Hezbollah controls much of Lebanon’s Shiite-majority areas, including parts of Beirut, southern Lebanon, and the eastern Bekaa Valley region. Although Hezbollah is based in Lebanon, its manifesto clarifies that its operations, especially those targeting the United States, are not confined by domestic borders: “The American threat is not local or restricted to a particular region, and as such, confrontation of such a threat must be international as well.” The group has been accused of planning and perpetrating acts of terrorism against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad, and there is [evidence of Hezbollah operations](#) in Africa, the Americas, and Asia.

Iran provides most of Hezbollah’s training, weapons, and funding, sending the group hundreds of millions of dollars each year, according to the State Department. Hezbollah also receives some support from the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria, as well as financing from legal businesses, international criminal enterprises, and the Lebanese diaspora.

WHAT ROLE HAS IT PLAYED IN LEBANESE POLITICS?

Hezbollah has been a fixture of the Lebanese government since 1992, when eight of its members were elected to Parliament, and the party has held cabinet positions since 2005. The party marked its integration into mainstream politics in 2009 with an updated manifesto that was less Islamist than its predecessor and called for “true democracy.” The most recent national elections, in 2022, saw Hezbollah maintain its 13 seats in Lebanon’s 128-member Parliament, though the party and its allies lost their majority.

Hezbollah essentially [operates as a government](#) in the areas under its control, and neither the military nor federal authorities can counter this, Arab Barometer analysts MaryClare Roche and Michael Robbins write

for *Foreign Affairs*. It manages a vast network of social services that include infrastructure, health-care facilities, schools, and youth programs, all of which have been instrumental in garnering support for Hezbollah from Shiite and non-Shiite Lebanese alike. Even so, Arab Barometer polling in 2024 found that “despite Hezbollah’s significant influence in Lebanon, relatively few Lebanese support it.”

At the same time, Hezbollah maintains its military arm. Under the 1989 Taif Agreement, which was brokered by Saudi Arabia and Syria and ended Lebanon’s civil war, Hezbollah was the only militia allowed to keep its arms. The International Institute for Strategic Studies [estimated in 2020](#) that the militia had up to twenty thousand active fighters and some twenty thousand reserves, with an arsenal of small arms, tanks, drones, and various long-range rockets. Analyst and Brigadier General (Ret.) Assaf Orion, of Israel’s Institute for National Security Studies, says [Hezbollah possesses](#) “a larger arsenal of artillery than most nations enjoy,” and a 2018 report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies called it “[the world’s most heavily armed non-state actor](#).” In June 2024, experts speculated that Hezbollah has [150,000–200,000 rockets and missiles](#) of various ranges.

Critics say Hezbollah’s existence violates UN Security Council Resolution 1559—adopted in 2004—which called for all Lebanese militias to disband and disarm. The UN Force in Lebanon (UNFIL), first deployed in 1978 to restore the central government’s authority, remains in the country and part of its mandate is to encourage Hezbollah to disarm.

“Hezbollah is the world’s most heavily armed non-state actor.”

Center for Strategic and International Studies

In October 2019, Hezbollah became a target of mass protests. Government mismanagement and years of slow growth had saddled Lebanon with one of the world’s [highest public debt burdens](#), at 150 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP). Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese citizens disillusioned by the economic slump called for the government, including Hezbollah, to cede power to a new, technocratic leadership. The formation of a Hezbollah-backed government under Prime Minister Hassan Diab in January 2020 failed to appease antiestablishment protesters, who saw it as a win for the country’s entrenched elites.

Unemployment, poverty, and debt soared under the new government, and demonstrations persisted for months despite lockdowns amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The protest movement spanned religious backgrounds, and even fellow Shiites [openly criticized](#) Hezbollah.

The group faced [further censure](#) in August 2020, when a UN-backed tribunal found Salim Jamil Ayyash, a Hezbollah affiliate, guilty of the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Ayyash and the other three living defendants, who were acquitted, were tried in absentia. The whereabouts of the four are not publicly known, and Hezbollah has refused to surrender them to the tribunal.

What is Hezbollah’s connection to Syria?

Hezbollah finds a loyal ally in Syria, whose army occupied most of Lebanon during Lebanon’s civil war. The Syrian government remained as a peacekeeping force in Lebanon until it was driven out in the 2005 Cedar Revolution, a popular protest movement against the foreign occupation. Hezbollah had unsuccessfully pushed for Syrian forces to remain in Lebanon, and has since remained a stalwart ally of the Assad regime. In return for Tehran’s and Hezbollah’s support, experts say, the Syrian government facilitates the transfer of weapons from Iran to the militia.

Hezbollah's experience fighting in Syria has helped it become a stronger military force.

Hezbollah publicly confirmed its involvement in the [Syrian Civil War](#) in 2013, and it sent some seven thousand militants to assist Iranian and Russian forces in supporting the Syrian government against largely Sunni rebel groups. Hezbollah [withdrew many of its fighters](#) in 2019, attributing the decision to the Assad regime's military success. Analysts say fighting in Syria helped Hezbollah become a [stronger military force](#), while some Lebanese complain that focusing on the war led the group to neglect its domestic duties. Hezbollah's support from Sunnis in particular has waned over the group's backing of the Assad regime. Hezbollah's involvement in the war also opened it to further attacks by Israel, which regularly launches air strikes against Iran-allied forces in Syria.

WHERE DOES IT STAND ON ISRAEL?

Israel is Hezbollah's main enemy, dating back to Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon in 1978. Hezbollah has been blamed for attacks on Jewish and Israeli targets abroad, including the 1994 car bombings of a Jewish community center in Argentina, which killed eighty-five people, and the bombings of the Israeli Embassy in London. Even after Israel officially withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000, it continued to clash with Hezbollah, especially in the disputed Shebaa Farms border zone. Periodic conflict between Hezbollah and Israeli forces escalated into a monthlong war in 2006, during which Hezbollah launched thousands of rockets into Israeli territory.

The group reiterated its commitment to the destruction of the Israeli state in its 2009 manifesto. In December 2018, Israel announced the [discovery of miles of tunnels](#) running from Lebanon into northern Israel that it claimed were created by Hezbollah. The following year, Hezbollah attacked an Israeli army base—the first serious cross-border exchange in more than four years. In August 2021, Hezbollah fired more than a dozen rockets in response to Israeli air strikes in Lebanon; it was the first time the group claimed responsibility for rockets fired into Israel since the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war.

HOW HAVE THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES TREATED THE GROUP?

U.S. policymakers see Hezbollah as a global terrorist threat. The Bill Clinton administration designated Hezbollah a foreign terrorist organization in 1997, and several individual Hezbollah members, including Nasrallah, are labeled "[specially designated global terrorists](#)," which subjects them to U.S. sanctions. In the mid-2010s, the Barack Obama administration provided aid to Lebanon's military with the hope of diminishing Hezbollah's credibility as the country's most capable military force. However, Hezbollah's and the Lebanese military's parallel efforts to defend the Syrian border from the Islamic State and al-Qaeda-affiliated militants made Congress [hesitant to send further aid](#) [PDF], for fear that Hezbollah could acquire it.

In 2015, the U.S. Congress passed the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act, which sanctions foreign institutions that use U.S. bank accounts to finance Hezbollah. Lawmakers amended it in 2018 to include additional types of activities. Additionally, the Donald Trump administration sanctioned some of Hezbollah's members in Parliament as part of its "[maximum pressure](#)" campaign against Iran. While Trump's approach disrupted Iran's economy, analysts say the country's [increasingly self-sufficient proxies](#) have weathered the worst of the sanctions.

President Joe Biden’s administration has continued sanctioning individuals connected to Hezbollah’s financing network, including Ibrahim Ali Daher, head of the group’s Central Finance Unit. In 2021, the Treasury Department [announced sanctions](#) targeting an international finance network accused of laundering tens of millions of dollars through regional financial systems to benefit Hezbollah and Iran. The European Union (EU) has taken a less aggressive approach to Hezbollah. The bloc designated Hezbollah’s military arm a terrorist group in 2013 over its involvement in a bombing in Bulgaria and its backing of the Assad regime. In 2014, the EU’s multinational police agency, Europol, and the United States created a joint group to counter Hezbollah’s terrorist activities in Europe. In recent years, several European countries have taken a stronger stance. The United Kingdom deemed all of Hezbollah a terrorist group in 2019, followed by the German government in 2020.

Hezbollah has scorned the largely Sunni Gulf Arab countries over their relations with the United States, Israel, and European powers. The Gulf Cooperation Council—comprising the seven Arab states of the Persian Gulf, with the exception of Iraq—considers Hezbollah a terrorist organization. Additionally, Saudi Arabia and the United States co-lead the Terrorist Financing Targeting Center, created in 2017 to [disrupt resource flows](#) to Iran-backed groups such as Hezbollah.

WHAT’S HAPPENED AMID THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR?

Following Hamas’s October 2023 assault on Israel, the Iran-backed [Palestinian militant group](#) based in the Gaza Strip, Hezbollah began firing rockets, mortars, and drones across the Israel-Lebanon border in a show of what the group’s leaders called “solidarity” with its [militarily inferior](#) ally. Many experts say that Iran and Hezbollah likely advised and trained Hamas on how to attack Israel, though Hamas maintains that neither was involved in planning its 2023 operation.

Israel-Hezbollah clashes and tensions have only intensified in 2024, fueling concerns of a wider regional war. Israel blamed Hezbollah for a missile strike in the Golan Heights in late July that killed twelve children, an attack the group denies. Israel responded shortly after by [targeting Fuad Shukur](#), a senior Hezbollah commander in Beirut, in a strike that also reportedly killed three civilians and wounded dozens more. In September, Israel also ramped up air strikes on Hezbollah military infrastructure in Lebanon and is suspected of conducting thousands of coordinated bombing attacks against Hezbollah members, remotely detonating their private electronic devices. Many Mideast observers, including senior U.S. military officials, expressed concern that Israel was preparing for a ground invasion of Lebanon.

Recommended Resources

CFR’s Center for Preventive Action tracks the [instability in Lebanon](#).

CFR Senior Fellow Ray Takeyh unpacks [Hezbollah’s view](#) of the war in the Gaza Strip.

For *Foreign Affairs*, Arab Barometer’s MaryClare Roche and Michael Robbins explain [what Lebanon really thinks of Hezbollah](#).

CFR’s Christina Bouri takes a closer look at the [history of tensions](#) between Hezbollah and Israel.

This Backgrounder by CFR’s Kali Robinson discusses the role of Hezbollah’s Palestinian partner [Hamas](#).

This Backgrounder looks at Iran’s [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](#).

THE THIRD LEBANON WAR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HEZBOLLAH HAS BEGUN. WHAT'S NEXT?

[New Atlanticist](#) [Alex Plitsas](#) September 23 2024

Since the heinous terrorist attack on October 7, 2023, Israel has waged a war against Hamas to ensure that this type of attack cannot happen again. To do so, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu set a goal of demilitarizing Hamas in Gaza and ensuring that it can no longer govern. Simultaneously, Iran's largest terrorist proxy force, Hezbollah, has fired more than 8,000 rockets, missiles, and mortars into Israel, killing civilians and soldiers alike, and displacing nearly 100,000 Israeli citizens in the north. For months, world powers have been engaging in back-door diplomacy trying to head off a war to no avail. Hezbollah has refused to move its forces from near the Israeli border to the Litani River, approximately nineteen miles north, as required by United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1701, which stipulates that any forces other than UN peacekeepers or Lebanese military must vacate.

Hamas has been severely degraded in Gaza, and Hezbollah has refused to move, so last week Israel began a new approach. This approach is in line with the one it has taken in Gaza that resulted in the [first hostage deal](#) in late November 2023. Israel has decided to exert military pressure on Hezbollah to try and force a settlement and repatriation of displaced persons in northern Israel. Here are the steps Israel has taken in the past week:

First, Israel [modified](#) the goals of the ongoing war to include returning citizens to their homes in Israel. This was a government action to make the impending military and intelligence operations conducted by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Mossad in Lebanon a part of the war and to allocate resources accordingly.

Second, Israel initiated a sabotage campaign against Hezbollah leaders and senior fighters. Israel had placed explosive charges inside [beepers and radios](#) that Hezbollah had ordered for primary and back-up command and control during war. Each device was filled with just enough explosives to severely injure or kill the user, and thousands of the devices went off on September 17 and 18.

Third, Israel [launched](#) a targeted strike in Beirut on September 20 that took out almost all of Hezbollah's Radwan Unit leadership during a secret meeting. Radwan Units are Hezbollah's special operations forces.

Fourth, Israel saw preparations for a massive attack against Israel and took preemptive strikes [on September 21](#) against missile and rocket launchers and storage sites in Lebanon. Israel's [Iron Dome](#) shot down those rockets and missiles that did manage to launch.

Fifth, Israel initiated a massive aerial bombardment campaign targeting remaining stockpiles, depots, and launchers in southern Lebanon on Monday. We can expect to see days if not a week or more of additional bombing campaigns targeting what Israel says are thousands of Hezbollah targets in Lebanon. Israel's aim is to systemically degrade Hezbollah's rocket and missile inventory, which was estimated to be between 120,000 to 150,000 at the beginning of the war. This is being done to try and prevent Hezbollah from

overwhelming Israel's Iron Dome with significantly larger barrages of rockets and missiles. So far Israel has been successful in doing so.

The length of the third war will depend largely on how quickly Hezbollah will come to the table.

Israel's sabotage campaign, preemptive strikes, and airstrikes against rocket launchers and storage depots appear to have taken Hezbollah by surprise. The group has yet to respond in a meaningful way.

Hezbollah's operations are likely in disarray as many senior leaders have been killed or wounded in the past week. In creating that disarray, Israel has demonstrated its ability to penetrate and collect operational intelligence on Hezbollah.

What comes next will depend on Hezbollah. So far, Israel has largely left Beirut alone, but bombardments of Hezbollah targets there and elsewhere in the country could follow if Hezbollah refuses to budge on the issue of moving north of the Litani River. If that does not work, Israel will likely be forced to launch a ground invasion into southern Lebanon to push Hezbollah out. That hasn't happened in nearly twenty years. While this would be a significant military expansion for Netanyahu's government, there does appear to be broad political support. National Unity Party chairman Benny Gantz, who resigned from Israel's wartime cabinet in June, [stated](#) Monday that he would support a ground invasion of Lebanon if that is what is required.

A ground invasion into southern Lebanon would be required if the IDF is unable to take out Hezbollah's positions, weapons stockpiles, and launch sites in the area between the border and the Litani River. This would involve armored units, artillery, infantry, and special forces sweeping through the area, conducting raids, and targeting Hezbollah positions. Israel would prefer to avoid doing so given the risk to ground forces. But if it feels a ground invasion is a necessary step, it may seek to soften the battlefield as much as possible using aerial bombardment, as it has done in Gaza, prior to deploying ground forces. Again, that will depend on whether Hezbollah voluntarily withdraws north of the river and on whether Israel determines it can accomplish its mission from the air alone.

The Second Lebanon War lasted for thirty-four days in 2006. The length of the third war will depend largely on how quickly Hezbollah will come to the table. Another important question: What will Iran do? Tehran may, for example, push for a quick end to preserve Hezbollah, as it may not want to lose its largest proxy force in the region. Hezbollah would play a key retaliatory role if Israel were to strike Iran's nuclear sites, a problem that is still simmering in the background of an increasingly volatile regional conflict.

Alex Plitsas is a nonresident senior fellow with the Middle East Programs' [Scowcroft Middle East Security Initiative](#) and leads the Initiative's Counter-Terrorism Project. He previously served as chief of sensitive activities for special operations and combating terrorism in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

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

GO TO SITE TO ACCESS REMAINDER OF ARTICLE

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 Altermann: 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 rubble 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.

HEZBOLLAH: WHAT WEAPONS DOES IT HAVE? A VISUAL GUIDE

[CNN World](#) by [Lou Robinson](#) and CNN staff September 29, 2024

(Go to site to see diagrams)

Hezbollah is believed to be the most heavily armed non-state group in the world. Backed by Iran and based in the eastern Mediterranean country of Lebanon, the Shiite Islamist group has been engaged in confrontations with Israeli forces on Lebanon's southern border since October 8.

Hezbollah first fired at Israel to protest the war in Gaza, demanding a ceasefire there as a condition to end its attacks. Cross-border hostilities have since escalated, culminating in the death of Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, in an Israeli strike on the Lebanese capital Beirut.

The cross-border conflict and recent developments have raised the specter of a regional conflagration and amplified intense diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions. Though no match for Israel's military might, Hezbollah's increasingly sophisticated arsenal has the potential to inflict significant damage on Israel.

Israel would also have to contend with Hezbollah's strategic depth. The group is part of an Iran-led axis of militants spanning Yemen, Syria, Gaza and Iraq. Some of these groups have increased coordination significantly since October, when Israel launched a war in Gaza after Hamas-led militants attacked the country. This axis is known in Israel as the "ring of fire."

For nearly a year, Hezbollah's partners in the region have been engaged in a simmering conflict with Israel and its allies. Yemen's Houthis have sporadically fired at vessels in the Red Sea, an artery of global trade, as well as on Israel. Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of hardline Shiite factions, has also launched attacks on US positions in that country. The axis has conditioned the cessation of those hostilities on a ceasefire in Gaza, rebranding themselves as a "supportive front" for Palestinians in Gaza, as described by a senior Hezbollah leader.

In September, Israel stepped up its direct confrontation with Hezbollah. In [back-to-back attacks](#), hundreds of Hezbollah's pagers and walkie-talkies exploded, killing at least 37 people and injuring thousands, before an Israeli [airstrike](#) on Beirut killed a senior Hezbollah commander. In response, Hezbollah has [vowed](#) "a battle without limits."

Following the twin communications attacks, Hezbollah launched what it said was a ballistic missile at Israel, targeting the headquarters of Israel's intelligence service Mossad. It is believed to be the first ballistic missile to be launched by militant group toward Israel. The strike, which was intercepted, reached near the bustling city of Tel Aviv.

Hezbollah's fighting force emerged from the rubble of Israel's 1982 invasion of Beirut. At the time, it was a rag-tag group of Islamist fighters supported by Iran's fledgling Islamic Republic. This was followed by a meteoric rise in the group's military and political might. In 2000, its guerrilla fighters forced Israeli forces to withdraw from south Lebanon, ending a more-than-20-year occupation. In 2006, it survived a 34-day war with Israel that wreaked havoc on Lebanon.

During Syria's uprising-turned-civil war in the 2010s, it fought on behalf of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad as he brutally quashed armed opposition forces and inflicted a huge civilian death toll. As it fought in the trenches of that nearly decade-long war, Hezbollah became seasoned in urban warfare and solidified its alliances with other Iran-backed groups fighting in Syria. It also cleared a vital supply route for weapons between Iran and Lebanon, via its partners in Iraq and Syria, further bolstering its arsenal.

Hezbollah's military capabilities have notably grown since its last war with Israel in 2006. Military analysts estimate Hezbollah to have between 30,000 and 50,000 troops, but earlier this year its leader Nasrallah claimed it has more than 100,000 fighters and reservists. The group is also believed to possess between 120,000 and 200,000 rockets and missiles.

Experts say the group's biggest military asset is the long-range ballistic missile, of which it is estimated to have thousands, including 1,500 precision missiles with ranges of 250–300 kilometers (155–186 miles). Throughout its decades-long conflict with Israel, Hezbollah has been engaged in asymmetric warfare. It has sought to grow its political and military might, while seeking to establish deterrence despite Israel's military superiority.

But Hezbollah threads the needle carefully. Provoking Israel's full firepower could significantly degrade the group's capabilities, setting it back years – if not decades – and destroying large parts of Lebanon, which has buckled under the weight of its years-long financial crisis.

The group has already lost more than around 500 fighters, including commanders, in border confrontations with Israel since October, according to Hezbollah statements and a CNN tally. On the Lebanese side of the border, over 94,000 people have been displaced. The impact on Israel has also been considerable, with more than 62,000 people displaced from its northern border area, and scores killed, including soldiers and civilians.

As the confrontations at the border continue, Hezbollah has sought, with some success, to undermine Israel's vaunted missile defense system known as the Iron Dome. It has tried to do so by attacking its platforms and overwhelming it with swarms of drones and short-range missiles in order to open a path for other projectiles to reach deeper into Israeli territory.

The full extent of Hezbollah's arsenal is not clear. In response to Israel's twin wireless device attacks, Hezbollah fired a barrage of missiles across the border into northern Israel, and said it hit an air base with [Fadi 1 and Fadi 2](#) missiles – a longer-range weapon not known to have been used so far in nearly a year of conflict.

Hezbollah's chances of survival in an all-out war with Israel is hinged on whether or not it can outsmart these systems which have in recent months intercepted thousands of airborne weapons from Iran, Gaza and Lebanon.

Because of Hezbollah's growing power, a possible all-out war between Israel and Lebanon would thrust the Middle East into uncharted waters. The diplomatic effort to prevent it is likely to continue at a breathless pace.

CNN's Rachel Wilson contributed to this report.

ANALYSIS: HASSAN NASRALLAH'S KILLING TRANSFORMS AN ALREADY DEADLY REGIONAL CONFLICT

[NPR](#) September 28, 20241 [Daniel Estrin](#) [Ruth Sherlock](#) [Willem Marx](#)



Supporters of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group raise their fists and cheer as Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah appears via a video link, during a Nov. 3, 2023, rally in Beirut to commemorate Hezbollah fighters who were killed in South Lebanon while fighting against the Israeli forces.

Hussein Malla/AP

Israel's [killing of Hassan Nasrallah](#), the long-time Hezbollah leader, has transformed an already complex and deadly regional conflict, with a broad array of potential outcomes for Israel, Gaza, Lebanon and beyond.

Prior to the powerful series of airstrikes that hit several residential buildings in southern Beirut on Friday, analysts in the Mideast had speculated that Nasrallah had left Lebanon following the widespread [pager explosions](#) earlier this month, but then soon after returned, as the United States presented an initiative that would lead to a 21-day ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israel.

[Middle East crisis — explained](#)

[Who was Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader killed by Israel?](#)

Those thousands of remotely detonated blasts — subsequently sourced to walkie-talkies too — had targeted members and allies of Hezbollah, and represented a significant blow to the group. A subsequent Israeli airstrike had then killed Hezbollah's chief of staff, and by Friday the Israeli military says Nasrallah was meeting with several other senior commanders.

Amer Al Sabaileh, a Jordanian security expert and close observer of Hezbollah, said the fact Nasrallah was willing to take the high risk to his life of gathering with other Hezbollah commanders amid Israel's campaign indicates the group was in crisis after two weeks of crippling Israeli attacks.

"The level of shock among Hezbollah cannot be measured," Al Sabaileh said. "Simply, they never expected that Israel would initiate and would continue, and does not stop attacking Hezbollah."

[Middle East](#)

[Israel has killed Hezbollah's top leader of 32 years in an airstrike](#)

And the regional consequences could be significant too, according to Sanam Vakil, director of the Middle East and North Africa program at the British think tank Chatham House.

"Iran will be looking for some way to turn the tables and save some face," Vakil wrote in a long series of online posts about the killing and its impact on Iran's so-called "[axis of resistance](#)" that includes Hezbollah, Hamas and other militant groups like the Houthis in Yemen. "The axis has not proven effective at providing Iran deterrence against Israel, or a Gaza cease-fire."

But Orna Mizrahi, an Israeli security expert from the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv, said Israel's successes in degrading Hezbollah's leadership structure and military capabilities could be leveraged to reach a lasting agreement that would force Hezbollah forces back from Lebanon's border with northern Israel.

"The weakened and battered state of Hezbollah provides a short window of opportunity to diminish its strategic capabilities further before civilian harm prompts international pressure on Israel to cease operations," she wrote in an analysis. "Simultaneously, Israel must develop a coordinated exit strategy with the U.S. to end the northern conflict."

[Middle East crisis — explained](#)

[Netanyahu defies calls for a cease-fire at the U.N., as Israel strikes Lebanon](#)

Hezbollah's succession plans and the process by which Nasrallah may be replaced are opaque, but should follow a blueprint that saw his own elevation more than 30 years ago, according to Nick Blanford, a nonresident senior fellow with the Atlantic Council's Middle East Programs and long-time expert of Hezbollah based in Beirut.

"The morale blow is going to be massive for Hezbollah, but technically it should be a repetition of what happened in '92," says Blanford. "The Shura Council sits down and they elect somebody else."

WARRING WITH SHADOWS

PERSPECTIVES Catherine Perez-Shakdam September 2024

An infiltrator's exposé of Iran's spiritual and ideological war on Jews

Catherine Perez-Shakdam

DISCLAIMER:

The views expressed in this article are that of the author and do not necessarily express the views of Jewish Futures. This article was written on 5 July 2024 and is therefore reflective of events up to this date.

In the labyrinthine world of geopolitics, where ideologies clash and power struggles manifest in the most gruesome of spectacles, there exists a profound spiritual dimension that often goes unexamined. The Islamic Republic of Iran's relationship with the State of Israel and the Jewish diaspora is one such dynamic, steeped in a spiritual and ideological zeal that demands scrutiny.

During a rare and unsettling meeting with Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, back in 2017, I was struck by the chilling clarity of his intentions. His words—"we seek to destroy the sons and daughters of Jacob"—revealed a sinister aim not just to destroy Jews physically, but to sever the divine covenant

between God and Israel. My journey into the heart of Iran's regime began with a complex infiltration that exposed me to the regime's core ideologies and strategies. Detailed in my account "The Mossad Agent Who Never Was: Inside Iran's Regime", I navigated the corridors of power under the guise of an academic and researcher, unravelling the depths of Iran's state-sponsored antisemitism and its broader geopolitical ambitions.

Whilst there, I gained unprecedented access to its inner circles, offering a rare glimpse into the radical ideologies driving the regime's policies. These revelations weren't mere abstractions; they emerged from firsthand encounters, underscoring the perilous trajectory Iran's leadership is charting, especially against Israel and the Jewish people. My role was not for personal gain but a dire warning to others. In Tehran's shadowy political landscape, my survival depended on a flawless concealment of identity, with exposure meaning far more than just expulsion—it was a matter of life and death.

This essay offers my reflections based on my experiences at the heart of the Islamic Republic, unmasking the regime's destructive ambitions and urging Jews worldwide to recognise and respond to the existential threat they face.

Iran's genocidal agenda against Jews extends beyond the borders of Israel, casting a long

shadow over Jewish communities worldwide. The regime's fervour is rooted in a deep-seated hatred for what Jews represent: a covenantal relationship with the Divine, a beacon of moral law and a symbol of resilience against tyranny. This spiritual animosity is not new; it echoes the ancient enmities that have periodically erupted throughout history. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran has managed to harness this age-old hatred and weaponise it in unprecedented ways.

Central to the regime's strategy is its manipulation of the Palestinian cause. By championing the plight of Palestinians, Tehran has positioned itself as a defender of Muslim rights against what it portrays as "Zionist oppression". This clever ruse serves multiple purposes: it garners support from the Muslim world, diverts attention from Iran's own repressive practices and amplifies antisemitism under the guise of anti-Zionism. The regime's ideologues have adeptly leveraged the Palestinian struggle, transforming it into a vehicle for their broader geopolitical and theological ambitions.

This manipulation extends to a quasi-hypnotic influence over the Middle East, and now, alarmingly, the West. Through a relentless propaganda campaign, Iran has co-opted various communities into believing a pernicious lie—that liberation and freedom require the destruction of the Jewish people.

Image courtesy of Catherine Perez-Shakdam



This narrative of liberation through annihilation is not merely a political strategy but a profound inversion of values, a grotesque parody of justice.

Iran's fiery rhetoric and actions are not confined to inflammatory speeches and militant support; they manifest in systematic attempts to delegitimise and dehumanise Jews globally. By fostering an environment where antisemitism can flourish, Iran seeks to create a world in which the Jewish state is isolated and Jewish communities are vulnerable. This is evident in their backing of militant proxies like Hezbollah and Hamas, groups that openly call for the destruction of Israel and have a history of perpetrating violence against Jews.

The other side

The ideological framework of the Islamic Republic is antithetical to the principles of Judaism. While Judaism celebrates life, sanctity and the moral imperatives of justice and mercy, Iran's theocratic regime glorifies martyrdom, death and an apocalyptic vision of divine justice that is fundamentally despondent. This cult of death, masquerading as the ultimate expression of piety, is in truth a negation of the divine light that Judaism seeks to illuminate in the world.

The spiritual war that the Islamic Republic of Iran wages against Jews is not merely a battle

for territory or political dominance; it is a cosmic struggle between life-affirming values and a worldview that venerates destruction. The regime's agenda is nothing short of genocidal, aiming to eradicate not only a people but also the very covenantal relationship that defines their existence. This war transcends the tangible; it is a battle for the soul of humanity.

October 7 was a macabre display of this genocidal agenda. Hamas' systematic targeting of women and girls, the atrocious ferocity of their attacks, was not a simple exercise in revenge but an expression of a deep-seated desire to defile Jewish women as they guarantee the continuation of the Jewish line—the vessel within which light is forever renewed and expressed. We cannot speak of October 7 without attesting to this dimension of the conflict. If we fail to see the dark design of the regime, we may be forced to endure such painful ordeals again—Hamas leaders have already expressed their desire to make it so.

Kabbalistic teachings describe evil in several profound ways, referring to it as the "Sitra Achra" (the Other Side) and "kליפות" (husks or shells), representing forces of impurity and negativity that obscure the divine light. The Islamic Republic's actions, cloaked in the language of divine mission, are the epitome of

these Kabbalistic concepts. They represent an inversion of the values that Judaism upholds.

Until we acknowledge the spiritual dimension of this fight, we are condemned to prolong it. Unless we learn to name the evil we wrestle against, we won't be able to bring it down. Jewish tradition teaches us that understanding the nature of our adversary is crucial to overcoming it. As my grandfather, a Holocaust Survivor, so often used to say, "in order to fight one's enemy one needs to give it its proper name."

The Holocaust sought the physical destruction of the Jewish people; the Ayatollahs' ambition is to disconnect our ties with the Divine. This war against Israel is actually a war against God—a rebellion akin to that of Pharaoh, who saw himself as divine.

As we navigate the treacherous waters of modern geopolitics, let us not lose sight of the deeper, spiritual battle that underpins it. To confront the Islamic Republic of Iran, we must muster not only our political and military resources but also our moral and spiritual fortitude. Only by doing so can we hope to preserve the covenant and ensure the survival of the values that make us truly human.

The spiritual dimension of antisemitism

The battle waged by the Islamic Republic against Israel and the Jewish diaspora is fundamentally spiritual. Antisemitism, that ancient and insidious poison, thrives on this perceived threat, seeking to dismantle the very values and beliefs that form the bedrock of Jewish identity.

Khamenei's chilling admission underscores the spiritual warfare in which Iran is engaged. By aiming to destroy the 'sons and daughters of Jacob,' the regime targets the very foundation of Jewish faith and continuity. Iran's regime seeks to erase not only the biological line of the Jewish people but also to annihilate the source of its spiritual traditions, its ethos and its collective memory. By targeting the cultural and spiritual foundations of these communities, Iran's leadership aims to sever the connections that bind past, present and future generations. This is an assault on the very concept of identity, intending to create a world devoid of the values that have underpinned human dignity and societal progress.

The resurgence of the blood libel, that mediaeval calumny, exemplifies the depths of this spiritual and ideological conflict. This grotesque myth, which accuses Jews of using the blood of innocents for ritual purposes, has been revived and repurposed by the Islamic Republic to vilify Israel and the Jewish people. This pernicious accusation, adapted to the modern political landscape, is used to paint Jews

“

This war transcends the tangible; it is a battle for the soul of humanity

as inherently evil and corrupt.

Recent claims by Iranian propagandists suggest that Israel's efforts to secure the return of hostages are an injustice to Palestinians. This twisted narrative defines acts of self-defence and humanitarian concern as evidence of Jewish malevolence. By framing Israel's legitimate security measures and humanitarian efforts as proof of corruption, the Iranian regime employs a classic tactic of projection. They accuse their enemies of the very atrocities they themselves are willing to commit, thereby ensnaring the unwary and the gullible in a web of deceit.

This projection is not merely rhetorical; it serves a strategic purpose. By casting Jews as bloodthirsty aggressors, the Islamic Republic seeks to dehumanise them, making it easier to justify acts of violence and oppression against them. This dehumanisation process is crucial for maintaining internal cohesion and external aggression within the regime's ideological framework, as it creates a scapegoat for the regime's failures and a rallying point for its supporters.

Moreover, the weaponisation of victimhood is a grotesque and macabre fascist play that the Iranian regime has mastered. By positioning themselves as the ultimate victims of Western and Zionist conspiracies, they deflect criticism and garner sympathy from those who view anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism as paramount values. This strategy has ensnared many in the West, who, for fear of being labelled racist or Islamophobic, become architects of their own oppression. They silence themselves and others, reinforcing the very structures of control and

repression that the Iranian regime relies upon.

The Islamic Republic's focus on the Palestinian cause has been a central tenet of its foreign policy, not out of genuine concern for Palestinian rights, but as a means to amplify antisemitism and galvanise support for its broader geopolitical ambitions. The plight of the Palestinians has been co-opted as a tool to foster hatred against Jews, portraying their liberation as inherently tied to the destruction of the Jewish state. This narrative has a quasi-hypnotic hold over many in the Middle East and increasingly in the West, where communities have been duped into believing that true liberation and freedom necessitate the complete erasure of the Jewish people.

The challenge for the global Jewish community and its allies is to recognise and counter this existential threat, understanding that the battle is as much about preserving a way of life and a spiritual legacy as it is about physical survival.

Iran's ideological framework glorifies martyrdom and death, contrasting sharply with the Jewish emphasis on life and its sanctity. This inversion of values manifests in the regime's support for terrorist organisations like Hamas and Hezbollah, which use violence and terror as tools of resistance and power. The veneration of suicide bombers and the celebration of death as a path to divine favour are stark reminders of this perverse ideology.

In contrast, Judaism's reverence for life is reflected in its laws, traditions and ethical teachings. The Talmudic principle of *pikuach nefesh*—the obligation to save a life—illustrates the paramount importance of life in Jewish thought. This fundamental divergence in values highlights the spiritual chasm between the Islamic Republic's ideology and the principles upheld by Judaism, its injunctions are our best weapons in this great war.

The broader implications of this struggle

are clear: the values that have shaped western civilisation are rooted in Jewish teachings. The Islamic Republic's war against Jews, therefore, is a war against these fundamental values.

The urgent need for awareness and action

In the current struggle against the darkness represented by the Islamic Republic of Iran, we must muster a resolve and moral clarity that is unwavering. Jewish texts and traditions offer profound insights into confronting evil. The Torah and the Talmud are replete with exhortations to stand firm against wickedness. In the Book of Deuteronomy, we are reminded that when facing an enemy, we should not be afraid because God is with us.¹ This passage underscores the necessity of courage and the divine support that bolsters us in the face of formidable foes.

We learn from our Sages in a Talmudic discussion that mercy and compassion are virtues to be extended towards those who seek peace and righteousness, not towards those who embody and perpetuate evil. Extending mercy to the wicked is seen as a distortion of divine justice and an abrogation of our moral duty. As Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus states, "Anyone who becomes merciful upon the cruel one will end by being cruel to the merciful."²

In another tractate of the Talmud, we find the principle of *Din Rodef*, (the Law of the Pursuer) which permits preemptive action against someone who is pursuing you with the intent to kill.³ This concept underlines the imperative of self-defence and the protection of innocent lives. It is a stark reminder that in the face of existential threats, decisive action is not only justified but required.

Judaism emphasises the importance of confronting evil. The texts assert that one must actively pursue justice and eradicate wickedness from the world. This pursuit of justice is not passive; it requires active engagement and, at times, the use of force to ensure that righteousness prevails.

In this struggle, we must reclaim the narrative. The weaponisation of victimhood by the Iranian regime and its proxies is a grotesque inversion of justice. By portraying themselves as defenders of the oppressed, they mask their own oppressive actions and manipulate global perceptions. We must expose this deceit and affirm the true nature of their agenda.

The battle we face transcends the physical realm. It is a spiritual war, a confrontation between light and darkness. Our resolve must be unbreakable, our moral clarity undimmed. When we stand firm against the forces of evil, we honour the covenant that binds us to the divine and ensure the preservation of a just and righteous world.



Read Catherine's account 'The Mossad Agent Who Never Was Inside Iran's Regime'

Image courtesy of Catherine Perez-Shakdam

¹ Deuteronomy 20:1-4 ² Midrash Tanchuma, Metzora 1 ³ Sanhedrin 73a

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.

Wimpen 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, 2022, 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.

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.

UNWRA AND THE JEWS

How 3000 years of Jewish civilisation in the Arab world vanished overnight'

(Vallentine 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.'

UNWRA 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?'](#)

UNRWA 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.

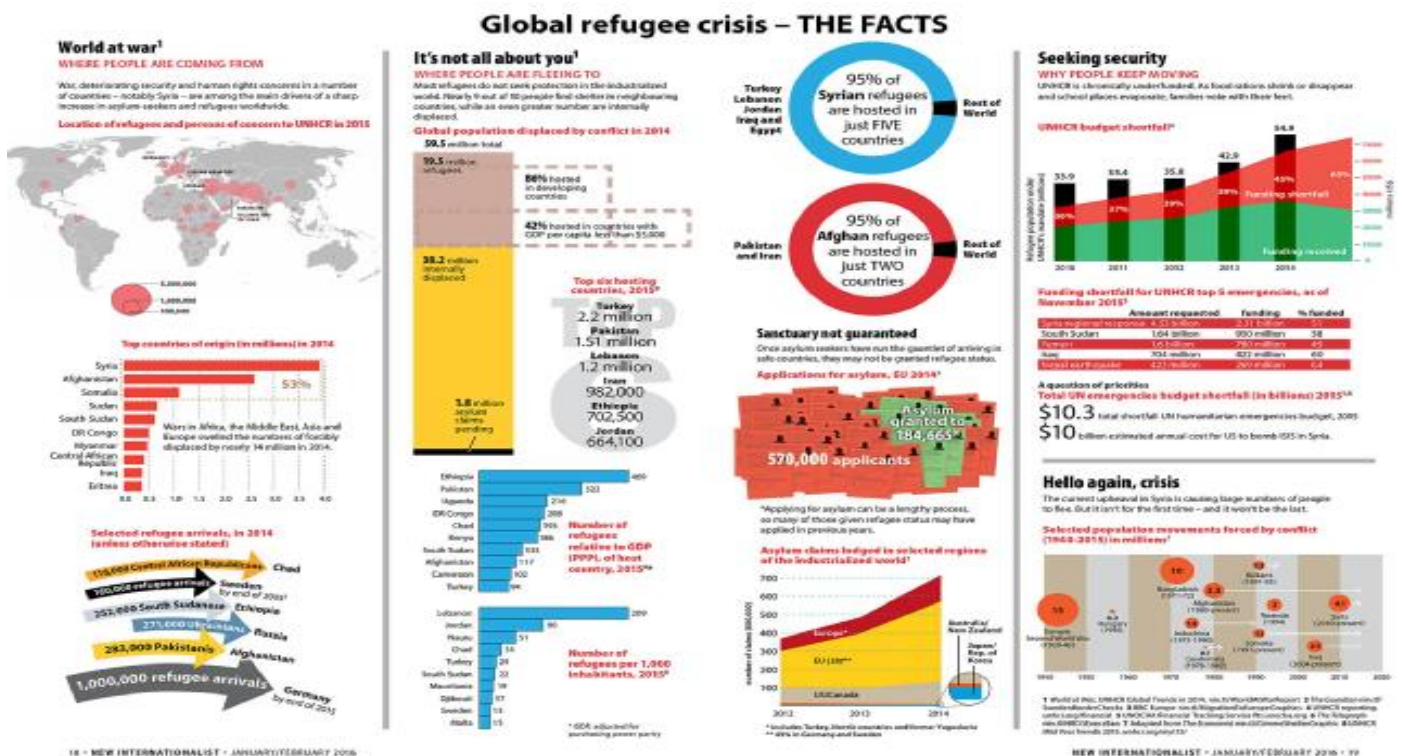
UNRWA mounted an extraordinary response during the 50 days of hostilities which highlighted its unique position as the largest UN organization in the Gaza Strip and the only UN Agency that undertakes direct implementation.

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.



UNWRA 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.

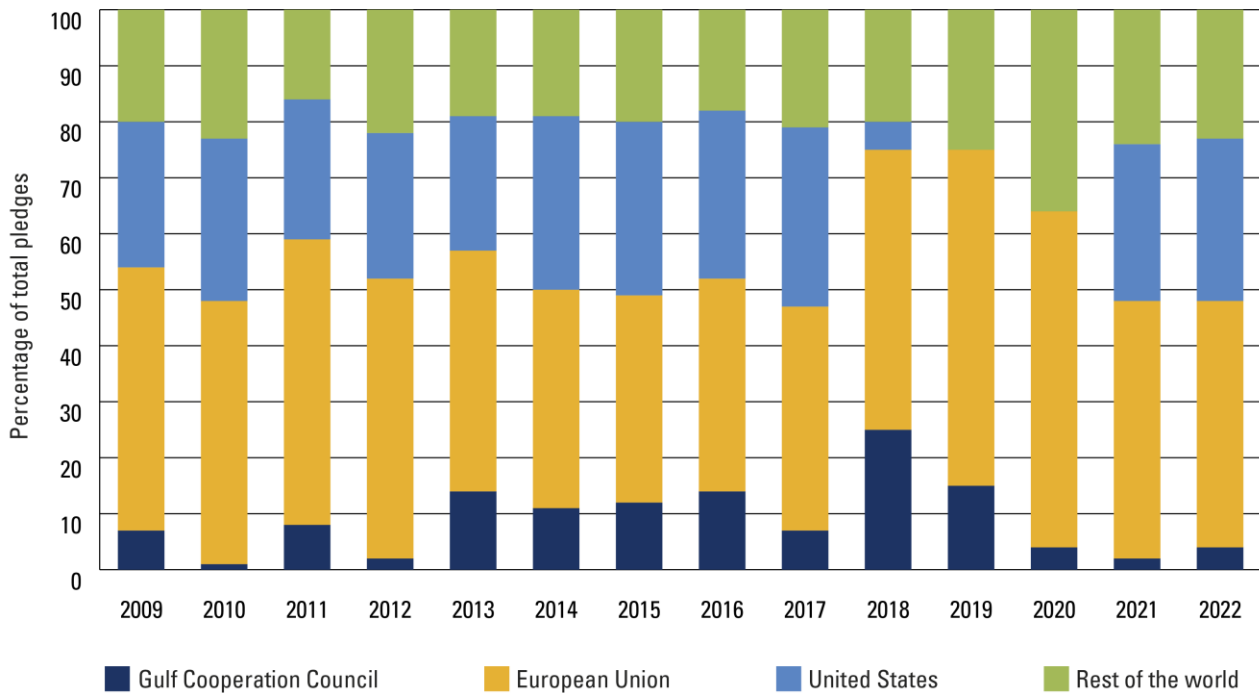
UNRWA'S FINANCIAL TROUBLES

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

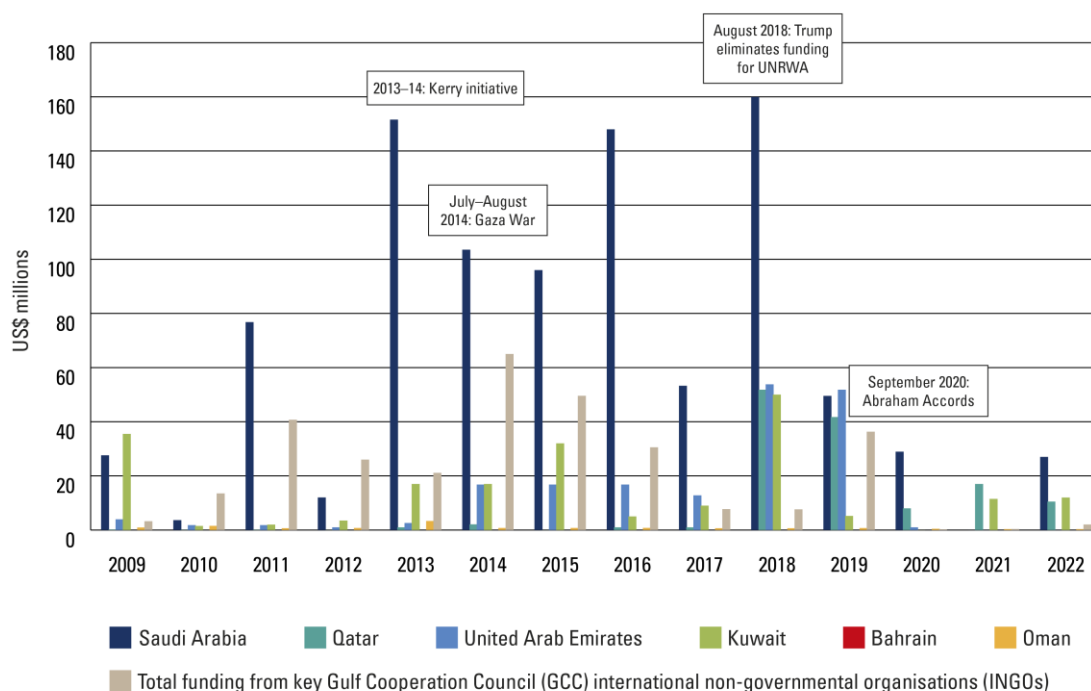
UNRWA's Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini has explicitly called on the Gulf states to step up, [touring](#) Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to raise additional funds for the agency. All four Gulf donor states [criticised](#) the decision to suspend UNRWA's funding. 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**



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.

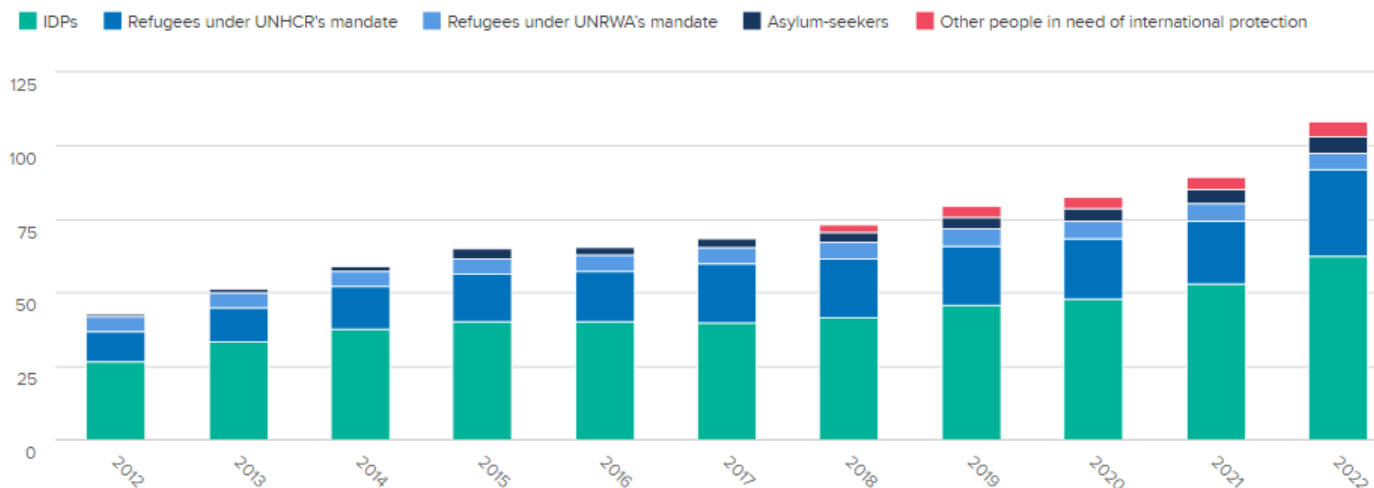
[UNHCR](#)

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

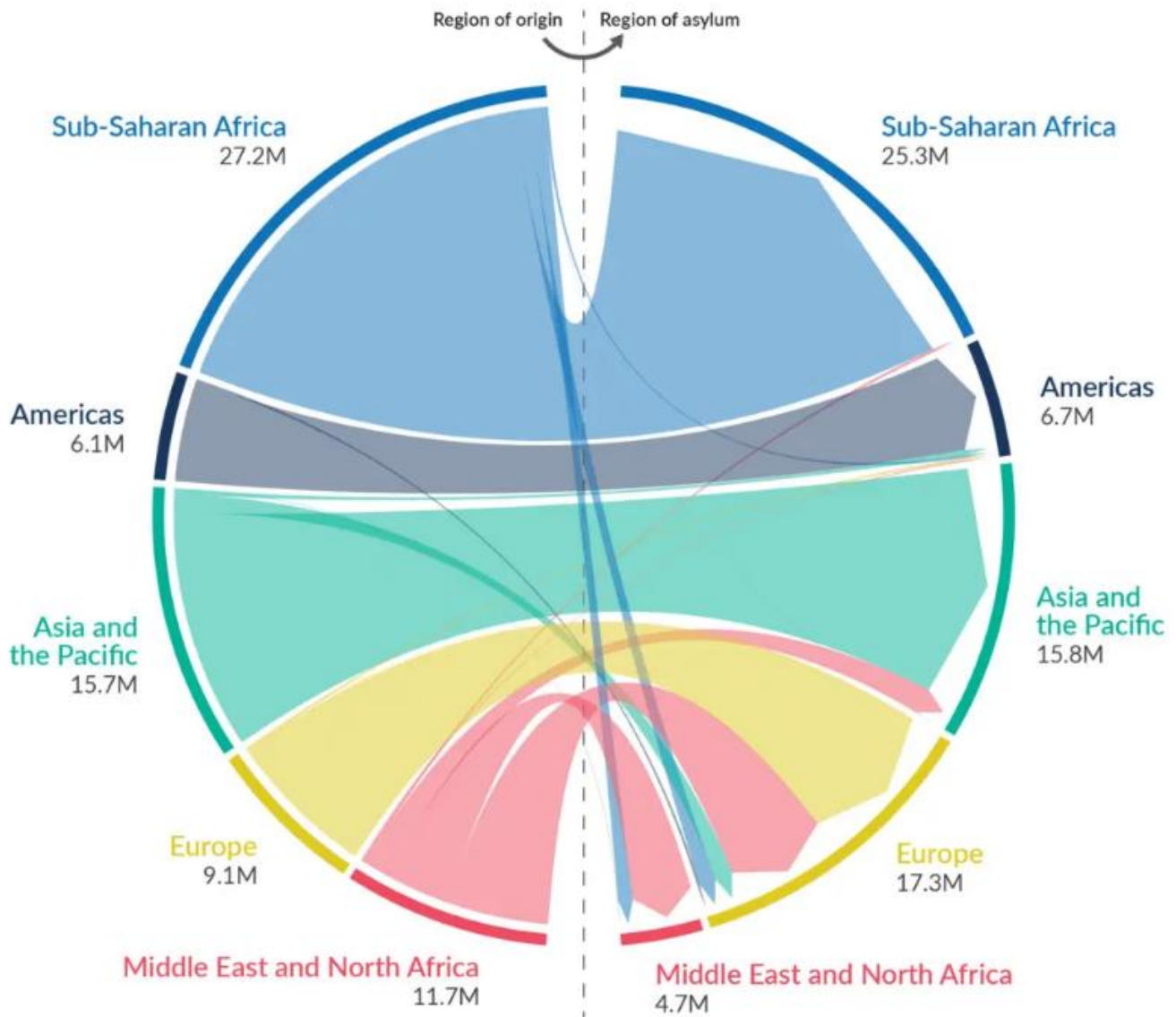
In addition to conflict and violence, people were displaced within their countries due to disasters. During the year, 32.6 million internal displacements due to disasters were reported, with 8.7 million people remaining displaced at the end of 2022, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. 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 CONFIRMED PLEDGES TO UNWRA'S PROGRAMMES
(CASH AND IN-KIND)
- OVERALL DONOR RANKING AS 31 DEC 2023 (IN USD)**

UNWRA

Go to the detailed country table to see the analysis by country, 2023
for example USA

Programme Budget (\$)	218,373,326
EA.OPT	88,500,000
Syria Appeal	37,321,000
Projects	16,710,619
Syria Flash Appeal - Earthquake	3,400,000
Early Recovery Appeal for Jenin	3,600,000
Ein El Hilweh Flash Appeal	3,100,000
Gaza Flash Appeal	51,000,000
 TOTAL USA	 422,004,945

GRAND TOTAL (ALL COUNTRIES)	\$1.463,868,250
-----------------------------	-----------------

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

CLAUDE.AI

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.

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.

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.

[Claude can make mistakes.](#)

[Please double-check responses.](#)

Subscribe to Pro and get [Claude 3 Opus](#), our most intelligent model.

[Subscribe to Pro](#)

WHY SOME COUNTRIES HAVE SUSPENDED ITS UNWRA 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 rocket 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

ARAB COUNTRIES WHO DO NOT ALLOW PALESTINIANS TO BECOME CITIZENS

ChatGPT said: (24 Sept 2024)

1. LEBANON

Policy:

- Lebanon has the strictest policies against granting citizenship to Palestinians. Lebanese law prohibits Palestinian refugees from naturalizing, owning property, and working in several professions.

Reasons:

- Sectarian balance: Lebanon's political system is based on a delicate balance between Christian, Sunni, and Shia Muslim communities. Palestinians, who are predominantly Sunni, would disrupt this balance if given citizenship, potentially empowering the Sunni population.
- Political tension: Palestinians are seen as a destabilizing force because of their involvement in Lebanon's civil war (1975-1990). Many Lebanese fear granting them citizenship would risk further conflict.

Impact:

- Around 180,000–250,000 Palestinians live in Lebanon, many of them in 12 refugee camps with poor living conditions.
- Palestinians are barred from over 70 professions, have limited access to healthcare, education, and social services, and face extreme poverty. The inability to own property further entrenches their marginalization.
- Palestinians in Lebanon are highly dependent on UNRWA for basic services, but the agency's underfunding limits its ability to meet their needs.

Analysis:

Lebanon's refusal to naturalize Palestinians is driven by concerns over domestic stability, but it has created severe humanitarian consequences for Palestinians. This policy leaves Palestinians in a cycle of poverty and marginalization. Their inability to integrate into Lebanese society increases their dependence on international aid, which is increasingly unstable.

2. JORDAN

Policy:

- Jordan has a complex relationship with its Palestinian population. The majority of Palestinians who arrived after 1948 were granted Jordanian citizenship, but a significant number, especially those from Gaza, remain stateless and without full citizenship rights.

Reasons:

- National identity concerns: While Jordan's Hashemite monarchy has been supportive of Palestinians, there is concern about the growing political influence of Palestinians in Jordan, who

already make up over half of the population. Granting citizenship to all would shift the balance of power within the country.

- Security concerns: Palestinians without citizenship, especially from Gaza, are seen as potential security risks due to tensions with Israel and internal pressures.

Impact:

- About 370,000 stateless Palestinians in Jordan (mainly from Gaza) face severe limitations. They have residency permits but cannot access the same healthcare, education, or employment opportunities as full Jordanian citizens.
- Jordan's economic struggles mean that even Palestinians with citizenship experience high unemployment and economic difficulties, but stateless Palestinians face even more significant barriers to socio-economic mobility.

Analysis:

Jordan's situation is shaped by its political and demographic considerations. While the country has integrated many Palestinians, those without citizenship remain marginalized. This duality reflects Jordan's attempt to balance Palestinian integration with its own internal stability. However, the large population of stateless Palestinians continues to face poverty and exclusion, which risks becoming a source of future instability.

3. SYRIA

Policy:

- Before the civil war, Syria offered more rights to Palestinians compared to other Arab countries, allowing them access to education, work, and some government services. However, they were not granted citizenship.

Reasons:

- Pan-Arab solidarity: Syria has historically framed its policy as one of support for the Palestinian cause, advocating for their right of return rather than their integration into Syrian society.
- Geopolitical concerns: The Assad regime used the Palestinian issue as part of its broader political stance against Israel, and naturalizing Palestinians could weaken its position.

Impact:

- Before the civil war, around 560,000 Palestinians lived in Syria, but the conflict has displaced many of them. Around 120,000 Palestinians fled Syria, and those who remain live in deteriorating conditions, especially in war-torn camps like Yarmouk.
- Displaced Palestinians face similar restrictions in neighboring countries like Lebanon and Jordan, where they are not offered citizenship and endure further deprivation.

Analysis:

Syria's initially supportive policies have been devastated by the civil war, leaving Palestinians in a desperate situation. The country's refusal to naturalize Palestinians, while framed as solidarity, has left them vulnerable to both state violence and the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Their situation remains precarious, especially as the conflict drags on.

4. KUWAIT

Policy:

- Before the Gulf War, Kuwait was home to around 400,000 Palestinians, but after the war, Kuwait expelled the majority of its Palestinian population due to the PLO's support for Saddam Hussein's invasion. Today, only around 70,000–80,000 Palestinians remain.

Reasons:

- Political retaliation: Kuwait's expulsion of Palestinians after the Gulf War was a direct response to the Palestinian leadership's support for Iraq. This severed the relationship between Kuwait and the Palestinian community.
- Economic concerns: Kuwait, like other Gulf states, operates a kafala system that ties residency to employment, and Palestinians are treated as foreign workers without any pathway to citizenship.

Impact:

- Palestinians in Kuwait live under the kafala system, with their residency tied to their jobs. They are denied access to citizenship and the rights that come with it, such as property ownership and social services.
- The expulsion of Palestinians in 1991 destroyed many lives and scattered the Palestinian population across the region. Those who remain have precarious legal status and limited rights.

Analysis:

Kuwait's policies are heavily shaped by the geopolitical fallout from the Gulf War. While Kuwait no longer expels Palestinians en masse, the country continues to deny them citizenship, leaving them in a vulnerable position. The kafala system further restricts their freedom and rights, reinforcing their status as temporary workers rather than long-term residents.

5. SAUDI ARABIA

Policy:

- Saudi Arabia, like the other Gulf states, does not offer citizenship to Palestinians and treats them as expatriates under the kafala system.

Reasons:

- Demographic and national security concerns: Saudi Arabia has a large expatriate population, and granting citizenship to Palestinians (or any foreign group) would alter the social and political dynamics within the kingdom. The state is also wary of granting citizenship to groups that could pose a political challenge.
- Solidarity: Saudi Arabia has consistently framed its policy as one of support for the Palestinian cause, emphasizing their right to return to their homeland rather than integration into Saudi society.

Impact:

- An estimated 240,000–300,000 Palestinians live in Saudi Arabia, where they are part of the expatriate labor force. Their residency is dependent on employment, and they have no path to citizenship or access to state welfare programs.

- Palestinians in Saudi Arabia, like other expatriates, face restrictions on movement, job opportunities, and social mobility, with the risk of deportation if they lose their employment.

Analysis:

Saudi Arabia's approach reflects its broader policy towards foreign workers, viewing Palestinians as a temporary workforce rather than a group to integrate into society. While the kingdom has provided financial support for the Palestinian cause, its treatment of Palestinian residents is marked by their exclusion from citizenship and social benefits, limiting their long-term stability and rights.

6. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

Policy:

- The UAE, like its Gulf neighbors, does not grant citizenship to Palestinians, treating them as foreign workers under the kafala system.

Reasons:

- Economic and social hierarchy: The UAE operates a highly stratified society, with citizens enjoying privileged access to resources and welfare, while the large expatriate population, including Palestinians, is excluded from these benefits. Granting citizenship to foreign workers would disrupt this system.
- Political considerations: Like other Gulf countries, the UAE has historically framed its refusal to naturalize Palestinians as a form of solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

Impact:

- There are around 100,000–200,000 Palestinians in the UAE, many of whom have lived there for decades but remain foreigners with no path to citizenship.
- Palestinians are dependent on employment for residency, which creates uncertainty and limits their ability to settle permanently. They cannot access state-provided housing, healthcare, or education benefits reserved for Emirati citizens.

Analysis:

The UAE's policies reflect its broader treatment of expatriates, where citizenship is reserved for a small elite. Palestinians, while able to work and live in the UAE, remain highly vulnerable due to their exclusion from the state's citizenship and social welfare system. The kafala system enforces this exclusion, perpetuating their status as temporary residents.

7. IRAQ

Policy:

- Palestinians in Iraq were once granted special residency status under Saddam Hussein but have faced persecution since his fall in 2003. Most Palestinians in Iraq are stateless and face severe discrimination.

Reasons:

- Political backlash: Palestinians were favored by Saddam Hussein's regime, and after his downfall, they became targets of harassment by sectarian militias and the Iraqi government.

- Security concerns: In post-2003 Iraq, Palestinians are seen as politically dangerous due to their association with the previous regime.

Impact:

- The Palestinian population in Iraq has dropped from 34,000 to around 10,000–15,000 since the U.S. invasion. Many have fled persecution and violence, while those who remain face discrimination, lack of legal protection, and severe poverty.
- Palestinians in Iraq live in a state of constant fear and instability, with limited access to work, healthcare, and education.

Analysis:

Iraq's treatment of Palestinians has drastically worsened since the fall of Saddam Hussein, with many fleeing due to targeted violence. The Iraqi government has shown little interest in granting citizenship or improving conditions for Palestinians, leaving them in a state of vulnerability and persecution.

CONCLUSION

Across the Arab world, Palestinians face varying degrees of exclusion and statelessness. While the official justification for these policies is often framed as support for the Palestinian cause, the actual impact has been profound humanitarian suffering. Millions of Palestinians live without basic rights, vulnerable to poverty, exploitation, and displacement. This issue highlights the complex intersection of geopolitics, national security, and identity politics in the Arab world, where domestic concerns often outweigh humanitarian considerations.

EDITORS NOTE (for detail go to [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

The *kafala* system regulates the lives of tens of millions of migrant laborers in the Middle East, but growing outrage over human rights abuses, racism, and gender discrimination has fueled calls for reform.

- The *kafala*, or sponsorship, system gives private citizens and companies in Jordan, Lebanon, and most Arab Gulf countries almost total control over migrant workers' employment and immigration status.
- The system arose from growing demand in Gulf economies for cheap labor, and the desperation of many migrants in search of work and the opportunity to send money home to their families.
- Calls for reform have grown since preparations for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar drew international scrutiny.

PART N

PEACE TREATY