



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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Israel's Story in Maps



The Arab-Israel conflict and the peace process have for decades been a focus for world-wide attention – on the part of the media, academia, political and governmental institutions, NGOs, religious groups, the business world, and the public at large.

With the passage of time, some of Israel's critics have increasingly allowed their approach to the problem to be shaped by myths, slogans, prejudices and lack of knowledge, rather than by solid facts. This has been seen, for example, in matters pertaining to the territories in dispute between Israel and the Palestinians: the historical background is often either unknown or ignored. Moreover, even when dealing with the present situation – the problem of terrorism, regional dangers, and the impact of topography on borders – the context is often not taken into account.

The purpose of this publication is to provide factual and background material through maps and graphs which address key aspects about Israel, the Arab-Israel conflict, and the peace process. This publication does not presume to address all issues, but does address many of them.

It is hoped that through the illustrations and data provided here, a better and more factual understanding – of past events, the present reality, and future opportunities for peace – may be achieved.

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THE KINGDOMS OF DAVID AND SOLOMON (1077–997 BCE)

King David ruled Israel from 990 BCE to 968 BCE; and his son Solomon ruled after him until 928 BCE. David enlarged his kingdom and brought it to the peak of political and military power. Solomon “ruled over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River from Tiphseh to Gaza; he was at peace with all his neighbors” (1 Kings, 4:24).



THE HERODIAN PERIOD (30 BCE TO 70 CE)

King Herod, of Edomite extraction, was king of Israel from 40 BCE to 4 BCE. He was appointed by Rome and conquered the kingdom from the Hasmoneans. When Augustus became the Roman Caesar in the year 30 BCE, Herod convinced him of his loyalty, and Augustus rewarded him by adding Jericho, the coastal region south of Dor and the region east of the Sea of Galilee. In 23 BCE, he was given the Bashan, Horen, and Tarchon regions, and three years later, the Golan Heights.



Jews in the Land of Israel (7th – 11th Centuries)

After the death of Emperor Julian II, in 363 CE, most of the Jewish settlements in the south were destroyed. The Jews remained mainly in the Galilee and in the larger cities.



SETTING THE SOUTHERN BORDER (1906)

Lord Cromer, Britain's agent in Egypt, wanted to change the border between the Ottoman Empire, which was under strong German influence, and Egypt, in order to push the Ottomans further away from the Suez Canal. In 1892, the Turks agreed to allow Egyptian guard stations near the Gulf of Eilat; in 1905, Lord Cromer tried to move the border. In April of 1906, the Turks were given an ultimatum – to set the border between Aqaba and Rafah. They proposed a compromise (El Aris – Ras Muhamed) but finally gave in to British pressure. The firm stand of the commander of the Turkish police station at Um Rashrash (today, Eilat) changed the starting point of the border from Aqaba to Taba, which became the international border between Israel and Egypt.



SETTING THE NORTHERN BORDER (1916 – 1923)

In May 1916, France and Great Britain signed an agreement known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement in which the claims of both sides to the Levant were set down, and areas of administration and influence were determined. Until 1923, the sides were involved in hard bargaining, with the British insisting on two principles: control of the area delineated in the Bible, “from Dan to Beer Sheba;” and control of Israel’s water sources, e.g., the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee.



BRITISH MANDATE

In 1920, the San Remo Peace Conference gave Great Britain the mandate for the Land of Israel and Transjordan. In 1921, the British decided to decrease the size of the Jewish national home and to take Transjordan away from it. In 1922, Churchill published the White Paper on this subject. Later that year, the League of Nations approved the changed mandate, which took effect in 1923.



SEPARATION OF TRANSJORDAN (1922)



UN PARTITION PLAN (1947)

In 1947, Great Britain relinquished to the UN the power to make decisions relating to the status of the Land of Israel. The General Assembly appointed a special committee that collected evidence and decided unanimously that Israel should be granted independence. Most of the committee members favored partitioning the land into two states, a Jewish state and an Arab state, with Jerusalem under international supervision. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly accepted the partition resolution, 33 to 13.





ARMISTICE LINES (1949 – 1967)

In the spring and summer of 1949, agreements were signed between Israel and its neighbors establishing Israel's armistice lines. To some extent, these lines overlapped the borderline of Palestine during the British Mandate period, or they were close to it, with the exception of the Judea and Samaria region, and the surrounding area of the Gaza Strip. These lines were drawn up, on the assumption that they would be temporary, and would be replaced within a few years by permanent borders.

Much of the international border between Mandatory Palestine and Egypt became the armistice line between Israel and Egypt. The armistice line with Lebanon was close to the international border that existed during the British Mandate period, and overlapped it. These two lines did not correspond to the battle frontlines as they existed during the cessation of hostilities, and Israel withdrew in both cases to the mandatory borderline, which became the armistice line. The armistice lines with Syria and Jordan closely corresponded to the frontlines.