

Timeline of the Arab-Israeli Conflict and Peace Process

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Description</i>
1897	First Zionist Congress	Organized by Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern political Zionism, the congress officially announced Zionism's goal of establishing a legally assured home for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel and created an umbrella organization to promote this goal. Convinced that the long history of oppression and persecution of Jews would not stop until Jews could live in a land of their own, these early Zionists committed themselves to a return to their ancient homeland, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people.
1915	McMahon-Hussein Correspondence	Sharif Husein was the ruler of the Muslim holy city of Mecca. During World War I, British High Commissioner Henry McMahon promised him that Britain would grant independence to most Arab areas in the Ottoman Empire. After the war, Arab and British representatives disagreed over the borders that were promised.
1917	Balfour Declaration	The British Balfour Declaration promised to create a Jewish homeland in the region comprising the ancient Land of Israel. <i>"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."</i>
1920-1947	British Mandate Established	The League of Nations divided Ottoman lands between the British and the French after World War I. Britain was given the Palestine Mandate on land comprising modern-day Israel, the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jordan. The Mandate incorporated the language of the Balfour Declaration. In 1921, Britain created Transjordan as a subdivision of the mandate in the area east of the Jordan River. In 1922, Britain barred Jewish settlement in the Transjordan section of the Palestine Mandate. Thus the area available for a Jewish homeland was reduced by more than 75%. During the British Mandate period, idealistic Jewish Zionists immigrated to develop the land as well as to escape persecution in Europe that preceded the

		Holocaust. During the same period, the Arab population nearly doubled from natural increase and immigration from neighboring Arab countries. The Jewish population formed community organizations, labor unions, political bodies, and built roads, schools, hospitals and other infrastructure for an independent state. Arab resistance to Jewish immigration grew, causing the British to sharply limit Jewish immigration.
1939-1945	World War II and the Holocaust	Nazi Germany attacked and conquered most of Europe. Preceding and during the war, the Nazis persecuted Jews, eventually carrying out a genocide known as the Holocaust. This resulted in the murder of 6 million Jews. Although the Jewish population of the Palestine Mandate gave military support to Britain during the war, the British refused to allow the Jews to flee Nazi persecution and enter the Palestine Mandate. After the war, Jewish resistance in the Mandate was conducted against British refusal to allow the immigration of Jewish displaced persons, the remnant of European Jews , who had survived the Holocaust and had nowhere else to go.
1947	UN Partition Plan	In 1947, in the midst of growing tensions between Arabs, Jews and the British, Britain announced its plan to pull out of the region and turned the question of sovereignty over to the United Nations. On November 29, 1947 the UN General Assembly voted to strike a compromise by partitioning the Palestine Mandate into an Arab state and a Jewish state and to internationalize the city of Jerusalem. Although it was less than they hoped for, the Jews accepted the partition, but the Arabs in the Palestine Mandate and the Arab states rejected the partition. Immediately after the UN partition vote, Arabs in the area, seeking to block Jewish statehood, attacked Jews.
1948	1948 War	In keeping with the UN Partition Plan, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, proclaimed the independence of the new State of Israel on May 14, 1948. The following day, Arab armies from Egypt, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq attacked the new Jewish state. This was the first Arab-Israeli war, called by the victorious Israelis the "War of Independence." As a result of the 1948 war, approximately 700,000 Arabs fled or were displaced and became refugees from the areas over which Israel obtained jurisdiction. The Arabs who remained became Israeli citizens and now comprise approximately 20% of Israel's population. Also, in the aftermath of the war, over 900,000 Jews were forced to flee Arab countries, with about two-thirds of them being absorbed by Israel. As a result of its defensive war, Israel obtained twenty percent more land than the UN partition allotted. Transjordan captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem (the Old City), later annexed them, and officially changed its name to Jordan. Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip. Jordan evicted Jews from the Old City and erected barriers preventing Jews access to their holy sites there, most of which were destroyed or defaced by

		the Jordanian army. The Arab countries would not enter into a peace agreement with Israel. Armistice boundaries were established and remained until 1967.
1967	The Six-Day War / The 1967 Arab-Israeli War	Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Iraq moved their armies to Israel's borders. Egypt closed the international water way, the Straits of Tiran, to all Israeli shipping, an act of war according to international law. These actions were accompanied by publicly stated intentions by Arab leaders to destroy Israel. After weeks of fruitless diplomacy, Israel launched a preemptive strike against the Arab armies mobilized on its borders, and a six-day war ensued between Israel and Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. As a result of the war, Israel captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt. Israel offered to return land it captured in exchange for peace treaties and recognition of its right to exist. It removed the barriers in the Old City and allowed all religions control of and free access to their holy sites.
1967 - 1970	Attrition Battles/ The War of Attrition	During the 1967 War, Israel gained land from Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. Israel maintained that Jerusalem would remain a unified city, with all religions having access to their holy sites. But Israel stated it was open to returning other territories in exchange for peace and recognition of its right to exist. Arab nations met in Khartoum, Sudan in 1967, and declared their unwillingness to make peace, recognize, or even negotiate with Israel. Egypt began small-scale attacks against Israeli positions which continued until Anwar Sadat came to power in 1970. During this same period, the PLO attacked Israeli military personnel and civilians from bases in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. It also carried out airplane hijackings and terrorist attacks outside of Israel. In 1970, after an attempt by the PLO to overthrow Jordan's King Hussein, the Jordanian army attacked PLO forces in what became known as "Black September." Fighting continued until June of 1971 when Jordan succeeded in evicting the PLO from the country. The PLO moved its base of operations to Lebanon.
1967	Settlement Construction Begins	The Israeli government approved the building of settlements in the Sinai, Gaza and the West Bank. The term <i>settlements</i> refers to Israeli communities built on land that was captured in the 1967 War. The first settlements were intended to act as security outposts and to prevent attacks on major population centers. Settlements were also built on the sites of Jewish villages that had been destroyed by Arab forces during the 1948 War. Settlement construction was very limited for the first decade that Israel controlled the territories; in 1976, there were approximately 3,200 West Bank settlers. Over time, settlement constructions increased; there are now roughly 300,000 West Bank settlers. Those who criticize settlements say that they are built on land needed for a future Palestinian state, protecting settlements is a drain the Israeli military, and they make travel for Palestinians in the

		West Bank more difficult. The future of the settlements is one of the issues that the Israel and the Palestinian Authority must negotiate as part of a comprehensive peace agreement.
1973	The October War / Yom Kippur War / 1973 Arab-Israeli War	Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year. After initial Arab military successes, the Israelis managed to push back the attack. The US convinced Israel to withdraw from the territories it had entered. For many Israelis, the 1973 war reinforced the strategic importance of the buffer zones gained in 1967. Syrian troops were stopped ten miles from the Israeli town of Tiberias; many Israelis felt that the heartland of Israel could have been overrun without the time it took for the invading forces to move through the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai. After the war, Israel retained the territories captured in 1967, but did not keep any additional land.
1978	Camp David Accords	Menachem Begin of Israel and Anwar al-Sadat of Egypt signed agreements in Camp David. The American-sponsored talks paved the way to the peace treaty signed in 1979.
1979	Egypt and Israel Sign a Peace Agreement	As a result of intense diplomatic efforts by the United States, Egypt became the first Arab country to recognize Israel and to enter into a peace treaty with it. Egypt's President, Anwar Sadat realized that a continuing state of war with Israel was harming the Egyptian economy and the well-being of his people. For its part, Israel returned to Egypt all of the Sinai that had been captured during the 1967 war and removed Jewish families from the homes they had established there. This agreement became a model for Israel's "land for peace" policy.
1982	The 1982 Lebanon War / The First Lebanon War	PLO units in southern Lebanon increasingly attacked communities in northern Israel. In response, Israel launched an attack on PLO militants stationed in Lebanon. This conflict is known as the 1982 Lebanon War or the First Lebanon War. Israeli troops advanced as far as Beirut and succeeded in expelling the PLO leadership from Lebanon to Tunisia. This costly struggle drew Israel into the increasingly complicated Lebanese civil war and generated domestic and international opposition to its involvement in Lebanon. Israel withdrew from most of Lebanon in June 1985. Until 2000, it maintained a military presence in a section of southern Lebanon that served as a buffer zone and prevented widespread terrorist incursions into Israel from the north. Renewed terrorist attacks from southern Lebanon led to the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

1987-1993	The First Intifada	Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank engaged in an uprising, or <i>intifada</i> , against Israeli control of these territories. Palestinians attacked Israelis with improvised weapons and firearms supplied by the PLO, which organized much of the uprising. Suicide attacks against civilians in Israel began at this time. Israel used military force to contain the violence. The Israeli army, trained to fight regular armies, was not well prepared to respond to these kinds of attacks. Palestinian lives lost during military countermeasures led some to feel that the Israeli response was too harsh, while continued attacks against Israelis led others to feel that the response was too lax. In addition to conflicts with Israeli troops, an approximately equal number of Palestinians were killed in Palestinian in-fighting. This conflict continued until the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993.
1993	The Oslo Accords	The Oslo Accords were a set of agreements that began in 1993 when Israel and the PLO signed a Declaration of Principles (DOP). The Oslo Accords led to the creation of the Palestinian Authority, which had responsibility for administering the territory under its control. It also called on Israel to gradually withdraw its military presence from the Gaza Strip and a small area around Jericho. It left Israel the right to defend itself and its citizens, including those in the territories. Along with the DOP, Israel and the PLO exchanged Letters of Mutual Recognition. For the first time the PLO formally recognized Israel, renounced violence, and publicly expressed acceptance of peaceful coexistence with Israel. Also, for the first time Israel formally recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. The Oslo Accords were intended to be an interim agreement that would lead to a permanent settlement with Israel giving up land in return for peace and security. Both Israelis and Palestinians accuse the other of not fulfilling their obligations.
1994	Israel and Jordan Sign a Peace Treaty	As with the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, the United States led a difficult but successful diplomatic process to help Jordan and Israel achieve peace. In 1994, Jordan became the second Arab country to recognize Israel. Trade, business relations, tourism, cultural exchanges, and scientific cooperation between the two nations have increased since the agreement was signed, but at a slower pace than hoped for initially.
2000	The Camp David Summit	American President Bill Clinton brought Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to Camp David in July 2000. It was the first major attempt to negotiate a comprehensive final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Although the negotiations were carried out in secret, participants President Clinton and Dennis Ross attributed the failure of the talks to Arafat's refusal to compromise. They reported that Barak made major concessions including withdrawing from the vast majority of the West

		Bank to create an independent Palestinian state with a capital in East Jerusalem. However, Arafat did not feel the offer was enough and refused it. He made no counter-proposals. The goal of the summit, two states living side by side in peace, was not achieved and further conflict ensued.
2000 - ?	The Second Intifada	In September 2000, Israeli General Ariel Sharon visited the Jewish Temple Mount, a site revered by Jews that is also of major importance to Muslims. There was widespread frustration at the lack of progress in the peace process. Many Palestinians claimed that Sharon's visit was provocative and began to riot. Many Israelis claimed that Sharon's visit was a pretext for violence, not its cause. This visit began the Second Intifada, known to Palestinians as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, named for the Al-Aqsa Mosque which is on the Temple Mount. The conflict caused great bloodshed and suffering on both sides. Israelis were terrorized by numerous suicide bombers who targeted and killed hundreds of civilians. In response, Israel's military returned to major population centers in the territories and carried out operations against terrorist targets. Since terrorists operate among the civilian population, Palestinian civilians were also unintentional victims of the intifada. The result of the failed peace process has been a prolonged condition of misery for both peoples. There is no definitive event marking the end of the Second Intifada. Many people suggest late 2004 or early 2005. Others argue it never stopped.
2002	Israel Begins Constructing a Security Barrier	In 2002, Israel decided to build a security barrier that would separate its citizens from terrorist groups in the West Bank. The new fence was similar to the security fence Israel built in 1996 that separated the Gaza Strip from Israel. Both fences have been effective in dramatically reducing the number of suicide bombings in Israel coming from the Gaza Strip and West Bank. However the barrier – which is for the most part a fence, but is a wall in areas near urban centers - has been criticized for dividing some Palestinians from their land and places of work or study and requiring these individuals to wait to pass through security checkpoints. Other people argue that the barrier is temporary and can be removed in the context of true peace, but that lives lost to terrorism cannot be brought back.
2002	Arab Peace Initiative Is Proposed	In March 2002, during the Beirut Summit of the Arab League, crown prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia (the current king of that country) proposed a peace initiative that was endorsed by all members of the Arab League. The proposal offered Israel peace in return for Israeli withdrawal from all territories captured in the 1967 War, recognition of an independent Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a "just solution" for Palestinian refugees. The Arab League endorsed the proposal again at the Riyadh Summit in 2007. The proposal is viewed by some as a major breakthrough because previously most

		<p>Arab nations had ruled out peace, recognition, and even negotiations with Israel. Israel has welcomed the proposal, but does not accept all of its demands. Israel especially rejects the demand that it withdraw to the pre-1967 borders as a precondition to negotiations. In July 2007, Israeli leaders met with representatives of the Arab League to discuss the proposal. This was the first time that the Arab League sent an official delegation to Israel.</p>
2003	The Roadmap for Peace is Proposed	<p>The Roadmap for Peace, known as the Roadmap, is a plan for peace that was proposed in 2003 by the "Quartet:" the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations. It involves reciprocal steps by the Israelis and Palestinians with the ultimate goal of an independent Palestinian state and a secure Israel. The Roadmap is divided into three phases, but has never progressed past the first. Progress on the Roadmap was completely halted following the Palestinian election of Hamas in 2006. Hamas is a terrorist organization committed to destroying Israel. 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. There has yet to be significant progress as a result of the Roadmap or the Annapolis Conference.</p>
2005	Israel Disengages from Gaza	<p>Prime Minister Ariel Sharon began a process that led Israel to unilaterally withdraw from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements as part of a larger policy of "disengagement," or the separation of Israel from Palestinian territories. The Gaza disengagement was very controversial domestically, because Israeli soldiers were required to uproot Israeli citizens who wanted to remain in their communities in Gaza. Nevertheless, Israel decided to remove itself from this territory so that the Palestinians living there could govern themselves. The plan has been criticized because it was not done as part of negotiations with the Palestinians and did not require the removal of all West Bank settlements (four were dismantled). After Israel withdrew from Gaza, the number of rockets fired by terrorists from Gaza into Israel increased dramatically.</p>
2006	Hamas is elected	<p>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. People have speculated that Hamas won the elections because many Palestinians saw the previous government as corrupt. 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 has claimed responsibility for hundreds of terrorist attacks. As a result of the election, many Western nations imposed sanctions and suspended aid to the Palestinian Authority that they declared would be lifted</p>

		once Hamas recognized Israel's right to exist, forswore violence, and accepted previous Palestinian-Israeli agreements.
2006	The 2006 Lebanon War	Hezbollah is a radical Islamist organization committed to destroying Israel. It is based in Lebanon and is believed to be heavily supported by Iran and Syria. On July 11, 2006, it crossed the Lebanon-Israel border and attacked an Israeli army unit, killing eight soldiers and kidnapping two more who were later murdered. At the same time, it began launching rockets into Israeli cities and towns. In response, Israel launched air strikes on suspected Hezbollah military targets, particularly rocket launchers, and mounted a ground offensive. This conflict is known as the 2006 Lebanon War or the Second Lebanon War. Hezbollah used a human shield strategy by imbedding its fighters and rocket launchers in civilian neighborhoods and homes. This resulted in the loss of civilian lives as well as property damage when Israel retaliated. Israel also damaged Lebanese transportation infrastructure in an attempt to prevent Hezbollah from resupplying and redeploying. Hostilities officially ended with UN Cease Fire Resolution 1701 passed on August 11, 2006.
2007	The Battle of Gaza	There had been great tension and occasional conflict between Hamas and the PLO Fatah since Hamas won the Palestinian election in January of 2006. In June 2007, Hamas militants attacked Fatah members throughout Gaza. In response, the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas, dissolved the Hamas government. Today, there are, in effect, two Palestinian governments. Hamas controls Gaza and the Palestinian Authority controls the West Bank. Western sanctions to the Palestinian Authority were lifted after the Hamas government was dissolved.
2007	Annapolis Conference	On November 27, 2007, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice organized a conference between Israel and the Palestinian Authority's Fatah leaders 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, Israelis and Palestinians have not reached a formal agreement and conflict continues.
2008 - 2009	The Gaza War	Between December 27, 2008 and January 18, 2009, Israel attacked Hamas targets in Gaza in order to stop rocket attacks on southern Israel and to disrupt terrorist infrastructure and weapons smuggling. Hundreds of militants were killed. But because Hamas was based in and launched attacks from urban areas, there were also many civilian casualties and Gaza's buildings and economy were heavily damaged.

<p>2010</p>	<p>Gaza Flotilla Incident</p>	<p>After Hamas seized control from the Palestinian Authority, Israel and Egypt began a blockade of Gaza. They required all goods to be inspected before entering Gaza to prevent Hamas from smuggling in weapons. Some groups argue the blockade is collective punishment and is illegal. A UN investigative committee has ruled it is legal. In May 2010, six ships set sail to break the blockade. Israel informed the ships that they could not sail into Gaza, but they could dock at the Israeli port of Ashdod where their cargo would be inspected and permitted goods would be shipped into Gaza. The ships refused. Israeli commandos boarded the ships. On one ship, the <i>Mavi Marmara</i>, the commandos were attacked with iron bars and knives. During the ensuing struggle, 9 Turkish activists were killed. Israel gained control of the ship and directed it to Ashdod along with the other 5 ships, which were taken there without incident. The cargo was subsequently inspected and permitted goods were shipped into Gaza. Turkey has demanded an apology from Israel. Israel states that its actions were justified and instead expressed regret at the loss of life. This has led to a severe deterioration in the relationship between Israel and Turkey, which had been allies.</p>
<p>2011</p>	<p>The Arab Spring</p>	<p>Before 2011, no Arab state had a democratic government. Beginning in Tunisia on December 18, 2010, citizens in Arab states began to protest against autocratic and oppressive governments. This is known as the Arab Spring. Protests spread from Tunisia across the Arab world. The Tunisian president left the country on January 14, 2011. The Egyptian President resigned on February 11. Protests have also occurred in Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Syria, Yemen and other countries. The long-term impact of the ongoing changes in Arab nations on the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace process is not yet clear.</p>