

I S R A E L

TIMELINE OF THE HOLY LAND

Ancient times

The land that now encompasses Israel and the Palestinian territories has been conquered and re-conquered throughout history.

Details of the ancient Israelite states are sketchy, derived for the most part from the first books of the Bible and classical history. Some of the key events include:

Biblical times

- 1250 BC: Israelites began to conquer and settle the land of Canaan on the eastern Mediterranean coast.
- 961-922 BC: Reign of King Solomon and construction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Solomon's reign was followed by the division of the land into two kingdoms.
- 586 BC: The southern kingdom, Judah, was conquered by the Babylonians, who drove its people, the Jews, into exile and destroyed Solomon's Temple. After 70 years the Jews began to return and Jerusalem and the temple were gradually rebuilt.

Classical period

- 333 BC: Alexander the Great's conquest brought the area under Greek rule.
- 165 BC: A revolt in Judea established the last independent Jewish state of ancient times.
- 63 BC: The Jewish state, Judea, was incorporated into the Roman province of Palestine
- 70 AD: A revolt against Roman rule was put down by the Emperor Titus and the Second Temple was destroyed. This marks the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora, or dispersion.
- 118-138 AD: During the Roman Emperor Hadrian's rule, Jews were initially allowed to return to Jerusalem, but - after another Jewish revolt in 133 - the city was completely destroyed and its people banished and sold into slavery.
- 638 AD: Conquest by Arab Muslims ended Byzantine rule (the successor to Roman rule in the East). The second caliph of Islam,

Omar, built a mosque at the site of what is now the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in the early years of the 8th Century. Apart from the age of the Crusaders (1099-1187), the region remained under Muslim rule until the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th Century.

First Zionist Congress

The First Zionist Congress met in Basle, Switzerland, to discuss the ideas set out in Theodor Herzl's 1896 book *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State). Herzl, a Jewish journalist and writer living in Vienna, wanted Jews to have their own state - primarily as a response to European anti-Semitism.

The Congress issued the Basle Programme to establish a "home for the Jewish people in Palestine secured by public law" and set up the World Zionist Organisation to work for that end.

A few Zionist immigrants had already started arriving in the area before 1897. By 1903 there were some 25,000 of them, mostly from Eastern Europe. They lived alongside about half a million Arab residents in what was then part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. A second wave of about 40,000 immigrants arrived in the region between 1904 and 1914.

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.

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.

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.

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".

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.

Palestinian intifada

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

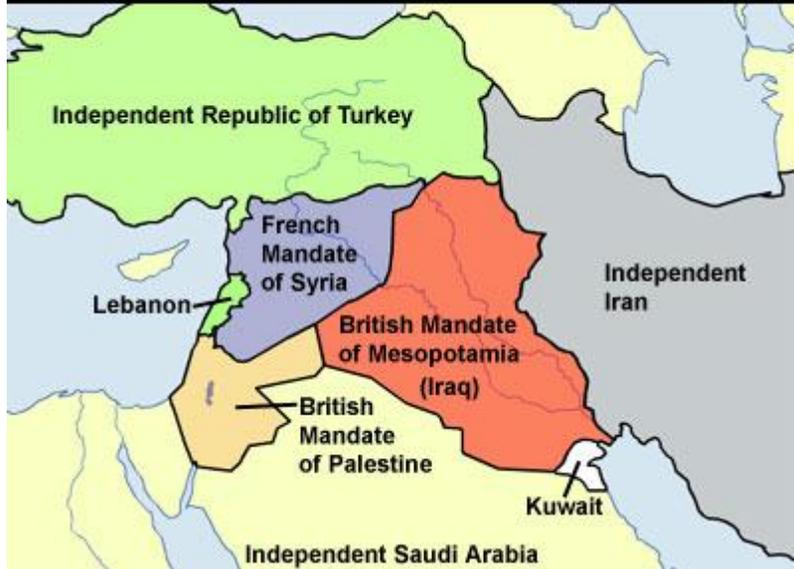
Protest took the form of civil disobedience, general strikes, boycotts on Israeli products, graffiti, and barricades, but it was the stone-throwing demonstrations against the heavily-armed occupation troops that captured international attention.

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.

Later Events:

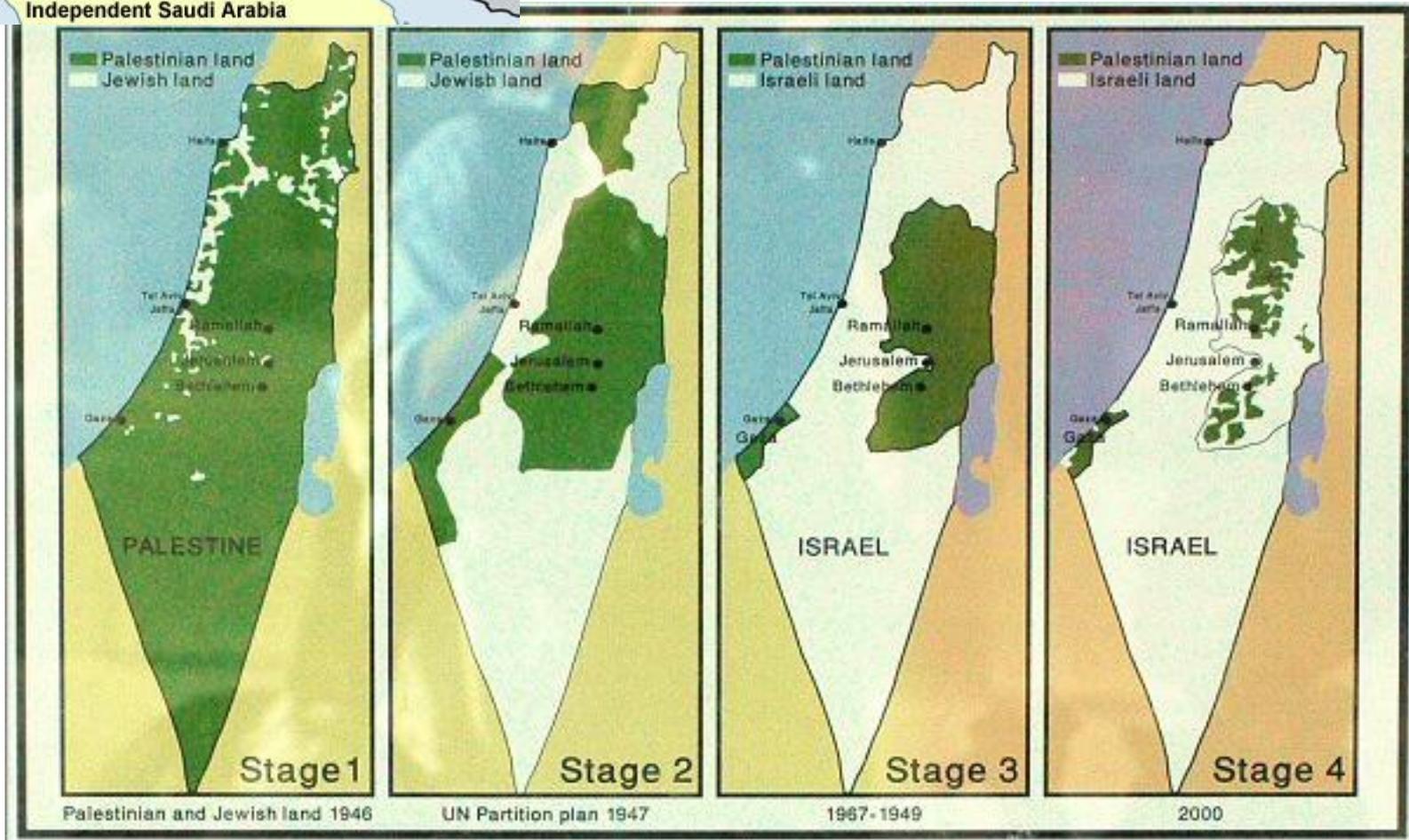
- Mid-1990's attempt by President Clinton to establish peace at Oslo, Norway produce a handshake between the two sides, but little else.
- May 1994, the Palestinian Authority is born from a meeting in Cairo, and Yasser Arafat is elected president.
- 1995, a new agreement "Oslo II," has Israel surrendering some territory by dividing up the West Bank, angering Zionists.
- 1996 – resumed suicide bombings by Hamas brings right-wing Netanyahu to power in Israel, halting Israeli concessions.
- 2000 – a temple mount tour by right-wing Israeli leader Ariel Sharon angers Palestinians, sparking a second intifada (uprising).
- 2002 – Israelis re-occupy the West Bank after a wave of Palestinian militant attacks, surrounding Arafat's HQ.
- President George W. Bush attempts to broker peace, brings a ceasefire in 2003. Arafat dies in 2004.
- Terrorist organization Hamas wins legitimate election in Gaza strip.
- On and on it goes...

Post-WWI Middle East (1923)



“The Sack of Jerusalem”

Circa 70 AD



Grievances against the United States

In his 1998 fatwa entitled, "Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders," bin Laden identified three grievances against the US:

“ First, for over seven years the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples.

If some people have in the past argued about the fact of the occupation, all the people of the Peninsula have now acknowledged it. The best proof of this is the Americans' continuing aggression against the Iraqi people using the Peninsula as a staging post, even though all its rulers are against their territories being used to that end, but they are helpless.

Second, despite the great devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people by the crusader-Zionist alliance, and despite the huge number of those killed, which has exceeded 1 million... despite all this, the Americans are once again trying to repeat the horrific massacres, as though they are not content with the protracted blockade imposed after the ferocious war or the fragmentation and devastation. So here they come to annihilate what is left of this people and to humiliate their Muslim neighbors.

Third, if the Americans' aims behind these wars are religious and economic, the aim is also to serve the Jews' petty state and divert attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and murder of Muslims there. The best proof of this is their eagerness to destroy Iraq, the strongest neighboring Arab state, and their endeavor to fragment all the states of the region such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan into paper statelets and through their disunion and weakness to guarantee Israel's survival and the continuation of the brutal crusade occupation of the Peninsula. ”

"World Islamic Front Statement Urging Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders". Fas.org. Archived from the original on 7 September 2010.

God Protects Hagar and Ishmael

And the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, laughing. So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac." And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring."

(Genesis 21:8-13 ESV)