



# Historical Map of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

## Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a complex struggle over land, nationhood, and faith that has unfolded over more than a century. This report provides a comprehensive historical overview, broken into major periods from ancient times to the present. It highlights key facts, influential actors, geopolitical shifts involving neighboring Arab countries, and the central role of Jerusalem through time. A chronological timeline table is included for quick reference, followed by detailed section-by-section analysis. Where claims from the Ben Shapiro video are misleading or incomplete, we correct them with factual context from reputable sources. The goal is an accessible, fact-checked historical map of the conflict for general readers.

## Timeline of Key Events

Period/Date	Key Events and Developments
c.1000 BCE - 636 CE (Ancient)	Kingdoms of <b>Israel</b> and <b>Judah</b> establish Jewish presence; Jerusalem made capital by King David c.1000 BCE <sup>1</sup> . Babylonian conquest (586 BCE) and Roman suppression (70 CE) lead to Jewish diasporas <sup>1</sup> . Region (often called Judea/Palestine) comes under Greek, Roman, and Byzantine rule. <b>Jerusalem</b> is revered in Judaism (site of the ancient Temple), in Christianity (site of Jesus's life and crucifixion), and later in Islam (Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey) <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> .
636 - 1517 (Islamic & Crusader)	Arab Muslim armies conquer the region (638 CE), which is thereafter ruled by various <b>Islamic caliphates</b> (Umayyad, Abbasid, etc.) except during the <b>Crusades</b> (1099-1187) when Christian kingdoms briefly control Jerusalem <sup>1</sup> . The city and region become known to Muslims as <i>Filastin</i> (Palestine), with a predominantly Arabic-speaking population and a continuous (but minority) Jewish presence. In 1517, the <b>Ottoman Empire</b> takes control.
1517 - 1917 (Ottoman Rule)	<b>Ottoman Palestine:</b> For four centuries, Palestine is an Ottoman province with diverse inhabitants (mostly Muslim and Christian Arabs, plus Jews in cities). In the late 19th century, the <b>Zionist movement</b> emerges in Europe aiming to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Small waves of Jewish immigration begin under Ottoman rule. By 1914, the population of Palestine was roughly 657,000 Muslim Arabs, 81,000 Christian Arabs, and 59,000 Jews <sup>4</sup> (Jews ~7% of the population). World War I leads to Ottoman defeat and British entry into Jerusalem in 1917.

Period/Date	Key Events and Developments
<b>1917 – 1947</b> (British Mandate)	<p>After WWI, Palestine comes under <b>British Mandate</b> (authorized by the League of Nations in 1922) <sup>5</sup>. The mandate incorporates Britain's 1917 <b>Balfour Declaration</b> supporting "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine <sup>6</sup>. Large-scale Jewish immigration (especially in the 1930s, escaping Nazi persecution) increases the Jewish proportion of the population <sup>6</sup>. Arab Palestinians resist colonial rule and mass immigration, demanding independence; a major Arab revolt erupts in 1936–1939 <sup>7</sup>. Violence and terrorism occur on both sides. Unable to resolve the conflict, Britain refers the issue to the newly formed United Nations in 1947.</p>
<b>1947 – 1949</b> (Partition & 1948 War)	<p>In 1947 the <b>UN proposed partitioning</b> Palestine into two states – one Jewish, one Arab – with <b>Jerusalem internationalized</b> under UN governance <sup>8</sup>. The Jewish Agency accepted the plan, but Arab leaders rejected it, seeing it as unfair (Jews were ~33% of the population yet offered ~55% of the land). <b>Israel declared independence</b> on May 14, 1948, upon British withdrawal <sup>9</sup>. Neighboring Arab states (<b>Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon</b>, with other Arab support) intervened, launching war against the new State of Israel <sup>9</sup>. Israel prevailed in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, expanding to control about <b>77% of Mandatory Palestine</b> (more territory than allotted by the UN plan) <sup>10</sup>. The war created a massive <b>refugee crisis</b>: an estimated 700,000+ Palestinian Arabs (over half the Arab population) fled or were <b>expelled</b> from their homes – an event Palestinians call the <i>Nakba</i> ("Catastrophe") <sup>11</sup>. In the 1949 armistices, the remaining territories were divided: <b>Jordan took the West Bank and East Jerusalem</b>, including the Old City, while <b>Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip</b> <sup>12</sup>. Jerusalem was left split – Israel held West Jerusalem and Jordan held East Jerusalem (containing holy sites) <sup>13</sup>. No Palestinian Arab state was established, planting the seeds of the continuing conflict.</p>
<b>1950s – 1960s</b> (Early Conflict)	<p><b>Palestinian displacement</b> and anger grew in the 1950s as refugees remained in camps in Jordan, Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria, denied return by Israel <sup>11</sup>. Fedayeen (guerrilla fighters) launched cross-border raids, and Israel conducted reprisals. <b>Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser</b> emerged as a pan-Arab leader championing the Palestinian cause. In 1956, Israel, Britain, and France invaded Egypt (the <b>Suez Crisis</b>) after Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal; under U.S. and UN pressure they withdrew, but Israel gained a sense of military strength. <b>1964</b> saw the founding of the <b>Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)</b> under Arab League auspices, aiming to reclaim Palestine. Tensions mounted by 1967 with border clashes and Egyptian-led moves to confront Israel.</p>

Period/Date	Key Events and Developments
<b>1967</b> (Six-Day War)	<p>In June 1967, Israel fought <b>the Six-Day War</b> against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Israel launched a preemptive strike, and within six days achieved a sweeping victory <sup>14</sup>. Israel <b>occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem</b>, plus Syria's <b>Golan Heights</b> and Egypt's <b>Sinai Peninsula</b> <sup>15</sup>. Jerusalem was reunified under Israeli control; Israel soon annexed East Jerusalem, expanding the city's municipal boundaries <sup>16</sup> (this annexation is not internationally recognized and was condemned by the UN <sup>16</sup>). Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the newly occupied territories became refugees (a <b>second exodus</b> of about 300,000–500,000 Palestinians fled the West Bank and Gaza in 1967) <sup>17</sup>. The UN Security Council passed <b>Resolution 242</b> calling for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 and affirming the "land for peace" principle <sup>18</sup>. From 1967 onward, Israel administered the West Bank and Gaza under military occupation. Soon it began establishing <b>settlements</b> for Israeli Jews in these territories, a practice later deemed illegal by UN resolutions.</p>
<b>1970s</b> (War and Peace Shifts)	<p><b>1970:</b> Conflict spread to Jordan – after the PLO built a state-within-a-state among Palestinian refugees there, King Hussein's forces fought the PLO in a brief civil war (<i>Black September</i> 1970), expelling it to Lebanon. <b>1973:</b> Egypt and Syria launched the <b>Yom Kippur War</b> (October 1973) against Israeli forces to recapture Sinai and Golan. After initial Arab advances, Israel repelled the attacks <sup>19</sup>, but the war shook Israeli confidence and paved the way for diplomacy. <b>1978–79:</b> In a groundbreaking move, Egypt's President <b>Anwar Sadat</b> and Israel's Prime Minister <b>Menachem Begin</b>, brokered by U.S. President <b>Jimmy Carter</b>, signed the <b>Camp David Accords</b> (1978) and a <b>Peace Treaty</b> (1979). Egypt formally recognized Israel – the first Arab state to do so – and Israel withdrew from the entire Sinai Peninsula in 1982 as agreed <sup>20</sup> <sup>21</sup>. This ended the Egyptian-Israeli state of war <sup>21</sup> (though the Palestinian question was largely deferred, aside from agreeing to negotiate future autonomy for the occupied territories <sup>22</sup>). Meanwhile, the PLO, led by <b>Yasser Arafat</b>, continued guerilla attacks from its new base in <b>Lebanon</b>, and Israel responded with airstrikes.</p>
<b>1982</b> (Lebanon War)	<p>Israel invaded Lebanon in June 1982 with the goal of destroying PLO bases near its northern border <sup>23</sup>. The invasion, reaching Beirut, forced the <b>PLO to evacuate</b> Lebanon. Despite U.S. guarantees for the safety of Palestinian refugees left behind, a <b>massacre</b> occurred in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in September 1982, carried out by an Israeli-allied Lebanese militia while Israeli forces encircled the area <sup>23</sup>. The Lebanon War highlighted the regional dimension of the conflict (involving <b>Lebanon</b> and indirectly <b>Syria</b> as well) and led to the PLO's dispersal (Arafat relocated to Tunisia). In the occupied territories, Palestinian frustration continued to build under Israeli military rule.</p>

Period/Date	Key Events and Developments
<b>1987 – 1993</b> (First Intifada)	<p>In December 1987, a spontaneous <b>Palestinian uprising</b> known as the <b>First Intifada</b> erupted in the West Bank and Gaza, triggered by an incident in which an Israeli military vehicle struck and killed four Palestinians <sup>24</sup>. The intifada saw mass protests, civil disobedience, and clashes; the enduring image was youths throwing stones at Israeli troops and tanks <sup>25</sup>. Israel responded with force; over the six-year revolt, approximately <b>1,300 Palestinians and 200 Israelis</b> were killed <sup>26</sup>. During this time, <b>Hamas</b> was founded in Gaza by Sheikh <b>Ahmed Yassin</b> (1987) as an Islamist movement opposing Israel, eventually rivaling the secular PLO <sup>27</sup>.</p> <p>Regionally, <b>Jordan's King Hussein</b> in 1988 renounced all claims to the West Bank and acknowledged the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people <sup>28</sup>. That same year the exiled PLO, under Arafat, <b>proclaimed the State of Palestine</b> and accepted a two-state solution along the 1967 borders, implicitly recognizing Israel <sup>29</sup>. The intifada created international pressure for a peace process.</p>
<b>1991 – 1995</b> (Oslo Peace Process)	<p><b>1991:</b> After the Gulf War, the U.S. and USSR convened the <b>Madrid Peace Conference</b>, bringing together Israel, the PLO (under the Jordanian delegation), Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan for the first direct talks <sup>30</sup>. These talks led to secret negotiations between Israel and the PLO. <b>1993:</b> The breakthrough came with the <b>Oslo Accords</b> – a Declaration of Principles signed by Israeli Prime Minister <b>Yitzhak Rabin</b> and PLO Chairman <b>Yasser Arafat</b>, facilitated by Norway <sup>31</sup>. The Oslo Accords established mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO and created the <b>Palestinian Authority (PA)</b> for interim self-governance in parts of Gaza and the West Bank <sup>32</sup>. Israel agreed to withdraw from Gaza and the Jericho area first <sup>33</sup>, and later from other West Bank towns. While thorny issues (Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, final borders) were left for future talks <sup>34</sup>, Oslo raised hopes. In 1994, Arafat, Rabin, and Israeli FM <b>Shimon Peres</b> received the <b>Nobel Peace Prize</b> <sup>31</sup>. Also in 1994, <b>Jordan</b> signed a <b>peace treaty</b> with Israel – the second Arab state to normalize relations. The Israel-Jordan treaty settled borders and even acknowledged Jordan's special role in Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites <sup>35</sup>. Despite these positive steps, extremists on both sides opposed Oslo: Jewish extremist Baruch Goldstein massacred 29 Palestinians in Hebron (1994), and Hamas and Islamic Jihad carried out suicide bombings in Israel. In November 1995, Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist opposed to his peace efforts.</p>

Period/Date	Key Events and Developments
<b>2000 – 2005</b> (Second Intifada)	<p>Final-status peace talks faltered. A high-stakes summit at Camp David in July 2000 (hosted by U.S. President Bill Clinton with Israel's <b>Ehud Barak</b> and Arafat) failed to reach a final agreement <sup>36</sup>. In September 2000, <b>Ariel Sharon</b> (then an opposition politician) visited Jerusalem's <b>Temple Mount</b> (Haram al-Sharif) — a site holy to both Jews and Muslims — in what was seen as a provocative assertion of Israeli control <sup>37</sup>. Anger over this visit and the collapse of talks sparked the <b>Second Intifada</b> (also called Al-Aqsa Intifada). This uprising (2000–2005) was far more violent than the first <sup>38</sup>: militants carried out frequent suicide bombings in Israeli cities, and Israel reoccupied many Palestinian areas in harsh crackdowns. Approximately <b>4,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis</b> were killed in the second intifada <sup>38</sup>. The Palestinian Authority lost control as lawlessness and militant groups grew; meanwhile, Israeli politics shifted rightward (Ariel Sharon became Prime Minister in 2001 and took a hard line against Arafat). The intifada finally waned by 2005, leaving the Oslo peace process in tatters.</p>
<b>2005 – 2010</b> (Gaza and Political Split)	<p><b>2005:</b> Prime Minister Sharon unilaterally implemented Israel's <b>disengagement from Gaza</b>, evacuating all Israeli settlers and military from the Gaza Strip <sup>39</sup>. However, Israel retained control of Gaza's airspace, coastal waters, and most border crossings (Egypt controlled the Rafah crossing) <sup>39</sup>. <b>2006:</b> The Islamist group <b>Hamas</b> won Palestinian legislative elections, defeating the Fatah party (the main PLO faction) <sup>40</sup>. The U.S., EU, and Israel cut off aid to the PA, as Hamas is designated a terrorist organization <sup>41</sup>. A unity government attempt failed, and in <b>2007</b> Hamas seized full control of <b>Gaza</b> by force, while the Fatah-led PA retained control in parts of the <b>West Bank</b> <sup>42</sup>. This political split persists, resulting in two rival Palestinian administrations. <b>2008:</b> After persistent rocket fire from Gaza, Israel launched <b>Operation Cast Lead</b> in Dec 2008, a war in Gaza that killed around 1,300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis before a ceasefire <sup>43</sup> <sup>44</sup>. The cycle of conflict around Gaza was just beginning.</p>
<b>2010s</b> (Stalemate and Gaza Wars)	<p>Repeated U.S.-brokered peace negotiations (e.g. 2013–14 under Secretary of State John Kerry) failed to achieve a final status agreement <sup>45</sup>. Meanwhile, <b>Israeli settlements</b> in the West Bank continued expanding, and Palestinians saw East Jerusalem increasingly isolated by a security barrier (started in 2002 during the intifada) <sup>46</sup>. In Gaza, <b>Hamas</b> and Israel fought several intense conflicts: <b>Nov 2012</b> (brief conflict after exchanges of fire) and a major war in <b>2014 (Operation Protective Edge)</b>, in which a 50-day Israeli offensive in Gaza left about <b>2,000 Palestinians (mostly civilians)</b> and <b>71 Israelis</b> (66 soldiers, 5 civilians) dead <sup>47</sup>. Each war further devastated Gaza's infrastructure. <b>2011–2014</b> also saw regional upheaval (the Arab Spring and Syria's war), which shifted Arab states' focus away from Palestine. The peace process stagnated; by the late 2010s, the two-state solution appeared increasingly elusive.</p>

Period/Date	Key Events and Developments
<b>2020 – 2021</b> (Diplomacy & Unrest)	<p><b>2020:</b> In a surprising development, several Arab states forged <b>normalization deals</b> with Israel (the <b>Abraham Accords</b>) <sup>48</sup>. The <b>United Arab Emirates and Bahrain</b> established formal diplomatic relations with Israel, followed by <b>Sudan and Morocco</b>, marking the first Arab recognitions since Jordan in 1994 <sup>48</sup>. These agreements, brokered by the Trump administration, bypassed the Palestinian issue – a blow to Palestinian leverage as Arab consensus on conditioning peace with Israel on Palestinian statehood weakened. Also in 2020, the U.S. under President Trump proposed a <b>Middle East peace plan</b> heavily favoring Israeli positions, which Palestinians rejected outright <sup>49</sup>.</p> <p><b>2021:</b> Tensions in Jerusalem sparked another round of violence. Protests over the threatened eviction of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem (Sheikh Jarrah), coupled with Israeli police clashes with Palestinian worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque, led <b>Hamas</b> to fire rockets at Israel in May 2021 <sup>50</sup>. Israel responded with heavy airstrikes on Gaza. In the <b>May 2021 Gaza war</b>, around <b>260 Palestinians</b> (including many civilians) and <b>13 Israelis</b> were killed before an Egypt-brokered truce <sup>50</sup>. The U.S. restored some aid to Palestinians afterward <sup>51</sup>, but the core issues remained unresolved.</p>
<b>2023 – 2025</b> (Recent Developments)	<p>On <b>October 7, 2023</b>, <b>Hamas</b> launched an unprecedented surprise attack from Gaza, breaching the border, killing around <b>1,200 people in Israel (mostly civilians)</b>, and taking over 200 hostages <sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup>. This shocking attack (the deadliest in Israel's history) prompted Israel to declare war on Hamas. Israel's military responded with a massive bombing and ground campaign in Gaza, aiming to dismantle Hamas. The war caused catastrophic Palestinian casualties and destruction in Gaza; by early 2025, Israeli operations had killed nearly <b>60,000 Palestinians</b> (per later estimates, many of them civilians) <sup>54</sup>, and a humanitarian crisis unfolded. The conflict threatened to expand as <b>Lebanese Hezbollah</b> fired rockets at Israel in solidarity with Hamas, leading to cross-border clashes. By late 2024, Israel even carried out limited ground incursions into southern <b>Lebanon</b> against Hezbollah, until a ceasefire in November 2024 halted a feared wider war <sup>55</sup>. Meanwhile, international efforts pushed for pauses to address the humanitarian situation. A brief <b>cease-fire</b> in early 2025 enabled hostage-prisoner exchanges and aid delivery <sup>56</sup>, but it collapsed, and hostilities resumed <sup>54</sup>. The conflict remains ongoing, underscoring that the core disputes – mutual recognition, borders, security, Palestinian statehood, refugees, and the status of <b>Jerusalem</b> – remain painfully unresolved.</p>

## Ancient and Ottoman Era: Roots of the Conflict

**Historical Roots:** Both Jews and Palestinian Arabs trace their connection to the land back many centuries. In antiquity, the land (historically called Israel, Judea, or Palestine) was the home of the Hebrew/Jewish people, who built their kingdoms and holy Temple in **Jerusalem** <sup>1</sup>. Jewish political sovereignty was lost in ancient times: Jerusalem was destroyed by Babylon (586 BCE) and again by Rome (70 CE), which led to the dispersion (**diaspora**) of much of the Jewish population <sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, some Jews continued to live in the area under various empires. By the time Islam emerged, Jerusalem and the surrounding region had seen **Greco-Roman** and **Byzantine** Christian rule.

**Islamic and Arab Presence:** In 638 CE, Muslim Arab armies conquered Jerusalem and Palestine, bringing the land into the realm of **Islamic caliphates** <sup>1</sup>. Over the next centuries, the population became predominantly Arabic-speaking and Muslim (with significant Christian communities and a small Jewish minority). Jerusalem became holy to **Muslims** – it is home to the **Dome of the Rock** (built 691 CE) and Al-Aqsa Mosque, and is revered as Islam's third holiest city (site of Prophet Muhammad's ascension) <sup>2</sup>. It is also central to **Christianity** (where Jesus was crucified and resurrected) and remains the spiritual focal point of **Judaism** <sup>3</sup>. This unique status made Jerusalem a flashpoint even in medieval times (e.g. the **Crusades** pitted Christians against Muslims for control of the holy city).

**Ottoman Rule:** From **1517** to **1917**, Palestine was governed by the **Ottoman Empire**. During these four centuries, there were no independent states of Israel or Palestine; the region was divided into Ottoman provinces. Importantly, **Jews, Christians, and Muslims** lived together under Ottoman administration, mostly in peace. By the 19th century, **Palestine** had a mostly agrarian society of Arabic-speaking Muslims and Christians, with Jews constituting a small fraction of the population (often living in cities like Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias). The *religious* significance of the land to Jews in the diaspora remained, but the idea of re-establishing a Jewish nation-state (political **Zionism**) only emerged in the late 1800s. Pioneering Zionist immigrants from Europe began arriving, joining the old Jewish communities. Still, on the eve of World War I the Jewish population was under 8-10% <sup>4</sup>, and the Arab population saw the land as their ancestral home (though they identified primarily in religious or local terms, as the concept of Arab nationalism was only just developing).

**Geopolitical Context:** During Ottoman rule, **neighboring regions** like **Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt** were also Ottoman provinces. Identities were fluid, but Jerusalem was a regional center of spiritual importance. Tensions between communities were minimal compared to later periods; however, the **late Ottoman era** saw growing friction as Zionist immigration increased. Arab locals began to oppose the idea of large-scale Jewish settlement that aimed for eventual statehood. Still, it was the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in WWI – and the actions of Great Power colonialism – that truly set the stage for the modern conflict.

## The British Mandate (1917–1947): Nationalism on the Rise

World War I transformed the Middle East. The Ottomans were defeated, and in 1917 British forces captured Jerusalem. That same year, Britain issued the **Balfour Declaration**, endorsing the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine <sup>6</sup>, while also vaguely promising not to prejudice the rights of existing non-Jewish inhabitants. After the war, the *League of Nations* formally granted **Britain the Mandate over Palestine** in 1922, tasking it with preparing the country for eventual independence <sup>5</sup>. Crucially, the mandate’s terms included implementing the Balfour Declaration <sup>6</sup>. This created an inherent contradiction: two communities – **Jews** and **Arab Palestinians** – now had their national aspirations tied to the same land, under British oversight.

**Jewish Immigration and Land Purchase:** During the Mandate period, waves of Jewish immigration (the *Aliyahs*) arrived, mainly from Europe. Jewish agencies purchased land (sometimes displacing tenant farmers), and the Jewish population rose from ~10% in 1918 to about 30% by 1947 <sup>7</sup>. Especially in the 1930s, as Jews fled Nazi persecution, immigration swelled <sup>7</sup>. The Yishuv (Jewish community in Palestine) built farms, industries, and political institutions, anticipating an independent Jewish state. Notable figures included **Chaim Weizmann** and **David Ben-Gurion**, who led the Zionist leadership.

**Arab Nationalism and Unrest:** The Arab majority – roughly 1.2 million Palestinian Arabs by the 1940s – grew increasingly alarmed. They had expected independence (Sharif Hussein of Mecca and local Arab leaders had been encouraged by wartime British promises of self-determination). Instead, they saw British rule facilitating a Jewish homeland at their expense. Palestinian Arab nationalism coalesced under leaders like **Haj Amin al-Husseini** (the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem). Arabs demanded democratic governance (which, given their majority, would preclude a Jewish national home), but Britain resisted. Frustration erupted in the **Arab Revolt of 1936–1939**, a widespread uprising against British rule and mass Jewish immigration <sup>7</sup>. The revolt included strikes and armed insurgency; it was brutally suppressed by British forces (with help from Zionist militias). Thousands of Arabs were killed, and their leadership was decimated or exiled. Violence and reprisals between Arabs and Jews during these years sowed bitter enmity.

Britain tried proposals to reconcile the sides – from a 1937 **partition plan** (Peel Commission) to limiting Jewish immigration with the 1939 White Paper – but pleasing one side angered the other. By **1947**, exhausted and facing insurgencies (Jewish militants of the Irgun and Lehi now also waged violent campaigns against British authorities), Britain decided to **terminate its Mandate** and hand the problem to the **United Nations** <sup>57</sup>.

**UN Partition Plan:** A UN Special Committee proposed to **partition Palestine** into two independent states – one Arab, one Jewish – with an economic union and **Jerusalem under international administration** (corpus separatum) given its universal significance <sup>8</sup>. In November 1947, **UN General Assembly Resolution 181** was adopted, endorsing partition. Jews (by then ~600,000 people) celebrated the prospect of statehood and accepted the plan, though they were unhappy with Jerusalem being separate. Palestinian Arabs (about 1.3 million people) and all Arab states rejected the plan. They argued it was unjust to give the Jewish minority a state on 55% of the land while denying Arab self-determination. Tensions immediately boiled over into violence – the country slid into **civil war** between Jewish and Arab communities even before the British withdrawal.

## The 1948 War and the Creation of Israel

On May 14, 1948, **David Ben-Gurion** declared the independence of the **State of Israel** as the British mandate officially ended <sup>9</sup>. The surrounding Arab nations reacted by intervening militarily the next day, marking the start of the **1948 Arab-Israeli War**. Forces from **Egypt, Transjordan (Jordan), Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon** (with token support from other Arab volunteers) invaded the territory of former Palestine <sup>9</sup>. Their declared goal was to protect Arab Palestinians and prevent the establishment of a Jewish state.

**Outcomes:** Despite the odds, the Israeli forces (the Haganah, which became the Israel Defense Forces/IDF) won a decisive victory. The war was hard-fought and not one-sided at first – the Arabs secured some initial gains, and Jerusalem's eastern half fell to Jordan's well-trained Arab Legion. But Israel managed to not only defend the areas allotted to the Jewish state by the UN plan but also to **expand its territory**. When armistice agreements were signed in 1949, Israel controlled about **77% of the former Palestine Mandate** <sup>10</sup> (about 22% more land than the UN plan had given it). The remaining areas – the **West Bank** (including **East Jerusalem**) and the **Gaza Strip** – were held by Jordan and Egypt, respectively <sup>11</sup>. Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950 (unrecognized except by a few countries), and stationed troops in East Jerusalem's Old City, from which the Jewish population had fled or been expelled. Jerusalem was thus a divided city: Israel made **West Jerusalem** its de facto capital (though most countries withheld recognition and kept embassies in Tel Aviv), while **East Jerusalem**, including holy sites like the Western Wall and Church of the Holy Sepulchre, was under Jordanian rule <sup>13</sup>.

**Nakba – The Palestinian Tragedy:** The 1948 war had a devastating impact on Palestinian Arabs. Over 700,000 Palestinians became refugees, fleeing or being forced from their towns and villages <sup>11</sup>. Israeli forces conducted expulsions in some areas, and panic from events like the **Deir Yassin massacre** (April 1948) caused many Arabs to flee. Arab governments had encouraged civilians to temporarily leave war zones in some cases, promising they'd return after an Arab victory – but that victory never came <sup>58</sup> <sup>59</sup>. When the war ended, Israel refused to readmit the vast majority of Arab refugees, seeing them as a threat to the Jewish majority of the new state. These displaced Palestinians (and their descendants, now numbering in the millions) have remained refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, and the West Bank ever since. The **UN General Assembly Resolution 194** (Dec 1948) called for refugees wishing to return and live at peace to be permitted to do so or to receive compensation <sup>60</sup> – a point Palestinians cite as recognition of a "right of return," though Israel disputes this. The refugee issue became a core sticking point in the conflict.

**New State, New Armistice Lines:** The 1949 armistice lines (often called the "Green Line") became the effective borders of Israel until 1967. These lines left no Palestinian state – a fact that is often overlooked. Palestinians ended up under foreign Arab rule: Jordan occupied the West Bank (including a majority-Palestinian East Jerusalem), and Egypt controlled Gaza. Palestinians in those areas did not gain independence; in fact, the **Palestine** that might have been was essentially partitioned between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The **Gaza Strip** swelled with refugees but remained under Egyptian military administration (Egypt did not annex Gaza or make its residents citizens). **Jordan**, however, annexed the West Bank and granted its Arab residents Jordanian citizenship (King Abdullah of Jordan likely hoped to eventually incorporate that territory permanently).

**Geopolitical Dynamics:** The 1948 war not only pitted Israelis against Palestinians, but also **Israel against surrounding Arab states**. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and others emerged from the war embittered by defeat but unwilling to recognize Israel. No formal peace was signed; only armistice agreements marked a pause. The **Arab League** imposed a economic boycott on Israel. The Arab states hosted Palestinian refugees but (with the exception of Jordan) generally kept them in camps without citizenship, both for political reasons and due to local tensions. The war also created **Jewish refugees**: in its aftermath, Jews living in Arab countries faced hostility, and about 800,000 would eventually flee or be expelled from Arab lands in the 1950s, many resettling in Israel. Though distinct from the Palestinian refugee issue, this parallel exodus further entwined regional politics.

For the next two decades, the frontiers were tense. Palestinian fedayeen fighters infiltrated Israel from Gaza and the West Bank to strike at Israeli targets; Israel often responded with raids into Jordanian or Egyptian territory. This period saw **Israeli political dominance by founding figures** like Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, and on the Arab side, rising nationalist leaders such as Egypt's **Gamal Abdel Nasser**. The **Cold War** also made its imprint: the US and Western powers came to support Israel (and conservative Arab monarchies like Jordan), while the Soviet Union armed states like Egypt and Syria.

## The Six-Day War of 1967: Occupation of Territories

By the mid-1960s, the conflict escalated again. **Palestinian guerrilla groups** (like Fatah, led by Yasser Arafat) began armed operations, often based from Syria or Jordan. Border skirmishes between Israel and Syria over the Golan Heights, and between Israel and Palestinian fighters, became frequent. In **May 1967**, a crisis unfolded: Egypt's Nasser mobilized troops in Sinai, expelled UN peacekeepers, and **blockaded Israel's access** to the Red Sea via the Straits of Tiran – steps Israel considered casus belli. Israel, feeling encircled by

hostile moves from Egypt, Syria, and Jordan (which signed a defense pact with Egypt), launched a preemptive strike on June 5, 1967.

**Blitz Victory:** In what came to be known as the **Six-Day War**, Israel achieved a stunning victory <sup>14</sup>. It destroyed the Egyptian air force on the ground on day one, then routed Jordan's and Syria's forces. By June 10, Israel had seized: - **East Jerusalem and the entire West Bank** from Jordan, - The **Gaza Strip** and all of Egypt's **Sinai Peninsula**, and - The **Golan Heights** from Syria <sup>15</sup>.

The territorial gains were enormous – Israel had quadrupled the size of the area it controlled. For the first time, **all of historic Palestine fell under Israeli rule**, except for the Palestinian populations now under military occupation rather than in a sovereign state. Jerusalem, which had been divided for 19 years, was **captured in its entirety by Israel**. Israeli soldiers raised their flag at the Dome of the Rock; the government quickly annexed East Jerusalem and adjacent West Bank land into a broadened Jerusalem municipality <sup>16</sup>, declaring the city reunified. Israel allowed Jewish residents to return to the Old City (and Jews could pray at the Western Wall again), but **Jerusalem's political status** became even more contentious – the UN condemned Israel's annexation and urged that the city's status be resolved by negotiations <sup>16</sup>.

**Occupation and International Law:** The **West Bank and Gaza** now came under **Israeli military occupation** (as did Syria's Golan and Sinai in Egypt's case). These areas were populated almost entirely by Palestinian Arabs. Israel's swift victory created another wave of Palestinian displacement: about **300,000 Palestinians fled** or were expelled from the West Bank and Gaza during and after the war <sup>17</sup>, many into Jordan (some were 1948 refugees displaced *again*). The UN Security Council passed **Resolution 242** in November 1967, which became the cornerstone for future peace efforts. It called for Israel's withdrawal "from territories occupied" in the conflict and for all states in the region to be able to live in peace within secure, recognized boundaries <sup>18</sup>. The phrase "land for peace" encapsulates this formula – implying Israel should return occupied land in exchange for peace with its Arab neighbors. Resolution 242 also affirmed the need for a "just settlement of the refugee problem" <sup>61</sup>. However, the interpretation of 242 (especially whether it meant all territories or some) would be disputed. The Arab League, meeting in Khartoum in August 1967, famously responded with the "**Three No's**": no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations – reflecting shock and refusal to accept territorial loss.

**Settlements:** Soon after 1967, Israel began establishing **settlements** (civilian communities) in the occupied territories, particularly the West Bank and Golan. Some were strategic (e.g. to create buffers or retain high ground), others were motivated by religious/historical claims (Jews returning to areas like Hebron, or building suburbs around Jerusalem). These settlements, which expanded over the decades, were **widely deemed illegal** under the Fourth Geneva Convention (which prohibits transferring one's civilian population into occupied land). The UN repeatedly called on Israel to cease settlement building. Settlements became a major obstacle to the viability of a future Palestinian state.

**Geopolitical Shift:** The 1967 war also redrew the Middle East map and power dynamics. **Egypt** lost Sinai; **Syria** lost the Golan Heights; **Jordan** lost the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israel emerged as the dominant regional military power. The war made clear that the territory once set aside for Arabs in Palestine was now under Israeli control – henceforth, the **Palestinian national movement** focused on either liberating that land or achieving statehood in part of it. In 1969, Yasser **Arafat** became chairman of the PLO, which adopted a charter calling for reclaiming all of Palestine. The Palestinians increasingly came to the forefront (rather than Arab states fighting on their behalf). Meanwhile, Israel's victory attracted Cold War

alignments: the U.S. became an even stancher ally of Israel (seeing it as a bulwark against Soviet-backed Arab regimes), while the USSR rearmed Egypt and Syria for future confrontations.

## From 1967 to 1979: Diplomacy and War – Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians

**War of Attrition:** After 1967, Egypt under Nasser engaged in a low-intensity “War of Attrition” along the Suez Canal (1968–70), bombarding Israeli positions in Sinai; Israel responded with deep strikes. This ended inconclusively. Nasser’s death in 1970 brought **Anwar Sadat** to power in Egypt. Meanwhile, the PLO, headquartered in Jordan, nearly caused a war between the PLO and Jordan’s King Hussein in 1970. In that **Black September** (1970) conflict, Jordan expelled the PLO to Lebanon, underscoring that Arab regimes had their own interests and were not always aligned with Palestinian guerrillas.

**Yom Kippur War 1973:** On October 6, 1973 (Yom Kippur day in Israel / Ramadan for Muslims), **Egypt and Syria** launched a **surprise attack** on Israeli forces in Sinai and the Golan Heights. **Egyptian troops** crossed the Suez Canal, initially overwhelming Israel’s Bar-Lev line, and **Syrian forces** pushed into the Golan. Caught off guard, Israel suffered heavy losses at first <sup>62</sup>. Over the next two weeks, however, Israel managed to regroup, repelling Syrian forces and even crossing to the west bank of the Suez Canal, encircling part of Egypt’s army. A UN-ordered ceasefire (Resolution 338) halted the fighting after about 19 days <sup>63</sup>. Militarily, Israel won again (though at great cost), but **psychologically and politically**, the 1973 war was a turning point. For Egypt, it was seen as a partial victory that restored Arab honor enough to engage in diplomacy. The war also had global impact: Arab states imposed an **oil embargo** that sent oil prices soaring and pressured Western countries to push for conflict resolution <sup>64</sup>.

**Camp David Accords 1978:** Egyptian President Sadat made a dramatic gesture in 1977 by visiting Jerusalem and speaking before the Israeli Knesset, signaling readiness for peace. U.S. President Jimmy Carter seized the opportunity to mediate. In September 1978, Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister **Menachem Begin** met at Camp David. The resulting **Camp David Accords** had two frameworks: one for Egyptian-Israeli peace, and one (much vaguer) for Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank/Gaza <sup>22</sup>. The **Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty** was signed in March 1979 – **Egypt recognized Israel**, and Israel agreed to withdraw from **Sinai** entirely and dismantle its settlements there <sup>21</sup>. By 1982, this withdrawal was complete <sup>21</sup>. The treaty also provided for free passage of Israeli ships in Suez and other such normalization steps <sup>65</sup>. Egypt regained all its land (the only Arab state to do so by force of arms and then negotiation). In exchange, Egypt effectively **withdrew from the Arab-Israeli military conflict**, leaving Jordan and Syria as the front-line states and the Palestinians without their strongest ally. This treaty was a cold peace – it ended active hostilities between Egypt and Israel (no more wars after four bloody rounds), but was denounced by many in the Arab world as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. Egypt was suspended from the Arab League for a time. Sadat himself was assassinated in 1981 by Egyptian extremists opposed to peace with Israel.

**Jordan and Syria:** Jordan, having lost the West Bank, eventually reconciled with its loss – King Hussein in 1988 formally relinquished Jordan’s claim to the West Bank in favor of the PLO’s claim <sup>28</sup>. Syria, however, under **Hafez al-Assad**, held out for return of the **Golan Heights**. Peace talks with Syria would make little progress; the Golan remains under Israeli control (and civilian settlement) to this day. For the Palestinians, the late 1970s were frustrating – their fate was discussed but deferred at Camp David. The autonomy plans went nowhere as Israel and the U.S. excluded the PLO from talks and Menachem Begin’s government

balked at anything leading to a Palestinian state. Israeli settlements in the West Bank doubled during 1977–1984 under Begin's tenure, indicating Israel's intent to cement control.

**Lebanon 1970s-1980s:** After being expelled from Jordan, the **PLO set up its base in Lebanon**, where Palestinians numbered around 300,000 (including refugees from 1948 and their descendants). From South Lebanon, PLO factions launched attacks into northern Israel, and Israel retaliated with airstrikes. Lebanon slid into its own civil war in 1975, with the PLO as one of many actors. In **1978**, Israel invaded southern Lebanon (Operation Litani) to push PLO fighters away from the border; the UN established an interim force (UNIFIL) there afterward. This set the stage for the larger **1982 Lebanon War** (already discussed in timeline): Israel's invasion aimed to crush the PLO for good. Under international (primarily US) mediation, **Arafat and the PLO leadership evacuated Beirut in 1982** and dispersed to Tunisia and other countries

<sup>23</sup>. The Sabra and Shatila massacre of Palestinian refugees by a Lebanese Christian militia (while Israeli forces stood by) stained Israel's reputation <sup>23</sup> – an Israeli commission later found Defense Minister Ariel Sharon indirectly responsible, and he resigned that post. The PLO's ouster from Lebanon ironically opened new doors: Arafat's group, now far from Israel's borders, turned more to **diplomacy**. In 1988 the PLO formally accepted the two-state solution (implicitly recognizing Israel in its pre-1967 borders) and renounced terrorism, seeking a negotiated settlement <sup>29</sup>.

In summary, 1967–1979 was a period in which the **conflict's focus broadened**: Israel had to deal with conquered **territories and restive Palestinian inhabitants**, and the surrounding **Arab states** faced the reality of Israel's permanence, leading one (Egypt) to choose peace. However, for Palestinians under occupation, these years only deepened their despair, setting the stage for their own uprising.

## The Intifadas: Uprisings and Shifting Tides (1987–2005)

### First Intifada (1987–1993)

After twenty years of occupation, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza reached a boiling point. In December 1987, an Israeli military truck collided with cars carrying Palestinian laborers in Gaza, killing four – this incident sparked spontaneous protests in the **Jabalia refugee camp**, which quickly spread to the West Bank and throughout Gaza <sup>24</sup>. Thus began the **First Intifada** ("shaking off" in Arabic), a grassroots uprising against Israeli rule.

**Nature of the Uprising:** The intifada involved mass participation: unarmed teenagers throwing **stones and Molotov cocktails** at Israeli tanks, general strikes, boycotts of Israeli goods, graffiti and leaflets as resistance media, and the formation of popular committees in towns and camps. Israel deployed troops to suppress demonstrations, using tear gas, live bullets, and mass arrests; in some cases, soldiers beat protesters (an infamous "broken bones" policy briefly implemented to discourage stone-throwers). The situation was often one of David vs. Goliath – youths with rocks facing heavily armed soldiers – an image that garnered worldwide sympathy for the Palestinians <sup>25</sup>. Over roughly six years, about **1,300 Palestinians were killed** (many by Israeli gunfire, including children), and **some 200 Israelis were killed** (including soldiers and civilians, some by lynch mobs or terror attacks) <sup>26</sup>. Thousands more Palestinians were injured. Israel's harsh tactics drew international criticism, and the intifada shattered the illusion that the status quo in the occupied territories could be maintained without consequence.

**Political Impact:** The intifada was a turning point. It propelled the **Palestinian cause** back onto the world stage and forced Israel to acknowledge a widespread Palestinian desire for independence. It also led to

**Palestinian political shifts:** for one, it gave rise to **Hamas**, an Islamic Resistance Movement. Hamas was founded in Gaza in 1987 by **Sheikh Ahmed Yassin**, positioning itself as an Islamic alternative to the secular PLO <sup>27</sup>. Its charter called for Israel's destruction and an Islamic state, and it quickly gained support, especially in Gaza. Hamas also engaged in militancy, though during the first intifada much of the violence was still largely unarmed revolt or sporadic attacks.

The **PLO**, which had been in exile, found itself somewhat upstaged by local leaders of the intifada. However, the PLO managed to ride the wave by making a dramatic move: in **1988**, at a meeting in Algiers, Arafat and the Palestine National Council **proclaimed the independent State of Palestine** (in exile) on the West Bank and Gaza, and crucially **recognized UN Resolution 242** and Israel's right to exist – effectively endorsing a two-state solution <sup>29</sup>. This moderated stance helped the PLO regain international legitimacy. The United States, which had long refused contact with the PLO, opened a dialogue with Arafat after he renounced terrorism in 1988 and accepted Israel's right to live in peace.

**Neighboring Arab States:** During the intifada, **Jordan's King Hussein** decided to sever administrative ties with the West Bank. On July 31, 1988, he renounced any claim to the territory and recognized that the PLO would assume responsibility for it <sup>28</sup>. This removed any Jordanian obstacle to Palestinian independence there. Meanwhile, Israel's other neighbor **Lebanon** was in turmoil (civil war until 1990), and **Syria** was preoccupied with Lebanon and internal issues – so the intifada was largely a bilateral issue between Israelis and Palestinians under occupation, with broader Arab support mostly rhetorical.

By the early 1990s, it was clear to pragmatic leaders on both sides that a negotiated solution was needed. The intifada had no military victory, but it changed minds: Israelis increasingly saw that ruling over a hostile Palestinian population was untenable and morally corrosive, while Palestinians realized that Arab states alone wouldn't win their freedom – they would have to negotiate with Israel. This paved the way for the **Madrid Conference of 1991** (after the Gulf War, where Arafat's support for Saddam Hussein had hurt the Palestinian image, the U.S. pushed for a peace conference) and then the secret **Oslo negotiations** that followed.

### **Oslo Accords and Hopes for Peace (1993–1999)**

The **Oslo Accords** marked the first direct, mutual agreement between Israelis and Palestinians. Through secret talks in Norway, representatives of the Israeli government and the PLO produced a Declaration of Principles, signed in Washington D.C. in September 1993 with President Bill Clinton famously witnessing the handshake between **Yitzhak Rabin** and **Yasser Arafat**. In essence, Oslo was a *land-for-peace interim deal*: the PLO **recognized Israel's right to exist** and renounced violence, and Israel **recognized the PLO** as the representative of the Palestinian people and agreed to begin pulling back in parts of the occupied territories <sup>31</sup> <sup>66</sup>.

**Key Points of Oslo:** - **Palestinian Authority (PA):** Oslo created the PA, an interim self-government tasked with administering territory Israel would withdraw from <sup>31</sup>. - **Phased Withdrawal:** Israel would withdraw its forces from the major population centers. The first step was the **Gaza-Jericho Agreement** (May 1994) where Israel left most of Gaza and the Jericho area of the West Bank <sup>33</sup>. Later, the **Oslo II Accord** (1995) divided the West Bank into Areas A (full Palestinian control in major cities), B (Palestinian civil control, Israeli security control in towns), and C (full Israeli control, about 60% of West Bank) <sup>67</sup> <sup>68</sup>. - **Elections:** Palestinians held elections in 1996; Arafat was elected President of the PA. The PA built institutions (police, ministries, etc.) in areas under its control. - **Final Status Issues:** Crucial issues – **Jerusalem, refugees,**

**settlements, borders, security, and water rights** – were left for “final status” talks to be concluded by 1999. This was a major gap: Oslo was an interim arrangement without guaranteeing a sovereign Palestinian state at the end. It relied on goodwill and further negotiation.

At the same time, **Israel and Jordan** signed a full peace treaty in 1994, ending their 46-year state of war <sup>35</sup>. Jordan’s treaty fixed the international border (largely along the Jordan River) and recognized **Jordan’s custodial role over the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem** <sup>69</sup>. This was significant: Israel essentially acknowledged that Jordan had a special say regarding the Islamic Waqf in Al-Aqsa Mosque, a role Jordan continues to play.

**Atmosphere and Opposition:** The Oslo years were marked by cautious hope but also great turmoil. Many on both sides opposed the accords: - **Palestinian opponents:** Hamas and Islamic Jihad rejected Oslo, seeing it as a sellout that granted Israel recognition while delaying core Palestinian aspirations. They carried out **suicide bombings** against Israeli buses and cafes in the mid-1990s to derail peace. These attacks killed dozens of Israelis, undermining Israeli trust in the process. - **Israeli opponents:** Right-wing Israelis (including settlers and Likud party members) viewed Oslo as a terrible security blunder and a betrayal of the biblical Land of Israel. Extremists protested and in one case resorted to murder: in 1995, an Israeli extremist **assassinated PM Yitzhak Rabin** at a peace rally. Rabin’s death was a blow to peace, bringing **Shimon Peres** as PM for a brief period; but in 1996, **Benjamin Netanyahu** of Likud (an Oslo skeptic) was elected PM in a backlash fueled by suicide bombings.

Despite setbacks, further attempts were made: the 1997 Hebron Protocol (partial Israeli withdrawal from Hebron), the 1998 Wye River Memorandum (land-for-security deal), etc. However, mutual distrust was growing. Settlement building continued (albeit at a slower pace initially), and Palestinians felt the “peace dividend” was not reaching them as freedom of movement remained constrained and the economy lagged. Israel for its part was alarmed by ongoing violence. By 2000, after episodic talks and interim steps, final status issues were still unresolved.

One positive development: many Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza enjoyed a period of limited autonomy under the PA, and the daily interaction with Israeli soldiers in cities decreased (until the second intifada reversed this). But corruption and authoritarianism in the PA, plus lack of real sovereignty, tempered optimism. By the end of the 1990s, frustration was mounting again, setting the stage for a second, more violent uprising.

## Second Intifada (2000–2005)

The **Second Intifada** erupted after the collapse of the Camp David Summit in July 2000. U.S. President **Clinton**, in a last-ditch effort, hosted Israel’s PM **Ehud Barak** and Arafat at Camp David. Barak, by various accounts, offered a state in Gaza and most of the West Bank with some East Jerusalem control – roughly **91% of the West Bank plus swaps** as reported <sup>70</sup>. However, sticking points remained: the status of **East Jerusalem** (Barak was willing to cede some Arab neighborhoods and Islamic holy sites, but not full sovereignty over East Jerusalem), the fate of major **Jewish settlements**, security arrangements, and especially the **right of return** for refugees. Arafat found the offer insufficient to meet Palestinian minimum demands (no full return to 1967 borders, East Jerusalem still divided, sovereignty issues, etc.) and declined it. The summit ended without agreement, and **President Clinton** later blamed Arafat for missing an opportunity <sup>71</sup>, though Arafat contended he was being asked to sign away core rights.

Two months later, **Ariel Sharon** (a leading opposition figure) visited the **Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif** on September 28, 2000, accompanied by hundreds of Israeli police <sup>37</sup>. This site is the most sensitive in Jerusalem – containing Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock (holy to Muslims) atop the ruins of the ancient Jewish Temple (holy to Jews). Sharon's visit was viewed by Palestinians as a deliberate provocation and assertion of Israeli control over the contested holy site <sup>37</sup>. The next day, large Palestinian protests erupted in Jerusalem after Friday prayers; clashes with Israeli forces, who used live ammunition in some cases, led to Palestinian deaths. This ignited the **Al-Aqsa Intifada**, which quickly spread across the West Bank and Gaza.

**Characteristics:** The Second Intifada was far more militarized than the first. Palestinians, angered by the failure of peace talks and ongoing occupation, engaged not only in mass protests but also in armed attacks. Militants from **Fatah's Tanzim**, **Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade**, **Hamas**, and **Islamic Jihad** carried out a deadly campaign of **suicide bombings** inside Israel – hitting buses, restaurants, and clubs, causing horrific civilian casualties. Israelis lived in fear of these random bombings; over 1,000 Israelis (the majority civilians) were killed between 2000 and 2005 <sup>38</sup>. Israel responded with overwhelming force: curfews, closures, checkpoints, targeted assassinations of militant leaders, and large-scale military operations. In spring 2002, after a particularly devastating Hamas suicide bombing on Passover killed 30 Israelis (the "Passover Massacre"), the Israeli army launched **Operation Defensive Shield**, reoccupying all major West Bank cities (Area A) and besieging Arafat's compound in Ramallah <sup>72</sup>. Scenes from the era included fierce gun battles in the Jenin refugee camp, the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and Israeli tanks stationed in Palestinian city centers.

Casualties on the Palestinian side were much higher – around **4,000 Palestinians killed** by 2005, roughly three-quarters of them civilians according to human rights groups, as Israeli forces used heavy weaponry in densely populated areas <sup>38</sup>. Notably, **children** on both sides suffered – Palestinian youths shot during clashes, and Israeli children killed in suicide bombings or by rockets. The second intifada devastated the Palestinian economy and infrastructure (much of the PA's nascent institutions were damaged or destroyed). Israel accused Arafat of fomenting terror; the U.S. and Israel marginalized him (indeed, Arafat was effectively confined to his compound until his death in 2004). In 2002, Israel began constructing a **West Bank separation barrier** – a massive fence and wall complex ostensibly to stop suicide bombers <sup>46</sup>. While it did reduce attacks, its route deeply penetrated the West Bank in places to encompass Israeli settlements, cutting off Palestinian communities and annexing de facto land; the International Court of Justice later deemed it illegal where it veers into occupied territory.

**Leadership Changes:** In Israel, the violence brought **Ariel Sharon** (the same figure whose visit sparked the intifada) to power as Prime Minister in 2001 on a promise of tough action. In the Palestinian arena, Arafat's credibility among Israelis and Westerners was shattered; under pressure for reform, he appointed **Mahmoud Abbas** as the first Palestinian Prime Minister in 2003 (though Arafat remained the ultimate authority until his death). Abbas opposed militarization of the intifada and would later champion negotiations again.

By 2004–2005, the intifada lost momentum. Many militant leaders were killed (Hamas's founders Sheikh Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi were assassinated by Israel in 2004). The Palestinian public was exhausted and suffered immense losses, while Israelis also yearned for normalcy. Arafat died in November 2004, which removed a figure Sharon called an obstacle. In early 2005, Mahmoud **Abbas (Abu Mazen)** was elected President of the PA on a platform of nonviolence and diplomacy. He and Sharon reached an informal truce (the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, 2005) that essentially ended the Second Intifada.

**Intifada Legacy:** The second intifada was a strategic calamity for Palestinians. It resulted in unprecedented Israeli military control (the West Bank was carved up by checkpoints and the separation wall, and Gaza became isolated). It also hardened Israeli public opinion – many Israelis felt that after offering concessions at Camp David, they got terror in return, leading to deep skepticism about peace. Conversely, Palestinians were radicalized by the brutality of occupation and convinced that Israel only understood force. The trust built in the 1990s evaporated. Some positive outcome was that Sharon, reading the demographic and political writing on the wall, decided Israel should **withdraw from Gaza**, which he unilaterally did in 2005, and consider further pullbacks – but coordination with the PA was minimal, leaving a vacuum that would have consequences.

## Gaza, Hamas, and Stalemate (2005–2020)

### Israeli Disengagement from Gaza (2005)

In August–September 2005, Israel unilaterally **withdrew all troops and about 8,000 settlers from the Gaza Strip**, as well as from a small enclave of settlements in the northern West Bank <sup>39</sup>. This move, initiated by PM Sharon, was controversial in Israel (settlers were evicted by force, Sharon left his Likud party to form Kadima to push it through). For proponents, it was a step to reduce friction and demographic burden; for critics, it was “rewarding terror.” Palestinians had mixed reactions: relief that direct Israeli control ended in Gaza, but frustration that it wasn’t negotiated (meaning Israel coordinated security with Egypt and kept control of Gaza’s airspace, maritime border, and most crossings <sup>39</sup>). After the withdrawal, **Gaza** remained effectively besieged: Israel soon imposed tight restrictions on movement of people and goods, especially after Hamas gained power (see below). So while the occupation of Gaza (on-ground presence) ended, Gaza became a 365 sq km isolated enclave, its crossings frequently closed and economy crippled.

### Rise of Hamas and the Palestinian Split

In January 2006, the Palestinian territories held legislative elections (encouraged by the U.S. as part of spreading democracy). **Hamas** achieved a shock victory, winning a majority in the Palestinian Legislative Council over the long-dominant **Fatah** party <sup>40</sup>. The reasons were manifold: public disillusionment with Fatah’s corruption and the failure of Oslo, and respect for Hamas’s social services and steadfast resistance image. Hamas’s platform did not recognize Israel, which put it at odds with prior PA commitments.

The election result led to a **political crisis**. Israel, the U.S., and EU refused to deal with a Hamas-led government unless Hamas renounced violence and recognized Israel, which it refused to do. Foreign aid to the PA was frozen <sup>41</sup>. Tensions between Hamas and Fatah (whose leader Mahmoud Abbas remained PA President) escalated. After a short-lived unity government attempt, they **broke into open fighting in Gaza in June 2007**. Hamas forces routed Fatah forces in Gaza and took **full control of Gaza**. President Abbas then dismissed the Hamas government and consolidated a Fatah-led administration in the **West Bank**. Thus began the de facto **split of Palestinian governance**: - **Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip**: Hamas governs internally, while Israel and Egypt maintain a blockade around it, citing security (to prevent Hamas from importing weapons, etc.). - **Fatah-controlled West Bank (Palestinian Authority)**: Abbas rules by decree in the autonomous areas, cooperating at times with Israel on security (common interest in weakening Hamas).

This Palestinian division severely weakened their national cause. With the Palestinians divided, Israel could argue there was “no partner” to negotiate with that represented all Palestinians. Gaza, under Hamas,

became isolated and impoverished; its economy dependent on smuggling tunnels and limited humanitarian aid. Meanwhile, in the West Bank, Abbas's PA continued security cooperation with Israel and received international aid, but also faced public criticism for lack of progress toward independence.

## Gaza Wars and Ongoing Conflict

**Cross-Border Violence:** Following the Gaza withdrawal, militants continued firing **Qassam rockets** from Gaza into southern Israel, albeit mostly ineffectually at first. Hamas largely observed a ceasefire for a period after 2005, but smaller factions did not. In June 2006, a Hamas-affiliated group tunneled into Israel and **captured an Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit**, triggering Israeli incursions <sup>73</sup>. Then in 2007 after Hamas took over, rocket fire increased. Israel and Egypt's blockade tightened, restricting movement of people and basic goods, which the UN and human rights groups criticized as "collective punishment." Hamas considered the Israeli restrictions as acts of war and insisted it had a right to armed resistance.

This cycle led to repeated **Israel-Gaza wars**: - **Operation Cast Lead (Dec 2008 – Jan 2009)**: After rocket barrages and ceasefire breakdown, Israel invaded Gaza. In three weeks of intense bombardment and ground fighting, about **1,300 Palestinians were killed** (including hundreds of civilians) and **13 Israelis** (including 10 soldiers, some by friendly fire) <sup>43</sup>. Scenes of devastation in Gaza (like destroyed neighborhoods and UN schools hit) drew international outrage. A UN fact-finding mission (the Goldstone Report) later alleged both Israeli forces and Hamas may have committed war crimes. - **Smaller flare-ups**: November 2012 saw Operation Pillar of Defense – an 8-day conflict sparked by Israel's assassination of a top Hamas commander amid rocket fire. About 170 Palestinians and 6 Israelis were killed. - **Operation Protective Edge (July-August 2014)**: A larger confrontation erupted after the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teens by a West Bank Hamas cell and subsequent killing of a Palestinian teen in revenge. The 2014 Gaza war lasted 50 days. **Around 2,100 Palestinians** were killed (UN estimates about 1,500 were civilians) and **73 Israelis** (67 soldiers, 6 civilians) <sup>74</sup>. Israel bombarded Gaza from air, land, and sea; Hamas fired thousands of rockets (reaching deeper into Israel than before) and used cross-border tunnels to attack soldiers <sup>74</sup>. The war wrecked Gaza's infrastructure (including power, water, thousands of homes). Ceasefires mediated by Egypt eventually ended these rounds, but none addressed the underlying issues. Each war left Gaza more destitute, but Hamas politically survived and even trumpeted "resistance" gains (like holding out against the Israeli army).

**West Bank Dynamics:** In the West Bank during the late 2000s and 2010s, violence was more limited compared to Gaza. The Palestinian Authority under Abbas focused on diplomacy and state-building (with Prime Minister Salam Fayyad implementing reforms). There were periodic negotiations: in 2010, Abbas and Israeli PM **Netanyahu** (who had returned to power in 2009) engaged in U.S.-led talks that quickly faltered over settlement construction. In 2013-2014, Secretary of State John Kerry pushed intensive talks, but they collapsed over mutual distrust and disagreements on core issues (Israel's continued settlement expansion and refusal to release certain prisoners, Palestinian moves toward international recognition) <sup>45</sup>. Settlements grew steadily; by 2020 over 600,000 Israelis lived in East Jerusalem and West Bank settlements, complicating any future partition.

**Jerusalem Flashpoints:** Throughout this period, **Jerusalem** remained a sensitive flashpoint. Palestinians in East Jerusalem (which Israel annexed and considers part of its undivided capital) often protested against home demolitions, evictions, and Israel's attempts to solidify control. Israel's claim of all Jerusalem as its capital got a boost when the **United States formally recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017**, moving its embassy there <sup>75</sup>. This break with decades of U.S. policy pleased Israel but

angered Palestinians and Arab/Muslim-majority countries – it sparked protests and was condemned in the UNGA <sup>76</sup>. The U.S. decision essentially endorsed Israel's position on Jerusalem, leaving Palestinians feeling that their claim to East Jerusalem was in jeopardy. Indeed, the status of Jerusalem remained one of the most intractable issues – Israel insisted it would never again divide the city, while Palestinians insisted on East Jerusalem (with its Old City and Al-Aqsa) as their capital. Efforts were made to maintain a *status quo* at the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif (Jordan's custodianship continued, Israel kept overall security control but Muslims maintained religious administration). Even minor perceived changes in that fragile arrangement could trigger unrest.

**International Arena:** Frustrated by stalled negotiations, the Palestinian leadership shifted strategy around 2011. They pursued international recognition: joining UNESCO, applying for full UN membership (which failed at the Security Council), and eventually succeeding in a UN General Assembly vote in 2012 to upgrade Palestine's status to **Non-member Observer State**. This was a diplomatic win, essentially recognition of Palestinian statehood in the pre-1967 lines by the international community <sup>45</sup>. Many parliaments and some countries also bilaterally recognized the "State of Palestine." The PA also began joining international treaties and bodies (e.g. the International Criminal Court in 2015, aiming to bring cases regarding Israeli settlements and war actions).

Meanwhile, **regional geopolitics** evolved: the Arab Spring uprisings (2011) toppled regimes in Egypt and elsewhere, indirectly affecting the conflict. In Egypt, the brief rule of the Muslim Brotherhood (sympathetic to Hamas) ended with a 2013 military coup – the new government under President Sisi cooperated closely with Israel against Islamist militants and to isolate Hamas. Syria's civil war from 2011 devastated that country and distracted it entirely from the Israel issue (Israel even carried out occasional strikes in Syria, mostly against Iran-backed targets, without retaliation). The old paradigm of unified Arab opposition to Israel was eroding; many Arab states saw Iran (and Islamists) as bigger threats than Israel, leading to quiet alignments that set the stage for the **2020 Abraham Accords**.

## Recent Developments (2020–2025)

**Abraham Accords (2020):** In a historic departure from the past Arab stance (no peace without resolving Palestine), the **United Arab Emirates** and **Bahrain**, followed by **Sudan** and **Morocco**, agreed to **normalize relations with Israel** in 2020 <sup>48</sup>. These U.S.-brokered deals, known as the Abraham Accords, involved trade-offs (e.g. U.S. recognition of Moroccan claims in Western Sahara, removal of Sudan from sanctions lists). For the Palestinians, these agreements felt like a betrayal by Arab partners who broke ranks on the demand for a Palestinian state first. Israel, in return, suspended formal plans to annex parts of the West Bank (which had been floated by Netanyahu under the Trump administration's peace proposal) <sup>48</sup>. The Abraham Accords brought Israel openly into alliance with some Gulf Arab states, largely due to a shared interest in countering Iran. While the accords didn't directly change conditions on the ground in Palestine, they signaled a shift: Israel's integration in the region no longer strictly hinged on peace with the Palestinians. This increased Palestinian isolation and perhaps emboldened Israeli hardliners.

**Trump Peace Plan (2020):** In January 2020, the Trump administration unveiled a long-awaited **Middle East Peace Plan** (often dubbed the "Deal of the Century"). The plan proposed a **two-state solution** in name but on highly unfavorable terms for Palestinians: a patchwork Palestinian state with limited sovereignty (Israel would annex roughly 30% of the West Bank including all settlements and the Jordan Valley, Palestinians would get some land swaps in the Negev), no division of Jerusalem (Palestinians could have a capital on the outskirts of East Jerusalem), and refugees largely denied return or compensation <sup>49</sup>. It also conditioned

Palestinian statehood on a list of stringent requirements (disarming Hamas, recognizing Israel as a Jewish state, etc.)<sup>77</sup>. While Israel's government welcomed the plan (and immediately talked of annexing territory under its terms), Palestinians angrily **rejected it as one-sided**<sup>77</sup>. The plan went nowhere due to that rejection and international disapproval (most of the world stuck to the more equitable formula based on the 1967 lines). However, it reflected the U.S. shifting more toward Israel's positions.

**Jerusalem and Holy Sites:** Tensions around **Jerusalem's holy sites** continued to cause flare-ups. For example, in 2017 Israel installed metal detectors at Al-Aqsa compound after an attack, sparking mass protests until they were removed. Palestinian fears of Israeli designs on Al-Aqsa remain a volatile trigger. In 2021, as noted, protests in **Sheikh Jarrah** (East Jerusalem) over Palestinian families facing eviction by Jewish settler claims, along with Israeli police incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan, led Hamas to fire rockets and the May 2021 war<sup>50</sup>. This underscores Jerusalem's role: it is not just symbolic but often the spark for broader violence.

**2021-2022:** After the 11-day Gaza war in May 2021 that killed over 250 people (mostly Palestinians in Gaza)<sup>50</sup>, a fragile calm returned. In Israel, a new coalition government (without Netanyahu) took office in June 2021, including for the first time an Arab Israeli party. They maintained the status quo on the conflict (no major peace initiative, but also no new annexation). In the occupied territories, 2022 saw surging tensions – the Israeli military carried out near-daily raids in the West Bank following a spate of Palestinian attacks on Israelis. The UN noted **2022 was the deadliest year for West Bank Palestinians** (150+ killed) since 2005<sup>78</sup>. Gaza saw a brief clash in August 2022 when Israel struck Islamic Jihad targets, killing 49 Palestinians over three days, in response to perceived threats.

**Political Shifts:** By late 2022, Israel's politics swung rightward dramatically. Netanyahu returned to power in December 2022, this time in coalition with far-right parties that openly advocate West Bank annexation and have ultranationalist views toward Palestinians. In the Palestinian arena, Mahmoud Abbas aged in office (no elections have been held in the PA since 2006) and lost popularity. Hamas remained firmly in control of Gaza, occasionally restraining smaller militant groups to avoid war, but also rearming.

**The 2023 War:** The smoldering situation exploded on **October 7, 2023**, when Hamas launched a massive surprise attack on Israel. In a meticulously planned operation, around 2,000 Hamas and allied fighters breached the Gaza border fences at dawn, attacking Israeli border communities and even a music festival. They killed approximately **1,200 Israelis**, the vast majority unarmed civilians – men, women, children – with an unprecedented level of brutality (entire families were massacred, and atrocities documented)<sup>53</sup>. They also **abducted around 200** Israelis (and some foreign nationals) into Gaza as hostages<sup>53</sup>. This attack, the deadliest day in Israel's history, traumatized the nation and generated widespread international condemnation of Hamas.

Israel's response was immediate and forceful: the government (now a wartime unity coalition under Netanyahu) declared war on Hamas. The IDF launched a massive bombing campaign across Gaza. It also completely sealed off Gaza, cutting electricity, fuel, and severely restricting food and water – Gaza's 2.2 million residents (about half of them children) were plunged into darkness and scarcity. Israel's stated aim was to **destroy Hamas** and ensure it could never threaten Israelis again.

Over the following weeks, Israeli airstrikes pounded Gaza, causing **immense civilian casualties** and leveling entire neighborhoods. The destruction exceeded that of prior conflicts by far. The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza reported death tolls that climbed into the tens of thousands as months passed. By early

2025, estimates of **Palestinian fatalities exceeded 50,000**, including many women and children <sup>54</sup> – an almost unimaginable scale of loss (though exact figures were contested). The bombardment displaced over 1 million people within Gaza (forced to flee from north to south), and basic services collapsed. The UN and humanitarian organizations repeatedly sounded alarms about mass casualties and alleged war crimes (given Israel's use of heavy force in densely populated areas and strikes on hospitals, schools, markets). Israel accused Hamas of using civilians as human shields and operating from within civilian infrastructure, complicating combat.

By late October 2023, **Israeli ground forces** entered northern Gaza, engaging in fierce urban combat with Hamas fighters in places like Gaza City and the Jabalia camp. Hamas, despite being vastly outgunned, fought using tunnels, booby traps, and hit-and-run tactics. Civilians bore the brunt – with nowhere safe to hide in the tiny enclave. Internationally, there were large protests against the Gaza bombardment, even as Western governments supported Israel's right to self-defense but urged protection of civilians.

The war threatened to ignite the region: **Hezbollah** in Lebanon (backed by Iran, like Hamas) traded fire with Israel across the northern border. Skirmishes escalated to the point that in **late 2024**, Israel expanded operations with strikes into **Lebanon**, even assassinating some Hezbollah leaders <sup>55</sup>. Hezbollah launched missiles at Israeli cities, and **Iran** itself directly fired ballistic missiles toward Israel in support of Hezbollah (a major escalation) <sup>55</sup>. A broader regional war loomed. However, a full conflagration was narrowly avoided as diplomacy (involving the US, Qatar, Egypt) worked to contain each front separately.

**Ceasefires and Hostage Deals:** Amid the Gaza carnage, negotiations (mediated by Qatar and Egypt, with US pressure) yielded a brief **cease-fire in late November 2023**, primarily to exchange some hostages for Palestinians prisoners and allow humanitarian aid in <sup>56</sup>. Hamas released groups of Israeli hostages (mostly women and children) in phases, and Israel released Palestinian women and minors from its prisons accordingly. These pauses brought temporary relief and an influx of desperately needed supplies to Gaza's civilians. But the truce was fragile and broke down amid disputes over its extension and accusations of violations. Fighting resumed, with Israel determined to press its military advantage.

By the **start of 2025**, Hamas was battered but not eliminated – its leadership partially survived in bunkers/tunnels, and some fighters kept resisting. Israel expanded ground operations even to parts of southern Gaza (where it had told civilians to evacuate for safety, leading to further tragedy). A longer **ceasefire took effect in January 2025**, halting combat for several weeks <sup>56</sup>. This raised hopes of a more enduring truce and perhaps an end to the war. Under this deal, Hamas released dozens more hostages, and Israel freed hundreds of Palestinian prisoners <sup>56</sup>; more aid was allowed into Gaza's ravaged areas. However, like previous pauses, it **collapsed by March 2025**, with each side accusing the other of bad faith <sup>54</sup>. By May 2025, Israel had relaunched full-scale military operations, saying Hamas exploited the truce to rearm. The war thus continued into mid-2025, having already lasted longer than any prior Gaza conflict, and leaving an unfathomable humanitarian crisis.

**Current Situation:** As of mid-2025, **Gaza** lies in ruins in many parts, with casualties approaching **60,000 Palestinians killed** since Oct 2023 <sup>54</sup>. Israel has paid a price too: beyond the October 7 victims, several hundred Israeli soldiers died in the ground fighting, and the country's sense of security was deeply shaken. The war also internally polarized Israel (mass protests earlier in 2023 against Netanyahu's judicial overhaul were supplanted by war unity, but criticisms emerged over the government's failure to prevent the Oct 7 attack and handling of hostages). Regionally, Arab governments faced public outrage; while few took action against Israel, some (like **Qatar** and **Turkey**) were vocally critical. The **United States** gave strong backing to

Israel's war effort (military aid, vetoing some UN ceasefire resolutions) but also urged minimizing civilian harm and eventually pressed for humanitarian pauses. The conflict tested Israel's alliances and global opinion, with unprecedented denunciations from the UN and even the International Criminal Court examining potential war crimes by both Hamas (for deliberate attacks on civilians) and Israel (for disproportionate attacks in Gaza)<sup>79</sup>.

**Jerusalem's Role Continues:** Throughout all of this, Jerusalem remains at the heart of the conflict. Control of **Jerusalem** is both a political and a religious question. As Britannica notes, for **Jews** it is their ancient capital and holiest city, for **Christians** a sacred place of Jesus's life and death, and for **Muslims** the revered site of the Night Journey and Islam's third holiest shrine<sup>80</sup>. The city's status is intimately tied to the national narratives: Israel calls Jerusalem its "eternal, undivided capital" (enshrined in a 1980 Basic Law)<sup>81</sup>, while Palestinians insist East Jerusalem must be the capital of their future state<sup>80</sup>. Any perceived change to Jerusalem's status can ignite violence – the 2021 war and 2000 intifada both had sparks in Al-Aqsa/Temple Mount, and even in the 2023 war, Hamas partly framed its onslaught as defending Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa from Israeli encroachment (though the scale and targets of the attack went far beyond that claim).

**Prospects:** As it stands in 2025, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems locked in a grim loop. The **two-state solution**, long the international consensus, is on life support – undermined by expanding settlements, political extremism, and lack of trust. The **one-state reality** (with Israel in control and Palestinians lacking equal rights) persists, which former U.S. President Jimmy Carter once warned resembled apartheid in the occupied territories if not resolved. Diplomatic efforts are largely frozen; attention has shifted to crisis management (like negotiating ceasefires or humanitarian access) rather than final peace deals. The roles of neighboring countries remain crucial: **Egypt** and **Qatar** often mediate between Israel and Hamas; **Jordan** worries about instability given its large Palestinian population and custodial role in Jerusalem; **Lebanon** could be dragged in via Hezbollah; **Syria** and **Iran** continue to factor as adversaries of Israel that support militant groups.

Yet, history shows unexpected shifts can happen – like Egypt's about-face to make peace in the 1970s, or the Oslo breakthrough in the 90s, or Arab states normalizing ties in 2020. The conflict has proven resilient to resolution, but demographics and global opinion ensure it remains a pressing international issue. Ultimately, the aspirations of **two peoples for the same land** have to be reconciled, likely through painful compromises. Without that, periodic eruptions of violence will continue to exact a heavy toll on both Palestinians and Israelis.

## Misleading Claims in the Video - Corrections and Context

The Ben Shapiro video presents a narrative of the conflict that, while based on some historical facts, contains **several misleading or incomplete claims**. Below we identify a few such claims and provide fact-checked context:

- **Claim:** "Palestinians voluntarily left in 1948 (or were told to leave by Arab leaders), so Israel isn't responsible for the refugees."

**Fact:** The **mass exodus of Palestinians in 1948** – the Nakba – was not simply voluntary. Historians have documented that at least **700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled** during the war<sup>82</sup>. Some did leave on orders or advice from Arab officials in certain areas, but **many others were driven out by direct Israeli military action or fled in fear** after events like the Deir Yassin massacre. Israeli forces depopulated and destroyed numerous Arab villages during and after the war

to prevent return. The **United Nations in 1948 acknowledged** the refugees' right to return or compensation (Resolution 194) <sup>60</sup>. Israel's stance has been to deny return to preserve its Jewish majority, thus the refugee issue remains unresolved. To frame it purely as voluntary flight ignores the well-documented expulsions and panic-inducing violence that Palestinians experienced <sup>11</sup>. The **responsibility for the refugee crisis** is shared and is a core grievance, not something to be dismissed as self-inflicted by Palestinian or Arab choices.

• **Claim: "There was never a Palestinian state, so the Jews didn't take anyone's country."**

**Fact:** It's true **no independent State of Palestine** existed before, but this is a straw man. Many nations emerged in the 20th century from colonial rule despite no prior statehood (Jordan, Iraq, etc., had no modern precursors either). The absence of a prior Palestinian state does **not negate the Palestinians' identity or their rights**. Palestinian Arabs lived in and cultivated the land for centuries and by the early 20th century developed a distinct national consciousness, especially in opposition to Zionist immigration and colonial mandates. The land wasn't empty – in 1917, over 90% of Palestine's population was Arab <sup>4</sup>. The conflict is about two peoples' national claims. The **UN recognized Palestinian self-determination** decades ago – in 1974 the General Assembly affirmed the Palestinian people's right to independence and sovereignty <sup>81</sup>. So while the Jews didn't conquer a sovereign "Palestinian state" in 1948, they did establish their state **atop an existing society**, displacing a native population that today seeks its own state. Both Jews and Palestinian Arabs have legitimate historical claims and attachments to the land; peace requires acknowledging that, not denying one side's peoplehood.

• **Claim: "Israel has always been the side seeking peace and offering compromises; the Arab side just wants to destroy Israel."**

**Fact:** Israel has indeed made **peace deals** (with Egypt and Jordan) and at times offered Palestinians statehood (e.g. Camp David 2000, Olmert's offer in 2008). However, this claim **overgeneralizes a complex history**. For instance, in 1947 the Zionist leadership accepted the UN partition, but then swiftly took more land in 1948 than allotted (and did not allow the Palestinian state to emerge). Arab leaders **did reject partition and some sought Israel's destruction**, especially early on <sup>9</sup>, which perpetuated war. However, since the 1980s the mainstream PLO position has been a two-state solution – they officially recognized Israel in 1993 <sup>31</sup>. In 2002, all Arab League states offered Israel peace and normal relations in exchange for a Palestinian state on 1967 lines (the **Arab Peace Initiative**), an offer Israel never seriously pursued. Meanwhile, Israeli actions have at times undermined peace prospects: e.g. the rapid expansion of **settlements** in occupied territory violated the spirit of Oslo and consumed land envisioned for a Palestinian state, breeding Palestinian cynicism. Hardliners in Israeli politics have spoken of annexing the West Bank and have opposed Palestinian statehood outright. The reality is **both sides have factions for and against compromise**. There have been missed opportunities and blame on both sides for peace failures. Characterizing one side as always generous and the other as rejectionist is an oversimplification refuted by the nuances of each negotiation (for example, at Camp David 2000 and Taba 2001, substantial gaps remained on both sides; it wasn't a simple refusal by one party).

• **Claim: "Jerusalem is solely Israel's capital and Judaism's holiest city, whereas it's less important to Muslims and thus Israel's claim should be paramount."**

**Fact: Jerusalem's significance is profound in all three Abrahamic religions**, and politically both Israelis and Palestinians see it as their capital. True, Jerusalem is the holiest city in Judaism (site of the Temple Mount), and only the third holiest in Islam. However, that does not diminish Muslim

attachment: Jerusalem has been venerated in Islam for 1,300+ years as al-Quds, home of the **Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock** – key holy sites built in the 7th century <sup>3</sup>. It was the first qibla (direction of prayer) in Islam before Mecca. For Palestinian Muslims and Christians, Jerusalem is the cultural and religious heart of their homeland. The **international community never accepted Israel's unilateral claim to East Jerusalem**. UN Security Council resolutions (e.g. 478 in 1980) censured Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and called for a negotiated solution, treating East Jerusalem as occupied territory. **Legally and diplomatically**, East Jerusalem is not recognized as part of Israel – countries have mostly kept embassies in Tel Aviv (until the U.S. move in 2018). The city's final status is meant to be negotiated. Thus, portraying Jerusalem as unquestionably Israel's and of marginal importance to others is incorrect; it ignores Palestinian rights and the city's multi-religious heritage. A durable peace would likely require a **shared or divided capital arrangement** to honor both peoples' connections to Jerusalem <sup>82</sup>.

- **Claim: "Israeli military rule in the territories isn't 'occupation' because the land is disputed and was won in a defensive war."**

**Fact:** Under international law, the **West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza are considered occupied territories**. The UN Security Council in Resolution 242 (1967) emphasized "inadmissibility of acquiring territory by war" and called for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 <sup>18</sup>. The fact that Israel captured the land in a war of self-defense does not confer sovereignty over it. The **Fourth Geneva Convention** applies, protecting the rights of civilians under occupation. Over the past 56 years, Israeli policies – from settlements to checkpoints and blockade of Gaza – have been heavily criticized as facets of an oppressive occupation. The **International Court of Justice (2004)** advisory opinion confirmed the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) is occupied and the separation wall violates international law where it runs inside occupied land. Even Israel's own Supreme Court uses the framework of belligerent occupation in many rulings on the West Bank. So regardless of terminology debates, the **reality** is about **control without citizenship**: millions of Palestinians live under Israeli authority without the rights of Israeli citizens, which by definition is an occupation. Arguing it's merely "disputed" ignores the consensus of international legal bodies and effectively dismisses Palestinian claims to self-determination there.

- **Claim: "The conflict persists only because of Palestinian/Arab intransigence or a culture of hate; Israel has done everything it could."**

**Fact:** This is a one-sided attribution of blame. In truth, the conflict endures because of a complex mix of **competing nationalisms, traumas, leadership failures, extremist spoilers, and outside interests**. Palestinians indeed have factions that refuse to ever compromise (e.g. Hamas still doesn't formally accept Israel's permanence, citing continued occupation and refugee grievances). But Israel too has influential factions that openly oppose Palestinian statehood and continue to entrench occupation (for instance, some members of Israel's current government explicitly reject a two-state solution and advocate annexation of the West Bank). Peace efforts were undermined by **violence on both sides** – suicide bombings and rockets on one hand, and assassinations, military incursions, and settlement expansions on the other. **Mistrust and fear** run deep. The narrative that one side is solely at fault is misleading; rather, it's a reciprocal cycle of actions and reactions. As an example, after Oslo, Hamas attacks helped derail peace, but simultaneously Israel's doubling of settlers in the 90s and refusal to stop building on Palestinian land eroded Palestinian faith in the process. A realistic analysis acknowledges that **both Israelis and Palestinians have legitimate rights and both have made grave mistakes**. Lasting peace requires mutual recognition and security guarantees – it's not achievable by assigning all blame to one side.

In summary, the video's assertions often **lack context or balance**. A fact-checked understanding shows a narrative where **both peoples have deep historical ties and sufferings**, and where both sides' leaders at times compromised and at other times perpetuated conflict. Simplifying the story to good vs. evil does not do justice to the real history. We have provided the corrected context with reputable sources so that readers can appreciate the full, nuanced picture of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rather than a one-sided "truth."

**Sources:** The information above is drawn from a range of reliable sources, including the **United Nations** (on historical partition plans, resolutions, and refugee figures) <sup>11</sup> <sup>60</sup>, **Council on Foreign Relations** timelines (for key dates, casualties, and accords) <sup>83</sup> <sup>74</sup>, and **Encyclopædia Britannica** (for historical background and Jerusalem's significance) <sup>1</sup> <sup>3</sup>, among other scholarly and official records as cited throughout. All efforts have been made to ensure accuracy and balance in this comprehensive overview.

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> Jerusalem summary | Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/summary/Jerusalem>

<sup>3</sup> <sup>13</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>80</sup> <sup>82</sup> Jerusalem | History, Map, Religion, & Facts | Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Jerusalem>

<sup>4</sup> Demographic history of Palestine (region) - Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographic\\_history\\_of\\_Palestine\\_\(region\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographic_history_of_Palestine_(region))

<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup> <sup>17</sup> <sup>23</sup> <sup>29</sup> <sup>34</sup> <sup>57</sup> <sup>61</sup> <sup>81</sup> History of the Question of Palestine - CVD

<https://cvdvn.net/2023/10/14/history-of-the-question-of-palestine/>

<sup>9</sup> <sup>12</sup> <sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> <sup>18</sup> <sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> <sup>21</sup> <sup>22</sup> <sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> <sup>27</sup> <sup>28</sup> <sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> <sup>32</sup> <sup>33</sup> <sup>35</sup> <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> <sup>38</sup> <sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup> <sup>41</sup> <sup>42</sup> <sup>43</sup> <sup>44</sup> <sup>45</sup> <sup>46</sup>  
<sup>47</sup> <sup>48</sup> <sup>49</sup> <sup>50</sup> <sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup> <sup>54</sup> <sup>55</sup> <sup>56</sup> <sup>60</sup> <sup>62</sup> <sup>63</sup> <sup>64</sup> <sup>65</sup> <sup>66</sup> <sup>67</sup> <sup>68</sup> <sup>69</sup> <sup>70</sup> <sup>71</sup> <sup>72</sup> <sup>73</sup> <sup>74</sup> <sup>75</sup> <sup>76</sup> <sup>77</sup> <sup>78</sup> <sup>79</sup> <sup>83</sup>

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Timeline | CFR Education

<https://education.cfr.org/learn/timeline/israeli-palestinian-conflict-timeline>

<sup>58</sup> <sup>59</sup> Zochrot - Were they expelled?

[https://www.zochrot.org/publication\\_articles/view/51011/en?Were\\_they\\_expelled](https://www.zochrot.org/publication_articles/view/51011/en?Were_they_expelled)