

SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

YWA Chapter Lesson



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

05 INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDATIONS

06 SECTION 1:

Israel in the Bible

The Covenants of God

The Road to a Homeland

Glossary

12 SECTION 2:

Israel Road to Statehood

Timeline: The Great Revolt 70 A.D. – Israel's Independence 1948

17 SECTION 3:

Israel as a Nation

Timeline: Suez Crisis 1956 – Today

23 SECTION 4:

Israel Today

Modern Borders

Israel Defense Forces

Iron Dome

Knesset

Regional Threats

Global Threats

30 SECTION 5:

American Support for Israel

National Sovereignty

An Ally in the Middle East

U.S.-Israel Bilateral Relationship

Anti-Israel Rhetoric

34 MEETING IDEAS

35 ACTION ITEMS & PRAYER POINTS

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SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

INTRODUCTION

Israel is a nation with an extensive history that is both tumultuous and redemptive. It is a nation blessed by God. That being said, it is also one of the most controversial nations in the world. Throughout its history, it has faced opposition at every turn. Israel is often in the news because of the unrest it is surrounded by as a small Jewish nation in the midst of Islamic nations. It is important to understand the history of Israel and how it pertains to America, especially as college students where anti-Israel, anti-Jewish sentiments run particularly high.

CWA'S POSITION

CWA believes that the people and nations who stand with Israel and the Jewish people will be blessed by God. We believe that any foreign policy effort to withdraw U.S. support for Israel is in direct contradiction to America's national interests.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

One of CWA's core issues is Support for Israel. The purpose of this lesson is to provide you with the history of Israel, the background and description of the current threats and oppositions to Israel, and the Biblical foundation upon which CWA develops its position. This document also includes a suggested lesson plan for your Chapter meeting on this core issue.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Bible is clear that the people and nations who stand with Israel and the Jewish people will be blessed by God.

"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:3)

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

America has the authority to make treaties and alliances in the best interest of her national security.

"The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States ... He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur ..."

-United States Constitution 1787 (Article II, Section 2, Clause 2)

SECTION 1

ISRAEL IN THE BIBLE

THE COVENANTS OF GOD

The Abrahamic Covenant

“Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’” Genesis 12:1-3

The Bible does not say why God called Abraham in particular, but God chose one man to bring forth one great nation that would bless the rest of the world. God would use Abraham and his descendants to show the rest of the nations that there is only one God and a people group that would represent His holiness. God sovereignly made a covenant with Abraham to make his descendants as numerous as “the dust of the earth” (Genesis 13:16), to give a homeland to his descendants as a permanent possession, and that all the earth would be blessed through him and his descendants. At the time God made this covenant with Abraham, his wife Sarah (Sarai) was barren so the thought of having descendants as “countless as the stars in the sky” (Genesis 22:17) was a logical barrier to Abraham’s understanding, but Abraham did believe God, and because of his faith, he was considered righteous in the sight of God.

Covenant Fulfilled

Ultimately, Abraham’s descendants would be as numerous as the stars and the sand in God’s plan of redeeming mankind through his Son, Jesus Christ, Who came in the flesh through the Jewish people and all those who placed their faith in Him for the forgiveness of their sins would be counted as a descendant of Abraham due to their faith. (Galatians 3:6-9)

Ishmael and Isaac

The covenant was now established, and Abraham was promised an heir to inherit all the Lord would give him. After being in the land of Canaan for ten years, Sarah, Abraham’s wife, had still been unable to conceive a child for Abraham. In her desperation, she told Abraham to have a child with her Egyptian maidservant Hagar. “So Sarai said to Abram, ‘See now, the Lord has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.’ And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.” (Genesis 16:2)

Unbeknownst to Abraham and Sarah, this action would be the beginning of the unending hatred and violence that continues to terrorize the modern-day people of Israel and the world. Hagar indeed bore Abraham a son. The Angel of the Lord gave a prophecy to Hagar concerning her son: “Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has heard your affliction. He shall be a wild man; His hand shall be against every man, And every man’s hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.” (Genesis 16:11-12)

Although this was a common practice in ancient Mesopotamia, having an heir outside of the woman who was Abraham’s wife was not God’s plan. Instead, God’s plan was to bless Sarai and change her name to Sarah, which means “mother of nations.” At this time, Abraham was 100 years old, and Sarah was 90. The thought of having a child at their age was laughable.

“Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, ‘Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?’” And Abraham said to God, ‘Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!’ Then God said: ‘No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will

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SECTION 1

establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.” (Genesis 17:17-21)

The covenant was to pass down through Isaac. There are blessings pronounced upon Ishmael as well, but they are not the same as the blessings and covenant given to Isaac.

The Abrahamic Covenant would be confirmed by God to Abraham’s promised son, Isaac, and from Isaac, that covenant would be passed and confirmed with his son Jacob.

Jacob

Jacob, like his father Isaac, was born to a mother who went through the despair of barrenness. Isaac pleaded to the Lord on his wife Rebekah’s behalf for a child, and she became pregnant with twins, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 24:21). She felt such restlessness in her womb that it led her to inquire of the Lord, and He answered her with:

“... Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.

So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau’s heel; so his name was called Jacob.” (Genesis 25:23-26)

The name Jacob sounds like the Hebrew word for “heel” and “deceiver.” We see this characteristic displayed when he takes advantage of his brother

Esau’s starvation by trading him food for the rights as the firstborn son.

At the end of Isaac’s life, he prepares to pronounce a blessing on his sons. Once again, we see Jacob’s trickery at work in him deceiving his father into thinking he was Esau so that he would be pronounced with all the blessings of the firstborn as well as the Abrahamic covenant that was to be passed down.

Jacob was able to accomplish this with the help of his mother, Rebekah, who received the prophetic word of the Lord saying, “The older shall serve the younger.” (Genesis 25:23)

The blessing pronounced on Jacob (Genesis 27:28-29):

“Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven,
Of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine.
Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you.
Be master over your brethren, and let your mother’s
sons bow down to you.
Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be
those who bless you!”

The blessing pronounced on Esau (Genesis 27:39-40):

“Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:
Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,
And of the dew of heaven from above. By your sword
you shall live,
And you shall serve your brother;
And it shall come to pass, when you become restless,
That you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

Of course, Esau is furious and makes plans to kill his brother Jacob. Their mother sends Jacob away to live with her family. But before Jacob leaves, Isaac passes to Jacob the covenant that God made with his father Abraham:

“May God Almighty bless you, And make you
fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an

SECTION 1

assembly of peoples; And give you the blessing of Abraham, To you and your descendants with you, That you may inherit the land In which you are a stranger, Which God gave to Abraham.” (Genesis 28:3-4)

Along Jacob’s physical journey, he also begins a spiritual journey to know the God of his father and grandfather. The Lord came to Jacob in a dream and proclaimed to him:

“I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.” (Genesis 28:13-15)

On Jacob’s return to his father’s land, the Bible tells us that a “Man” came in the middle of the night and wrestled with Jacob until dawn. We find that it was God who wrestled with Jacob and touched the socket of his hip.

And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me!” So He said to him, “What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.” And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.” (Genesis 32:26-28)

And once more God confirms his covenant through Jacob: “Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, ‘Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.’ So He called his name Israel. Also God said to him: ‘I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a

nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.’” (Genesis 35:9-12)

Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and thus were his descendants called Israelites, who indeed struggled with God and men, even to this day. However, they will prevail if they are faithful to the terms of God’s covenant with them. But first, just as God said it would happen (Genesis 15:16), the descendants of Israel became slaves for four generations in the land of Egypt where they would see God’s hand of deliverance as well as His holiness in giving the Israelites specific commands to access all the blessings and prosperity contained within His generous covenant.

CONDITIONS OF THE COVENANT

After the Israelites were delivered from slavery in Egypt, they arrived in the wilderness of Sinai. Here the Lord reiterates His covenant with Israel and gives them specific instructions for entering and staying in the Promised Land in what is known as the Sinai Covenant.

The Sinai Covenant

1. Obey God and keep His covenant

“Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.”
(Deuteronomy 5:32-33)

2. Worship only God and not be overtaken with pagan practices.

SECTION 1

“You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars.” (Exodus 23:24)

3. Make no treaties with the people inhabiting the land to be conquered or with their pagan religion.

“Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst.” (Exodus 34:11-12)

God’s Covenant to Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob is unconditional in that there was nothing they could do to cease to be God’s chosen people, but there were conditions set in place to partake of the blessings of the covenant. He gave to Abraham and his descendants after him the responsibility to obey the terms of the covenant.

“Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.” (Deuteronomy 7:9-11)

Distinguishing God’s Covenants

There are covenants that God made with the people of Israel that were unconditional, meaning that there is a fixed outcome that will supersede any circumstance. There are also some covenants that were conditional, usually involving “if/then” statements.

EXAMPLES:

Unconditional: To be the God of Abraham and his descendants forever.

“And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.” (Genesis 17:7)

Conditional: “If you obey Me, then I will give you victory over your enemies.

But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.” (Exodus 23:22)

The Land Covenant promised that Israel would become the prime nation of the world if the Israelites were obedient to God. (Deuteronomy 28:1) But, the covenant warned that many curses would befall the people if they were disobedient (Deuteronomy 28:15-37), including exile from the land (Deuteronomy 28:38-57).

“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known.” (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)

THE ROAD TO A HOMELAND

From Jacob (Israel) came 12 sons (tribes): Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin. At the end of Israel’s life, he claimed his son Joseph’s children, as his own sons (Ephraim and Manasseh.) These two sons were a replacement for representing Joseph in the tribal distribution of the Promised Land to be conquered. Levi and his descendants are not included

SECTION 1

in the allotment of land because they were chosen by God to have a separate function as Priests who would mediate on behalf of the people before God and were given cities within each tribal territory. God brought the Israelites into the Promised Land 40 years after their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. However, the Israelites did not conquer all the territory allotted to them by tribe. The book of Joshua records the Israelites' successes and their failures in conquering all the land promised to them. Although the Abrahamic Covenant contained promises of blessings, it also came with promises of curses if they were disobedient.



The conquest period was a time of battle, victory, disobedience, and finally defeat at the hands of their enemies. The Israelites would then cry out for a deliverer, and each time God sent a deliverer to help His people. These deliverers were also called Judges. They presided over the people's affairs and enabled a defense when they were attacked. During the time of the judges, the people would turn back to God, but after that generation died, their descendants

would return to disobedience. This was the cycle that continued until the Israelites demanded a king just like all the other surrounding nations. Although the Lord considered Himself to be their King, He gave them a king. After the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, Solomon's son, Rehoboam, became king. During his reign, the kingdom split into the Northern Kingdom (10 tribes of Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (two tribes – Judah and Benjamin). Good kings and bad kings ruled the Southern Kingdom. The Northern kingdom was ruled by a succession of bad kings (1 Kings 12; 2 Kings; 2 Chronicles 10-36). The prophets foretold the exile of God's people for their disobedience. The tribes of the Northern Kingdom were sent into exile and dispersed by Assyria in 722 B.C. In 605 B.C., the Babylonians conquered the Southern Kingdom and took the Israelites into captivity. After 70 years in captivity, Persian King Cyrus The Great conquered Babylon and issued a series of decrees to return the Jewish people back to their homeland, Judea and Jerusalem.

The struggle for the Jewish people to remain in their homeland has been a difficult path, yet the covenant God made with them still stands because He cannot lie or go back on His promise. "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19)

One day, when Jesus Christ returns to gather and restore His people in the last day as they finally see him as the Messiah (Romans 11:25-27), all of the Israelites will live in their promised land in peace. Though certain consequences have occurred based on the conditions of the covenant, there are also demonic evils in the world that have not been wary to display their hatred for the Jewish people. This was only the beginning of the Jews' constant struggle to secure a homeland. As Christians, we are called to stand with God's people.

SECTION 1

GLOSSARY

Before moving on, please take note of the glossary below and come back to it as you work through the lesson. These terms will help you navigate the history of Israel as well as the modern issues faced by Israel today.

- **Apartheid:** Originated from the Afrikaans language, meaning: “apartness” or “separateness.” Used as a political term in South Africa, it is a term used to describe their racial segregation policy. It is now being used by those who believe that the Arab’s living in Israel are oppressed and discriminated against due to their race and religion.
- **BDS:** Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: A global movement against Israeli companies, products, investment, and international economic recognition with sanctions. This campaign has infiltrated many businesses and college campuses and cultural icons.
- **Fatah:** The word “Fatah” is a reverse acronym of the Arabic Harekat at-Tahrir al-Wataniyyeh al-Falastiniyyeh, meaning “conquest by means of jihad [Islamic holy war].” Fatah is a major Palestinian terrorist political party that began in 1965 as the Palestinian National Liberation Movement
- **Hamas:** The Arabic acronym for the “Islamic Resistance Movement,” Hamas is an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood and is a terrorist group committed to eliminating Israel.
- **Hezbollah:** The Arabic word for “Party of God.” A Shi’ite terrorist group based in Lebanon, Hezbollah’s main objective is the annihilation of Israel and an Islamic government in all Arab countries.
- **ISIS:** This acronym stands for “The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria,” whose aim is to create an Islamic state across Sunni areas of Iraq and in Syria, which excludes the tolerance for any other religion than Islam, and many Christians have been executed for their faith in Christ and refusing to convert to Islam. ISIS controls hundreds of square miles where state authority has evaporated. It ignores international borders and has a presence all the way from Syria’s Mediterranean coast to south of Baghdad.
- **Muslim Brotherhood:** Terrorist group that advocates the advance of Islamicization was first established in Egypt in 1928 and still maintains a strong presence in Egypt.
- **Palestinian Authority:** The Palestinian Authority (PA - also called the Palestinian National Authority) is the semi-official, self-governing Palestinian body established in May 1994 in accordance with the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PA’s performance came under growing Israeli public criticism as a result of continued terrorist attacks on Israelis both in the occupied territories and within the Green Line, carried out mainly by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.
- **Palestinian Islamic Jihad:** Terrorist Islamic philosophy is committed to uniting all Arab and Muslim countries into one great state.
- **PLO:** Palestine Liberation Organization was founded in 1964 during the Arab League Summit in Cairo. The PLO’s originally stated goal was the “liberation of Palestine” through armed struggle while seeking to destroy the existence of Zionism in the Middle East. By 1967 the PLO had decided that their primary goal was the destruction of the State of Israel. This organization has since then split into different factions.
- **Zionism:** Coined in 1890 by Nathan Birnbaum. Its general definition means the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionism has come to include the movement for the development of the State of Israel and the protection of the Jewish nation in Israel through support for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

SECTION 2

ISRAEL ROAD TO STATEHOOD

THE GREAT REVOLT

70 A.D.

This marked the end of Jewish political authority in their homeland until 1948. In an attempt to rid their land of the discrimination and religious persecution from Roman rule, Jewish “zealots” mounted a revolt to push the Romans out. Jerusalem was captured by the Romans, and it is estimated that as many as one million Jews died in the Great Revolt against Rome. The rest were deported.¹

THE BIRTH OF ISLAM AND THE ARAB CONQUEST OF PALESTINE

622-1099 A.D.

Muhammad's “migration” from Mecca to Medina marks the foundation and establishment of the Islamic religion in Arabia. Over the next hundred years, Islamic rule extends from the Sind in India to southern France.³ Palestine is part of the Arabian Empire, and the people of Palestine thus came to describe themselves as Arab.

SECOND JEWISH REVOLT AND LAND OF ISRAEL CHANGED TO PALESTINE

135 A.D.

Records by the Roman historian Cassius Dio, document that 580,000 Jewish soldiers were killed and over 900 villages and towns destroyed. Emperor Hadrian decrees the name “Judea” should be replaced by the name “Palestine” (which means ‘Syria Palestina’ – Syrian Palestine named after the Israelites traditional enemies, the Philistines.) The dispersion of the Jewish people accelerates, and they are taken as captives, slaves, or forced to live as refugees.²

1099-1291

The Crusaders conquers Jerusalem from the Muslims, massacring most of the city’s non-Christian dwellers.⁴



¹“Ancient Jewish History: The Great Revolt,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-great-revolt-66-70-ce/>. | ²“Second Jewish Revolt,” Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Second-Jewish-Revolt>. | ³“Jews in Islamic Countries: The Treatment of Jews,” Jewish Virtual Library, last updated September 2011, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-treatment-of-jews-in-arab-islamic-countries/>. | ⁴Mark Cartwright, “The Capture of Jerusalem, 1099 CE,” Ancient History Encyclopedia, <https://www.ancient.eu/article/1254/the-capture-of-jerusalem-1099-ce/>.

SECTION 2



1291-1516

Palestine goes under Egyptian Mamluk Rule⁵

**THE JEWS OF RUSSIA; THE RISE OF
MODERN ZIONISM**

1881-1882

Some five million Jews lived in Russia. Under the repressive Alexander III, anti-Jewish laws were re-introduced. The overwhelming response was emigration to America. Another response was the rise of Zionism, the political movement aimed at restoring a Jewish homeland in Palestine. A wave of Jewish immigration to Turkish (Ottoman) Palestine begins.⁸

SPANISH INQUISITION AND THE JEWISH EXPULSION

1492

The Jewish expulsion was punishment for the heresy of not converting to Christianity and continuing to practice Judaism under the Spanish takeover by Majesties Ferdinand and Isabella. Over 200,000 Jews were expelled from Spain. Those who remained had to convert to Catholicism. Jews were placed in ghettos, and many were turned into slaves while their children were sent to remote islands to die. Those who didn't stay were taken by boat to other kingdoms. Tens of thousands of Jewish refugees died while trying to reach safety.⁶

1516-1917

Palestine goes under Turkish control by the Ottoman Empire.⁷

⁵ "Mamluk Rule Timeline," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/mamluk-rule-timeline-1291-1516>. | ⁶ "Modern Jewish History: The Spanish Expulsion," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-spanish-expulsion-1492>. | ⁷ "Pre-State Israel: Under Ottoman Rule," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ottoman-rule-1517-1917>. | ⁸ "Modern Jewish History: Pogroms," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/pogroms-2>.

SECTION 2



THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS GRANTS
MANDATE TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

1922-1929

“The League of Nations grants mandate to the United Kingdom on the basis of the Balfour Declaration, but excludes Transjordan from that provision.” The Mandate, accepted on July 24, 1922, incorporates the critical provision of the Balfour Declaration: “The establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.”¹²

Trans-Jordan was separated from the Jewish national home, and the Golan was ceded to the French Mandate of Syria in exchange for a smaller adjacent area on the Lebanese border.

Between 1924 and 1929, 82,000 Jews arrived, mainly as a result of anti-Semitic outbreaks in Poland and Hungary at a time when the immigration quotas of the United States kept Jews out.¹³

1896-1897

Theodore Herzl calls the first Zionist Congress and wrote *Der Judenstaat*, a program for the establishment of a Jewish state.⁹

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION
1914-1918

The Allies (France, Britain, Russia, U.S.) defeat Turkey in the First World War, and Britain’s Foreign Prime Secretary Arthur Balfour’s support for a Jewish homeland became known in history as the Balfour Declaration which was issued in a letter to Lord Rothschild on November 2, 1917.¹⁰

THE TREATY OF SAN REMO AND THE
PALESTINE MANDATE
1920

At the allied conference at San Remo in April 1920 at which the Allied Powers determined the fate of the former Turkish possessions, the Balfour Declaration was approved and referred to the League of Nations over the area which now comprises Israel, Jordan, and the Golan Heights.¹¹

1919

Between 1919 and 1923, 40,000 Eastern Europe Jews, arrive in Palestine.

⁹“Zionist Congress: First Zionist Congress & Basel Program,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/first-zionist-congress-and-basel-program-1897>. | ¹⁰“The Balfour Declaration,” Israel & Judaism Studies, <https://www.ijs.org.au/the-balfour-declaration/>. | ¹¹“Pre-State Israel: The San Remo Conference,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-san-remo-conference>. | ¹²“League of Nations Mandate for Palestine (1922),” ECF, <https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/232>. | ¹³“Aliyah,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/aliyah>.

SECTION 2

ARAB RIOTS AGAINST
JEWISH IMMIGRATION

1929

In protest of Jewish immigration, a dispute at the Western Wall in Jerusalem broke out into riots throughout the country. The Jewish families living in Hebron (the burial place of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) were completely wiped out. 133 Jews were killed, and hundreds were wounded.¹⁴

MODERN ROOTS OF
ANTI-SEMITISM

1931

Twenty-two countries denounce Zionism at a Muslim Conference in Jerusalem attended by 22 countries. By 1933 these same countries begin a boycott of British and Zionist goods.¹⁶

PEEL ROYAL COMMISSION

1937

Due to the violence met by Jewish immigration, the Royal Commissions from London presided over by Lord Peel recommends abolishing the British mandate establishing a two-state partition of Palestine (one Arab and one Jewish), with Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Jaffa under British control. The Arabs of Palestine strongly refuse this recommendation and revolte.¹⁹

THE WHITE PAPERS

1930

The British respond to the violent Arab riots and protests of 1921, 1929, and 1936-8 by holding Royal Commissions and issuing policy statements in the form of “White Papers” which gradually and progressively closed the gates of Palestine to Jewish immigration and settlement, withdrawing Britain’s commitments to the Balfour Declaration and Mandate.¹⁵

1933

Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany and opens the first concentration camp.¹⁷

“THE GREAT UPRISING”

1936-1939

The Arab political parties form an Arab Higher Committee under the Mufti (Islamic legal and religious scholar) of Jerusalem. For six months, organized and armed groups attack Jewish settlements developing into a revolt against the British and a war against the Jews. It was known as the “Great Uprising” of 1936-1939. The Mufti eventually fled Jerusalem and offered assistance to Nazi Germany and Hitler’s “final solution” of the Jews.¹⁸

¹⁴“The Balfour Declaration,” Israel & Judaism Studies, <https://www.ijs.org.au/the-balfour-declaration/>. | ¹⁵Ibid. | ¹⁶Ibid. | ¹⁷“Dachau Concentration Camp,” History.com, last updated January 27, 2020, <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/dachau>. | ¹⁸“Pre-State Israel: The Arab Revolot,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-1936-arab-riots>. | ¹⁹“British Palestine Mandate: The Peel Commission,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-peel-commission>.

SECTION 2

WORLD WAR II
1939-1945

Six million Jews were murdered in the Nazi Holocaust. This was their answer to the “Jewish question” or the “final solution” in finding a home for them, according to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist party in Europe. The Holocaust was systematic and deliberate state-sponsored genocide against a people simply for existing.²⁰ The British capitulated to Arab demands in the 1939 White Paper which promised an independent Arab state in ten years and a limit on Jewish immigration to 75,000.²¹

UN PARTITION PLAN
1947

The United Nations, by General Assembly Resolution 181, “recommends to the United Kingdom, as the mandatory Power for Palestine,” a new two-state Partition Plan which envisions the establishment of an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an internationalized Jerusalem. Hostilities begin with Arab armed opposition to the Partition Plan and attacks on the Jewish population. An exodus of the Arab population begins.²²

ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE
1948

On May 14, 1948, the British Mandate officially ended, and Israel proclaimed its independence as a sovereign state within the borders determined by the United States Partition Resolution of November 1947.²³ A Provisional government was established under the leadership of David Ben Gurion as Prime Minister. The Arab nations rejected the Partition Resolution, as they denied the legitimacy of Jewish settlements in Palestine. The Arabs of Palestine, therefore, refused to establish an Arab state in the area contemplated by the Partition Resolution since this would imply recognition of a Jewish state in the remaining part of Palestine. The very next day, Israel was invaded by the armies of Egypt, Trans-Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia along with forces from Lebanon and Sudan.²⁴

For a succinct and engaging overview, watch this 11-minute video explaining Israel's history and attempts to live in peace with the Palestinian government.

http://www.youtube.com/embed/B084EmNeNDk?feature=player_embedded

²⁰ “The Holocaust: An Introductory History,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/an-introductory-history-of-the-holocaust>. | ²¹ “Immigration to Israel: British Restrictions on Jewish Immigration to Palestine,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/british-restrictions-on-jewish-immigration-to-palestine>. | ²² “General Assembly, Resolution 181 (II). Future Government of Palestine,” United Nations, <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/7F0AF2BD897689B785256C330061D253>. | ²³ “The Arab-Israeli War of 1948,” Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/arab-israeli-war>. | ²⁴ “Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx>.

SECTION 3

ISRAEL AS A NATION (SUEZ CRISIS – TODAY)

SUEZ CRISIS 1956

Israeli leadership grew weary of cross-border attacks from the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip and Egypt's attempts to block Israeli shipping in the Suez Canal and Gulf of Aqaba. Israel, England, and France fought Egypt for the control of the Suez Canal, and the United States demanded a cease-fire that took effect in November 1956. A UN force occupied the area in March 1957 and reopened the canal on April 24, 1957.²⁵

YOM KIPPUR WAR, OCTOBER 6-24 1973

Arab nations threatened Israel, saying that they would not accept Israeli "occupation" of lands lost in 1967. Egypt's President Hafez Assad attacked Israel on October 6, 1973 — on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement. Fighting continued for 18 days when the war ended again under UN backings. The U.S. convinced Israel to give up some of the territories it had gained in war. Later agreements gave Egypt control of some of the land of the Suez Canal and to Syria some control around the Golan Heights.²⁷

SIX-DAY WAR, JUNE 5-10 1967

In 1965 the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) conducted 35 raids against Israel; in 1966, that number increased to 41. The following year 37 civilian targetted attacks launched against Israel. Simultaneously, attacks from Syria were made on the Golan Heights, and Egyptian forces closed in on Israel's borders, blocking Israeli ships in the Gulf of Aqaba, which according to international law is an act of war. Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq moved their armies to Israel's borders. After weeks of attempted diplomacy, Israel needed the element of surprise and prepared Israeli defenses to retaliate. Jordan launched an offensive attack in Jerusalem on June 5. U.S. President Lyndon Johnson tried but failed to secure peace and reopen the gulf. When the cease-fire took effect on June 10, Israel's victory gained them a buffer zone – the Sinai, Gaza, East Jerusalem, West Bank and Golan — between them and their enemies. Israel offered to return the land in exchange for peace treaties and recognition of its right to exist.²⁶



²⁵ "America and the Suez Crisis," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/america-and-the-suez-crisis>. | ²⁶ "The Six-Day War: Background & Overview," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-six-day-war>. | ²⁷ "The Yom Kippur War: Background & Overview," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-yom-kippur-war>.

SECTION 3

FIRST INTIFADA
1987-1993

CAMP DAVID ACCORDS
1978-1979

As a result of intense United States diplomacy, Egypt became the first Arab country to recognize Israel's existence and to enter into a peace treaty with it. Egyptian and Israeli leaders met at Camp David with President Carter in 1978 to discuss a treaty in which Egypt would regain full control of the Sinai Peninsula. The treaty was signed on March 26, 1979, lending hope to a future of peace in the region.²⁸

In 1987, the tensions between Israelis and Palestinians over land and resources fumed into what is known as the First Intifada (Palestinian Uprising). Attacks of suicide terrorism, rioting, murder, and violence erupted upon Israelis and Palestinians. For the Palestinians, their objective was to remove the Israeli troops and civilians from territory they considered "occupied land" and to declare an independent Palestinian State. At the same time, the PLO refused to negotiate directly with Israel, and Israel refused to speak to the PLO, who had provided weapons to Palestinian terrorists. In February 1988, Israel saw the publication of the Covenant of Hamas, the new Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood; it called for the destruction of Israel and rejected negotiation or compromise: "In The Name Of The Most Merciful Allah ... Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it." Fighting continued until the Oslo Accords of 1993.³⁰

THE FIRST LEBANON WAR

1982

A ceasefire declared in 1981 between Israel and Palestinian terrorists shortly broke into attacks by the PLO from the Lebanon border. On June 6, 1982, IDF (Israel Defense Forces) launched Operation Peace Galilee; Israeli troops reached Beirut, cornering the PLO and Syrian fighters. This incident, unfortunately, drew Israel into Lebanon's civil war. The United States intervened, and a force of U.S. and Western European troops helped with the PLO and Syrian evacuation. The war ended in May 1983, and Israel gradually withdrew its troops. Daily ambushes against Israeli forces increased with casualties of 1,216 soldiers killed between 5 June 1982 and 31 May 1985.²⁹

PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD DECLARED

1988

Yasser Arafat seeks sole leadership of the Palestinian people proving a prudent diplomat. Arafat declares Palestinian statehood in November 1988 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Many nations, including the Soviet Union and Egypt, respond with recognition of the Palestinian government with Arafat as its leader. The United States refuses to recognize statehood but does open dialogue with Arafat.³¹

²⁸ "Camp David Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process," Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1977-1980/camp-david>.

²⁹ "The Lebanon War 1982," Anti-Defamation League, <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/the-lebanon-war-1982>.

³⁰ "Israel's Wars & Operations: First Intifada," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/first-intifada>.

³¹ Youssef M. Ibrahim, "P.L.O. PROCLAIMS PALESTINE TO BE AN INDEPENDENT STATE; HINTS AT RECOGNIZING ISRAEL," New York Times, Nov. 15, 1988, <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/11/15/world/plo-proclaims-palestine-to-be-an-independent-state-hints-at-recognizing-israel.html>.

SECTION 3

OSLO ACCORDS
1993

Israel and the PLO agreed to a Declaration of Principles which was signed in Washington on September 13, 1993. The accords provided for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Both sides formally recognized one another; Arafat agreed to Israel's right to exist. Two years later, the leaders met again at the White House and signed the Interim Agreement allowing for the next stage of Palestinian autonomy and control of some cities in Israel.³²

CAMP DAVID SUMMIT
2000

Tensions mounted as the September deadline approached with no treaty in sight. President Clinton began a secret last-ditch peace effort by hosting Palestinian President Arafat and Minister Ehud Barak, Israel's new prime minister, at Camp David. The summit lasted two weeks where Barak made efforts for compromise while Arafat did not.³⁴

SEPTEMBER INTIFADA (PALESTINIAN UPRISING)

Another uprising launches, followed by months of violence. Within the first year of the uprising, nearly eight hundred people die as a result of the fighting. Sacred sites such as Joseph's tomb and Rachel's tomb are desecrated, sacred Jewish books are burned, worshipers at the Western Wall are stoned, and violent riots occur throughout Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza strip.³⁵

WYE AGREEMENT
1998

In 1998, President Clinton hosted Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for talks in Way Mills, Maryland. The purpose was to end the stalemate for peace between Israel and the PLO and address Arafat's call for a Palestinian state. The summit ended with a land-for-security deal on October 23, 1998. Arafat agreed to crack down on terrorism, and Israel agreed to give up a percentage of the West Bank. The Palestinians agreed to withdraw elements of its charter that are hostile to Israel, and both sides agreed to a third phase of negotiations. Hamas denounced the agreement and vowed to continue to attack Israel. Agreements were quickly suspended due to accusations of elements of the agreement not being met.³³

PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD DECLARED
2002

Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia proposed the Arab Peace Initiative (API) at the Arab League Summit. It was a peace initiative that recognizing Israel as a sovereign state in return for territorial control of land Israel seized in the 1967 War, recognition of Palestine as an independent state, and East Jerusalem as its capital. It was endorsed by all 22 members of the Arab League. In July 2007, Israeli leaders met with representatives of the Arab League to discuss the proposal. This was the first time the Arab League sent an official delegation to Israel. These peace proposals have yet to be implemented and were reintroduced in 2013 by Secretary John Kerry calling on Arabs to take a more active role in peacekeeping. The Arab-Israeli conflict is yet to be resolved.³⁶

³² "The Oslo Accords and the Israeli Peace Process," Office of the Historian, U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo>. | ³³ "The Wye Agreement," The Jewish Agency for Israel, <http://archive.jewishagency.org/maps/content/36476>. | ³⁴ "2000 Camp David Summit: Background & Overview," The Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-of-2000-camp-david-summit>. | ³⁵ "The Second Intifada 2000," Anti-Defamation League, <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/the-second-intifada-2000>. | ³⁶ "Arab Peace Initiative," S. Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace, <https://centerpeace.org/explore/arab-peace-initiative/>.

SECTION 3

ROADMAP FOR PEACE 2003

The Roadmap for Peace was a plan for peace proposed in 2003 by the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations with the ultimate goal of an independent Palestinian state and a secure Israel. The Roadmap divided into three phases but never progressed past the first. Progress on the Roadmap completely halted following the Palestinian election of Hamas in 2006. Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority became possible again when the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, dissolved the government-controlled by Hamas. On November 27, 2007, the basic principles of the Roadmap were reaffirmed at the Annapolis Conference.³⁷

BDS MOVEMENT 2005

The BDS movement is initiated. BDS stands for boycott, divestments, and sanctions against Israeli goods, academics, and investments. The Palestinians initiated this global movement under the Palestinian Civil Society, coordinated by the Palestinian BDS National Committee established in 2007. This movement is still present today and is infiltrating many college campuses in the U.S and abroad. College students started anti-Israel or Pro-Palestinian “freedom” chapters on their campuses to actively boycott Israeli goods and even protest having Jewish students at their institutions. (See the section below on BDS movement.)

HAMAS IS ELECTED 2006

In January 2006, Palestinians elected a majority of Hamas members to the Palestinian Authority’s legislature over the PLO’s Fatah party that had previously been in power. In its charter, Hamas calls for the destruction of Israel and for the killing of Jews. It does not accept previous Palestinian-Israeli agreements. The group claims responsibility for hundreds of terrorist attacks.³⁹

ISRAEL WITHDRAWS FROM GAZA 2005

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon began the process leading Israel to unilaterally withdraw from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements as part of a larger policy separating Israel from Palestinian territories, which was very controversial domestically. Israeli citizens were required to move out of their communities. Nevertheless, Israel decided to remove itself from its territory so that the Palestinians living there could govern themselves. After Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza, the number of rockets fired by terrorists from Gaza into Israel increased dramatically.³⁸



THE 2006 LEBANON WAR 2006

“Hezbollah, a radical Islamist [terrorist] organization committed to destroying Israel, crossed the Lebanon-Israel border on July 11, 2006, and attacked an Israeli army unit, killing eight soldiers and kidnapping two more who were later murdered. Simultaneously, Hezbollah launched rockets into Israeli cities and towns due to Hezbollah’s use of their citizens as human shields. Hostilities officially ended with UN Cease-Fire Resolution 1701 passed on August 11, 2006.⁴⁰

³⁷ “Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East: Israeli/Palestinian Reciprocal Action, Quartet Support,” U.S. Department of State Archive, July 16, 2003, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/t/pa/ci/tls/22520.htm>. | ³⁸ “Israel’s Withdrawal from Gaza,” NPR, 2005, <https://www.npr.org/series/4797062/israel-s-withdrawal-from-gaza>. | ³⁹ Simon Jeffery, “Hamas Celebrates Election Victory,” The Guardian, January 26, 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/jan/26/israel1>. | ⁴⁰ “Second Lebanon War,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/background-and-overview-second-lebanon-war>.

SECTION 3

THE BATTLE OF GAZA 2007

The conflict between Hamas and the PLO Fatah reached its pinnacle when Hamas won the Palestinian election in January of 2006. In June 2007, Hamas attacked Fatah members throughout Gaza. In response, the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, dissolved the Hamas government. Hamas controlled Gaza, and the Palestinian Authority controlled the West Bank. Western sanctions to the Palestinian Authority lifted after the Hamas government was dissolved.⁴¹

ANNAPOLIS CONFERENCE

On November 27, 2007, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice under President George W. Bush organized a conference between Israel and the Palestinian Authority's Fatah leaders as part of the Roadmap for Peace mediations which was attended by many Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and Syria. The Annapolis Conference marked the first time that a two-state solution was publicly referred to as the mutually agreed-upon framework for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nonetheless, no formal agreement was settled, and the conflict is continuing.⁴²

HAMAS ESCALATES ATTACKS 2014

Fighting between Israel and Hamas intensified with the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli civilian boys. Hamas fired rockets into major Israeli cities and launched cross-border attacks from Gaza. The fighting continues with very short-lived ceasefires.⁴⁵

DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS 2010-2011

On August 20, 2010, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton invited Israel and the Palestinians to hold direct negotiations. Addressing a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress in May 2011, Prime Minister Netanyahu reiterated his commitment to the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside the Jewish state, adding: "I recognize that in a genuine peace, we will be required to give up parts of the Jewish homeland. We seek a peace in which they will be neither Israel's subjects nor its citizens. They should enjoy a national life of dignity as a free, viable, and independent people in their own state. They should enjoy a prosperous economy, where their creativity and initiative can flourish."⁴³

UNITY OF HAMAS WITH FATAH 2012

Hamas and Fatah (led by Mahmud Abbas) re-engaged in reconciliation talks to form a unity government. In November 2012, Israel launched another major operation: Operation Pillar of Defense that began with the killing of Hamas's military chief Ahmed Al-Jaabari in a precision airstrike on November 14, in response to escalating missile strikes from Gaza. The following day, two rockets from Gaza targeted Tel Aviv in the first attack on Israel's commercial capital in 20 years.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ian Black and Mark Tran, "Hamas Takes Control of Gaza," *The Guardian*, June 15, 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jun/15/israel4>. | ⁴² "The Annapolis Conference," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.israel.org/MFA/AboutIsrael/History/Pages/The%20Annapolis%20Conference%202007-Nov-2007.aspx>. | ⁴³ "Israeli PM Speaks Of Concessions, But Holds Firm On Criteria For Peace Before U.S. Congress," Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, May 24, 2011, https://www.rferl.org/a/netanyahu_says_israel_ready_for_painful_compromises/24194927.html. | ⁴⁴ "Summary of Operation Pillar Defense," Consulate General of Israel in New York, November 21, 2012, <https://embassies.gov.il/new-york/NewsAndEvents/Pages/Summary-of-Operation-Pillar-of-Defense.aspx>. | ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

SECTION 3

STABBING INTIFADA
2015

What has come to be known as the Stabbing Intifada was a call from Palestinian Leaders to enact violence against Israel for desecrating their holy places simply by visiting places such as the Temple Mount. The attacks, known as Lone Wolf Attacks, include stabbing, ramming cars into people and public places, bombs, suicide terrorist attacks, shooting, and stone-throwing.⁴⁶

HAMAS PROTESTS
2018

Hamas began holding daily protests, often violent, at the border fence separating Israel and Gaza. Israel's protection of its border escalated into fire from Gaza with return fire from Israel. Between the rockets, mortars, and incendiary kites from Hamas, it was the worst conflict between Gaza and Israel in nearly 10 years.⁴⁷

PRESIDENT TRUMP RECOGNIZES
JERUSALEM AS CAPITAL OF ISRAEL
2017

This was a momentous historical occasion as the United States was the first country in the world to recognize Israel's right to Jerusalem as its capital city. The United States subsequently moved its embassy to Jerusalem.

ABRAHAM ACCORDS
2020

On September 15, 2020, the United States of America brokered the signing of a peace agreement between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain.⁴⁸ Known as the Abraham Accords, they are a “monumental step in creating more opportunities for establishing peace, prosperity, and stability in the Middle East.”⁴⁹ The Abraham Accords were the first formal and public normalization of relations between Israel and an Arab nation since Egypt (1979) and Jordan (1994).

⁴⁶“Terrorism Against Israel: The Stabbing Intifada,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-stabbing-intifada>. | ⁴⁷ Isabel Kershner, “Hamas and Israel are in a Perilous Cycle. Is War a Miscalculation Away?” New York Times, July 21, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/21/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-hamas.html>. | ⁴⁸ “The Abraham Accords Declaration,” U.S. Department of State, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/the-abraham-accords/> | ⁴⁹ Department of State, Twitter post, December 2020, twitter.com/StateDept/status/1344357673001693185

SECTION 4

ISRAEL TODAY

30,000 FOOT VIEW

Population Demographics

As of mid-April 2020, Israel's population was 9,190,000, a ten-fold increase from its founding in 1948.

Jewish population: 6,806,000 (74.1%)

Arab population: 1,930,000 (21%)

Other (non-Arab Christians, Baha'i, etc.): 454,000 (~5%)

Religions

The religious breakdown of Israeli Jews is as follows:

Secular: 43%

Traditional: 22%

Traditional-religious: 13%

Religious: 11%

Ultra-Orthodox: 10%

As of 2019, the population by religions, other than Judaism, is as follows:

Muslim: 18%

Christian: 2%

Druze: 2%⁵⁰



Modern Borders

Israel borders Lebanon to the north, the Golan Heights and Syria to the northeast, the West Bank and Jordan to the east, the Gaza Strip and Egypt in the southwest, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west.



Just barely larger than New Jersey, Israel is just 8,630 square miles. On such a tiny piece of land, one can find mountains, plains, fertile land, and desert. From the Mediterranean Sea to the Dead Sea, the width of the country can be driven in about 90 minutes. From the North of Israel to Eilat in the southern tip, the length can be driven in about nine hours.⁵¹

Israel Defense Forces

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Tzahal in Hebrew, is the military of the State of Israel. According to their website, “The purpose of the IDF is to preserve the State of Israel, to protect its independence, and to foil attempts by its enemies to disrupt the normal life within it. The soldiers of the IDF are obligated to fight and devote every effort, even at the risk of their own lives, to protect the State of Israel, its citizens and residents.”⁵² The IDF holds these fundamental values: human dignity, defense of the state, both

⁵⁰ “Vital Statistics: Latest Population Statistics for Israel,” Jewish Virtual Library, 2020, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/latest-population-statistics-for-israel#diverse>. | ⁵¹ “Israel – Size and Dimension,” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Maps/Pages/Israel-Size-and-Dimension.aspx>. | ⁵² “Our Mission,” IDF, <https://www.idf.il/en/who-we-are/>.

SECTION 4

citizens and residents, and patriotism and loyalty to the state.

The IDF became the unified military organization charged with protecting the fledgling State of Israel on May 26, 1948, just two weeks after Israel's independence.⁵³ They were immediately forced into action in just one day after declaring independence when tens of thousands of troops from neighboring countries invaded Israel. Barely over a year later, the IDF successfully pushed back every invading Arab army and the armistice agreements were signed in July 1949.

At the age of 18, every Israeli, both male and female are required to serve. Males serve three years of compulsory service and females serve two years. There are exceptions in that most ultra-Orthodox Israelis are exempt from service so they can study religion. Arab-Israelis are also exempt from compulsory service with the intent being that they will not find themselves in a situation where they might have to engage in combat with relatives from neighboring Arab states. However, some Arab-Israelis feel they are disadvantaged by this arrangement. They are now able to serve in a program known as Sherut Leumi, national service, that is not active military service, but a variety of programs through which young Israelis can serve the State of Israel.⁵⁴ Enlistment into the IDF is a major milestone for Israelis and an important part of their national identity.



A large focus of the IDF is on threats of terror as acts of terrorism targeted at Israel are not uncommon. Between Hamas, Hezbollah, the Palestinian Authority, and Iran, the IDF have multiple actors threatening the safety of their citizens and the security of their nation.

Watch this five-minute video of Colonel Richard Kemp, a Commander in the British Army, explain why Israel has the world's most moral army.

<https://www.prageru.com/video/israel-the-worlds-most-moral-army/>

Iron Dome

Iron Dome is a missile defense system developed by the Israel Defense Ministry. As you know, Israel is a tiny nation in the midst of hostile nations who are actively working to destroy them. During the Second Lebanon War in 2006, Hezbollah fired roughly 4,000 rockets into the northern regions of Israel resulting in 44 civilian deaths. Two hundred and fifty thousand Israeli citizens had to evacuate. From 2000-2008, more than 4,000 mortars and 4,000 rockets were fired from Gaza into southern Israel with almost one million Israelis in range of their destruction.⁵⁵

This is Israel's reality, and Iron Dome allows Israel to live within this reality. Iron Dome detects and tracks mortars and rockets fired from their neighbors and monitors their paths to determine what the threat will be at the point of impact. If the rocket poses a threat to Israel, Iron Dome intercepts the rocket and detonates it over a neutral area.⁵⁶

After years of testing, Iron Dome has been protecting Israel since 2011. Since then, it has had 2,400 successful interceptions with a success rate of more than 85 percent, according to the Israel Defense Ministry.⁵⁷ There are ten Iron Dome batteries strategically placed near cities and densely populated areas with each battery defending up to 60 square miles.⁵⁸ Iron Dome is continually evolving and being tested for better, more efficient accuracy. Iron Dome

⁵³War of Independence," IDF, <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/wars-and-operations/war-of-independence/>. | ⁵⁴Joshua Mitnick, "The Israel Defense Forces," My Jewish Learning, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-israel-defense-forces/>. | ⁵⁵"Iron Dome Air Defence Missile System," Army Technology, <https://www.army-technology.com/projects/iron-dome/>. | ⁵⁶Ibid. | ⁵⁷Judah Ari Gross, "Decade after 1st interception, new Iron Dome boasts 100% success rate in trials," The Times of Israel, January 12, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/decade-after-1st-interception-new-iron-dome-boasts-100-success-rate-in-trials/>. | ⁵⁸"Iron Dome System and SKyHunter Missile," Raytheon Missiles & Defense, <https://www.raytheonmissilesanddefense.com/capabilities/products/irondome>.

SECTION 4

now also targets mortar shells and small drones. As of early 2020, the Israel Defense Ministry is developing a laser beam that would be part of the Iron Dome's defense against rockets and small drones.⁵⁹

Israel's Iron Dome is incredible technology that has saved numerous lives and made Israel a safe haven in the Middle East. It is partly manufactured in the United States by Raytheon in conjunction with Israel's company, Rafael. In August of 2019, the United States Army finalized a contract to purchase two Iron Dome systems for use by fiscal year 2020.⁶⁰

Watch this video of an Iron Dome battery in action. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_89139WKho.

This compilation video of Iron Dome interceptions in 2014 shows what various Israeli citizens witness when rockets are launched into Israel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrtDY2AGtlw>

Knesset

The Knesset is Israel's legislative body. Unlike the United States bicameral system, Israel has a unicameral (one house) parliament. Additionally, there are no districts, instead, the nation of Israel makes up one constituency. Both the name and format of the Knesset is modeled after the Knesset Hagedolah, or Great Assembly, that first convened in Jerusalem and was organized by Nehemiah and Ezra in the 5th century BC.

The Knesset is fixed at 120 members and usually each legislative body serves four years, although there can be exceptions. The Knesset is composed of plenary sessions and committees. Any governor or parliament member can introduce legislation. A bill must pass three plenary readings in the Knesset with committee meetings between those readings before a vote is taken.⁶¹

Throughout Israel's history there have been nearly 200 political parties, but today Israel's Knesset is

made up of 12 parties: Likud, Yesh Atid-Telem, Blue and White, Joint List, Shas, United Torah Judaism, Yisrael Beitenu, Yemina, Israeli Labor, Meretz, Derech Eretz, and Gesher. The Joint List is an alliance of the primary Arab-majority political parties which include Hadesh, Raam, Balad, and Taal.⁶²

The Knesset is reflective of the secular, religious, and cultural diversity of Israel. Israeli Arabs have been a part of the Knesset since 1949, just one year after Israel's statehood. Today, there are 15 members of the Joint List. Additionally, there are 29 women who serve in the Knesset across a multitude of party lines.⁶³ Israel was ahead of the times when it came to women in politics, electing Golda Meir as their fourth prime minister in 1969. She was the third elected female leader in the world.⁶⁴

In a close and contentious race, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, maintained his position in the 2020 Israeli election.

Regional Threats

Israel is a nation surrounded by enemies who are united in one goal: the destruction of Israel. Below is a list of the some of the more prominent self-proclaimed enemies of Israel.

Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

The PLO was created in 1964 at the Arab League Summit in Cairo, Egypt, as the unifying voice of all Palestinians. As it states in their constitution, "All Palestinians are natural members of the Palestine Liberation Organization, performing their duty to liberate their country in accordance with their abilities and qualifications. The Palestinian people is the base of this Organization."⁶⁵ The "duty" is the armed struggle (against Israel) to liberate Palestinians and take control of Israel's land.

Article 9 of the Palestine National Charter: "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. This is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase.

⁵⁹Judah Ari Gross, "Decade after 1st interception, new Iron Dome boasts 100% success rate in trials," *The Times of Israel*, January 12, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/decade-after-1st-interception-new-iron-dome-boasts-100-success-rate-in-trials/>. | ⁶⁰Jen Judson, "It's Official: US Army Inks Iron Dome deal," *Defense News*, August 12, 2019, <https://www.defensenews.com/digital-show-dailies/smd/2019/08/12/its-official-us-army-inks-iron-dome-deal/>. | ⁶¹"The State Legislature: The Knesset," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/aboutisrael/state/pages/the%20state-%20legislature-%20the%20knesset.aspx>. | ⁶²Current Knesset Members," *Knesset.gov.il*, https://www.knesset.gov.il/mk/eng/MKIndex_Current_eng.asp?view=1. | ⁶³Ibid. | ⁶⁴"Israel Diversity," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, https://mfa.gov.il/MFA_Graphics/MFA%20Gallery/Documents/Diversity2010-En.pdf. | ⁶⁵"Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): Constitution," Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/constitution-of-the-plo>.

SECTION 4

The Palestinian Arab people assert their absolute determination and firm resolution to continue their armed struggle and to work for an armed popular revolution for the liberation of their country and their return to it.”⁶⁶

Article 22 of the Palestine National Charter: “Zionism is a political movement organically associated with international imperialism and antagonistic to all action for liberation and to progressive movements in the world. It is racist and fanatic in its nature, aggressive, expansionist and colonial in its aims, and fascist in its methods. Israel is the instrument of the Zionist movement, and the geographical base for world imperialism placed strategically in the midst of the Arab homeland to combat the hopes of the Arab nation for liberation, unity, and progress. Israel is a constant source of threat vis-à-vis peace in the Middle East and the whole world. Since liberation of Palestine will destroy the Zionist and imperialist presence and will contribute to the establishment of peace in the Middle East.”⁶⁷

Article 23 of the Palestine National Charter: “The demand of security and peace, as well as the demand of right and justice, require all states to consider Zionism an illegitimate movement, to outlaw its existence, and to ban its operations.”⁶⁸

The PLO has been responsible for many acts of terrorism against Israel and its citizens over the years. This list includes but is not limited to, 11 Israeli athletes murdered at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972, 21 schoolchildren killed in 1974, an attack on Israeli tourist buses in 1978 that resulted in 35 dead and 85 wounded, as well as guerrilla attacks instigated from inside Jordan and Lebanon.⁶⁹ To that end, the PLO was categorized as a terrorist organization by the United States until the Oslo Accords in which Yasser Arafat announced his acceptance of Israel’s existence, recognition of UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and renounced terrorist

acts.

However, the PLO still exists and remains a terrorist threat with its original stated goals intact. The umbrella for all Palestinian efforts, organizations such as Fatah, Tanzim, and Force 17 work in affiliation with the PLO. Each of these organizations is linked to terrorism against Israel and its citizens.

Palestinian Authority (PA)

The Palestinian Authority (PA) is the product of the agreements made between Israel and the PLO at the Oslo Accords in 1994. The PA was created with the intent of being an interim governing body of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with Yasser Arafat as President. After Yasser Arafat’s death in 2004, Mahmoud Abbas became president of the PA and remains president today.

Following the Oslo Accords, the West Bank and Gaza Strip were separated into A, B, and C areas. In “A” areas, the PA has sole governing responsibility. “B” areas are shared; the PA has civil administration, but the security of the area belongs to both the IDF and the PA. In “C” areas, the IDF controls both civil and security functions.⁷⁰

Hamas

Hamas is an acronym in Arabic for Harakat Al-Mukawama Al-Islamiya, meaning Islamic Resistance Movement. It is a strictly Islamic Palestinian movement finding its roots in Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood. Hamas formally organized and wrote a charter in 1988 after the First Intifada. According to the charter, Hamas “strives to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine.” Additionally, it is written, “Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it.”⁷¹

⁶⁶“Palestine Liberation Organization: The Palestine National Charter,” Jewish Virtual Library, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-palestine-national-charter-july-1968>. | ⁶⁷Ibid. | ⁶⁸Ibid. | ⁶⁹“Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO),” Anti-Defamation League, <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/palestine-liberation-organization-plo>. | ⁷⁰“What is the Palestinian Authority,” Institute for Middle East Understanding, December 1, 2005, <https://imeu.org/article/what-is-the-palestinian-authority>. | ⁷¹“The Covenant of the Hamas,” <https://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/880818a.htm>.

SECTION 4

Hamas is dedicated to using Islamic Jihad to “obliterate” Israel and take control of the land under the rule of Islam. They are known for suicide bombing and have been designated as a terrorist organization by the United States since 1997.

Like the West Bank, Israel was in complete control of the Gaza Strip following the Six-Day War. However, Israel gave control of the Gaza Strip to the Palestinian Authority following the Oslo Accords in 1994 with the only exceptions being Israeli settlements and military zones within Gaza. In the absence of moving forward with peace negotiations, Israel pulled all settlements and military zones out of the Gaza Strip, giving full authority to the PA. One year later, Hamas won the Palestinian Parliamentary election and assumed control of the Gaza Strip. The U.S., Russia, United Nations, and European Union tried to negotiate recognition of Israel by Hamas and end terrorist actions for foreign aid. Hamas rejected all terms and so stopped receiving foreign aid. There were attempts at a unity government between Hamas and Fatah (the leading political party of the PA) but ultimately, Hamas forcibly took control of the Gaza Strip in 2007 in the Battle of Gaza.⁷²



Since the Gaza Strip has been largely closed off to all of its neighbors, Hamas has invested in a network of tunnel systems to try to gain closer access to Israel. These tunnels facilitate targeted bombing attacks. Hamas is known for strategically storing weapons beneath schools, UN facilities, homes, or places of

worship so that when Israel finds a cell and destroys it, Hamas will say that Israel targets children, women, and places of worship.⁷³

Hezbollah

Hezbollah is a designated terrorist group by the United States and several other countries. It is a Shiite radical terror organization that was established in 1982. It seeks to form an Islamic Republic in Lebanon and eliminate Israel through armed struggle.⁷⁴

Although a terrorist organization, Hezbollah continues to be legitimized within the Lebanese government, where it has held seats since 1992. Most recently, their 2018 elections saw 13 seats in Lebanon’s 128-seat parliament go to Hezbollah.

Like Hamas, there have been tunnels found leading to Israel from Lebanon that point back to Hezbollah. According to the IDF’s website, there are major terrorist attacks tied to Hezbollah including the “Burgas Bus Bombing (6 casualties, 2012), Khobar Towers Bombing (19 casualties, 1996), AC Flight 901 Attack (21 casualties, 1994), AMIA Bombing of a Jewish cultural center in Argentina (85 killed, 1994), Israeli embassy attack in Buenos Aires (29 casualties, 1992); 36 suicide attacks between 1982-1986, resulting in 659 dead.”⁷⁵

Hezbollah also uses their own people as human shields, just as Hamas uses Palestinians as human shields. Hezbollah uses Shiite villages as battlefields with arms depots, infantry, firing posts, rocket launching sites, underground combat tunnels, and combatant gathering points situated in highly populated civilian areas.⁷⁶

Iran

When Iran’s Shah was overthrown in the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, Iran’s once vibrant and relatively free culture became an Islamic monolith. In the years following, Iran secured a close relationship

⁷²Short History of Hamas in Gaza,” IDF.gov.il, <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/hamas/hamas/short-history-of-hamas-in-gaza/>. | ⁷³UN report outlines how Hamas used kids as human shields,” NY Post, May 2, 2015, <https://nypost.com/2015/05/02/un-report-outlines-how-hamas-used-kids-as-human-shields/>. | ⁷⁴Hezbollah Profile,” IDF.gov.il, <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/hezbollah/hezbollah/hezbollah-profile/>. | ⁷⁵Ibid. | ⁷⁶Ibid.

SECTION 4

with Syria, eventually propping up Syrian President Assad's regime through the Syrian Civil War which began in 2011. The close tie between the two countries is secured in their mutual goal to destroy Israel.

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, in a speech in the spring of 2020 had this to say about Israel, "The Zionist regime is a deadly, cancerous growth and a detriment to this region. It will undoubtedly be uprooted and destroyed."⁷⁷

Iran openly supports Hamas, has a prolific military presence in Syria, and supports Hezbollah financially in Lebanon. In 2018, Iran violated Israel's airspace with an armed drone that was promptly intercepted and shot down by an Israeli helicopter.⁷⁸ Since 1979, Iran has had two goals: the destruction of Israel and the United States. The Iranian leadership has only grown bolder in time in their targeting of Israel.

GLOBAL THREATS

Anti-Semitism in America

The deadliest anti-Semitic attack in America was in our very recent history. In 2018, a man targeted a Pittsburgh Synagogue on a Saturday morning. The Tree of Life Synagogue is in Squirrel Hill, a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was not an indiscriminate act, but a targeted anti-Semitic act with the intent of murdering Jews. The attacker interrupted the Tree of Life Synagogue where worshipers were gathered in various rooms and began shooting innocent victims while yelling anti-Semitic slurs and claiming he wanted to "kill Jews."⁷⁹ In the end, 11 congregants were murdered, and six people were injured including four police officers.⁸⁰ This was one of the deadliest attacks against the United States' Jewish community, but it is not an isolated incident. Six months after the Tree of Life mass murder, in 2019, an assailant shot and killed one person

and injured three others at the Chabad of Poway synagogue near San Diego.⁸¹

While Anti-Semitism is not new to the United States, these larger and more recent attacks have illustrated that the problem is only getting worse. The Anti-Defamation League, an organization founded on the premise of ending the defamation of the Jewish people, recorded 1,879 anti-Semitic acts in the United States in 2018.⁸²

You might be asking, what constitutes an anti-Semitic act, and what does it look like? Anti-Semitism (as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary): hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious, ethnic, or racial group. However, if you would like to read more about the working definition of anti-Semitism adopted in 2016 by the 31 member states of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and the examples provided, please visit the United States State Department page on Defining Anti-Semitism.⁸³

Anti-Semitism has taken root at many university campuses across our nation. *The Times of Israel* has a portion of its website dedicated to "Anti-Semitism on Campus."⁸⁴ You will find stories from UMass, Syracuse University, Columbia University, Arizona State University and many others.

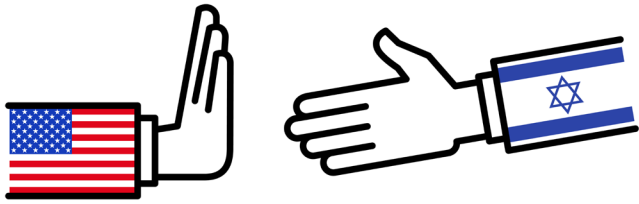
Anti-Semitism has reached such a fever pitch, specifically since 2013, to the degree that President Donald Trump issued an Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism on December 11, 2019.⁸⁵ The order reiterated the fact that Title VI of the Civil Rights Act protects Jews from discrimination at taxpayer-funded universities. The order also confirmed that anti-Zionism is another form of anti-Semitism.

⁷⁷Amir Vahdat and Jon Gambrell, "Iran leader says Israel a 'cancerous tumor' to be destroyed," AP News, May 22, 2020, <https://apnews.com/a033042303545d9ef783a95222d51b83>. | ⁷⁸The Islamic Republic of Iran, "Christians United for Israel," <https://www.cufi.org/wp-content/uploads/New-Islamic-Republic-of-Iran.pdf>. | ⁷⁹Jorge L. Ortiz, "Tree of Life massacre: A year later, US Jewish communities still facing 'significant threats,'" USA Today, October 27, 2019, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/10/27/tree-life-year-after-pittsburgh-attack-u-s-jews-threatened/2451390001/>. | ⁸⁰Paulina Dedaj, Kathleen Joyce, "Pittsburgh synagogue shooting leaves 11 dead and 6 wounded; suspect hit with multiple charges," FOX News, October 27, 2018, <https://www.foxnews.com/us/pittsburgh-synagogue-shooting-leaves-11-dead-and-6-wounded-suspect-hit-with-multiple-charges>. | ⁸¹Jorge L. Ortiz, "Tree of Life massacre: A year later, US Jewish communities still facing 'significant threats,'" USA Today, October 27, 2019, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/10/27/tree-life-year-after-pittsburgh-attack-u-s-jews-threatened/2451390001/>. | ⁸²"Anti-Semitism in the US," Anti-Defamation League, <https://www.adl.org/what-we-do/anti-semitism/anti-semitism-in-the-us>. | ⁸³Office of International Religious Freedom, "Defining Anti-Semitism," U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/>.

SECTION 4

Zionism and Anti-Zionism

Zionism: Originally coined by Nathan Birnbaum in 1890, the Jewish Virtual Library states, “Its general definition means the national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Zionism has come to include the movement for the development of the State of Israel and the protection of the Jewish nation in Israel through support for the Israel Defense Forces.”



Anti-Zionism, then, opposes everything written above. Anti-Zionists do not believe the Jewish people have a right to their homeland or that they have any sovereignty in the land of Israel. Anti-Zionists do not believe the state of Israel should exist at all. Anti-Zionism threatens to destroy the state of Israel.

Essentially, Zionism encompasses the Jewish right to self-determination, and anti-Zionists want to deny the right of self-determination because they believe Israel fundamentally should not exist.

Anti-Zionism as a form of Anti-Semitism

The working definition of anti-Semitism currently held by the State Department, and referenced earlier, include anti-Zionism as a form of anti-Semitism. It lists many contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere, one of which is “Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.”⁸⁶

Watch Dennis Prager’s five-minute video that gives a clear picture of how and why anti-Zionism is a form of anti-Semitism.

<https://www.prageru.com/video/if-you-hate-israel-youre-no-friend-of-the-jews/>

Anti-Jew, anti-Zionism, and anti-Semitism are different names for the same evil. All three of them play a role in the BDS Movement. *See the separate lesson on the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement.

Anti-Semitism and the United Nations (UN)

Part of the reason the anti-Semitism displayed above continues is that it has historically been sanctioned and even propped up by the United Nations. The UN World Conference Against Racism (discussed in the BDS Lesson) was the beginning of the global attitude of distaste and disapproval of Israel. The solution as proposed in the Durban meeting was to call upon the international community to “impose a policy of complete and total isolation of Israel as an apartheid state” as well as “Condemnation of those states who are supporting, aiding and abetting the Israeli Apartheid state and its perpetration of racist crimes against humanity including ethnic cleansing, acts of genocide.”⁸⁷

There have been many instances of anti-Israel sentiments being condoned by the United Nations. One of the most recent was in 2017 when the United Nations’ General Assembly wrote a resolution condemning the U.S. for recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. The United Nations Ambassador at the time, Nikki Haley, blasted the UN with a scathing rebuke warning that the U.S. was “taking names.”⁸⁸ The United States is a proud and unapologetical ally of Israel, whether the United Nations approves or not.

⁸⁶“Anti-Semitism on Campus,” The Times of Israel, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/topic/anti-semitism-on-campus/>. | ⁸⁷“Executive Order on Combating Anti-Semitism,” White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/p/residential-actions/executive-order-combating-anti-semitism/>. | ⁸⁸Office of International Religious Freedom, “Defining Anti-Semitism,” U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/>. | ⁸⁹NGO Forum, World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, Durban, South Africa,” University of Dayton, <http://academic.udayton.edu/race/06rights/WCAR2001/NGOFORUM/Palestinians.htm>. | ⁹⁰Jonathan S. Tobin, “Nikki Haley’s Right: Time to Start ‘Taking Names’ at the U.N.,” The National Review, December 21, 2017, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/12/nikki-haley-taking-names-un-right/>.

SECTION 5

ISRAEL TODAY

BIBLICAL DIRECTIVE

Concerned Women for America firmly believes that the United States support of Israel is a Biblical directive.

Watch CWA's CEO and President, Penny Nance, talk about our current support as our 'Esther moment.' <https://concernedwomen.org/badirandeall/>

NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Israel is a sovereign nation. On May 14, 1948, The Jewish People's Council gathered in Tel Aviv and issued the proclamation of their statehood.

"Accordingly we, members of the people's council, representatives of the Jewish community of Eretz-Israel (Hebrew for "Land of Israel") and of the Zionist Movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz-Israel and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel."⁸⁹

Sovereignty is defined as "The supreme, absolute, and uncontrollable power by which an independent state is governed and from which all specific political powers are derived; the intentional independence of a state, combined with the right and power of regulating its internal affairs without foreign interference."



America believes in the sovereignty of nations. We understand and respect Israel's sovereignty – their independence and inherent right to protect the best interest of their citizens. In our own declaration of sovereignty, the United States wrote of our "full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do."⁹⁰ We respect Israel's right to do the same.

AN ALLY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The United States has a handful of working allies in the Middle East, but none that share our values and ideals

as closely as the State of Israel. Because the U.S. has supported Israel's sovereignty, Israel's enemies target our country as an enemy in return.

Iran became an enemy to the United States at the same time as Israel; it was in the wake of the Islamic Revolution in the late 1970s. Iran calls America the "Great

Satan." Following the detrimental U.S.-Iran nuclear deal of 2015, the head of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, Maj. Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari said, "We should not change our foreign policy of opposition to America, our No. 1 enemy, whose crimes are uncountable."⁹¹ Tensions between the U.S. and Iran have intensified following President Trump's decision to remove the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal. In 2020, after President Trump authorized the targeted attack on Iranian Gen. Soleimani in Iraq, thousands took to the streets of Baghdad to chant, "America is the Great Satan" and "Death to America, death to Israel."⁹²

⁸⁹"Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx>. |

⁹⁰Steven Groves, "Why Does Sovereignty Matter to America?" The Heritage Foundation, December 3, 2010, <https://www.heritage.org/american-founders/report/why-does-sovereignty-matter-america>. | ⁹¹Thomas Erdbrink, "U.S. Remains the 'Great Satan,' Hard-Liners in Iran Say," The New York Times, September 1, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/02/world/middleeast/us-remains-the-great-satan-hard-liners-in-iran-say.html>. |

⁹²"Thousands mourn death of Iranian Gen. Soleimani in Baghdad, chanting 'America is the Great Satan'," CNBC News, January 4, 2020, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/01/04/mourners-chant-america-is-the-great-satan-over-death-of-soleimani.html>.

SECTION 5

U.S.-ISRAEL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP

Israel, throughout history and still today, is America's most reliable strategic partner in the Middle East. Israel is the only democracy in the region, a core value that provides a firm foundation between the two nations.

- The United States was the first country to recognize Israel's independence.
- The U.S. supports Israel financially with \$3 billion in foreign aid flowing from the U.S. to Israel annually.
- The U.S. and Israel participate in joint military exercises, research, and weapons development.
- The U.S. and Israel are committed to helping each other fight terrorism through the Joint Counterterrorism Group.
- The U.S. is Israel's largest single trading partner. This trade partnership has been facilitated by a free trade agreement between the two countries in 1985.
- Through three foundations, the U.S. and Israel also share scientific and cultural exchanges.
- The U.S. was the first country to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital city in 2017.
- The U.S. moved its embassy to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv on May 14, 2018.⁹³

Why does America spend so much on Israel? Watch this five-minute video to understand why Israel is a worthy ally in which to invest. <https://www.prageru.com/video/why-does-america-spend-so-much-on-israel/>

RESPONDING TO ANTI-ISRAEL RHETORIC

Israel is occupying and colonizing Palestinian land.

In order to occupy or colonize land, the land would have to belong to another sovereign nation. The Jewish people have a long historical tie to the land of Israel. Outside of that, the territories Israel is currently accused of occupying were gained in the 1967 War. Israel's presence in these areas does not

violate international law. Israel released portions of this land to the Palestinian Authority in an attempt at peace negotiations that have never been realized. The land that Palestinians accuse Israel of occupying is more accurately called "disputed territories" according to international law.⁹⁴

Israel is an apartheid state.

To call Israel an apartheid state undermines what black South Africans endured during that period of their nation's history. Apartheid was a set of policies that enforced racial segregation in all parts of life for South Africans. Israel does not have a system of racism enforced by policies and does not engage in, or encourage, segregation. Arab Israelis engage in the highest levels of government and enjoy every aspect of Israeli life. In 1992, Emile Habibi was awarded the Israel prize for Arabic literature. Miss Israel 1999 was an Arab woman. In 2004, the first Arab-Israeli soccer team, Bnei Sakhnin, won the State Cup.⁹⁵

Israel doesn't want a Palestinian state as much as Palestinians don't want an Israeli State.

If this were true, Israel would not have a history of repeatedly being willing to participate in a two-state solution in which borders would be set for an autonomous Israeli state and an autonomous Palestinian state. Palestinians have repeatedly refused any option that allows Israel to exist.

Watch this video that summarizes the five times that Israel and the international community have worked to provide terms for a Palestinian state that has been rejected by the Palestinians each time. The end goal for Palestinians is not a state, but the destruction of Israel. <https://www.prageru.com/video/why-isnt-there-a-palestinian-state/>

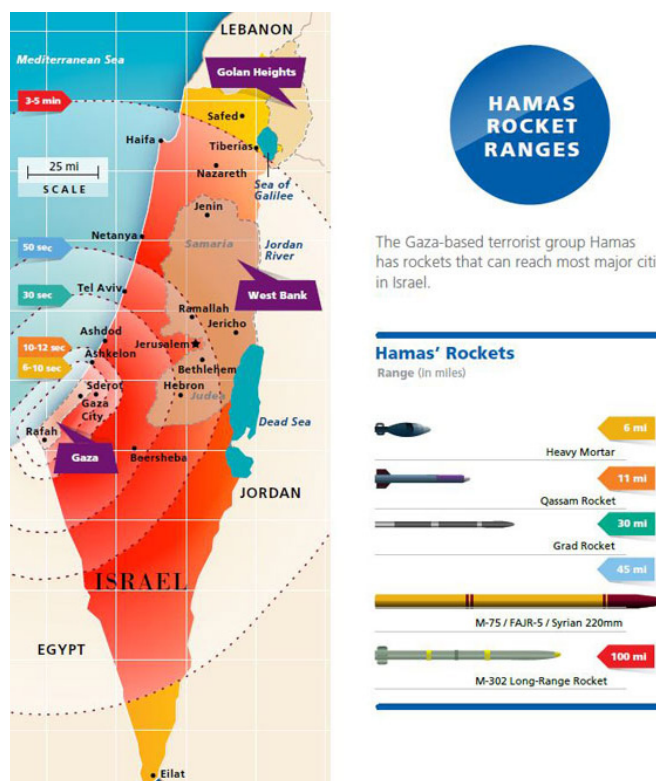
Israel is constantly provoking Hamas.

The opposite is, in fact, true. Israel gave over the Gaza Strip to the Palestinians in an attempt at peace negotiations. In 2005, Israel uprooted all Israeli citizens living in the Gaza Strip and gave it entirely

⁹³U.S. Relations with Israel," U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-israel/>. | ⁹⁴Response to Common Inaccuracy: Settlements and International Law," Anti-Defamation League, <https://www.adl.org/resources/fact-sheets/response-to-common-inaccuracy-settlements-and-international-law>. | ⁹⁵Israel Diversity," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, https://mfa.gov.il/MFA_Graphics/MFA%20Gallery/Documents/Diversity2010-En.pdf.

SECTION 5

to the Palestinians. When Hamas assumed full control of the Gaza Strip, that autonomy was never enough. As long as Israel exists, Hamas is bound to “obliterate” Israel, and that is from where the provocation stems.



Hamas has fired tens of thousands of rockets and mortars into Israel since 2005. They send over burning kites to ignite fires in Israel. The Israelis who live in the cities near the Gaza Strip live in constant fear of their lives. Houses have been restructured to include bomb shelters; bus stops are bomb shelters, and children’s playgrounds have bomb shelters as part of the play structure. When Gaza starts firing on Israel, citizens have eight seconds to find shelter or risk being hit. This is the true provocation. Israel is a sovereign nation with not only the right but the obligation to defend its borders and ensure the safety of its citizens. When Israel is forced to fire back on Hamas in retaliation, they do so with precision airstrikes that impact as little of the population as possible.

Israel is painted as a monster when they are repeatedly fired on, forced to strike back, and end up harming Palestinians. This is a setup. The headlines might read something like this: “UN Says Israel Killed 44 Palestinians in Schools During Gaza War.” As we discussed earlier, Hamas uses schools, hospitals, mosques, and UN facilities to store weapons so they will light up IDF intelligence maps. As the New York Post reported after such an incident in 2015, “Hamas, desperate to win world sympathy by any means, has always been happy to use Palestinian innocents as human shields — the more casualties, the better . . . And in at least one school where weapons were stored, the report found, Hamas unlocked the gate to allow children access to the schoolyard.”

But the Palestinians care about their people. Israel is the bad guy.

Clearly, this is not the case, given that they are willing to use their own people as human shields. Palestinian women face widespread discrimination. Women in Gaza participate in the labor force at just 22%, which is among the lowest in the world, especially considering they make up 50% of the population. Gender-based violence is a huge problem faced by Palestinian women – physical, sexual, and verbal abuse. In Gaza, there is no law prohibiting family violence against women. Nearly 17% of girls aged 12-17 have reported violence perpetrated by teachers or classmates. Fifty-one percent of married Palestinian women in Gaza admit to being victims of abuse in some form by their husbands. Twenty-nine percent of women in Gaza are married before age 18 and more than 13% are married before age 15. Honor killings, the act of murdering girls or women accused of sexual misconduct, are allowed by Hamas.⁹⁶

None of the above is true for Arab-Israelis.

Hamas is also known for grooming children to become militants by running training programs for

SECTION 5

children, indoctrinating them with hate for Israel through children's shows, and encouraging them that martyrdom against Israel is glorious. In the summer of 2016, Hamas turned their terrorist tunnels into summer attractions for children to come and see the weapons used to destroy Israel. They dress children as young as five in Hamas uniforms, give them automatic guns, and post the pictures to their Twitter with captions such as "These are our lion cubs. We have brought them up on the love of Jihad and martyrdom."⁹⁷

This doesn't only happen in Gaza. The IDF has, on more than one occasion, uncovered terror cells where weapons were hidden among children's toys or in their bed frames in the West Bank.⁹⁸

Palestinian children are robbed of their childhoods by the regimes to which they're forced to submit. The Palestinian Authority, PLO, and Hamas have proven that the destruction of Israel is greater than care for their people. Israel is not a perfect nation, but it cannot be accused of these gross humanitarian abuses.

The people of Israel are the apple of God's eye, and we have a responsibility to pray for them and to seek their good.

Psalm 122:6-9. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! 'May they be secure who love you! Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!' For my brothers and companions' sake I will say, 'Peace be within you!' For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good."

The decision to support Israel can feel daunting, but it is a directive from God and part of the history of our great nation.

⁹⁶"The Status of Women in Gaza," IDF.gov.il, <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/hamas/hamas/the-status-of-women-in-gaza/>. | ⁹⁷"The Status of Children in Gaza," IDF.gov.il, <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/hamas/hamas/the-status-of-children-in-gaza/>. | ⁹⁸"Forces Uncover Terror Cell, Find Weapons in Childrens' Bedroom," IDF.gov.il, May 4, 2017, <https://www.idf.il/en/articles/palestinian-terror/forces-uncover-terror-cell-find-weapon-in-child-s-bedroom/>.

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ISRAEL MEETING IDEAS

Topic: Israel and God's Covenants

See Section 1

Discussion Points

1. In what ways can we see how God's covenant with the Jewish people still stands today?
 2. God made some covenants with the people of Israel that were conditional and others that were unconditional. Discuss the difference between a conditional covenant and an unconditional covenant.
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Topic: Israel Road to Statehood, Israel as a Nation

See Section 2 & 3

Discussion Points

1. Is there any aspect on the timeline of Israel's road to statehood that you did not know about? If so, discuss.
 2. Discuss the history of the conflict between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. How can we use history to bring context to the ongoing crisis between Israel and its hostile neighbors?
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Topic: Israeli Borders, Defense, and Threats

See Section 4

Discussion Points

1. Much of the world tries to paint Israel as an apartheid state that does not allow freedom for everyone, how does the makeup of the Knesset undo that narrative?
 2. How can you combat anti-Semitism on your campus? If not blatant anti-Semitism, how can you proactively show support for Israel on your campus?
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Topic: American Support for Israel

See Section 5

Discussion Points

1. Why is it important that the United States remains a friend to Israel?
 2. Choose one or two examples of Anti-Israel Rhetoric and practice responding to them.
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SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

ACTION ITEMS

- In Section II, Israel's Road to Statehood, discuss key points of history that stood out to you as you learned about them. What were some things you were never taught about the history leading up to the creation of the Israeli state? Were there things you were taught that were in opposition to anything in this lesson?
- Dig deeper into the Six-Day War. This was a pivotal moment in Israel's history, and the land Israel acquired is still contested today. Understanding and being able to discuss the truth about the Six-Day War is pivotal in being an ally for Israel.
- Visit the IDF website (www.idf.il/en) to learn more about their missions and what they encounter as soldiers.
- You can download the Red Alert: Israel app that will alert you every time a rocket is fired on Israel. This allows us to have a small glimpse into Israeli life and is a good reminder to pray for Israel and their protection.
- Reach out to Jewish organizations on your campus and see how you can support them or work with them.
- Host a pro-Israel event on campus. Most college students are apathetic towards Israel, and you can play a role in changing that through education.

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
- Pray for the security of the Israeli people amidst hostile nations.
- Pray for the Israeli government – that they would lead with integrity and boldness.
- Pray for the United States to stand firm in our support of Israel, even as we face backlash from the international community.
- Pray that every terrorist plot against Israel, or the United States, would be stopped.
- Pray for terrorists and those who hate Israel – that they would turn from evil and come to know peace in Christ.

SECTION 6

VIDEO COMPILATION

Below is the list of videos throughout this lesson and the ancillary lessons for you to use as you deem most appropriate:

BDS Hurting Palestinians (4.5 mins.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad-oLR3z79E>

History of the Middle East Conflict (11 mins.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7ByJb7QQ9U>

Dennis Prager: if you hate Israel, you're no friend of the Jews (5 mins.)

<https://www.prageru.com/video/if-you-hate-israel-youre-no-friend-of-the-jews/>

Commander of the British Army, Colonel Richard Kemp: The world's most moral army (5 mins.)

<https://www.prageru.com/video/israel-the-worlds-most-moral-army/>

South African Native, Kenneth Meshoe, on Apartheid (5 mins.)

<https://www.prageru.com/video/a-black-south-african-on-israel-and-apartheid/>

David Brog: Palestinian rejections of a Palestinian State (5 mins.)

<https://www.prageru.com/video/why-isnt-there-a-palestinian-state/>

President Trump's December 2017 statement on the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. (12 mins.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rw-0wH63_4

Penny Israel Rally Speech (2.5 mins.)

<https://concernedwomen.org/badirandeall/>

Watch this video of an Iron Dome battery in action (2 mins.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_89139WKho.

This compilation video of Iron Dome interceptions in 2014 shows what various Israeli citizens witness when rockets are launched into Israel. (3 mins.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrtDY2AGtlw>

Why does America spend so much on Israel? (5 mins.)

<https://www.prageru.com/video/why-does-america-spend-so-much-on-israel/>

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