

PALESTINA



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LIFE EXPECTANCY
74 (M) 78 (W)



CAPITAL
Ramallah



LARGEST CITY
East Jerusalem



NATIONALITY
Palestinian



RELIGIONS
Islam, Christianity,
Judaism

PALESTINE OVERVIEW



CURRENCY
Israeli Shekel (ILS)
Jordanian Dinar (JOD)



POPULATION**
4,300,000 Arabs
592,200 Israelis
(see end note)



LANGUAGES
Arabic, Hebrew,
English



AGRICULTURE
Olives, Fruits, Vegetables,
Flowers, Beef, Dairy Products



INDUSTRIES
Manufacturing, Quarrying,
Textiles, Soap, Olive-Wood,
Mother of Pearl Souvenirs

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HISTORY

The place of origin of Judaism and Christianity, Palestine comprises a geographical area, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, that is separated today by the state of Israel. At times throughout history, as a result of various conflicts, there have been border shifts. Today, Palestine refers to the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, and is recognized as a *de jure* sovereign state in the Middle East.

Along with Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Cyprus, Egypt, the southeastern area of Turkey and western parts of Iran, Palestine makes up what was known as the Fertile Crescent or the cradle of civilization. Some of the earliest human settlements thrived there as a result of the agricultural and water resources provided by the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers. These civilizations flourished scientifically and creatively as well, developing writing, glass, and the use of irrigation.

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The history of this land is fraught with turmoil and complexity. In 1250 BCE, the Israelites began conquering the region, which led to the reign of King Solomon in 961 BCE. The Babylonians conquered the kingdom in 586 BCE and exiled the Jewish people. Seventy years later, the Jews began returning. What followed was centuries of conquest by various empires beginning with the Greeks in 333 BCE, the Jews in 165 BCE, the Romans in 63 BCE, the Jewish Diaspora in 70 CE, the Muslims in 638 CE, the Crusaders in 1099 CE, back to the Muslims in 1187 CE, and eventually the Ottomans in 1517 CE. During Ottoman rule, particularly in the late 19th century, Zionist writers such as Theodor Herzl began emphasizing the need for a Jewish homeland as a result of increasing levels of anti-Semitism in Europe. Two possibilities were strongly considered: the United States and Palestine.

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During World War I, the Ottomans joined the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Bulgaria. The Allied Powers (France, Britain, Russia, United States) supported Arab uprisings throughout the Ottoman Empire that would ultimately lead to its weakening and end. After the defeat of the Central Powers by the Allied forces, a series of private agreements resulted in the division of the area into sovereign states with mandate rulers.

In 1915, the High Commissioner of Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, engaged in secret correspondence with Hussein Bin Ali, the Sharif of Hejaz and Mecca. Sharif is a title meaning noble and refers to descendants of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson, Hassan Ibn Ali. McMahon expressed Great Britain's promise of eventual recognition and support of an Arab state whose boundaries would be determined by Hussein. These exchanges, now known as the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence (or, alternately, as the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence) lasted from July 14, 1915 to January 30, 1916. In exchange for Arab support of the war efforts through revolts against the Ottomans, the British would recognize Arab independence. This commitment was not honored.

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Meanwhile, also in 1915, British parliamentarian, Sir Mark Sykes, and a French diplomat, Francois Georges-Picot, looking toward a collapsed Ottoman Empire, carved up the Middle East into hypothetical spheres of influence under either British or French control. The Sykes-Picot agreement, drafted behind closed doors unbeknownst to other world leaders, would give the northern part of the Middle East, consisting of Christian enclaves in Syria and Lebanon to France, while Great Britain would have authority over southern territory including Palestine and Iraq.

In 1917, however, British Foreign Minister Arthur James Balfour promised the Zionist Federation of Great Britain "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." The Balfour Declaration of a homeland for the Jewish diaspora in what was believed to be a pre-emptory concession to the United States' President Woodrow Wilson who most certainly would have disagreed with the Sykes-Picot redesign of the Middle East.

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Upon the conclusion of World War I, the people of greater Syria were unwilling to cede control to the French as outlined in the Sykes-Picot agreement. In April 1920, the Allied leaders of Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan swiftly convened at the San Remo conference to discuss the allocation of mandates for administration of the former Ottoman-ruled lands of the Middle East. Precise state borders would be determined at a later date. Ultimately, as a result of the San Remo conference, the Middle East lands of present day Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia were divided into different regions under control of France and the United Kingdom with some variations from the original Sykes-Picot Agreement. Some of the current borders in the Middle East stem from this arrangement between western powers.

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A large number of Jews began immigrating to Palestine in response to the Balfour Declaration to establish a Jewish state. The Jewish population in Britain was extremely politically active in lobbying for continued support of the Zionist aspiration of a homeland based in Palestine. The Arab population in Palestine, previously the majority population, began protesting this development of a Jewish state in what the Arabs felt was historically their land. These demonstrations eventually turned violent and British authorities in mandate Palestine responded aggressively to the uprisings. Two Zionist groups, the Irgun, which would evolve into the Israeli Defense Forces, and Haganah, a militia, began attacking Palestinian civilians as well as British forces. Continued violence and upheaval resulted in the White Paper of 1939, a policy paper issued by the British government under Neville Chamberlain. The White Paper abandoned the idea of partitioning Palestine but promoted the creation of an independent Palestine to be governed by Palestinian Arabs and Jews proportionate to their numbers in the population by 1939. In addition, the White Paper limited the number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine to 75,000 for the period of 1940-1944, with a quota of 10,000 per year and a 25,000 supplementary allowance, after which further immigration would require the permission of the Arab majority population. Finally, there were restrictions placed on the rights of Jews to buy land from Arabs.

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The British made a promise in the White Paper that a Jewish state would not be formed in Palestine. The Jewish populations, especially organized groups like the Irgun, were incensed by this decision but with the outbreak of World War II, their focus shifted to other, more immediate concerns facing the European Jewish population.

During World War II, the Irgun and Haganah fought aside the Allied forces against the Axis powers. The militant groups gained considerable combat experience and support because of their involvement. After the defeat of the Axis, the Irgun and other Zionist organizations shifted their focus back to the idea of Palestine as a Jewish homeland. The Irgun continued targeting British military positions culminating in the bombing of the King David Hotel, a 5-star hotel in Jerusalem, on June 22, 1946. The attack resulted in the deaths of 91 people along with 46 injured at the hotel, which, at the time, was the central office of British authorities in Palestine. In 1947, the UN released Resolution 181, which recommended the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, inciting more conflict. Great Britain grew weary of the ongoing animosity and violence; its resources were exhausted as a result of the devastation caused by World War II and the decision was made to leave the region and hand over control to the United Nations. The removal of British forces allowed the Irgun and Haganah to force Palestinians out of certain areas of Palestine. By May 14, 1948, the last British soldiers had left and Israel declared itself an independent state. This was further complicated by the December 1948 UN Resolution 194 which declares the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

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Following Israel's formation, the surrounding Arab states attacked Israel. However, the Israeli forces, mainly the Irgun, had considerable combat experience from World War II and received arms and support from the United States. The Arab forces were pushed back and Israel remained an independent state. The defeat of the Arab armies and the Deir Yassin massacre (Irgun forces killed 107 villagers including women and children on April 9, 1948) terrified the Palestinians, resulting in large populations of refugees fleeing into Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan.

In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had been formed and Yasser Arafat soon became its leader. The PLO became the primary force in combating Israel and was based chiefly in Jordan. In 1967, the Six Day War began as Israel launched preemptive strikes against Egypt (who was attempting to mobilize its air force). Egypt, Syria, and Jordan launched attacks but all three were defeated resulting in Israel nearly doubling in size as a result of territorial gains. The United Nations condemned both sides and pressured Israel to withdraw forces from the land it seized. Israel withdrew from certain areas but remained in control of East Jerusalem, Gaza, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. In the aftermath of the war, UN Resolution 242 was released, calling for a two-state solution. To this day, 242 provides the parameters for the recommendation of a two-state solution, though the two-state solution has become increasingly improbable due to political circumstances.

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Meanwhile in Jordan, tensions began to strain as the PLO began competing with Jordanian forces for authority in certain regions. This culminated in Black September in 1970 when the Jordanian military and PLO forces waged open war resulting in thousands of deaths and the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan. The PLO subsequently established a headquarters in Lebanon above the Israeli border.

In 1974, Yasser Arafat made his first appearance at the United Nations where he famously proclaimed, "Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand." However, soon after the speech, the Likud, a right-wing Israeli political party who believed in extending Israel over all of the Palestinian territories, came into power. Their ideology and continued expansion of settlements resulted in a stunted peace process. In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon in order to force the PLO out of the region. Israeli forces quickly reached Beirut and established a ceasefire to allow the PLO to leave. However, Israeli troops surrounded two major Palestinian refugee camps, Sabra and Shatila, while protecting the Phalangists, a Christian militant group. During the occupation of Sabra and Shatila, the Israeli troops facilitated the massacre of thousands of Palestinian men, women, and children in the camps by blocking refugees from leaving and allowing the Phalangists to enter the camps. This resulted in an estimated 3,000 civilian deaths and the resignation of Israel's defense minister, Ariel Sharon, who would later be elected as the 11th prime minister of Israel in 2001

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By 1987, Palestinians began boycotting, protesting, and causing civil disobedience throughout Israel and the Palestinian territories. This spread throughout the West Bank and Gaza and is known as the First Intifada (uprising). The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) responded to these mostly nonviolent protests with brute force resulting in over 1,000 Palestinian civilian deaths over a five year period.

In the early 1990s, the peace process between Palestine and Israel began to grow. Initially, progress was stalled by Israel's refusal to recognize the PLO. However, the election of the left-wing Labor party revitalized the process. The secret Oslo Accords made significant progress while public negotiations failed. The agreement resulted in the signing of the **Declaration of Principles** between Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and Yasser Arafat in front of an audience of 400 million people in 1993. By 1994, Israel agreed to withdraw military forces from the West Bank and Gaza (excluding areas of Israeli settlements). One year later, Oslo II was signed dividing the West Bank into 7 percent Palestinian control, 21 percent joint control, and the remainder controlled by Israel. This agreement angered extremists on both sides; radical Palestinians did not want to accept such a small proportion of the land while radical Israelis did not want to give up any "Jewish" land. This agreement resulted in the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish religious extremist on November 4, 1995. The Palestinian Authority (PA) was established in 1994 with the hope of creating an independent Palestinian state and economy, but ineffective leadership, political party infighting, the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements and the building of the separation wall have made this goal increasingly difficult to achieve.

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Relations became strained in 1996 between Israel and Palestine as the Palestinian Islamic group Hamas began engaging in suicide bombings in Israel as a response to Israeli forces launching strikes in Lebanon. The election of Israeli, right-wing leader Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu as prime minister further strained relations as he began building settlements in Palestinian territories and campaigned against the Oslo peace deals. In 1999, Netanyahu lost reelection to Ehud Barak, leader of the Labor party. Frustration among the Palestinians began to grow as peace talks broke down. Barak and Arafat could not come to agreement over Jerusalem and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. Soon after, the right-wing Likud party leader, Ariel Sharon, toured the Temple Mount, the holiest site for Muslims in Palestine and Israel and the 3rd most important holy site for Muslims, while most Palestinians were restricted access to the Al Aqsa Mosque rather than the entire compound. This event combined with the stalled peace progress sparked the Second Intifada, a much more violent uprising than the first.

Barak stepped down as prime minister and Sharon took his place. Sharon emphasized using strength against the Palestinians, which became a popular decision as the Second Intifada become increasingly violent. Israeli strikes in Palestine and Palestinian rocket attacks against Israel both intensified. The Palestinian death toll began to soar as efforts by the U.S. to broker peace continued to fail. In 2002, intensified attacks by Palestinian forces resulted in Israel re-occupying the West Bank. Israel invaded several cities throughout the West Bank and began constructing its barrier wall in the West Bank thus isolating the Palestinians and restricting access to essential farmlands. [According to Aljazeera](#) in 2014, the full route, "as outlined in the blueprint approved by Israel's Ministry of Defense, is 422 miles of zigzagging curves and loops, making it more than twice as long as the 199-mile-long Green Line. More than one-fifth of the planned barrier has not yet been constructed."

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Palestinians are required to obtain a permit to access their land on the other side of the barrier. The barrier wall has many entrances, or checkpoints, where travelling Palestinians are required to produce proper authorization for their vehicle, as well as themselves, to enter after careful inspection from Israeli security who issue fines for infractions. Each checkpoint has specific hours of operation, only allowing entrance during a certain window of time. Such rigid restrictions prevent many from obtaining basic human resources and aid including food, employment, education and health services.

Arafat was under international pressure to rein in militant groups and reform the Palestinian Authority. Mahmoud Abbas became prime minister of Palestine in 2003 as Israel and the U.S. refused to continue negotiations with Arafat due to his use and support of violence. Abbas achieved a temporary ceasefire of hostilities from Palestinian militant groups. However, internal disputes resulted in Ahmed Qurei replacing Abbas for brief periods of time in 2003 and later in 2005. Prospects of peace began to crumble as attacks resumed from both sides.

In April 2004, Israel began removing settlers and troops from Gaza and the West Bank. However, construction of the barrier wall in the West Bank continued despite international pressure against the project. The International Court of Justice in The Hague pronounced the barrier illegal but this did not deter Israel. PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat died of a blood disorder in November 2004; he was replaced by Mahmoud Abbas.

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UN Recognition

In November 2012, the United Nations General Assembly officially upgraded the status of Palestine from observer status to "non-member observer state," with the resolution passing with 138 votes in favor, 9 opposed, and 41 abstentions. The United States threatened to use its veto power to prevent a similar action in the United Nations Security Council. The de facto international recognition of the State of Palestine has allowed Palestine the opportunity to pursue legal claims against Israel in international courts, although Palestine has declined this opportunity citing the desire to work out direct negotiations with Israel instead. On January 3, 2013, in response to these developments, the PA officially changed its name to the State of Palestine.

The Refugee Situation

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) provides services to over 1.5 million registered Palestinian refugees. This growing figure only represents roughly one third of the refugees, as the majority of refugees is unregistered. Currently, over 5 million Palestinian refugees are eligible for UNRWA services and shelter from the organization's 58 recognized Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Many of the approximately 527,000 registered Palestinian refugees living in Syria before the war have faced double displacement, forced to flee their homes because of the Civil War. Overcrowding and access to basic services are a major issue for refugees in camps, and beyond; for example, the Gaza Strip is the 5th most densely populated area of land in the world with 5,046 individuals per square kilometer.

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Introduction

The struggle between the Israelis and the Palestinians is one of the most enduring and explosive of all the world's conflicts.

It has its roots in the historic claim to the land which lies between the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan river.

For the Palestinians the last 100 years have brought colonisation, expulsion and military occupation, followed by a long and difficult search for self-determination and for coexistence with the nation they hold responsible for their suffering and loss.

For the Jewish people of Israel, the return to the land of their forefathers after centuries of persecution around the world has not brought peace or security. They have faced many crises as their neighbours have sought to wipe their country off the map.

BBC News Online highlights some of the key dates of recent Middle East history and looks back at the origins and development of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Shifting sands

At the time of World War I the area was ruled by the Turkish Ottoman empire. Turkish control ended when Arab forces backed by Britain drove out the Ottomans.

Britain occupied the region at the end of the war in 1918 and was assigned as the mandatory power by the League of Nations on 25 April 1920.

During this period of change, three key pledges were made.

In 1916 the British Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, had promised the Arab leadership post-war independence for former Ottoman Arab provinces.

However, at the same time, the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement between war victors, Britain and France, divided the region under their joint control.

Then in 1917, the British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour committed Britain to work towards "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people", in a letter to leading Zionist Lord Rothschild. It became known as the Balfour Declaration.

Arab discontent

The Zionist project of the 1920s and 1930s saw hundreds of thousands of Jews emigrating to British Mandate Palestine, provoking unrest in the Arab community.

In 1922, a British census showed the Jewish population had risen to about 11% of Palestine's 750,000 inhabitants. More than 300,000 immigrants arrived in the next 15 years.

Zionist-Arab antagonism boiled over into violent clashes in August 1929 when 133 Jews were killed by Palestinians and 110 Palestinians died at the hands of the British police.

Arab discontent again exploded into widespread civil disobedience during a general strike in 1936. By this time, the militant Zionist group Irgun Zvai Leumi was orchestrating attacks on Palestinian and British targets with the aim of "liberating" Palestine and Transjordan (modern-day Jordan) by force.

In July 1937, Britain, in a Royal Commission headed by former Secretary of State for India, Lord Peel, recommended partitioning the land into a Jewish state (about a third of British Mandate Palestine, including Galilee and the coastal plain) and an Arab one.

Palestinian and Arab representatives rejected this and demanded an end to immigration and the safeguarding of a single unified state with protection of minority rights. Violent opposition continued until 1938 when it was crushed with reinforcements from the UK.

UN partition of Palestine

Britain, which had ruled Palestine since 1920, handed over responsibility for solving the Zionist-Arab problem to the UN in 1947.

The territory was plagued with chronic unrest pitting native Arabs against Jewish immigrants (who now made up about a third the population, owning about 6% of the land). The situation had become more critical with the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Jews fleeing the Nazi persecution in Europe. Some six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust during World War II.

The UN set up a special committee which recommended splitting the territory into separate Jewish and Palestinian states. Palestinian representatives, known as the Arab Higher Committee, rejected the proposal; their counterparts in the Jewish Agency accepted it.

The partition plan gave 56.47% of Palestine to the Jewish state and 43.53% to the Arab state, with an international enclave around Jerusalem. On 29 November 1947, 33 countries of the UN General Assembly voted for partition, 13 voted against and 10 abstained. The plan, which was rejected by the Palestinians, was never implemented.

Britain announced its intention to terminate its Palestine mandate on 15 May 1948 but hostilities broke out before the date arrived.

The death of British soldiers in the conflict made the continuing presence in Palestine deeply unpopular in Britain. In addition, the British resented American pressure to allow in more Jewish refugees - a sign of growing US support for Zionism.

Both Arab and Jewish sides prepared for the coming confrontation by mobilising forces. The first "clearing" operations were conducted against Palestinian villages by Jewish forces in December.

Establishment of Israel

The State of Israel, the first Jewish state for nearly 2,000 years, was proclaimed at 1600 on 14 May 1948 in Tel Aviv. The declaration came into effect the following day as the last British troops withdrew. Palestinians remember 15 May as "al-Nakba", or the Catastrophe.

The year had begun with Jewish and Arab armies each staging attacks on territory held by the other side. Jewish forces, backed by the Irgun and Lehi militant groups made more progress, seizing areas allotted to the Jewish state but also conquering substantial territories allocated for the Palestinian one.

Irgun and Lehi massacred scores of inhabitants of the village of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem on 9 April. Word of the massacre spread terror among Palestinians and hundreds of thousands fled to Lebanon, Egypt and the area now known as the West Bank.

The Jewish armies were victorious in the Negev, Galilee, West Jerusalem and much of the coastal plain.

The day after the state of Israel was declared five Arab armies from Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq immediately invaded Israel but were repulsed, and the Israeli army crushed pockets of resistance. Armistices established Israel's borders on the frontier of most of the earlier British Mandate Palestine.

Egypt kept the Gaza Strip while Jordan annexed the area around East Jerusalem and the land now known as the West Bank. These territories made up about 25% of the total area of British Mandate Palestine.

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Yasser Arafat embodied the armed struggle

Formation of the PLO

Since 1948 there had been fierce competition between neighbouring states to lead an Arab response to the creation of Israel. That left the Palestinians as passive onlookers.

In January 1964, Arab governments - wanting to create a Palestinian organisation that would remain essentially under their control - voted to create a body called the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

But the Palestinians wanted a genuinely independent body, and that was the goal of Yasser Arafat who took over the chairmanship of the PLO in 1969. His Fatah organisation (founded in secret five years earlier) was gaining notoriety with its armed operations against Israel.

Fatah fighters inflicted heavy casualties on Israeli troops at Karamah in Jordan in 1968.



Israeli soldiers celebrate at Jerusalem's holy sites

The 1967 War

Mounting tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbours culminated in six days of hostilities starting on 5 June 1967 and ending on 11 June - six days which changed the face of the Middle East conflict.

Israel seized Gaza and the Sinai from Egypt in the south and the Golan Heights from Syria in the north. It also pushed Jordanian forces out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Egypt's powerful air force was put out of action on the first day of fighting when Israeli jets bombed it on the ground in a pre-emptive strike.

The territorial gains doubled the area of land controlled by Israel. The victory heralded a new age of confidence and optimism for Israel and its supporters.

The UN Security Council issued resolution 242, stressing "the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security". The resolution called for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict". It also called for an end to "all claims or states of belligerency and respect for... the sovereignty... of every state in the area and their right to live in peace... free from threats or acts of force".

According to the UN, the conflict displaced another 500,000 Palestinians who fled to Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

KEY MAP

↳ [1967 War](#)

KEY DOCUMENTS

↳ [UN Security Council resolution 242](#)



Jubilant Egyptian soldiers plant flag on Bar-Lev line bunker in Sinai

The 1973 Yom Kippur war

Unable to regain the territory they had lost in 1967 by diplomatic means, Egypt and Syria launched major offensives against Israel on the Jewish festival of the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. The clashes are also known as the Ramadan war.

Initially, Egypt and Syria made advances in Sinai and the Golan Heights. These were reversed after three weeks of fighting. Israel eventually made gains beyond the 1967 ceasefire lines.

Israeli forces pushed on into Syria beyond the Golan Heights, though they later gave up some of these gains. In Egypt, Israeli forces regained territory and advanced to the western side of the Suez Canal.

The United States, the Soviet Union and the United Nations all made diplomatic interventions to bring about ceasefire agreements between the combatants.

Egypt and Syria jointly lost an estimated 8,500 soldiers in the fighting, while Israel lost about 6,000.

The war left Israel more dependent on the US for military, diplomatic and economic support. Soon after the war, Saudi Arabia led a petroleum embargo against states that supported Israel. The embargo, which caused a steep rise in petrol prices and fuel shortages across the world, lasted until March 1974. In October 1973 the UN Security Council passed resolution 338 which called for the combatants "to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately... [and start] negotiations between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East".

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Eleven Israeli athletes were killed at the Olympics in 1972

Arafat's first UN appearance

In the 1970s, under Yasser Arafat's leadership, PLO factions and other militant Palestinian groups such as Abu Nidal launched a series of attacks on Israeli and other targets.

One such attack took place at the Munich Olympics in 1972 in which 11 Israeli athletes were killed.

But while the PLO pursued the armed struggle to "liberate all of Palestine", in 1974, Arafat made a dramatic first appearance at the United Nations mootng a peaceful solution.

He condemned the Zionist project, but concluded: "Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."

The speech was a watershed in the Palestinians' search for international recognition of their cause.

A year later, a US State Department official, Harold Saunders, acknowledged for the first time that "the legitimate interests of the Palestinian Arabs must be taken into account in the negotiating of an Arab-Israeli peace".

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The election ends Likud's long period in opposition

Israel's resurgent right wing

Hardline Irgun and Lehi groups may have been instrumental in the creation of Israel in 1948, but their heirs in the Herut (later Likud) party failed to win an Israeli election until 1977.

Until this time Israeli politics had been dominated by the left-wing Labour Party. Likud ideology focused on extending Israeli sovereignty in the whole of the earlier British Mandate Palestine, as well as claiming Jordanian territory as part of the "Greater Israel" of Biblical times.

The new government, led by former Irgun leader Menachem Begin, intensified Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and Gaza with a view to creating "facts on the ground" to prevent any future territorial compromise over the areas captured in 1967.


Agriculture minister Ariel Sharon spearheaded this movement as chairman of the ministerial committee for settlements until 1981.

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The handshake marks an end to hostility

WATCH/LISTEN

 **AUDIO** Camp David 1978
Menachem Begin: "It is harder to show civil courage than military courage"

KEY DOCUMENT

↳ [Camp David Accords](#)

Israel and Egypt make peace

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat stunned the world by flying to the Jewish state and making a speech to the Israeli parliament in Jerusalem on 19 November 1977.

Sadat became the first Arab leader to recognise Israel, only four years after launching the October 1973 war (known as the Yom Kippur war in Israel). The war was indecisive after Egypt and Syria had attacked Israeli forces occupying Sinai and the Golan Heights. It ended with the issuing of UN Resolution 338 calling for "a just and durable peace in the Middle East".

Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David accords in September 1978 outlining "the framework for peace in the Middle East" which included limited autonomy for Palestinians. A bilateral Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty was signed by Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin six months later in March 1979.

The Sinai Peninsula, which Israel had seized in the 1967 war, was returned to Egypt.

Arab states boycotted Egypt for breaking ranks and negotiating a separate treaty with Israel.

Sadat was assassinated in 1981 by Islamist elements in the Egyptian army, who opposed peace with Israel, during national celebrations to mark the anniversary of the October war.



Ariel Sharon resigned as defence minister after being criticised for his role in the Lebanon massacres

WATCH/LISTEN



1983 Ariel Sharon:
The West Bank and
Gaza "will not be, not now and
not in the future, a Palestinian
state"

Israel invades Lebanon

The Israeli army launched a massive military incursion into Lebanon in the summer of 1982. Operation "Peace for Galilee" was intended to wipe out Palestinian guerrilla bases near Israel's northern border, although Defence Minister Ariel Sharon pushed all the way to Beirut and expelled the PLO from the country.

The invasion began on 6 June, less than two months after the last Israeli troops and civilians were pulled out of Sinai under the 1979 treaty with Egypt. The action was triggered by the attempt on the life of Israeli ambassador to London Shlomo Argov by the dissident Palestinian group Abu Nidal.

Israeli troops reached Beirut in August. A ceasefire agreement allowed the departure of PLO fighters from Lebanon, leaving Palestinian refugee camps defenceless.

As Israeli forces gathered around Beirut on 14 September, Bashir Gemayel, leader of the Christian Phalange militia, was killed by a bomb at his HQ in the capital. The following day, the Israeli army occupied West Beirut.

From 16 to 18 September, the Phalangists - who were allied to Israel - killed hundreds of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps as they were encircled by Israeli troops in one of the worst atrocities of nearly a century of conflict in the Middle East. Mr Sharon resigned from his post as defence minister after a 1983 Israeli inquiry concluded that he had failed to act to prevent the massacre.

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The intifada put pressure on both the PLO and Israel

Palestinian intifada

A mass uprising - or intifada - against the Israeli occupation began in Gaza and quickly spread to the West Bank.

Protest took the form of civil disobedience, general strikes, boycotts on Israeli products, graffiti, and barricades, but it was the stone-throwing demonstrations against the heavily-armed occupation troops that captured international attention.

The Israeli Defence Forces responded and there was heavy loss of life among Palestinian civilians. More than 1,000 died in clashes which lasted until 1993.

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The intifada proved more powerful than had been expected

PLO opens door to peace

Despite its military might, Israel was unable to quell the intifada which started in 1987 and was backed by the entire Palestinian population living under Israeli occupation.

For the PLO - based in Tunis since its expulsion from Lebanon in 1982 - the uprising threatened the loss of its role as the main player in the Palestinian "revolution" as focus shifted to the occupied territories and away from the diaspora population.

The Palestinian National Council (a government-in-exile) convened in Algeria in November 1988 and voted to accept a "two-state" solution based on the 1947 UN partition resolution (181), renounce terrorism and seek a negotiated settlement based on Resolution 242, which called for Israel to withdraw from territory captured in the 1967 war, and Resolution 338.

The US began dialogue with the PLO. But Israel continued to view the PLO as a terrorist organisation with which it would not negotiate. Instead, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir proposed elections in the occupied territories before negotiations on a self-rule agreement.

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Conference opens the way for bilateral talks

Madrid Summit

The 1991 Gulf War was a disaster for the PLO and its leader Yasser Arafat whose support for Iraq alienated his wealthy supporters in the Gulf.

With Kuwait liberated from Iraqi control, the US administration devoted itself to Middle East peacemaking - a prospect more appealing to the financially weakened and politically isolated Arafat than Israel's hard-line Likud prime minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Numerous visits by the US Secretary of State James Baker prepared the ground for an international summit in Madrid. Syria agreed to attend, hoping to negotiate a return of the Golan Heights. Jordan also accepted the invitation.

But Shamir refused to talk directly with PLO "terrorists", so a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation was formed with prominent Palestinian figures- who were not from the PLO - taking part. In the days before the summit, Washington withheld \$10bn of loan guarantees from Israel in a rare moment of discord over the building of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

A worldwide audience watched the historic summit begin on 30 October. The old enemies were each given 45 minutes to set out their positions. The Palestinians spoke of a shared future of hope with Israel, Shamir justified the existence of the Jewish state, while Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara dwelled on Mr Shamir's "terrorist" past.

After the summit the US set up separate bilateral meetings in Washington between Israel and Syria, and with the Jordanian-Palestinian delegations.

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Historic handshake at the White House

WATCH/LISTEN

 **VIDEO** 13 September 1993:
The BBC's John Simpson reports on the Washington peace accord

KEY DOCUMENT

› Declaration of Principles

The Oslo Peace Process

The election of the left-wing Labour government in June 1992, led by Yitzhak Rabin, triggered a period of frenetic Israeli-Arab peacemaking in the mid-1990s.

The government - including the "iron-fisted" Rabin and doves Shimon Peres and Yossi Beilin - was uniquely placed to talk seriously about peace with the Palestinians. The PLO, meanwhile, wanted to make peace talks work because of the weakness of its position due to the Gulf War.

Israel immediately lifted a ban on PLO participants in the stalemated bilateral meetings in Washington. More significantly Foreign Minister Peres and his deputy Beilin explored the possibility of activating a secret forum for talks facilitated by Norway.

With the Washington bilateral talks going nowhere, the secret "Oslo track" - opened on 20 January 1993 in the Norwegian town of Sarpsborg - made unprecedented progress. The Palestinians consented to recognise Israel in return for the beginning of phased dismantling of Israel's occupation.

Negotiations culminated in the Declaration of Principles, signed on the White House lawn and sealed with a historic first handshake between Rabin and Yasser Arafat watched by 400 million people around the world.

PALESTINA



Yasser Arafat's triumphant return to Gaza

WATCH/LISTEN

 **VIDEO** 1 July 1994: The BBC's John Simpson reports on Yasser Arafat's return to Gaza

Birth of the Palestinian Authority

On 4 May 1994 Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation reached an agreement in Cairo on the initial implementation of the 1993 Declaration of Principles. This document specified Israel's military withdrawal from most of the Gaza Strip, excluding Jewish settlements and land around them, and from the Palestinian town of Jericho in the West Bank. Negotiations were difficult and were almost derailed on 25 February when a Jewish settler in the West Bank town of Hebron fired on praying Muslims, killing 29 people.

The agreement itself contained potential pitfalls. It envisaged further withdrawals during a five-year interim period during which solutions to the really difficult issues were to be negotiated - issues such as the establishment of a Palestinian state, the status of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories and the fate of more than 3.5 million Palestinian refugees from the 1948 and 1967 upheavals.


Many critics of the peace process were silenced on 1 July as jubilant crowds lined the streets of Gaza to cheer Yasser Arafat on his triumphant return to Palestinian territory. The returning Palestinian Liberation Army deployed in areas vacated by Israeli troops and Arafat became head of the new Palestinian National Authority (PA) in the autonomous areas. He was elected president of the Authority in January 1996.

PALESTINA



Rabin's death ends the momentum towards peace

WATCH/LISTEN

 **VIDEO** Rabin assassination, November 1995: "The assassin opened fire as the peace rally broke up"

Oslo II and the assassination of Rabin

The first year of Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho was dogged by difficulties. Bomb attacks by Palestinian militants killed dozens of Israelis, while Israel blockaded the autonomous areas and assassinated militants. Settlement activity continued. The Palestinian Authority quelled unrest by mass detentions. Opposition to the peace process grew among right-wingers and religious nationalists in Israel.

Against this background, peace talks were laborious and fell behind schedule. But on 24 September the so-called Oslo II agreement was signed in Taba in Egypt, and countersigned four days later in Washington.

The agreement divided the West Bank into three zones:

- Zone A comprised 7% of the territory (the main Palestinian towns excluding Hebron and East Jerusalem) going to full Palestinian control;
- Zone B comprised 21% of the territory under joint Israeli-Palestinian control;
- Zone C stayed in Israeli hands. Israel was also to release Palestinian prisoners. Further handovers followed.

Oslo II was greeted with little enthusiasm by Palestinians, while Israel's religious right was furious at the "surrender of Jewish land". Amid an incitement campaign against Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a Jewish religious extremist assassinated him on 4 November, sending shock waves around the world. The dovish Shimon Peres, architect of the faltering peace process, became prime minister.

PALESTINA



A new mistrust enters Mid-East dialogue

WATCH/LISTEN

 **VIDEO** Wye Accord 1998:
Clinton "determination to keep this all moving forward"

Deadlock

Conflict returned early in 1996 with a series of devastating suicide bombings in Israel carried out by the Islamic militant group Hamas, and a bloody three-week bombardment of Lebanon by Israel.

Peres narrowly lost elections on 29 May to the right-wing Binyamin "Bibi" Netanyahu, who campaigned against the Oslo peace deals under the motto "Peace with Security".

Netanyahu soon enflamed Arab opinion by lifting a freeze on building new settlements in the occupied territories and provoking fears about undermining Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem by opening an archaeological tunnel under the compound of al-Aqsa mosque - one of Islam's holiest sites.

Despite his antagonism towards the existing peace process, Netanyahu, under increasing US pressure, handed over 80% of Hebron in January 1997 and signed the Wye River Memorandum on 23 October 1998 outlining further withdrawals from the West Bank.

But his right-wing coalition collapsed in January 1999 in disarray over the implementation of the Wye deal. He lost elections on 18 May to Labour's Ehud Barak who pledged to "end the 100-year conflict" between Israel and the Arabs within one year.

The five-year interim period defined by Oslo for a final resolution passed on 4 May 1999, but Yasser Arafat was persuaded to defer unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood to give a chance for negotiations with the new administration.

PALESTINA



The shooting of Gaza boy Muhammad al-Durrah shocked the world

WATCH/LISTEN

 **VIDEO** 28 September 2000:
The BBC's Hilary Andersson reports on Ariel Sharon's visit to Jerusalem's holiest site

Second intifada

Initial optimism about the peacemaking prospects of a government led by Ehud Barak proved unfounded. A new Wye River accord was signed in September 1999 but further withdrawals from occupied land were hindered by disagreements and final status talks (on Jerusalem, refugees, settlements and borders) got nowhere. Frustration was building in the Palestinian population who had little to show for five years of the peace process.

Barak concentrated on peace with Syria - also unsuccessfully. But he did succeed in fulfilling a campaign pledge to end Israel's 21-year entanglement in Lebanon.

After the withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000, attention turned back to Yasser Arafat, who was under pressure from Barak and US President Bill Clinton to abandon gradual negotiations and launch an all-out push for a final settlement at the presidential retreat at Camp David. Two weeks of talks failed to come up with acceptable solutions to the status of Jerusalem and the right of return of Palestinian refugees.

In the uncertainty of the ensuing impasse, Ariel Sharon, the veteran right-winger who succeeded Binyamin Netanyahu as Likud leader, toured the al-Aqsa/Temple Mount complex in Jerusalem on 28 September. Sharon's critics saw it as a highly provocative move. Palestinian demonstrations followed, quickly developing into what became known as the al-Aqsa intifada, or uprising.

PALESTINA



Suicide bombs escalate the crisis

WATCH/LISTEN

 **AUDIO** 6 February 2001: The BBC's Paul Adams on Ariel Sharon's sweep to power

KEY DOCUMENT

↳ Mitchell report

Sharon returns

By the end of 2000 Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak found himself presiding over an increasingly bitter and bloody cycle of violence as the intifada raged against Israel's occupation in the West Bank and Gaza.

With his coalition collapsing around him, Barak resigned as prime minister on 10 December to "seek a new mandate" to deal with the crisis. However in elections on 6 February, Ariel Sharon was swept to power by an Israeli electorate that had overwhelmingly turned its back on the land-for-peace formulas of the 1990s and now favoured a tougher approach to Israel's "Palestinian problem".

The death toll soared as Sharon intensified existing policies such as assassinating Palestinian militants, air strikes and incursions into Palestinian self-rule areas. Palestinian militants, meanwhile, stepped up suicide bomb attacks in Israeli cities.

The US spearheaded international efforts to calm the violence. Envoy George Mitchell led an inquiry into the uprising, while CIA director George Tenet negotiated a ceasefire - but neither initiative broke the cycle of bloodshed.



A war of words raged after the Israeli army went into Jenin

West Bank re-occupied

Palestinian militants carried out an intense campaign of attacks in the first three months of the year, including a hotel bombing which killed 29 on the eve of the Jewish Passover holiday.

In response, Israel besieged Yasser Arafat in his Ramallah compound for five weeks and sent tanks and thousands of troops to re-occupy almost all of the West Bank.

Months of curfews and closures followed as Israel carried out operations it said were aimed at destroying the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure.

Controversy raged as Israeli forces entered and captured the West Bank city of Jenin in April. A UN report later refuted Palestinian claims of a massacre, but Amnesty International concluded that the Israeli army had committed war crimes in Jenin and also Nablus.

May saw a five-week stand-off between the Israeli army and a large group of militants and civilians sheltering inside Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity.

In June, US President George Bush called for Palestinians to replace their leader with one not "compromised by terror", and outlined a timetable for negotiations which would later become the plan known as the "roadmap".

Israel began building a barrier in the West Bank, which it said was to prevent attacks inside Israel, although Palestinians feared an attempt to annex land.

Mr Arafat faced heavy pressure to reform the Palestinian Authority and rein in the militants.

Palestinian attacks continued, met with periodic Israeli incursions and a ten-day siege which reduced much of Mr Arafat's compound to rubble.



Mahmoud Abbas (far left) served as Palestinian PM for four months

Road map hopes

After several Palestinian attacks in January, Israel stepped up operations against Hamas, killing the militant group's founder.

With the US and Israel continuing to refuse to deal directly with Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader appointed Mahmoud Abbas as his prime minister.

In late April, the US published the much-delayed roadmap, which outlined a step-by-step timetable towards a negotiated Palestinian state, with the first phase contingent on an end to Palestinian violence and Israeli incursions and settlement activity.

In May, the Israeli cabinet endorsed the plan, though it put on record several reservations.

At a summit with the US president in Aqaba, Jordan, in June, Mr Abbas called for an end to the armed intifada, while Israeli President Ariel Sharon declared his support for the creation of a "democratic Palestinian state at peace with Israel".

Further negotiations led to pull-backs of Israeli forces in Gaza and Bethlehem. Mr Abbas secured a temporary cessation of violence from Palestinian militant groups.

In August, after seven weeks of relative calm, the truce disintegrated with a spate of tit-for-tat Palestinian suicide bombings, Israeli raids and targeted killings.

After a long-running power struggle with Mr Arafat over control of the Palestinian security apparatus, Mr Abbas resigned in early September. He was replaced by Arafat loyalist Ahmed Qurei.

Construction of the West Bank barrier continued throughout the year despite growing international criticism.

The Israeli cabinet voted to "remove" Mr Arafat and in December Mr Sharon told the Palestinians he would implement a policy of unilateral separation unless they halted violence.



Crowds of mourners surround Yasser Arafat's coffin

Arafat dies

Palestinian suicide bombings and Israeli air strikes continued. Israel provoked outrage among Palestinians by killing Hamas spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin in a targeted missile attack in March.

A second senior leader, Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi, was killed a month later.

In April Ariel Sharon revealed a "disengagement plan" which included the withdrawal of all 8,000 settlers and the troops that protect them in the Gaza Strip, and from three small settlements in the northern West Bank.

Construction of the West Bank barrier continued, despite increasing protests and changes to the route in response to a verdict in the Israeli High Court.

In July, the International Court of Justice in The Hague pronounced the barrier illegal, but Israel dismissed the non-binding ruling.

Intra-Palestinian political turmoil broke out over the summer as Yasser Arafat, Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei and various Palestinian factions battled over reform of the security forces.

After three bombings in August and September and numerous Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli towns, Israel launched a major and bloody incursion into northern Gaza.

In late October Arafat was taken ill and flown to France for emergency treatment. He died of a mysterious blood disorder on 11 November.

The news was met with an outpouring of grief among Palestinians. Emotional crowds engulfed Mr Arafat's compound in Ramallah as his body arrived by helicopter to be buried.

Mahmoud Abbas, who had spent a brief spell as prime minister in 2002, was confirmed as Arafat's successor as chairman of the PLO.

1917 - Britain conquers Palestine from Ottomans. Gives support to "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration, along with an insistence that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities".

1918 - First significant Palestinian Arab nationalist organisations emerge - the mainly cultural Muntada al-Adabi and the Damascus-based Nadi al-Arabi.

1920 - San Remo Allied Powers conference grants Palestine to Britain as a mandate, to prepare it for self-rule. Jerusalem riots against Balfour Declaration assert distinct Palestinian Arab identity.



Britain's Lord Balfour, pointing to a feature in Jerusalem, became known for his declaration supporting

PALESTINA

1921 - Britain appoints Mohammed Amin al-Husseini, a member of a leading Palestinian Arab family, as Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and leader of the Muslim community. He rallies the Arabs and Muslims against any further concessions to the Jews.

1922 - Palestinian Arab delegation rejects British proposal for Legislative Council, saying inclusion of terms of the Balfour Declaration in draft constitution not acceptable.

1929 - Arab rioters kill about 200 Jews in Jerusalem's Old City and Hebron. British troops kill 116 Arabs in suppression of riots in Jerusalem.

1930 - British White Paper and Royal Commission recommend limiting Jewish immigration.

1930-35 - The Black Hand Islamist group led by Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam launches campaign of violence against Jewish community and British rule.

1935 - Palestinian Arab leadership accepts British High Commissioner's proposal for Legislative Assembly, but the British House of Commons rejects it the following year.

1936-39 - Arab revolt begins with a general strike in Jaffa. Britain declares martial law and dissolves Grand Mufti Al-Husseini's Arab Higher Committee. More than 5,000 Arabs killed and 15,000 injured in suppression of revolt, Al-Husseini flees to French-run Syria to avoid arrest.

1947 - United Nations recommends partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states after Britain signals end to Mandate, with international control over Jerusalem and its environs. Arab High Committee rejects partition.

Birth of Israel

1948 - Israel declares independence as British mandate ends.



Arab armies fail to defeat new Jewish state of Israel after Britain withdraws. Jordan occupies West Bank and East Jerusalem, Egypt occupies Gaza, and Israel holds the rest of Mandate Palestine including West Jerusalem.

At least 750,000 Palestinian Arabs either flee or are expelled. Disputes over the nature of their departure endure to this day.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) set up to cater to the educational and health needs of Palestinian refugees and their descendants throughout the Middle East.

1949-1950s - Fedayeen Palestinian guerrillas based in Egypt and Gaza carry out raids into Israel with Egyptian encouragement. This increases after pan-Arab officers seize power in Cairo in 1952.

1956-1957 - Israel colludes with Britain and France to invade Egypt during the Suez Crisis, partly to end Fedayeen incursions. UN buffer force in Sinai and Gaza drastically reduces raids.

A scattered people

More than four million Palestinians are thought to be living with refugee status in Arab countries, many marginalised and trapped in camps

Slideshow: Inside Shatila

1959 - Yasser Arafat forms Fatah fighting group in Egypt to carry out raids into Israel.

1964 - Arab League sets up Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Palestine Liberation Army under Ahmad Shukeiri.



The West Bank has a rich heritage, including this Ottoman-era mosque near Nablus

PALESTINA

1967 June - Six-Day War leaves Israel occupying East Jerusalem, all of West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights and Sinai. Jewish settlements are set up in all of these areas in coming years, with government approval.

1969 - Yasser Arafat takes over PLO leadership after debut as military leader in clashes with Israeli forces in Jordan in 1968, and asserts the group's independence from Egyptian control.

1970 - Increasing tension over the strength of the PLO in Jordan leads to the Black September clashes with Jordanian forces, driving the PLO into exile in southern Lebanon.

1970s-1980s - PLO and other armed Palestinian groups turn to airline hijackings and attacks on Israeli soldiers, officials and civilians within Israel and abroad to highlight their cause.

1972 - Palestinian "Black September" gunmen take the Israeli team hostage at the Munich Olympics. Two of the athletes are murdered at the site and nine more killed during a failed rescue attempt by the German authorities. Israel launches a series of reprisal assassinations.

1973 - Israel raids PLO bases in Beirut and southern Lebanon before and during the October Yom Kippur/Ramadan War.

1974 April-May - Two hardline factions, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, carry out raids into northern Israel and kill 43 civilians, including many children, in a block of flats in Kiryat Shmona and a school in Maalot.

1974 June - After 1973 Yom Kippur/Ramada war, PLO adopts Ten-Point Programme allowing compromise with Israel on the way to establishing complete Palestinian control over historic Palestine, including the territory of Israel.

Some hardline factions split away to form the Rejectionist Front and step up attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians.

Famed hijacker



Leila Khaled took part in a spate of hijackings which focused attention on the Palestinian cause

Profile of a hijacker

On this Day: 1970:
Guerrillas destroy jets

PLO recognised

1974 October - Arab League recognises PLO as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" and it admits it to full membership of the League.

1974 November - Yasser Arafat becomes first non-state leader to address the United Nations General Assembly, delivers "olive branch... and freedom fighter's gun" speech.

1975 - Rejectionist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and German far-left armed group hijack Air France plane en route from Israel to France, divert it to Entebbe in Uganda. Israel commandos rescue most of passengers and crew, kill hijackers.

1977 May - The right-wing Likud party wins surprise election victory in Israel and encourages settlements policy on West Bank and Gaza.

1978 March - PLO attack kills 38 civilians on Israel's coastal road. Israel carries out first major incursion into southern Lebanon, driving PLO and other Palestinian groups out of the area.

1978 September - Israel pledges to expand Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza as part of the Camp David Accords establishing diplomatic relations with Egypt.

1982 June - Israel invades Lebanon again to expel PLO leadership from Beirut after assassination attempt by Palestinian faction on Israeli ambassador to London.

PALESTINA

PLO leaders quit Lebanon

1982 September - Massacre of Palestinians in the Beirut Sabra and Shatila camps by Israel's Christian Phalangist allies.

PLO leadership moves to Tunisia, where it remains until it moves to Gaza in 1994.

1985 October - Israeli air force strikes PLO headquarters in Tunis after PLO group kills three Israeli tourists on a yacht. Palestine Liberation Front PLO faction hijacks Achille Lauro cruise ship, demanding release of 50 Palestinians from Israeli prisons. Hijackers kill elderly American wheelchair user Leon Klinghoffer.

1987 December - First Palestinian Intifada uprising begins in Palestinian Territories. Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza forms the Hamas movement, which rapidly turns to violence against Israel.

Sabra and Shatila massacre



Israel's occupation of Lebanon in 1982 saw the relocation of the PLO, and the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians in refugee camps by Israel's Phalangist allies

Video: Sabra and Shatila

PALESTINA

1988 Jordan abandons claim to West Bank, ceding it to PLO. Palestinian National Council meeting in Algiers proclaims State of Palestine. **BBC: Witness**

1990 - PLO backs Iraq over its annexation of Kuwait, which severs ties with the PLO and subsequently expels about 400,000 Palestinians.

1991 October - US-Soviet sponsored conference in Madrid brings Israeli and Palestinian representatives together for the first time since 1949.

1992 - Israeli Labour government of Yitzhak Rabin pledges to halt settlement expansion programme and begins secret talks with PLO.

1993 September - Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat sign Oslo Declaration to plot Palestinian self-government and formally end the First Intifada, which had been running out of steam since the Madrid Conference. Violence by various Palestinian groups that reject the Oslo Declaration continues.



Palestinian militants hijacked the cruise ship Achille Lauro and killed a Jewish passenger

PALESTINA

1994 February - Baruch Goldstein of the extremist Jewish Kach movement kills 29 Palestinians at prayer at the Cave of the Patriarchs shrine in Hebron on the West Bank.

Progress towards self-rule

1992 May-July - Israel withdraws from most of Gaza and the West Bank city of Jericho, allowing Yasser Arafat to move his PLO administration from Tunis and set up the Palestinian National Authority.

1992 December - Yasser Arafat, along with Yitzhak Rabin and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, are jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

1995 - Interim Agreement sets out path for transfer of further power and territory to Palestinian National Authority. Forms basis of 1997 Hebron Protocol, Wye River Memorandum of 1998 and internationally-sponsored "Road Map for Peace" of 2003.

2000-2001 - Talks between Israeli Labour Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat break down over the timing and extent of a proposed further Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. Palestinian protests escalate into new Intifada.

PALESTINA

2001 December - Israel sends troops to encircle Ramallah after series of deadly Palestinian attacks inside Israel. Yasser Arafat is unable to leave his government compound.

Barrier goes up

2002 March - Israeli army launches Operation Defensive Shield on the West Bank and begins building barrier there to stop armed Palestinian entering Israel. The route of the barrier is controversial as it frequently deviates from the pre-1967 ceasefire line into the West Bank.

2002 March - Arab League meeting in Beirut offers to recognise Israel in return for its full withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967, agreement to a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital and "fair solution" to refugee question - the "Arab League Peace Plan".

2003 March - Yasser Arafat establishes post of prime minister and appoints Fatah veteran Mahmoud Abbas to lead contacts with US and Israel, both of which refuse to deal with Arafat.

2003 May - Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon says the occupation of Palestinian territories cannot continue indefinitely.

PALESTINA

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2003 June - Arab League meeting in Egypt expresses support for "road map" proposed by US, European Union, Russia and UN and accepted by Palestinian National Authority and Israel, positing an independent Palestinian state and a freeze on West Bank Jewish settlements.



Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder and spiritual leader of Hamas, was assassinated in 2004

PALESTINA

2003 September - Mahmoud Abbas resigns as prime minister, citing US and Israeli intransigence as well as internal Palestinian opposition to his government. Succeeded by Fatah veteran Ahmed Qurei.

2004 March - Israeli forces kill Sheikh Yassin, the founder and leader of Hamas, and his successor Abd al-Aziz al-Rantissi, the following month.

2004 July - International Court of Justice issues advisory opinion that the Israeli separation barrier violates international law and must be removed.

2004 November - Yasser Arafat dies in hospital in France, where he went for urgent medical treatment in October.

2005 January - Mahmoud Abbas elected Mr Arafat's successor as head of the Palestinian National Authority.

2005 September - Israel withdraws all Jewish settlements and military personnel from Gaza, while retaining control over airspace, ports and border crossings.

PALESTINA

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PALESTINA

Hamas wins elections

2006 March - Hamas Islamist group's Ismail Haniyeh forms government after winning parliamentary elections in January. Struggle for primacy with Fatah begins. United States and European Union suspend aid, and Israel ends tax transfers, because of Hamas's refusal to recognise Israel, renounce violence and accept previous peace accords.

2006 June - Hamas militants from Gaza seize Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit near border crossing and hold him hostage for five years, demanding release of Palestinian prisoners. Major clashes between Israel and Hamas forces in Gaza follow. Israel imposes restrictions on Gaza.

2006 September - Clashes break out between Fatah and Hamas supporters in Gaza. Various Arab states and Palestinian groups seek to mediate between them in coming months in order to avert civil war.

Hamas reinforces control of Gaza



The Islamist movement won

PALESTINA

2007 March - Fatah and Hamas form national unity government to end months of intermittent clashes in Gaza.

2007 June - Unity government founders. Hamas ousts Fatah from Gaza and reinforces its control of the territory. Israel tightens blockade after increase in rocket attacks from Gaza; Egypt closes border with Gaza.

Mahmoud Abbas appoints Salam Fayyad as prime minister, but Hamas refuses to recognise him. Two rival governments in West Bank and Gaza emerge. US and European Union resume aid to the Fayyad government.

2007 November - US-hosted Annapolis Conference for the first time establishes the "two-state solution" as the basis for future talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

legislative council elections in 2006 and has since controlled Gaza. It has proved itself a tough adversary in its fight with Israel, as well as with other Palestinian factions

Who are Hamas?

PALESTINA

2008 March - Efforts at reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas begin in Yemen, but next round in Cairo in November stalls when Hamas objects to Fatah arrest of its West Bank activists.

2008 November - Israel launches incursion into Gaza, seen by Hamas as a ceasefire violation. Hamas responds by launching rockets.

2008 December - Israel launches Operation Cast Lead month-long invasion of Gaza to stop Hamas and other militant groups firing rockets into Israel.

2010 February - Fatah and Hamas resume talks on national reconciliation.

Direct talks resume between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, only to falter over the question of settlements.

2010 May - Nine Turkish pro-Palestinian activists killed in Israeli capture of ships attempting to break maritime blockade of Gaza.

Deadly raid on aid flotilla



The Israeli raid on a fleet of vessels carrying pro-Palestinian activists trying to break the Gaza blockade caused international outrage

Q&A: Raid on the Mavi Marmara

PALESTINA

2011 April-May - Fatah and Hamas agree at talks in Cairo to reform a unity government and hold fresh elections, but no practical implementation follows.

Bid for UN membership

2011 - Palestinian National Authority launches campaign for UN membership of "State of Palestine", as means of highlighting stalled talks with Israel. Bid fails, but UNESCO cultural agency accepts Palestine as member in October.

2012 May - After preliminary talks in Qatar, Fatah and Hamas sign Cairo Agreement pledging to maintain non-violent resistance to Israeli occupation in pursuit of an independent state within the 1967 ceasefire lines.

2012 October - Local elections on West Bank undermine Fatah's position, as it wins only two-fifths of the seats contested on a turnout of 55%. Lists led by Fatah rebels win four of the 11 major towns and cities, and independents and leftists take control of a fifth. Hamas boycotts the poll and allows no elections in Gaza.

Hi-tech hopes



PALESTINA

2012 November - UN upgrades Palestinian representation to that of "non-member observer state", allowing it to take part in General Assembly debates and improving chances of joining UN agencies.

2012 December - Fatah allows Hamas celebration rally on West Bank over UN status upgrade, a gesture reciprocated by Hamas in Gaza the following month.

2013 April - Prime Minister Fayyad resigns after long-standing dispute with Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas. He is succeeded by academic Rami Hamdallah in May.

2013 Newly appointed US Secretary of State launches a series of Israeli-Palestinian talks aimed at reaching a framework peace deal by April 2014. Palestinian officials say continuing Israeli approval of Jewish housing in occupied East Jerusalem undermines progress. Israel accuses the Palestinians of incitement.

2013 July - Fall of Morsi government in Egypt dashes Palestinian hopes for lifting of Egyptian blockade of border with Gaza, and suspends Egyptian mediation in the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation process.

GETTY IMAGES

Palestinians are hopeful that investing in tech start-ups will help lift them out of a struggling economy

Meeting the West Bank's tech start-ups

2013 December - Israel, Jordan and Palestinian Authority sign water-sharing pact to halt and eventually reverse the drying-out of the Dead Sea by laying pipeline to carry brine from Red Sea desalination plant while providing drinking water to region.

2014 March - Egypt bans Hamas activities and seizes its assets because of links to Egypt's illegal Muslim Brotherhood.

Reconciliation government

2014 April - Fatah and Hamas agree to form unity government, which takes office in June. Fatah complains that separate Hamas cabinet continues to rule Gaza.



PALESTINA

2014 July-August - Israel responds to attacks from armed groups in Gaza with a military campaign by air and land to knock out missile launching sites and attack tunnels. Clashes end in uneasy Egyptian-brokered ceasefire in August.

2014 December - Minister Without Portfolio Ziad Abu Ein dies at clash with Israeli troops at West Bank protest.

2017 October - Hamas signs a reconciliation deal intended to administrative control of Gaza transferred to the Palestinian Authority, but disputes stalled the deal's implementation.

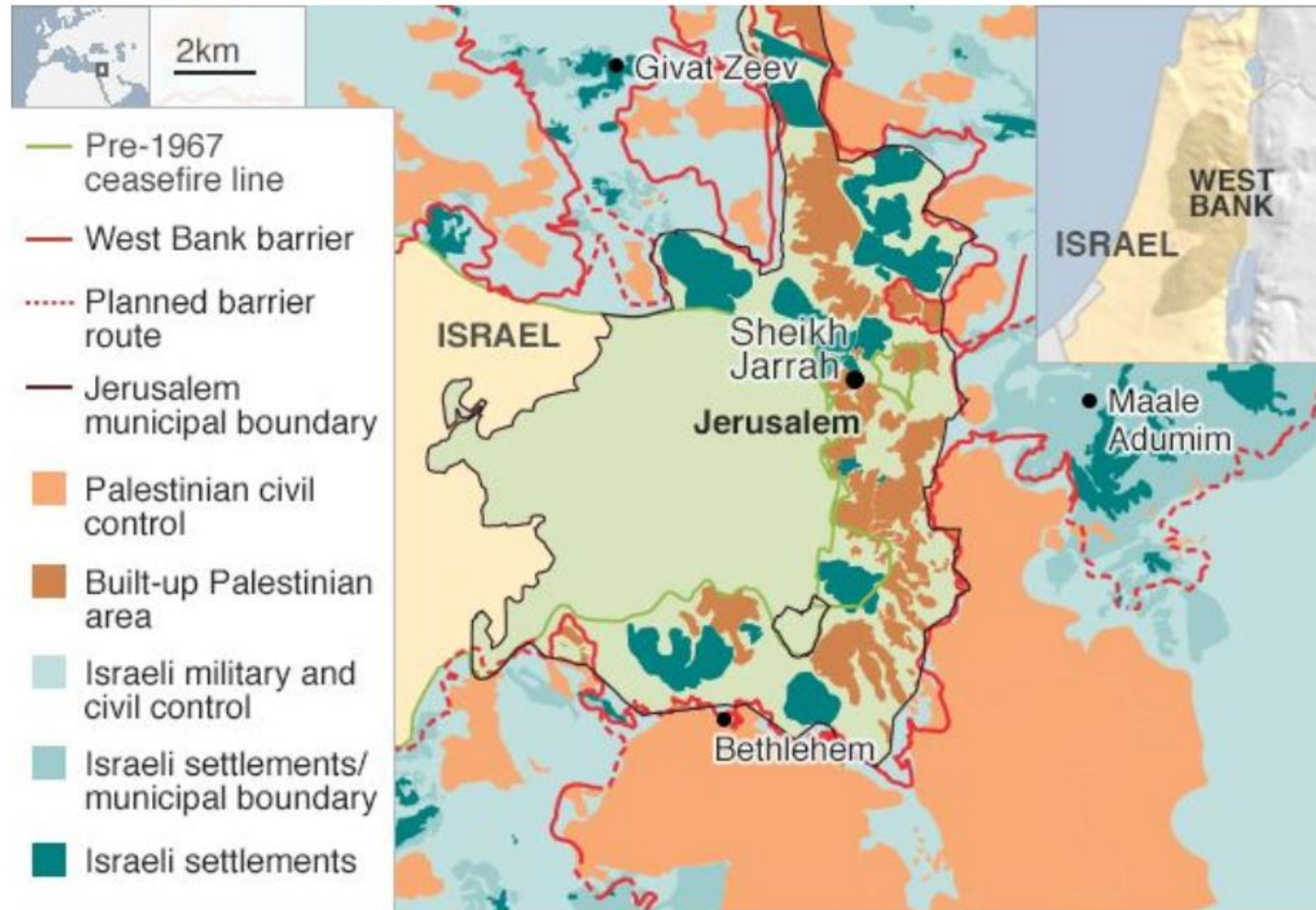
2017 December - US President Donald Trump recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, upsetting the Arab world and some Western allies.

2018 March - Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah visits Gaza, where his convoy survives a roadside bomb attack.

2018 July-August - UN and Egypt attempt to broker a long-term ceasefire between Israel and Hamas amid an upsurge in violence on the Gaza border from March.

PALESTINA

Israel regards East Jerusalem as its eternal, indivisible capital and does not consider the sector in any way occupied - and by extension, it does not regard Jewish neighbourhoods there as settlements.



Source: B'Tselem

BBC

Foreign Office.

November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

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

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

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

Y. in
Arthur Balfour

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Yours,

Arthur James Balfour

INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL ISSUES



The current political status of the West Bank and Gaza is subject to the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of 1995, also known as the Oslo Accords. Permanent status is to be determined through further negotiations. Israel continues the construction of settlements and the separation barrier wall along parts of the 1949 Green Line that divides Israel and Palestine within the West Bank. Large sections of barrier walls often extend beyond the 1949 Green Line into territory captured in 1967. About 8.5% of the West Bank lies on the Israeli side of the barrier, mostly in East Jerusalem, with another 3.4% on the Israeli side of sections planned or under construction.

PALESTINA

Settlement building in the West Bank remains a major obstacle to permanent peace agreements as does the continued blockade of the Gaza Strip by Israel, and intermittently by Egypt at the Rafah crossing. According to the Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU), as of March 2013 there were between 300,000 and 400,000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank, 200,000 in East Jerusalem, and 20,000 in the Golan Heights, compared to 2.6 million Palestinians in the West Bank, 250,000 in East Jerusalem, and 1.7 million in the Gaza Strip. Israel officially recognizes 130 separate settlements in the West Bank.

The issue of Palestinian refugees continues as well. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) estimates that there are roughly 449,957 refugees in Lebanon; 450,000 in Syria; and 2,097,338 in Jordan. These nations have encountered difficulty providing basic amenities for the refugees, and the migration of displaced Palestinians has changed the demographics of neighboring countries. Many Palestinians have faced further displacement due to regional instability attributed to the Islamic State. Palestinian Arabs in Jordan, many of whom have been granted Jordanian citizenship, are close to becoming the majority population over Jordanian Arabs.

PALESTINA

Conflict about the waters of the Jordan River was a contributing factor to the **Six-Day War** when, starting in 1965, Syria attempted to divert some of its headwaters in collaboration with Lebanon and Jordan (Mehr, Farhang). The diversion works **would have reduced the water availability** for Israel's carrier by about 35%, and Israel's overall water supply by about 11%. In April 1967 Israel conducted air raids into Syria to halt this work, and two months later the **Six Day War** followed. The use of Jordan River's water was **cited as a cause of the war by Ariel Sharon**; in his memoirs, he wrote that, "While the border disputes between Syria and ourselves were of great significance, the matter of water diversion was a stark issue of life and death." Israel's control of water sources, desalination technology and distribution undoubtedly has a role in the ongoing tensions. View the environment section above for more details.

PALESTINA

ECONOMY

The Palestinian economy is almost entirely dependent on aid from foreign governments due to several factors inhibiting economic growth. Among these are the economic disruption from the continuing conflict with Israel, Israeli restrictions on economic activity, and the internal conflict between proponents of the PLO's Fatah in the West Bank and the Islamist group Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The GDP per capita, as estimated by the CIA World Fact Book, is only \$2,900. By comparison, the GDP per capita in Israel is around \$32,200. Palestine also suffers from severe unemployment. The West Bank and Gaza Strip together have the world's 13th highest unemployment rate at 37% for males and 50% for females.

MASYARAKAT PALESTINA



The Palestinian people are the modern descendants of the peoples who lived in Palestine for centuries, and who are, for the most part, culturally and linguistically Arab. According to the CIA World Fact Book, many are Palestinian refugees or internally displaced Palestinians, including: more than a million in the Gaza Strip, three-quarters of a million in the West Bank, and about a quarter of a million in Israel. Of the Palestinian population who live abroad, known as the Palestinian Diaspora, more than half are stateless (lacking citizenship in any country).

MASYARAKAT PALESTINA

Palestinian Arabic is a subgroup of the broader Levantine Arabic dialect, a dialect of Arabic spoken throughout the areas of Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Prior to the 7th century Islamic conquest and Arabization of the Levant, the primary languages spoken in Palestine among the predominately Christian and Jewish communities were Aramaic, Greek, and Syriac. Palestinian Arabic, like other variations of the Levantine dialect, exhibits influences in lexicon from Aramaic.

Since 1994, education in Palestine has been administered by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE). Schools are typically either established by the PNA or UNRWA, and the MOEHE administers these with monetary support through the Ministry of Finance. Attendance is compulsory in Palestine from grades 1-10, and is typically divided into the preparatory stage (1-4) and empowerment stage (5-10). However, geographic constraints and the inability of some students to attend school make compulsory education unenforceable. Students can then continue to two years of secondary instruction in preparation for university studies. Palestine has several universities, including Al-Azhar University and Al-Aqsa University in Gaza, and Arab American University, Al-Quds University, and Birzeit University in the West Bank. Despite the challenges of lacking statehood, the educational system in Palestine has had moderate success. The literacy rate for Palestine is 92%, and enrollment in the empowerment stage of education is nearly 97%.

MASYARAKAT PALESTINA

RELIGION

Palestinians in the West Bank are predominantly Muslims (about 80-85%), the vast majority of whom are Sunnis. Palestinian Christians represent a shrinking minority (1-2.5%) due to lower birth rates and migration. Israeli settlement activity has brought the Jewish population to 12-14% in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. There are small minorities of other faiths including Greek Orthodox, Druze and Samaritans. In the Gaza Strip, the population is almost entirely Muslim (99%). The Jewish population of about 9,000 left the area in 2005 following Israel's plan to completely disengage from the territory.

PALESTINA

Gaza - Palestine

