

THE HISTORY OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

Earlier History – Roman Period (63 BCE-324 CE), Byzantine Period (325-640), Early Arab Period (640-1099), Crusader Period (1099-1291), and Mameluke Period (1250-1517)

Ottoman Empire control of Palestine (1517-1918)

Ottoman Turks control a vast empire, including Palestine

Largely underdeveloped, though remained a pilgrimage destination
1858 New land code to facilitate tax collection concentrated control of land in the hands of a few

Renewed Jewish Interest in Palestine

1800s Ghetto life was breaking down for the Jews
1858-71 In western Europe, Jews were granted full emancipation, while in Tsarist Russia, most Jews were restricted to the “Pale”
1881-1914 Huge emigration of Jews (ca. 2.5 million) to western Europe, U.S., & Palestine.
1897 **First Zionist Congress** was organized by Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) who promoted a “national homeland” for Jews.

World War I with Defeat & Dismantling of the Ottoman Empire (1914-1918)

1915/17 **Britain’s double promise**–letters to Sharif Husayn of Mecca & Balfour Declaration

British Mandate Period

Increasing Jewish immigration in tension with growing Palestinian nationalistic resistance

1936-39 Great revolt of the Palestinians
1937 Britain's Peel Commission for partitioning (20% to Jews & rest to Palestinians)
1939 British White Paper trying to slow down Jewish immigration
1940s Jewish attacks against British rule instigated by Irgun and Stern Gang
1939-45 War years leading to withdrawal of British from Palestine
1947 **UN Partition Plan allots Jews 56% of Palestine though Jews own only 6% of land**

Arab-Israeli War of 1947-49

1947-1949 Fighting between Jews and Palestinians, with Arab countries joining after May 14
Jews' implementing Plan Dalet to gain control of Palestinian villages and land
1948 **Independent State of Israel** declared on May 14
No Palestinian State, only loss of land and homes (750, 000 refugees)

Period Between Independence & Occupation (1948-1967)

Rapid development of Israel: "law of return" (massive immigration), building up state infrastructure (parliament, education, IDF, etc.)
Arab countries viewed Israel as colonial imposition, with the result that Palestinians were paying for the holocaust
1950 U.N. established Palestinian refugee camps (UNRWA)
1956 **Sinai-Suez War:** Nasser's nationalization of Suez Canal led to an attack by British, U.S., & Israel, but Eisenhower forced Israel to return Gaza & Sinai in 1957
1964 **PLO** as public organization of Palestinian resistance groups (FATAH in 1957)

Six Day War to First Intifada (1967-1987)

1967 **Six-Day War:** Growing hostilities between Israel & Egypt (Nasser closed Strait of Tiran) resulted in Israel's surprise attack on Egypt, Jordan, & Syria on June 5
Israel occupied Sinai, Gaza, West Bank/East Jerusalem, & Golan Hts.
UN Resolution 242 offered "land for peace" basis for negotiations, accepted by Israel but rejected by Arab States at Khartoum Summit
New PLO (Arafat as head) asserted itself as political & resistance group for Palestinians

- 1970 **"Black September"** civil war in Jordan prompted PLO's move to Lebanon
- 1973 **Yom Kippur War:** ongoing skirmishes between Egypt & Israel culminated in surprise attacks on Israel by Egypt & Syria with UN Resolution 338 calling for negotiations
- 1977 **Likud Victory:** dramatic shift in Israeli politics, due to demographic changes and partly in reaction to international recognition of PLO and its use of terror attacks
Likud govt. encouraged more "illegal" settlements & rise of religious settler groups
- 1978 **Camp David Accords** agreement returned Sinai to Egypt & emboldened Israel
- 1982 **IDF's Invasion of Lebanon** to eradicate PLO became a disaster for Israel

1st Intifada & Beyond (1987-2000)

- 1987 **1st Intifada:** Palestinians' non-violent revolt due to neglect & oppressive conditions, leading to Madrid Conference after 1st Gulf War & Pal. Nat. Council vote
- 1993 **Oslo Process** began, leading to Palestinian Authority established in Gaza & Jericho
- 1994 **Israel-Jordan Peace Agreement** was signed.
- 1995 **Oslo II** established a plan for Israel's disengagement from the West Bank (Areas A, B, & C)
- 1995 **Increased violence by extremist groups** (Rabin assassinated and Hamas suicide bombings)
- 1996 **Likud's Netanyahu** won the Israeli election and withdrew support from the Oslo agreement
- 2000 **Camp David II** (Clinton with Arafat & Barak)

2nd Intifada & Confrontation with Hamas (2000-2018)

- 2000 **2nd Intifada** started after Sharon's September visit to Temple Mount
- 2001 Clinton Proposal (Dec.) & Taba Talks (Jan.)
- 2002 Sharon as prime minister launched "Operation Defensive Shield" (arrests Arafat)
Saudi Peace Plan was endorsed by Arab League, while U.N. Resolution 1397 affirmed a two-state solution
Construction of a Security-fence was begun by Israel
- 2003 **Iraqi War** begun by U.S. and Britain ("Road Map" announced by Bush White House)
- 2005 **Gaza withdrawal** was completed by Sharon government
- 2006 **Hamas** gained majority in Jan. 25th Palestinian elections
- 2006 **War between Hezbollah & Israel**
- 2007 Unity govt. between Fatah & Hamas, but later hostile takeover of Gaza by Hamas
Annapolis Summit hosted by Bush Administration
- 2009 **First Gaza War or "Operation Cast Lead"** (just prior to Obama's inauguration)
- 2010 Gaza Flotilla Raid (Turkish activists involved)
Direct talks between Israel & PA launched by Obama Administration
- 2011 Abbas of PA seeks recognition of Palestinian State from UN (upgraded in 2012 to non-member observer state status; Israel retaliated by approving more settlements)
- 2012 Continuing hostility between Israel and Hamas (numerous airstrikes into Gaza)
- 2014 IDF launched "**Operation Protective Edge**" into Gaza (peace talks suspended)
- 2015 **Israeli elections** on March 17 and Vatican's recognition of Palestinian State
- 2016 U.S. abstains on UN Resolution condemning Israeli settlements
- 2017 Israel passes law retroactively legalizing about 4000 settler homes on Palestinian land
- 2017 Hamas declares willingness to accept Interim Palestinian State within 1967 borders
- 2018 President Trump moves US Embassy to Jerusalem after recognizing it as Israel's Capital
- 2018 Israeli Knesset passed controversial Nation-State Law, granting "the right to exercise national self-determination" uniquely to the Jewish people in Israel
- 2018 Trump administration moves U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem and recognizes Golan Hts. as part of Israel (2019).
- 2019 Israeli Elections (Netanyahu to continue as Prime Minister) and Netanyahu (Likud Party) forms a coalition government with Gantz (Blue & White Party) on April 20, 2020
- 2020 Trump Peace Plan, "Peace to Prosperity," unveiled in January, 2020.

Compiled by James L. Bailey (March 16, 2006; revised August, 2020)