

Timeline of Events: Arab-Israeli Conflict

The land contested between Palestinians and Israelis has a long, complicated history. The timeline that follows is not exhaustive, but it provides information on several of the pivotal events that have shaped the conflict.

Prior to World War I, the Ottoman Empire controls this region for centuries. In this era, there is increased interaction of colonizing European powers and, beginning in the 1880s, increased Jewish immigration to the area. Theodore Herzl writes *The Jewish State*, a founding Zionist document, in 1895.

Upon the conclusion of WWI, Britain assures Palestinian Arabs of the creation of an independent Palestine through the Hussein-McMahon correspondence. However, the Sykes-Picot agreement, constructed by the European winners of WWI, places Palestine under British rule. With a continued increase in Jewish immigration, questions surrounding land possession become more pressing. In the 1920s, British documents such as the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate affirm Jewish claims to the area. These are met with Arab opposition as manifested in the Haifa Congress in the 1920s and the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939. A series of white papers, published by the British government in 1930 and 1939, respond to this backlash and generally cede to Palestinian demands.

During World War II, the Biltmore Conference, attended by Zionist leaders, attempts to construct an unofficial Jewish state through promoting immigration. Britain quietly rejects this notion. Additionally, the London Conference, held from 1946-1947, to which both Jews and Palestinians refuse invitation, are precursors to the end of the British Mandate. The State of Israel is established and the partition of the land into Jewish and Palestinian areas occurs on May 14, 1948, through the U.N.'s Resolution 181.

The day the mandate ends marks the beginning of the Israeli War of Independence, referred to by Palestinian communities as the Nakbah (meaning destruction), resulting in a refugee crisis in the region. This, combined with continued Western encroachment leads to a series of conflicts that stretch to the present day. These conflicts often include surrounding Arab states, such as Egypt during the Suez Crisis (1956) and the Yom Kippur War (1973-1979) and Lebanon during the first and second Lebanon Wars (1982, 2006). Other conflicts concern disputes over specific pieces of land, like the Golan Heights with the Six Day War (1967) and the West Bank and Gaza Strip with the First and Second Intifadas (1987, 2000). After the First Intifada, the Oslo Accords (1993, 1995) attempt to negotiate peace by providing a framework for negotiations. The Accords ultimately collapse and result in the Second Intifada.

In the 2000s, the U.N. attempts to negotiate peace several times but is interrupted by the collaboration of Fatah and Hamas in 2014. The following year, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas announces that Palestine will no longer be bound by the Oslo Accords. In recent years the Israeli government leans towards nationalism, though Israelis are not a monolith. Both Jews living in Israel and internationally are becoming increasingly critical of the Israeli governments treatment of Palestinians and Arab Israelis. Encounters between Israelis and Palestinians undergo periods of violence and cease-fire, with few signs of escaping the cycle.

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Information gathered from: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Arab Israeli Wars (Updated October 2022); *Encyclopedia Britannica*, History of Palestine (Updated October 2022); Council on Foreign Relations, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker); The United Nations, The Question of Palestine (www.un.org); Pew Research Center, 7 Key Findings About Religion and Politics in Israel (www.pewresearch.org); The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process (www.history.state.gov).