

The Israel/Palestine Conflict

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BridgeND

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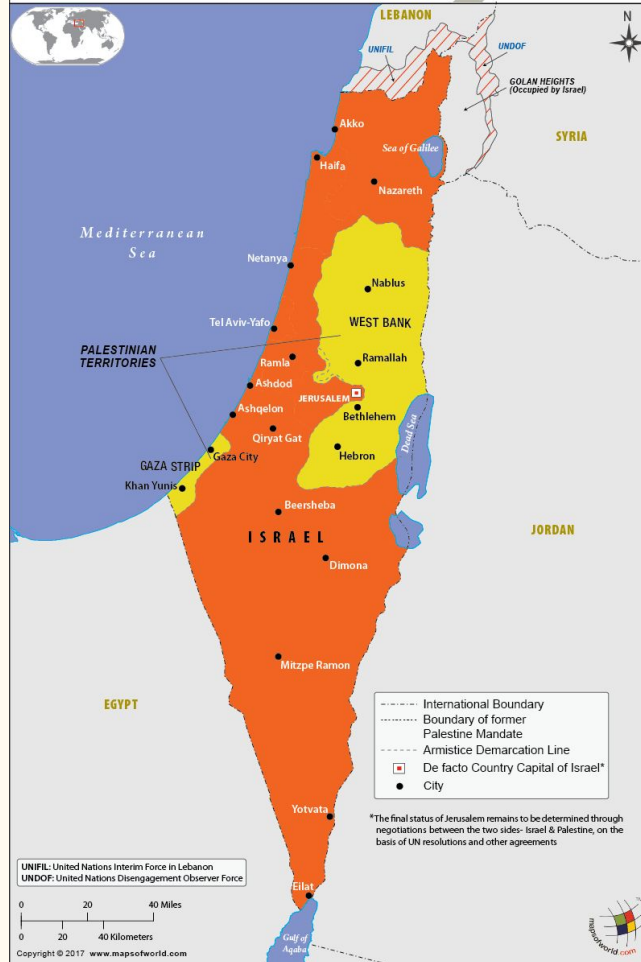


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Agenda

- Regional history
 - Israel/Palestine today
 - US involvement
 - Peace efforts
 - Discussion
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What is the capital of Israel?



History



- Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire; taken over by British after WW I
 - Arab majority and Jewish minority
- After WWII, the near-genocide of the Jewish population raised debates over a place for them to live
- UN treaty in 1947 split territory into Israel and Palestine → Jewish leaders accepted; Arabs did not. Britain left after failure to reach solution.
- First Arab-Israeli war ended in 1949; split territory into Israel, West Bank, and Gaza Strip. 750,000 Palestinians displaced
- 1967: Six Day War between Israel and Egypt/Syria/Jordan ended with Israel expanding its land and occupying Gaza and the West Bank

Israel/Palestine Today



- Israel occupies West Bank; hundreds of thousands of Israelis have settled in Palestinian territory, raising concerns of human rights violations
- Palestine is split into two main parties: Hamas and Fatah
 - Hamas does not recognize Israel and controls Gaza
 - Fatah is the leading party of the Palestinian Authority and recognizes Israel
- Violence in May 2021 after Palestinian families were evicted from East Jerusalem
- Israeli police prevented Palestinians from gathering near Jerusalem gate during Ramadan. Hamas fired rockets, Israel retaliated with air strikes
- Ceasefire after 11 days

US Involvement

- US and Israel = strong relationship; Israel is one of only relatively democratic states in the Middle East and has strong intelligence resources
- In 2017, the US recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel instead of Tel Aviv, which is controversial because Jerusalem is split between Israel and Palestine
- The State Department provides \$3.3 billion in aid for Israel's military alone each year
- Recently, the progressive wing of the Democratic party has begun to question US support for Israel



Peace efforts



- The common goal in peace talks on this issue are to give Palestine the full autonomy to establish states in Gaza and the West Bank (called the “land for peace” model)
 - Palestine rejected Israel’s peace offer in 2001, but what the exact deal was is ambiguous
 - The Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations continued to work toward a land for peace agreement
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Why is peace so difficult to achieve?

- **There are four issues that must be addressed:**
 - West Bank borders and settlements,
 - Israeli security,
 - Palestinian refugees,
 - And Jerusalem
- **The three main obstacles:**
 - Israel's continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank
 - Inner divisions within Fatah and Hamas
 - Both sides have lost trust in the other and are skeptical of the process



Discussion Questions

- Should Israel and Palestine continue to focus on “land for peace” negotiations or consider other alternatives?
- Is the state of Israel legitimate?
- Does Israel have a right to create settlements in the West Bank?
- Does Israel have a right to evict Palestinians from East Jerusalem?
- Should the US recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel?
- Should the US continue to invest in the Israeli military?
 - What about other regional actors that have historically balanced against Israel, like Iran?

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