

My definition of “Palestine”: Region in Middle East that now consists of nations of Israel, and Palestinian regions in the West Bank and Gaza strip. Historically Palestine was the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River but exact historical boundaries were not certain and changed often.

Key Dates in the History of Jewish Diaspora and Return to Israel

- 1250 BCE: Moses leads Hebrews to “Promised Land” of Palestine
- 1000 BCE: King David unites Kingdom of Israel
- 950 BCE: King Solomon builds First Temple in Jerusalem
- 722 BCE: Assyrians destroy Northern Kingdom, dispersal of ten tribes of “Israelites”
- 586 BCE: Babylonians overthrow Southern Kingdom (Judah) destroy Temple, exile to Babylonia of many but not all “Judeans” or “Hebrews”
- 428 BCE: Second Temple dedicated in Jerusalem
- 70 CE: Second Temple and much of Jerusalem destroyed by Romans following Jewish revolt against Roman rule
- 132 CE: Bar Kokhba revolt against Hadrian failed, Jews forbidden access to Jerusalem
- 617 CE: Byzantine Emperor Heraclius massacre of Jews, flight to Egypt of survivors
- 638 CE: Muslim conquest of Palestine, mixed impact on Jewish communities, early tolerance followed by increasing persecution
- 1095-1291 CE: Christian Crusades in “Holy Land”, Muslims and Jews both often massacred
- 1290-1657 CE: Period of Jewish expulsion from England
- 1391-1492 CE: Jewish persecution and expulsion from Spain
- Middle Ages: Ashkenazi Jews settled in Northern & Eastern Europe; Sephardic Jews in Spain, Portugal, North Africa & Middle East; these are main groups, also others
- 1517 CE: Ottoman Empire conquers Palestine where Jewish population totals about 5,000.
- 1840 Jewish population of Palestine estimated at 9000. Increasing Jewish immigration from Europe begins about this date.
- 1884-1948 CE: Official Zionist movement to create homeland for Jews in Palestine. Also concurrent revival and modernization of Hebrew language
- 1920 – May 1948 CE: Mandated British “administration” of Palestine by League of Nations
- 1933-1945 CE: German persecution of Jews and the Holocaust
- 1944-1948 Jewish Insurgency vs. British in Palestine
- November 1947: United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, separate Jewish & Arab States
- 15 May 1948 CE: Declaration of Israeli State
- Today the population of those who identify as Jews totals about 16 Million with almost half (7.6 million) residing in the US, 30% residing in Israel, about 8% in Europe, 3% in Russia, 3% in Latin America and 3% in Canada.

Key dates in the Non-Jewish Settlement of Palestine

- 1250 -722 BCE: Canaanites were settled in independent city states when Moses’ people arrived; Later Philistines occupied the Southern Coast and Israel and Judah occupied the rest of Palestine
- 722-539 BCE: Assyrians and Babylonians conquer Palestine
- 539-330 BCE: Persians conquer Babylonian Empire
- 330-63 BCE: Greek rule following Alexander the Great conquering Persian Empire
- 63 BCE - 638 CE: Roman and later Byzantine Rule, Christian influx begins in 4th Century CE
- 638-1099 CE: Islamic rule of Palestine, gradual but steady influx of Arabic Islamic peoples

- 1099-1187 CE: Crusader rule of “Kingdom of Jerusalem” portion of Palestine
- 1187-1920 CE: Islamic rule of all of Palestine restored; Ottoman empire from 1516 to 1920; Islamic and Christian “Palestinians” comprised 90% of the population of Palestine in 1919, before the British administration of Palestine and the increasing influx of Jews as a part of the Zionist movement.
- 1948 Palestinian Expulsion: Over 700,000 Palestinians driven from Israel after Arab forces lost Israel’s “War of Independence”. More detail in next section.
- The identity “Palestinian” strengthened after the Israeli Declaration of Independence, the 1948 Palestinian expulsion and the 1967 Palestinian exodus as detailed in the next section. Today, to many Palestinians, it encompasses the native population of Palestine from the Canaanites onward.
- Today the population of those who identify as Palestinians totals at more than 14 million who reside as follows: 5.3 M in the West Bank and Gaza strip; 2 M in the official state of Israel; over 5 M in Jordan, Lebanon and Arabic nations; remainder spread over the world. Currently about 170,000 people of Palestinian ancestry live in the United States. There are about 1.2 million persons with Arabic roots living in the US.

History of Israeli and Palestinian Conflicts and Peace Initiatives

- 1840-1909: Zionist immigration into Palestine mostly peaceful with about 70,000 Jews settling in about 40 new settlements in Palestine. Note there were about 9,000 Jews in Palestine before 1840 and Jews were greatly outnumbered by Arab Palestinians. The Jewish population rose to about 25,000 by 1884 and then began to increase more rapidly.
- 1909-1920: Arab opposition to Jewish settlement grows with about a dozen deaths, mostly Jewish settlement guards. Mostly quiet during WW I with Arab tribes assisting British forces vs. the Germans in Palestine.
- 1917-1919: Balfour Declaration and Treaty of Versailles – British Foreign Minister Balfour, on behalf of PM David Lloyd George, wrote 1917 letter to Lionel Rothschild, a very prominent Zionist, stating British Government’s support for a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. Treaty of Versailles gave Britain “temporary administration” of Palestine with the understanding that it would work on behalf of both Jewish and Arab inhabitants.
- 1920-1947: Emergence of Palestinian nationalism after Franco-Syrian War in 1920s. Jewish paramilitary force Haganah formed. Riots erupted between Israelis and Arabs in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Hebron and Safed. The 1936 to 1939 Arab Revolt in Palestine was forcefully repressed by the British with major support from Jewish paramilitary forces.
- November 29, 1947 United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine: Recommended the creation of independent Arab and Jewish states with a Special International Regime for the city of Jerusalem. 56% of the land in Palestine was to become the Jewish state with the remaining allocated for an Arab state. In 1947 the Jewish population of Palestine (about 600,000) was half the Palestinian Arab population (about 1,200,000). The Christian population was about 140,000. This partition plan was accepted by most Jews living in Palestine and by the Jewish Agency for Palestine. The Arab League and other Arab leaders rejected this plan, stating the

Arabs were a large majority of the population of Palestine and owned (held title to) most of the land in Palestine. This plan was never implemented.

-1947-1948: Palestinian Civil War – United Nations partition of Palestine not accepted by Palestinian Arab leaders or by surrounding Arab states. Civil war was initially fought mainly by Jewish and Palestinian militias. War was escalated by winning Israeli forces in March 1948 to extend the boundaries of the UN partition. British limited their intervention.

-14 May 1948 to March 1949 - British terminated their mandated administration and Jews declared the establishment of the state of Israel on 14 May 1948. Arab armies from surrounding states attacked the next day beginning the official 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Israeli forces prevailed by March 1949 and signed armistices with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria which extended Israeli controlled territory well beyond the UN partition. Egypt took over Gaza Strip and Lebanon annexed the West Bank of the Jordan River. 700,000 Palestinian Arabs were displaced from their homes during and immediately after this war. Many of these people and their descendants remain stateless today and still reside in refugee camps. Israel absorbed another 700,000 Jewish immigrants from Europe and Arab states in the three years following this war.

-1949 to 1967: Jordan and Egypt support Palestinian militant cross-border attacks into Israel with Israel conducting frequent reprisal attacks. Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) formed in 1964 and was granted a seat in the Arab League.

-1956 Suez Crisis: Egypt closed Israeli shipping access to the Straits of Tiran passage to the Suez Canal which resulted in Israel invading Egypt. This resulted in the deployment of an United Nations Emergency Force to the Egypt-Israel Border and the reopening of Suez access to the Israelis. No territory changed hands permanently.

-1967 Six Day War: President Nasser of Egypt again announced the closing of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping and mobilized the Egyptian military to the Israeli border. Israel launched a series of pre-emptive strikes, destroying most of Egypt's aerial assets while still on the ground. With air supremacy assured, Israel launched a ground offensive into the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, both held by Egypt prior to the onset of the war. Jordan and Syria belatedly entered the war ineffectively against Israel. Israel gained military control of the West Bank from Jordan; the Golan Heights from Syria and the Gaza Strip and Sinai from Egypt. About 300,000 Palestinians were displaced from the West Bank and 100,000 Syrians from the Golan Heights. Israeli Air Forces launched an attack on the American Navy surveillance ship USS Liberty, apparently to prevent disclosure of its pre-emptive attacks. This caused the death of 34 American sailors. In the aftermath to this war, Egypt closed the Suez Canal to all shipping until 1975.

-1968 to 1982: Jordanian-Palestinian friction leads to full scale Jordanian civil war beginning in 1970. Palestinian forces periodically attack Northern Israel throughout this civil war leading to Israeli intervention and the end of this war in 1982. PLO headquarters evacuated to Tunisia.

-September 1972: Munich massacre of 11 Israeli athletes and coaches during Olympic Summer games by Black September Palestinian terrorists from refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. Objective was to capture Israelis to trade for release of 234 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. 2 Israelis killed and 9 captured during initial attack. Badly botched West German rescue attempt resulted in death of all 9 hostages, 5 terrorists and 1 German policeman. Hijacking of Lufthansa # 615 shortly thereafter resulted in release of 3 remaining terrorists for airplane passengers. Israeli retaliatory air attacks immediately killed over 200 in Palestinian camps. Mosaad assassinations of those considered responsible continued for over 20 years but also resulted in deaths of at least 5 innocent people, including 1 case of mistaken identity in Norway and 4 as collateral damage during a car bombing assassination.

-1973 Arab-Israeli War (Yom Kippur War): Armed conflict from 6 to 25 October 1973 between Israel and a coalition of Arab states led by Egypt and Syria. Egypt and Syria attacked Israel by surprise simultaneously on two fronts on the afternoon of October 6. Egyptian forces crossed Suez Canal and Syrian forces broke through to Golan Heights, both of which had been under Israeli control since the 1967 War. Israel's stocks of munitions were nearly exhausted when the United States began massive arms shipments to Israel while the Soviet Union resupplied Egypt and Syria. After re-supply by the US, Israel IDF disabled Egyptian air defenses, crossed back over the Suez Canal and surrounded the Egyptian Third Army. Israeli troops then recaptured the Golan plateau after heavy fighting and many losses of soldiers. War ended on October 26 following a series of United Nations resolutions for a cease fire. This was eventually followed by cease-fire agreements between Israel and Egypt and later Israel and Syria.

-1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty: President Anwar-Sadat of Egypt traveled to Israel in 1977 to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and address the Israeli parliament to begin a peace process. In September 1978 these leaders met with President Carter at Camp David and laid the groundwork for a formal peace treaty. In March 1979 this treaty was formally signed in a ceremony at the White House. In October 1981, Sadat was assassinated by hard line Arabs opposed to the peace treaty he had initiated and signed.

-1982 to 1985: Israeli invaded Lebanon and eventually expelled the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) which then established its primary base in Tunis.

-1987 – 1993: First Intifada began in December 1987 in the Jabalia Palestinian refugee camp in Gaza when an Israeli Defense Force (army) truck collided with a civilian car killing four Palestinian workers. Intifada was a sustained series of protests and riots in both the Palestinian Territories and Israel resulting in many deaths and injuries on both sides.

-1993 to 2000 Oslo Peace Process: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (moderate Labor party) and PLO leader Yasser Arafat meet to find a peaceful solution. Arafat agrees to Israel's right to exist and Rabin agrees to cede control of Palestinian territories to Palestinians. After a right wing Israeli assassinated Rabin in Israel in November 1995, the peace process eventually unraveled by July 2000. Rabin's successor, Ehud Barak (Labor Party), proposed an agreement which would give the Palestinians a state split into at least three separate parts, leave 69 Jewish settlements in place on the West Bank, provide no significant Islamic rights in Jerusalem and would continue Israeli Control of the Jordan Valley. Arafat rejected this proposal and was

criticized by President Clinton for not compromising with a counter proposal. A more balanced plan was finally proposed by Clinton in December 2000 but little time remained to iron out any details before Barak lost the February 2001 Israeli election and Ariel Sharon of the conservative Likud party became prime minister and walked away from the peace talks.

-2000-2005 Second Intifada began after Sharon, then the opposition leader in the Knesset, made a November 2000 visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This was much more violent than the First Intifada with the IDF engaged in gunfire, tank and aerial attacks as well as targeted killings of Palestinians. The Palestinians engaged in gunfire, stone-throwing, rocket attacks on Israel and many suicide bombings. Deaths during this intifada are estimated at 3000 Palestinians, 1000 Israelis and 64 foreigners.

-2005 Israeli Evacuation of Gaza Strip: Israeli PM Sharon became convinced that continued Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip were untenable in the long run for practical and security reasons. With the support of the Knesset and the Israeli Supreme Court, he ordered Israeli settlers out of Gaza. The displaced settlers received compensation averaging about one quarter million US dollars per family (2005 dollars) and favorable terms in resettlement areas. Many left voluntarily but many had to be removed forcibly by Israeli Defense Force soldiers. About 8,000 settlers in 21 settlements in Gaza were relocated as well as 4 settlements in the Northern end of the West Bank. Industrial companies run by Israelis but employing Palestinians were moved into Israel. Agricultural green houses were mandated to remain but many were destroyed by departing settlers. Israeli settler houses were destroyed but Jewish Synagogues were left. Israel continued to control the coastline, airspace and all borders after the withdrawal. Netanyahu, a Knesset minister, objected strongly to this evacuation and eventually resigned (temporarily) from the Knesset when it went forward. Note the Gaza Strip is much smaller geographically than the West Bank (about 140 vs 2200 square miles)

-In 2007 Jimmy Carter wrote the book *Peace Not Apartheid*: Carter contends that Israel's continued control and construction of settlements in areas designated by the United Nations as Palestinian territory are the primary obstacles to a comprehensive peace agreement. He has stated "The ultimate purpose of my book is to present facts about the Middle East that are largely unknown in America, to precipitate discussion and to help restart peace talks that can lead to permanent peace for Israel and its neighbors."

-2005-Present: In each of his terms in office, PM Netanyahu has actively supported the construction of new Israeli settlements in the West Bank. At the current time there are at least 140 Israeli settlements in the West Bank officially approved by the Israeli government and another 100 Israeli "outposts" not formally approved but not actively opposed by the Israeli government. Many of the settlements have resulted in the displacement of Palestinian communities and families. There are currently over 670,000 Israeli Jews living in these settlements and outposts. Each new settlement makes the possibility of a "two state" solution more difficult and less likely.

Note: A more detailed history of the Gaza Strip and Hamas will be presented on November 12.

David Ben-Gurion Quotes (Israeli PM May 1948 to January 1954 & November 1955 to June 1963)

“Let us not ignore the truth among ourselves...politically we are the aggressors and they defend themselves. The country is theirs, because they inhabit it, whereas we want to come here and settle down, and in their view we want to take away from them their country.”

“If I were an Arab leader, I would never sign an agreement with Israel. It is normal; we have taken away their country. It is true God promised it to us, but how could that interest them? Our God is not theirs. There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They see but one thing: we have come and we have stolen their country. Why would they accept that?”

“Everybody sees a difficulty in the question of relations between Arabs and Jews. But not everybody sees that there is no solution to this question. No solution! There is a gulf, and nothing can bridge it...We, as a nation, want this country to be ours; the Arabs, as a nation, want this country to be theirs.”

“The Arabs will have to go, but one needs an opportune moment for making it happen, such as a war.”

“We must do everything to ensure the Palestinians never do return. The old will die and the young will forget.”

Yassar Arafat Quotes (PLO Leader 1969 to 2004)

“The establishment of a Palestinian state is the only guarantee for stability and security in the region”

“The Palestinian struggle is not about land, it is about our national identity and dignity”

“Our struggle will continue until the complete liberation of Palestine, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea”

“Our resistance will continue until the last Israeli soldier leaves our lands”