

facts

speaking for themselves



the first casualty of war is the truth
Palestine/Israel timeline 1850–2023





Palestinians expelled from a village near Haifa, June 1948.



Israel is a European colonial state established in historic Palestine in 1948 after ethnic cleansing the majority of Palestinians from their lands and homes. Today, every Palestinian who lives between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea (historic Palestine) lives under an apartheid regime, denying them the right to self-determination and freedom.

The western media in aligning with the Zionist-Israeli narrative, has distorted the truth of Israel's war on Gaza, sustaining the lie that it all started on 7 October 2023 with the Hamas attack on Israel.

The purpose of this document is to lay out the facts and let them speak for themselves, giving you the confidence to challenge this narrative which is being used to justify the ongoing repression of the Palestinian people, and has resulted in the deaths of over 36,000 Palestinians in the last eight months alone.

Compiled by two friends, an Israeli and a New Zealander, the information in this timeline has been sourced from the work of historians Illan Pappé, Norman Finkelstein and United Nations records.

This resource includes suggestions for further reading and audiovisual material to deepen your understanding of the genocide against the people of Palestine.

1850 | Palestine demographics:

Population 350,000. 300,000 Muslims (85%), 27,000 Christians (11%), 13,000 Jews (4%). Relationships between the groups are peaceful and based on mutual respect.

1897 | Founding of modern Zionism:

Driven by Theodor Herzl, the proposal for a Jewish homeland in Palestine gains traction, as well as ambitions for its “de-Arabisation”.

1882-1903 | First wave of Zionist immigration (“First Aliya”):

Approx. 25,000 Jewish people, from eastern Europe, Iraq and Yemen, immigrate to Palestine, doubling the Jewish population.

1904-1914 | Second wave of Zionist immigration (“Second Aliya”):

Approx. 35,000 Jews, from eastern Europe and Yemen, immigrate to Palestine.

1916 | The Sykes–Picot Agreement:

A secret treaty signed by Britain and France divides the Ottoman Empire between British and French control. Palestine comes under British control, known as the British Mandate.

1917 | Balfour Declaration:

In its own strategic interests, including establishing a European client state in the oil-rich Middle East, the British government pledges to establish “a national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine. At this point, Jews comprise less than 10% of Palestine’s population.

1918-1920 | British military rule in Palestine**1918-1931 | Third & Fourth waves of Zionist immigration (“Third & Fourth Aliya”):**

Approx 100,000 Jews immigrate to Palestine. Britain allows Jews to establish self-governing institutions such as The Jewish Agency, tasked with assisting Jews worldwide to develop and settle the land.

1929 | Palestine Riots:

Increasing anger at ongoing Jewish immigration and land purchase. In the old city of Jerusalem, Jewish activists march on the Muslim sector. Violent clashes erupt. 33 Jews and 116 Palestinians are killed.



Palestinian loss of land, 1947 to the present.

1932-1939 | Fifth wave of Zionist immigration (“Fifth Aliya”):

Approx. 250,000 Jews immigrate to Palestine, a quarter from Germany where the Nazis ascend to power.

1936-1939 | The Great Palestinian Revolt:

Palestinians revolt against the British, demanding independence and an end to the policy of unlimited Jewish immigration and land purchases. The Jewish paramilitary organisation, the *Haganah* (later to become the Israel Defence Force [IDF]), assists British forces in brutal suppression of the Revolt. 5,000 Palestinians are killed.

1947 | UN Partition Plan for Palestine:

Increasing attacks from Jewish terrorists and concerns that its involvement in Palestine will undermine its relations with the independent Arab states, Britain announces it will quit Palestine. The question of Palestinian sovereignty is left to the newly formed United Nations.

UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) (Partition Resolution) divides Palestine, granting the Jews more than half the territory for a Jewish state. Jews at this point comprise one third of the total population of 2,000,000, and own less than 6% of land.

The Palestinians refuse to accept Resolution 181 on two grounds: firstly, they are the indigenous population; secondly, at 1.4 million, they are the majority population. The Zionists accept the resolution but want control of the entire country.

December 1947 | Plan Dalet (Plan D):

Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion calls for the occupation and destruction of Palestinian villages and the expulsion of Palestinians in the conquest for more land. Jewish paramilitary groups created and trained to fight side by side with the British in WW2, (*Haganah* and *Stern Gang*), begin implementing the plan. In the following months, prior to the end of the British Mandate, British troops turn a blind eye, and in some instances assist, by disarming Palestinian resistance.

1948 | State of Israel proclaimed by the UN:

First Arab-Israeli War and the *Nakba* (“the Catastrophe”) immediately start.

14 May | British forces leave Palestine:

The Jewish People's Council proclaims the new State of Israel, which is immediately recognised by the USA.

The Arab Liberation Army responds to escalating Zionist attacks. Made up of 24,000 volunteers, it is poorly trained and equipped, and is quickly defeated by the Israeli Army of approx. 72,000 soldiers. (the *Phoney War*). Only the Jordanian military has the potential to defeat the Israelis, but it does not participate. On British advice, a secret deal is made between Jordanian and Israeli leadership to avoid fighting between their respective armies. In return, Jordan will be given the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Israeli forces begin the expulsion of the Palestinian population. 500 Palestinian towns and villages are ethnically cleansed in a campaign of destruction and massacres. Thousands of Palestinian civilians are killed, many villages flattened.

Over 80% of the Palestinian population (750,000), is expelled, or flee their homes to become refugees. Of these, 250,000 end up in Gaza, overwhelming the local population. 70% of Gazans identify as refugees or descendants of refugees.

At the end of the campaign, 80% of Palestine is under Jewish control. Only the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remain under Palestinian control.



Israeli riot police arrest a Palestinian boy on Nakba Day, East Jerusalem, 15 May 2012.

1964 | Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) founded:

A secular nationalist coalition internationally recognized as the official representative of the Palestinian people. It seeks to establish a Palestinian state and advocates for the elimination of the Israeli state.

1967 | The Six Day War & the Naksa (“the Setback”):

Israel occupies the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. Approximately 300,000 Palestinians become refugees for a second time.

UN Resolution 242:

Under the rules of occupation (*4th Geneva Convention/Hague Regulations*) this resolution demands the occupied territories be handed back to the Palestinians in return for their recognition of Israel as a sovereign state.

Under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, the PLO is ready to accept UN resolution terms; to recognise Israel as a sovereign state, live in peaceful co-existence with Israel, and exercise their UN mandated right to self-determination.

1967 – ongoing: Illegal Settlements & Military Rule:

Israel ignores *UN resolution 242* and international law, under which it is inadmissible to acquire land through war. It annexes the Golan Heights (Syria) and Sinai (Egypt).

In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel begins building Jewish settlements. These are established first as military posts, allowing confiscation of land by military decree, and later, settling Jewish civilians in them. All Israeli governments support, fund and expand the illegal settlement project, making a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian question impossible. Today there are 144 Jewish settlements and around 720,000 settlers living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, now armed and defended by the Israeli state.

Palestinian men, detained and stripped by the IDF, northern Gaza, 8 December 2023.



International pressure increases on Israel to accept *UN Resolution 242* and withdraw from the occupied territories.

An emergent apartheid state:

The Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip live under brutal military rule which does not apply to Jewish settlers.

1979 | Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty:

Signed by Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt, and Menachem Begin, Prime Minister of Israel. The Sinai Peninsula is returned to Egypt. Palestinians and other Arabs see the treaty as a betrayal by Egypt, by leaving the Palestinians, Lebanon and Syria more isolated and exposed to Israel's attacks.

1982 | War in Lebanon (June-September):

Israel launches a war in Lebanon to counter Palestinian resistance based in the south of Lebanon. 15-20,000 Palestinians and Lebanese, mainly civilians, are killed. The war climaxes in the *Sabra and Shatila massacres* in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. The PLO is defeated and forced into exile. The Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank now continues in the absence of any Palestinian leadership on the ground.

1987 | Hamas (Zeal) founded in Gaza:

A religious nationalist movement with connections to the Muslim Brotherhood, it aims to liberate historic Palestine.

1987 | First Intifada (“uprising”):

Rioting breaks out in Gaza’s Jabalia refugee camp, spreading to the West Bank after Israel cracks down on the initial riots with extreme violence under defense minister Yitzhak Rabin’s internationally condemned slogan to “break their [the Palestinians] arms and legs”.

Palestinian anger continues over Israel's 20 year military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. During the six-year uprising, Palestinians throw rocks, and Israelis fire bullets, killing over 1,000 Palestinians including more than 240 children. Between 57,000 and 120,000 Palestinians are arrested, 481 are deported and 2,532 have their houses razed to the ground.

An escalation of apartheid:

Palestinians are confined to scattered enclaves, subject to martial law and are not permitted to vote in Israel's national elections. Movement is restricted

by checkpoints guarded by the IDF, arbitrarily subjecting them to interrogation, detention and soldier brutality.

Illegal Israeli settlements grow rapidly in Palestinian territory, while Palestinians are not permitted to build new homes. Daily life is subject to pervasive military regulation. They have no citizenship and cannot leave the occupied territories for any reason without Israeli permission. They must pay taxes to Israel, but are not entitled to any services from the Israeli government. However, illegal settlers receive tax benefits and subsidised housing.

1993 | The Oslo Accord (September 13):

A response to the 6 year *Intifada*, this first accord between the Israeli and Palestinian leadership (PLO) sees each side recognise the other for the first time. Both sides pledge to end their decades-long conflict. The PLO now seeks Arab statehood only in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hamas objects to the signing of the Accords, seeing it as too big a compromise.

The *Palestine Authority* is set up as an interim governing body (administrative/security network), ostensibly to pave the way to an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It operates however, under the Israeli military, keeping tight control over the Palestinian population. Its US-trained forces target those suspected of planning attacks on Israelis, as well as arresting union figures, journalists and critics of Israel.

Hamas emerges as a military movement using suicide bombing tactics to pressure the Israeli government to end the occupation.

September 1995 Israel and the PLO sign the Oslo B agreement:

It is intended to be an interim agreement on the way to an eventual Palestinian state alongside Israel. Simultaneously, Israel accelerates the building of illegal settlements in the West Bank. The agreement concedes Palestinians control of 18% of the West Bank (4% of historic Palestine).

November 1995: assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin:

Assassinated for signing the Oslo agreements and making concessions to the Palestinians. Carried out by an Israeli ultranationalist, it is the result of an incitement campaign led by Benjamin Netanyahu, then Leader of the Opposition. Rabin is portrayed in a Nazi uniform with a bullseye target on his forehead. The following year, Netanyahu becomes Prime Minister of Israel and the Oslo Agreements break down.



2000 | The Second Intifada (“uprising”):

Violent incidents flare up after Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon and an escort of over 1,000 Israeli police officers make a provocative visit to the Al-Aqsa compound, the third holiest site of Islam. Riots are quelled with live ammunition. Protests spread to the occupied territories. Israeli forces engage in gunfights, targeted killings, tank attacks and air strikes against civilians. Palestinians engage in suicide bombings in Israeli cities, stone-throwing and rocket attacks. Approximately 3,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis are killed.

2002 | The Separation Wall:

The Israeli Cabinet decides to construct the *Separation Barrier*. The declared objective is to prevent Palestinians without permits from entering Israel from the West Bank. Strategic locating of the wall enables de facto annexation of most of the illegal Jewish settlements as well as more land for future (illegal) expansion.

This physical wall is a major political instrument for furthering Israeli annexationist goals. It enables the Israelis to take over almost 10% of the West Bank. It minimises the number of Palestinians living in the area between the wall and the Green Line [the boundary between Israel and the West Bank], separating Palestinian communities east of the barrier from their agricultural land.

2005 | Israeli disengagement from Gaza:

Twenty-one illegal Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip are unilaterally dismantled. Israeli settlers and army are evacuated. The military is redeployed along the border.

2006 | Hamas is elected:

Hamas is encouraged by Israel and the US to participate in the elections in an effort to create divisions within the Palestinian leadership. The US exhorts all Palestinians to exercise their vote. Hamas wins. Former US President Jimmy Carter, an observer, calls them “completely honest and fair elections”.

Hamas, now in power, is prepared to negotiate a settlement with Israel on the basis of international law and *UN Resolution 242*. Diplomatic efforts fail because Israel will not accept Hamas as a legitimate negotiating partner.

2007 | Blockade of Gaza:

Following the election, and supported by the EU and US, Israel imposes a blockade on Gaza, punishing Palestinians for voting the ‘wrong party’ into power.

As well as separating families, the blockade separates Gaza from the West Bank, minimising the possibility of combined unity and resistance against Israeli occupation. The blockade limits movement of goods and people in and out of the Gaza Strip by land, air and sea. Israel controls food, power, medical and water supplies. Malnutrition is rampant. Almost 80% of Gazans rely on humanitarian assistance for survival. More than half of Gaza’s population of over 2 million people live in poverty, and nearly 80% of youth are unemployed.

2009 | Operation “Cast Lead”:

A three-week Israeli attack on Gaza begins on 27 December 2008 ending on 18 January 2009 with a unilateral ceasefire. The massacre is carried out by air strikes and ground invasion, resulting in 1,166–1,417 Palestinian and 13 Israeli deaths. Over 46,000 homes are destroyed in Gaza, making more than 100,000 people homeless.

2010 | Gaza flotilla raid:

The flotilla's aim is to break the Israeli-imposed three-year blockade by delivering six ships carrying 10,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. In international waters, the Israeli army open fires on activists aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, killing nine people including eight Turkish citizens and one American. The activists are detained in Israel. Widespread international condemnation follows.

2012 | Operation "Pillar of Defense":

An IDF attack on the Gaza Strip in which, according to Israeli human rights group *B'Tselem*, 167 Palestinians are killed, including 32 children. 2 Israeli soldiers are killed. Palestinians fire rockets into Israel, killing 4 civilians.

2014 | Operation "Protective Edge":

Israel launches a massive operation conducting more than 6,000 airstrikes and firing approximately 50,000 tank and artillery shells at targets within the enclave. 2,200 Gazans including 550 children are killed. 8,000 homes are destroyed. Infrastructure is in ruins and 100,000 people are made homeless.

Destruction of Gaza, 2024.





Palestinians flee to the southern Gaza Strip, November 2023.

2018 | “The Great March of Return”:

Gazans attempt peaceful civil disobedience demanding the right to return to their family homes from which they were expelled in 1948. During the approx. six months of weekly demonstrations against the wall (separating Gaza and Israel), Israeli snipers fire and kill 223 Palestinians, targeting in particular, children, medical personnel, journalists and people with disabilities.

2023 – ongoing: the Genocide against the People of Gaza:

October 7 | Hamas Surprise Attack on Israel:

Hamas fighters and others breach the security fence in several places and kill 1270 Israelis. (816 civilians, 382 military, 59 police, 13 emergency services). 247 Israelis are taken hostage.

Israel, supported militarily and financially by primarily the US, Germany, UK and France, launches a massive assault on Gaza. Planned by Israeli leaders including Netanyahu, and carried out by the IDF, the assault is indiscriminate and genocidal.

Since 7 October, 36,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been killed by the IDF. Of these, over 14,500 are children. Palestinians are now being deliberately starved; a result of Israel refusing to allow aid (food, water, medical supplies) through the borders. 72,500 Palestinians have been injured with no functioning medical care due to deliberate bombing of hospitals and medical facilities. 425 Palestinians in the West Bank have been killed, and over 8,000 arrested, including more than 400 children. A further 800 hectares of Palestinian land has been illegally annexed, the largest seizure of land since 1993.

Despite worldwide condemnation and international civilian protest of an unprecedented scale, Israel, with guaranteed support from the US, Germany and the UK both militarily and within the United Nations Security Council, continues to carry out acts of genocidal intention with impunity.

**keep talking about Palestine
challenge the false narrative
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Media:

Al Jazeera English Live
The Listening Post (Al Jazeera)
The Intercept
The Gray Zone
Electronic Intifada
The Chris Hedges Report
Doubledown News
Democracynow.org

Films:

Five Broken Cameras
Where Olive Trees Weep
The Settlers
Slaves to Memory
Born in Gaza
Gaza Fights For Freedom
The Gatekeepers

Further reading:

The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine, Ilan Pappé
The Biggest Prison on Earth, Ilan Pappé
Goliath, Max Blumenthal
Gaza: An Inquest into its Martyrdom, Norman Finkelstein
Drinking the Sea at Gaza, Amira Hass
The Fateful Triangle, Noam Chomsky

Opposite page: Palestinians mourning their relatives after an Israeli strike on the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, 25 December 2023.



مكتبة

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