

Israel Palestine Conflict - War Timeline, History, Israel Palestine Map

July 6, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



The **Israel-Palestine conflict** arises from interconnected historical assertions, nationalist aspirations, and religious significance in the Middle East, centered on territory and identity struggles. Started with the **rise of Zionism in the late 19th century and mirrored by the rise of Arab nationalism**, the conflict escalated in the 20th century, especially after Israel's establishment in 1948. Both Israelis and Palestinians assert rights to identical lands, resulting in wars, revolts, and peace talks. This area is significant to the three major world religions, which adds to the complexity of this ongoing political dispute between Israel and Palestine.

Background of Israel Palestine Conflict: Zionism

Zionism, at its core, is the national endeavour of the Jewish people, supporting and advocating for the restoration of a Jewish homeland, traditionally identified with the area of Palestine or the Biblical land of Israel.

- The 19th century witnessed a surge in **European nationalistic sentiments paired with a growing wave of antisemitism**.
- In this backdrop, Theodor Herzl convened the **First Zionist Congress (1897) in Basel, Switzerland**.
 - It proposed the movement of Jews towards Palestine and the buying of land from the local population.

Israel Palestine Map

Despite being one of the smallest regions in the world, the area comprising Israel-Palestine has several key areas. These territories are:



Region	Aspects
--------	---------

Gaza Strip	- Location: The Gaza Strip is a coastal Palestinian region along the Mediterranean Sea, bordered by Israel and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Together with the West Bank, it forms the State of Palestine, with Israel situated between the two territories. - Governance: Hamas, a politico-military entity, has administered the Gaza Strip since its electoral victory in 2006. - Control: While Israel maintains authority over Gaza's airspace and coastline, it has also implemented limitations on goods entering the territory. Additionally, Egypt manages its border with Gaza.
West Bank	- Location: This territory is landlocked and is bordered by Israel and Jordan, with the Dead Sea marking part of its boundary. - Administration: A section of Jerusalem is within the West Bank. The region is governed by Fatah, previously recognised as the Palestinian National Liberation Movement.
Jerusalem	- Location: Located on a plateau in the Judean Mountains between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. It's roughly in the centre of Israel and is bordered by several Palestinian territories. - Administration: Jerusalem is divided into several districts: Jewish-majority West Jerusalem and the predominantly Palestinian East Jerusalem, which includes the Old City. • It holds profound significance for three major world religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. • The Israeli government operates out of Jerusalem, with the Knesset and the residence of the President and Prime Minister located in the city.

Israel vs Palestine: Perspectives of Both Sides

Both Israel and Palestine share a different take on the conflict. Both sides have their own narratives and interpretations of the conflict's origins and evolution.

Parties	Point of View
---------	---------------

Israel	- Israelis feel a deep-rooted religious and historical bond to the land, dating back to biblical times. - Following the Holocaust, Israel became a sanctuary for Jews globally, representing a defence against global anti-Semitism and threats from nearby nations. - The UN's 1947 plan approved the establishment of a Jewish state. - Due to past wars and terror attacks, many Israelis prioritize security, particularly y concerning the West Bank and Gaza. - Some Israelis question the commitment or capability of the Palestinian leadership to address Israel's safety concerns.
Palestine	- Palestinians have a longstanding historical and cultural bond with the territory. -The foundation of the state of Israel has resulted in a vast number of Palestinian refugees. -Palestinians perceive Israel's control over Gaza as an oppressive form of colonization, bringing about considerable suffering. -A significant number of Palestinians advocate for the refugees' repatriation rights, as anchored in UN Resolution 194. -The West Bank's Israeli establishments are deemed unauthorized by global standards, posing challenges to the formation of a Palestinian state.

Israel and Palestine Timeline - Early 19th Century to 21st Century

The Israel-Palestine conflict, spanning over a century, is a deeply rooted geopolitical struggle in the Middle East. **Its origins trace back to late 19th and early 20th-century nationalist movements** Key events of the conflicts include:

World Wars and British Mandate

Aspect	Key Events
Post-World War I- Creation of British Mandate	- Background: Through the Balfour Declaration (1917), Britain supported the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. - Mandate Charter: After the First World War, the League of Nations granted Britain the mandate to govern Palestine and implement the Balfour Declaration. - Jewish immigration (Aliyah): Large waves of Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine, especially following the rise of Nazism in Europe.

Post-World War II- End of British Mandate	Background: In 1946, the British decided to give up their mandate to the newly established United Nations. UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) Recommendation (1947): The committee recommended partitioning Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international administration. It was adopted as Resolution 181.
--	--

Establishment of the State of Israel

Declaration of the State of Israel:

- On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel.

First Arab-Israeli War (1948-1949):

- **Initial Phase:** As soon as Israel declared independence, armies from **Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Lebanon** invaded the new state.
- **Territorial Gains:** Israel retained its sovereignty and expanded its territory beyond the **UN Partition Plan** proposal.
- **Palestinian Exodus:** The war led to the displacement of a significant number of Palestinian Arabs, an event referred to by Palestinians as the "**Nakba**," or **catastrophe**.
- **Armistice Agreements (1949):** By early 1949, separate armistice agreements were signed between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria.
 - The agreements established the **Armistice Demarcation Lines, often referred to as the Green Line**.

1950s-1960s: Further Conflicts Between Israel and Palestine

Event	Key Aspects
Suez Crisis (1962)	- Israel invaded the Sinai Peninsula. Following the plan, Britain and France intervened. - British, French, and Israeli forces withdrew by March 1957.

Formation of PLO (1964)	- The PLO was established in May 1964 during the first Palestinian Congress, convened by Arab states. - It called for • Liberation of Palestine through armed struggle (Through Fatah using guerrilla operations) • Establishment of an independent Palestinian state within the 1947 UN Partition Plan borders • Rejection of the Balfour Declaration, which facilitated the establishment of Israel - Key leaders were • Ahmed Shukeiri: First chairman of the PLO • Yasser Arafat: Most recognisable leader who headed Fatah and become chairman of the PLO's Executive Committee in 1969.
Six-Day War (1967)	- Background: Border incidents and Blockades created tensions between Israel and its neighbour - Beginning: Israel launched a preemptive air strike, crippling the air forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan. - Aftermath: Israel emerged victorious and captured • Sinai Peninsula from Egypt • West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan • Golan Heights from Syria. - Consequences: Increased responsibility of Israel over significant Palestinian populations

1970s: Continued Tensions and Hope

- **Yom Kippur War (1973):** Despite the vast territories captured by Israel in 1967, **there was no comprehensive peace settlement.**
 - **Surprise Attack:** On October 6, 1973, coinciding with the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, Egypt and Syria launched a coordinated surprise attack on **Israeli positions in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights.** Both Egypt and Syria made significant initial advancements. **However, Israeli forces managed to regroup and counterattack.**
 - **Impact:** The war exposed **vulnerabilities in Israel's defence strategy**, leading to political upheaval.
- **Camp David Accords (1978):** By the late 1970s, both Egypt and Israel, **encouraged by the U.S., were considering the possibility of peace negotiations.**
 - **Key Outcomes:**

- **Framework for Peace in the Middle East:** The document outlined a broad set of principles for peace, including a five-year transitional period of limited Palestinian self-rule **in the West Bank and Gaza**.
- **Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty:** It led to Egypt officially recognizing Israel, the normalisation of diplomatic and economic relations, and the **return of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt**.

1980s: Lebanon and Intifada

Israel's Invasion of Lebanon (1982):

- **Background:** The early 1980s saw an escalation of cross-border attacks between Israel and the **Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) based in southern Lebanon**.
- **Siege of Beirut:** Israel's military laid siege to Beirut, where PLO leadership was based. After months of bombardment, **the PLO agreed to evacuate its fighters from Beirut**.
- **Aftermath:** The invasion significantly **disrupted the PLO's operations** but inadvertently facilitated the rise of more radical groups like Hezbollah.

Formation of Hamas (1987):

- **Background:** The Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine, primarily focused on religious and social issues, **sought a more active role in the Palestinian national struggle against Israel**.
- **Formation:** Hamas combined its political and religious agenda with armed resistance against Israel.
- **Key Tenets:** The complete **liberation of Palestine and the establishment of an Islamic state in place of Israel**.

First Intifada (1987-1993):

- **Background:** Growing frustration among Palestinians in the **occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip) due to Israeli military occupation** and lack of political progress led to simmering tensions.
- **Nature of the Uprising:** The Intifada (which means "shaking off" in Arabic) was characterized by **civil disobedience, protests, and sporadic violence**. Palestinians employed tactics like **stone-throwing, general strikes, and boycotts of Israeli products**.
- **Aftermath:** The Intifada, demonstrating the intensity of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation, **played a role in bringing both parties to the negotiation table**.

1990s: Oslo Accords

Oslo Accords-I(1993):

- **About:** Agreement between Israel (PM Yitzhak Rabin) and Palestine Liberation Organisation (Yasser Arafat) overseen by the US President Bill Clinton
- **Key Outcomes:**
 - **Mutual Recognition:** Both side recognised their right to existence and Israel further recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

- **Interim Government:** A five-year transitional period of Palestinian interim self-government in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.
- **Phased Israeli withdrawal:** Israel agreed to gradually withdraw from parts of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- **Economic cooperation:** The accords laid the groundwork for economic cooperation between Israel and the newly established Palestinian Authority.
- **Challenges and criticism**
 - **Vague on key issues:** Core were not discussed, issues like status of Jerusalem the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and the borders of a future Palestinian state.
 - **Security Concerns:** The accord did not demand a complete disarmament of militant Palestinian factions.
 - **Settlement Expansion:** While the accords were being implemented, Israeli settlement expansion continued in the West Bank.
 - **Lack of Enforcement Mechanisms:** The accords lacked robust mechanisms to ensure both parties adhered to their commitments.

Oslo Accords-II (1995):

- **About:** Agreement between Israel (PM Yitzhak Rabin) and Palestine Liberation Organisation (Mahmoud Abbas) overseen by the US President Bill Clinton
- **Key Outcomes:**
 - **Territorial division:** The West Bank was divided into- Areas A (full Palestinian control), B (joint Israeli-Palestinian control), and C (full Israeli control).
 - **Security arrangements:** The accord outlined protocols for security cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and the Israel Defence Forces.
 - **Safe passage:** Provisions were made for safe passage for Palestinians between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, facilitating movement.
 - **Economic relations:** Provided for the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations to govern economic interactions between Israel and the Palestinian territories.
- **Challenges and Criticism:**
 - **Territorial fragmentation:** It made the viability of a contiguous Palestinian state more challenging.
 - **Economic dependence:** The Palestinian economy remained heavily dependent on Israel thereby leading to power imbalances.
 - **Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin:** Rabin's death was a significant blow to the peace process and its momentum.
 - **Bypassing other Palestinian groups:** Hamas and other Palestinian factions were not part of the negotiations, which they criticized and resisted.

2000s: Second Intifada & Wars in Gaza

- **Second Intifada (2000-2005)**
 - **Background:** Following the breakdown of the Camp David Summit in July 2000, tensions were high.

- **Outbreak:** Violent confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli security forces soon escalated into a full-blown uprising.
- **Nature of the Uprising:** Compared to the First Intifada, the Second Intifada was more violent, with a higher death toll. It involved suicide bombings by Palestinian militant groups and military operations by the Israeli Defense Forces.
- **Wars in Gaza**
 - **Background:** Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006. Tensions between Hamas and Fatah led to a brief civil war in Gaza, after which Hamas took control in 2007.
 - Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza, citing security concerns due to rocket attacks.
 - **Gaza War (2008-2009):**
 - **Operation Cast Lead:** Launched by Israel in December 2008, it aimed to stop rocket fire and weaken Hamas. It ended in January 2009 with a unilateral ceasefire by both sides.

2010-Present: Tensions and Peace Attempts

- **2010 Peace Talks**
 - The United States initiated the talks.
 - The discussions aimed to address core issues, such as
 - The borders of Israel and a future Palestinian state
 - The status of Jerusalem
 - The right of return of Palestinian refugees and security arrangements
 - **Outcomes:**
 - They effectively collapsed within weeks, mainly over the issue of Israeli settlement construction.
 - The Palestinian side wanted a freeze on settlements as a precondition to continuing the talks, which was opposed by Israeli settlement construction.
- **U.S. Embassy Move to Jerusalem (2018)**
 - **Announcement:** In December 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump announced the U.S. would recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
 - **Reactions:** The move was celebrated in Israel but was met with strong opposition from Palestinians and widespread international criticism. Massive protests erupted in Gaza and the West Bank.
- **Peace to Prosperity Plan (2020)**
 - **Introduction:** The U.S., under President Trump, unveiled a new peace proposal in January 2020, often referred to as the "Deal of the Century."
 - **Key Points:** The plan favoured many Israeli positions, such as annexing parts of the West Bank, recognising Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital, and not allowing the right of return for Palestinian refugees.
 - **Reactions:** While Israel's leadership welcomed the plan, Palestinians rejected it outright, stating it denied them a viable state.
- **Abraham Accords (2020)**
 - **Agreement:** Brokered by the U.S., the Abraham Accords led to the normalisation of relations between Israel and several Arab states, including the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco.

- **Significance:** This marked a strategic realignment in the Middle East, with many Arab states prioritising regional threats (like Iran) over the Palestinian issue.
- **Gaza Conflict (2021)**
 - **Trigger:** Tensions around the potential eviction of Palestinian families in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood and Israeli police actions at the Al-Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan culminated in rocket fire from Gaza and Israeli airstrikes in May 2021.
 - **Conflict:** The 11-day war resulted in the deaths of over 200 Palestinians and 12 Israelis.
 - **Ceasefire:** An Egypt-brokered ceasefire took effect on May 21, 2021.

Present Conflict - Hamas Attack (2023)

The genesis of the present conflict lies in the attack of militants from Hamas on Israeli forces and citizens and the subsequent capture of numerous civilians, leading to an emergency in the nation.

- **Motives:** Hamas described the assault as retaliation for Israel's military operations in the West Bank and incidents at the **al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem**.
- **Losses:** Over 5,000 missiles were fired from Gaza, which is under Hamas' control. The skirmish resulted in casualties **on both sides of the border**.
- **Operation Iron Swords:** In response to an unexpected assault by Hamas, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) initiated Operation 'Iron Swords'. Under the operation, the IDF is **striking Hamas targets in Gaza**.
 - The Israeli government had decided to make **ground incursions in Gaza, destroy Hamas and hand over Gaza to international authorities**.
- **Possible outcomes**
 - **Regional repercussions**
 - Potential for broader regional war especially with Hezbollah in Lebanon.
 - Endangerment of Israel's diplomatic relations with Arab neighbours, threatening Abraham Accords and I2U2.
 - Possibility of reinforcements for Gaza from neighbouring countries.
 - **Hostage Issue**
- Hamas's threat regarding hostages complicates the potential invasion. Hostages' fate remains uncertain during any ground incursion.
- **Post-Invasion Implications**
 - Uncertainty of a lasting political solution following the military action.
 - Historical challenges faced by Israel during its previous occupation of Gaza.

India's Stand on Israel Palestine Conflict

India supports a two-state solution, maintaining diplomatic ties with both Israel and Palestine, advocating peaceful resolution, and **balancing strategic partnerships while emphasizing historical support for the Palestinian cause**. Several dimensions of India's stand on the Israel-Palestine conflict include:

- **Background**
 - **Palestine tilt:** India favoured Palestine for multiple reasons

- Gandhiji's disapproval of a **Jewish state**.
- A significant **Muslim demographic**
- Ties with Arab nations.
- **UN Voting Patterns**
- India voted against the partition of Palestine and opposed **Israel's UN admission**.
- **Shift in the Policy**
 - **Post-Cold War Developments**
 - After the Cold War, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao **decisively formed diplomatic relations with Israel**, overlooking potential repercussions from Arab countries.
 - 1992 saw **India form complete diplomatic ties** with Israel, a pivotal move.
 - India, however, persisted in its **advocacy for Palestine**.
- **India's Diplomatic Balance**
 - Guided by its national priorities, India strives to:
 - **Bolster its relations with Israel.**
 - **Continue its support for Palestine.**
 - **Enhance its rapport with the Arab nations.**
- **Current policy**
 - **Strengthening Ties with Israel**
 - Recent years have seen India-Israel relations grow across sectors like **trade, defence, technology, and counter-terrorism**.
 - India's backing for Israel is partly attributed to its challenges with **cross-border terrorism, though the circumstances in both countries vary**.
 - **Support for Palestine**
- Despite closer ties with Israel, India maintains its **support for Palestine**.
- India donated **USD 29.53 million to UNRWA for Palestinian refugees**.
- India dispatched **6.5 tonnes of medical assistance and 32 tonnes of disaster relief for Palestinians**.
- **De-hyphenation Diplomacy**
- 2017: **Indian Prime Minister's maiden visit to Israel**.
- 2018: First official visit to Palestine.
- India, in 2017, **voted against the US and Israel regarding Jerusalem's unilateral declaration as the Israeli capital**.
- While India denounces terrorism, **it opposes unfettered retaliation bombings**.
- **India's Unwavering Position**
- India advocates a **two-state solution for Israel and Palestine** to coexist peacefully.
- The **1991 Madrid Peace Conference, mediated by the US, endorsed the two-state solution**.
- **Indian Prime Minister's 2018 trip to Ramallah in the West Bank** underscores this stance.
- **Implications of Israel-Palestine conflict on India**
 - **Defence Ties with Israel:** Israel is a top military equipment supplier to India, with defence deals valued at about USD 2.1 billion. Such supplies might get delayed.
 - **Concerns about Energy Security:** Regional disturbances can influence energy prices, thus affecting India's economic landscape.

- **Implications for India-Middle East-Europe Corridor:** India inked the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) pact.
 - Regional instability may bring security concerns, potentially hindering IMEC's seamless execution.

Challenges to Peace in the Israel Palestine Conflict

There are several challenges which hinder peace attempts between Israel and Palestine, these include:

- **Ancient disputes:** Long-standing religious and territorial conflicts are deeply entrenched in both parties.
- **Capital controversy:** Both the Israelis and Palestinians view Jerusalem as their rightful capital, creating friction.
- **West Bank settlements:** Palestinians perceive Israeli settlements in the West Bank as barriers to peace, and the sentiment is reciprocated.
- **Border conflicts:** There are unresolved debates over the boundary lines, particularly following the 1967 war.
- **Refugee return:** Palestinians advocate for the refugees' right to come back to their original homes within Israel.
- **Safety issues:** Both sides harbour mutual suspicions and apprehensions of violence, such as missile strikes from Gaza and Israeli defence actions.
- **Political fragmentation:** Distinct political factions exist within each group, like Hamas and Fatah for Palestinians and diverse Israeli political groups.
- **Foreign interference:** Outside political agendas and preconceptions can occasionally intensify tensions.
- **Financial inequalities:** Economic restrictions and imbalances can escalate tensions and provoke more disputes.

Possible Solution to the Israel-Palestine Conflict

Conflicts with deep historical roots and varying interests require continuous and multiple stakeholder collaboration for peace efforts. Some of the possible solutions to the conflict include:

- **Two-state solution:** Establishing a sovereign Palestinian nation next to Israel
- **One-state solution:** One nation where both Jews and Palestinians possess equal privileges.
- **Alliance model:** Pairing two nations with combined duties and free transit between them.
- **Border realignments:** Modifying boundaries based on the present-day situation, trading lands settled by Israelis.
- **Joint capital in Jerusalem:** The city acting as a mutual capital or under global governance.
- **Refugee repatriation:** Tackling the issue of Palestinian refugees' return, with potential compensation or alternative settlement solutions.
- **Disarmament:** Forming a weapon-free Palestinian nation to mitigate Israeli defence apprehensions.
- **Financial infusion:** Global funding to strengthen Palestine's economy and enhance living standards.
- **Inter-national collaboration:** Engaging adjacent Arab nations to promote regional harmony and teamwork.
- **Community Diplomacy efforts:** Localized campaigns fostering unity between Israeli and Palestinian residents.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/israel-palestine-conflict/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.