

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	<p>The British Balfour Declaration promised to create a Jewish homeland in the region comprising the ancient Land of Israel.</p> <p><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></p>

<p>1920-1947</p>	<p>British Mandate Established</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>1939-1945</p>	<p>World War II and the Holocaust</p>	<p>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 no where else to go.</p>
<p>1947</p>	<p>U.N. Partition Plan</p>	<p>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 U.N. 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 U.N. partition vote, Arabs in the area, seeking to block Jewish statehood, attacked Jews.</p>



<p>1948</p>	<p>1948 War</p>	<p>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 U.N. 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.</p>
<p>1967</p>	<p>The Six-Day War / The 1967 Arab-Israeli War</p>	<p>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.</p>



<p>1967 - 1970</p>	<p>Attrition Battles/ The War of Attrition</p>	<p>The UN attempted to negotiate a peace agreement between Arab countries and Israel over the territories captured by Israel. Israel maintained that Jerusalem would remain a unified city, with all religions having access to their holy sites, and offered to return other territories in exchange for peace and recognition. In spite of Israel's willingness to enter into peace talks, 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, which had been founded in 1964 and called for the complete destruction of Israel, attacked Israeli military personnel and civilians from bases in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. The PLO 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 1971 when Jordan succeeded in evicting the PLO. The PLO moved its base of operations to Lebanon.</p>
<p>1967</p>	<p>Settlement Construction Begins</p>	<p>The Israeli government approved the building of settlements in the Sinai, Gaza and the West Bank 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. Some Jews began moving to the newly acquired territory for religious reasons, believing that the strong biblical Jewish connection to the land gave them the same right to live there as elsewhere in the land of Israel. Settlement construction remained limited and there were few Israeli settlers for the first decade that Israel controlled the territories. 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.</p>
<p>1973</p>	<p>The October War / Yom Kippur War / 1973 Arab-Israeli War</p>	<p>Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack against Israel on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year. After initial Arab military successes, Israel pushed back the attack. Following the war, Israel retained the territories captured in 1967 but withdrew from territories it entered during the October War. For many Israelis, the 1973 war reinforced the strategic importance of the buffer zones gained in 1967 because invading forces came close to overrunning major Israeli population centers.</p>

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	Egypt became the first Arab country to officially recognize Israel and to sign a peace treaty with the Jewish state. Israel returned to Egypt the entire Sinai peninsula it had captured in 1967, removing Jewish families from their homes established there. This agreement became a model for Israel's "land for peace" policy.
1982	The 1982 Lebanon War / The First Lebanon War	After PLO units in Lebanon increasingly attacked the north of Israel, Israel launched an attack on the PLO and Syrian troops stationed in Lebanon. The Israeli army prevailed in the battles. As a result of the war, the PLO leadership was expelled from Lebanon to Tunisia. After Israel became drawn into a Lebanese civil war, Israeli public opinion led Israel to withdraw most of its troops from Lebanon in June 1985. Until 2000, Israel maintained a military presence in a section of southern Lebanon to create a buffer zone to protect northern Israel from terrorist incursions. In 2006 renewed terrorist attacks from southern Lebanon led to the Second Lebanon War.
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. Israeli citizens were targeted and killed and the first suicide attacks against Israeli civilians began at this time. Israel responded with increased military force in the territories, in an effort to put a stop to the violence. 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 Palestinian lives lost in 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 signed in 1993 between Israel and the PLO. The Oslo Accords created the Palestinian Authority, which had responsibility for administering territories that would be placed under its control. The accords called on Israel to gradually withdraw its military presence from the Gaza Strip and areas in the West Bank, while leaving Israel the right to defend itself and its citizens, including those living in the territories. For the first time the PLO formally recognized Israel, renounced violence, and publicly expressed acceptance of peaceful coexistence with Israel. Israel also 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. However, they have never been fully implemented.
1994	Israel and Jordan Sign a Peace Treaty	After successful U.S.-led negotiations, Jordan became the second Arab country to recognize Israel, and the two countries signed a peace treaty. Trade, business relations, tourism, cultural exchanges, and scientific cooperation between the two nations have increased since the agreement was signed, albeit at a slow pace.
2000	The Camp David Summit	American President Bill Clinton brought Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to Camp David. 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, Ariel Sharon, a retired Israeli general and leader of the party in opposition to Prime Minister Barak, visited the Temple Mount, a site revered by Jews worldwide as the site of the second Temple and by Muslims as the site of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Palestinians instigated riots at the holy site, charging that Sharon's visit was a provocation. The riots marked the beginning of the second Intifada, known to Palestinians as the Al-Aqsa Intifada. This conflict has caused great bloodshed and suffering on both sides. Increased numbers of Palestinian suicide bombings killed hundreds of Israeli civilians and injured thousands. In response to the bombings, Israel carried out military actions in the territories aimed at destroying Palestinian terrorist infrastructure which resulted in



		terrorists being killed as well as many civilian casualties. There is no definitive event marking the end of the Second Intifada so its end date, and whether it has ended, is unclear.
2002	Israel Begins Constructing a Security Barrier	Israel decided to build a security barrier to separate the Israeli population from Palestinian terrorist operations in the West Bank. Since its construction, the barrier has been shown to be very effective in reducing the number of suicide bombings in Israel that originate in the West Bank by about 90%. It has been criticized for dividing some Palestinians from their places of work or study, which requires them to wait to pass through Israeli security checkpoints.
2002	Arab Peace Initiative Is Proposed	King Abdullah (then Crown Prince) of Saudi Arabia proposed a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict which 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, Israeli recognition of an independent Palestinian state 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 Arab nations had ruled out peace, recognition, or even negotiations with Israel. Israel has welcomed the proposal, but has reservations about several elements of it. Negotiations have not ensued because the Saudis have demanded that as a pre-condition of meeting with Israel, Israel must first withdraw to the 1967 borders. This pre-condition is unacceptable to Israel.
2003	The Roadmap for Peace is Proposed	The Roadmap for Peace is a plan that was proposed in 2003 by the “Quartet”: the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations. The Roadmap 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. The basic principles of the Roadmap, however, were reaffirmed at the Annapolis Conference in 2007.
2005	Israel Disengages from Gaza	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.
2006	Hamas is elected	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. The group has claimed responsibility for hundreds of terrorist attacks. The new government declared that it did not accept previous Palestinian-Israeli agreements. As a result of the election, many Western nations imposed sanctions and suspended aid to the Palestinian Authority that they declared would be lifted once Hamas recognized Israel's right to exist, forswore violence, and accepted previous Palestinian-Israeli agreements.
2006	The 2006 Lebanon War	Hezbollah, a terrorist organization based in Southern Lebanon, crossed the Lebanon-Israel border and attacked an Israeli army unit, killing three soldiers and kidnapping and then killing two more. At the same time, Hezbollah began to launch rockets into northern Israel. Israel responded with air strikes, an air and naval blockade, and a ground assault aimed at destroying the Hezbollah terrorist infrastructure. Because Hezbollah operations are based in Southern Lebanon's civilian neighborhoods, Israel's retaliation resulted in loss of Lebanese civilian lives as well as property damage. Approximately one million Lebanese fled their homes in southern Lebanon, and about one million Israelis fled their homes in northern Israel or took refuge in bomb shelters. Hostilities officially ended 33 days later with a U.N.-brokered ceasefire.
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, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleeza 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.
2009	President Obama Appoints Special Envoy for Middle East Peace	President Obama has stated that securing a peaceful Middle East is an important foreign policy goal. Just two days after his inauguration, he appointed former Senator George Mitchell as Special Envoy for Middle East Peace to facilitate negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and promote recognition of Israel by the Arab states. This is seen by many as an indication of the importance Obama places on the U.S. role in the Arab-Israeli peace process.