

Palestine is Still the Issue

A special report
by John Pilger



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"25 years ago I made a film called **Palestine is Still the Issue**. It was about a nation of people, the Palestinians, forced off their land and later subjected to a military occupation by Israel – an occupation condemned by the UN and almost every country in the world including Britain. But Israel is backed by a very powerful friend, the United States. So in 25 years, if you are to speak of great injustice here, nothing has changed. What has changed is that the Palestinians have fought back. Stateless and humiliated for so long, they have risen up against Israel's huge military machine, although they themselves have no army, no tanks, no American planes and gunships or missiles. Some have committed desperate acts of terror – like suicide bombing. But for Palestinians, the overriding, routine terror, day after day, has been the ruthless control of almost every aspect of their lives – as if they live in an open prison. This film is about the Palestinians and a group of courageous Israelis united in the oldest human struggle – to be free".

John Pilger, *Palestine is Still the Issue*, Carlton, Sept 2002

This booklet accompanies John Pilger's film **Palestine is Still the Issue** transmitted on ITV in September 2002. It gives some background to the years of conflict and how the people of Palestine view their lives under the military occupation by Israel.

For more information see the further reading section or visit the websites listed at the back of this booklet.

Introduction



“ There is only one way of ending this, it's ending the occupation because occupation has become the cancer that is eating the lives of both people. ”

Dr Mustafa Barghouti¹

Rami Elhanan, an Israeli whose daughter died in a suicide bomb attack, says the occupation has "reduced us into animals in a way that sometimes I am ashamed to say I am an Israeli." ²

The issue of the Palestinians remains at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, one of the most intractable and protracted in the world. The heart of the conflict is the struggle for land – for the hills and valleys of Palestine, for precious water and fertile soil. The people of Palestine feel that the absence of a just and lasting solution and a failure to find a negotiated settlement has left them stateless, and for many, under the daily oppression of a brutal Israeli occupation.

The origins of the Palestine question

Until the start of the 20th Century and the advent of Zionism, the people of Palestine lived largely as peasants in what was then a province of the Ottoman Empire. They had lived in the area for centuries, many of them descended from the earliest inhabitants of Canaan.

Zionism is an organised political movement. The movement's name is derived from Zion, the hill on which the Temple of Jerusalem was located.

Although organised Zionism originated in the 19th century, its roots go back to the 6th century BC, when the Jews were carried off to captivity in Babylon. Their prophets encouraged them to believe that one day God would allow them to return to Palestine, or Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel).

The Zion movement to unite the Jews of the Diaspora (the Jewish communities outside Israel) and settle them in Palestine, culminated in 1948 in the establishment of the State of Israel. Zionism is based on the unequivocal support of two basic principles—the autonomy and safety of the state of Israel and the right of any Jew to settle there (the Law of Return) – which together provide the guarantee of a Jewish nationality to any Jew in need of it.



Timeline

- 1897** The first Zionist Congress was held in Switzerland, which issued the Basle programme on the colonisation of Palestine and the establishment of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO).
- 1904** Fourth Zionist Congress decided to establish a national home for Jews in Argentina.
- 1905** Zionist congress decided the Jewish homeland should be Palestine.
- 1914** World War I, Britain promised the independence of Arab lands under Ottoman rule, including Palestine, in return for Arab support against Turkey which had entered the war on the side of Germany.
- 1916** Britain and France signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which divided the Arab region into zones of influence. Lebanon and Syria were assigned to France, Jordan and Iraq to Britain and Palestine was to be internationalised.
- 1917** After capturing Palestine, the British government promised to support the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine in what became known as the Balfour Declaration
- 1922** Britain was granted the Mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations.
- 1936-9** There is a massive Arab rebellion against British rule and the Zionists following soaring Jewish immigration.
- 1945-6** Following the Second World War and the horrors of Nazi rule, worldwide sympathy and support for Zionism increased as did Jewish immigration to Palestine. Jewish groups fought against British soldiers. Some committed terrorist atrocities such as the blowing up of the King David hotel in 1946 when 88 died.³
- 1947** Britain decided to hand over the issue of the future of Palestine to the United Nations (UN). The UN voted on partitioning the country into a Jewish and an Arab state with Jerusalem as a 'corpus separatum' under international trusteeship. The Arab states and the Palestinians rejected this pointing out that, although they made up only one third of the population,⁴ owned only 6 per cent of the land,⁵ that the Jews would receive 54 per cent of the country including the most fertile coastal region.⁶ In the military struggle that followed, the Palestinians were defeated. Terrorism was used on both sides. The Jewish forces pushed forward into the area designated for an Arab state and a refugee crisis followed.⁷
- 1948** In May Israel declared itself independent and the surrounding Arab states declared war. The result of this was Israel expanded the area allotted to it by 23 per cent⁸ and Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip and Jordan the West Bank.
- 1967** Following a major conflict between Israel and neighbouring Arab states, Israel occupied the remainder of what was Mandate Palestine. This occupation of Palestinian land continues and remains at the heart of the conflict. A further 350,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled.⁹
- Following the war, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 242 which stressed the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war," calling for an Israeli withdrawal, the right of all states to live in peace in secure and recognised borders, and a just resolution of the refugee problem. Still to this day many people see this resolution as the cornerstone of any peace agreement but it has not been fully implemented. This is commonly known as the "land for peace" formula.
- 1970** Black September in Jordan. PLO leadership was forced to move to Lebanon
- 1972** 11 Israeli athletes killed by Palestinian guerrillas at the Munich Olympic Games
- 1973** October War. Egyptian forces attack Israeli forces in the Sinai and cross the Suez before being repelled.
- 1977** President Anwar Sadat of Egypt travelled to Jerusalem and addresses the Knesset
- 1978** Egypt and Israel sign peace agreement at Camp David
- 1982** Israel invades Lebanon for the second time. The Christian Phalange massacred around 900 Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila camps whilst Israeli soldiers looked on. PLO leaves Lebanon for Tunisia
- 1987** The Intifada erupts in the Gaza Strip
- 1990** Iraq invades Kuwait
- 1991** Gulf War. The PLO loses support internationally as a result of its perceived support for Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. The Madrid Peace Conference brings together Israel and the Arab states.
- 1993** Oslo Accords: The Declaration of Principles is signed on the White House lawn, after Israel and the PLO had recognised each other.
- 1994** Israel redeploys its forces in the Gaza Strip and Jericho. The Palestinian Authority is set up.
- 1995** Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by a Jewish extremist, Yigal Amir.
- 1996** Election of Binyamin Netanyahu, the Likud leader, as Prime Minister of Israel.
- 1997** The Hebron agreement is signed. Israel maintains full control of 20 per cent of the West Bank city.
- 1998** The Wye River Memorandum is signed. Israel agrees to transfer 10 per cent more of the West Bank to Palestinian Authority control. Netanyahu halts the implementation of the agreement and calls for elections.
- 1999** June: Election of Ehud Barak as Prime Minister
September: The Wye II agreement is signed at Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt.
- 2000** July: Israelis and Palestinians fail to reach an agreement at The Camp David summit.
September: The Al Aqsa Intifada breaks out
- 2001** January: Peace talks at Taba in Egypt run out of time to resolve outstanding issues.
February: Ariel Sharon defeats Ehud Barak to become Prime Minister of Israel.
- 2002** Israel launches its most devastating assault on the Palestinian areas in Operation Defensive Wall responding to Palestinian suicide attacks.

Population

The population of the entire area that was once Mandate Palestine has increased dramatically. In 1947 there were 1.3 million Palestinian Arabs.¹⁰ By 2002 Palestinians are dispersed all over the world and their population is estimated to be around 8 million.¹¹

Palestinian Population of the Occupied Territories

West Bank	1.9 million
East Jerusalem	0.2 million
Gaza Strip	1.1 million
Total	3.2 million ¹²

The population of Israel has now risen to 6.46 million.¹³ Inside Israel, there are now 1.2 million Arab citizens.¹⁴

Around 50 per cent of the Palestinian population today is under the age of 15.¹⁵ There are higher proportions of young Palestinians in the refugee camps.

The land area

The combined area of Israel, West Bank and the Gaza Strip is 26,990 sq. kms, of which the West Bank and Gaza Strip is 6,220 sq. kms.¹⁶ Palestinians want a state in the Occupied Territories settling for only 22 per cent of what was once their country.

The West Bank refers to its location west of the River Jordan. It contains numerous cities of importance including Ramallah, the financial heartland of the Palestinian autonomous areas.

The Gaza Strip is one of the mostly densely overcrowded areas on the planet. The coastal strip is home to over one million Palestinians, 70 per cent of whom are refugees.¹⁷ The conditions are appalling in the refugee camps – narrow crowded alleys, with little or no infrastructure. Typically there is no sewerage system. The refugees in particular are dependent on work inside Israel.

The situation is made even worse by the settlements inside the strip that occupy about 30 per cent of the land area for the exclusive benefit of around 7000 settlers.¹⁸ The Israelis erected a security perimeter fence around Gaza in 1994.



The Gaza Strip, 2000



The refugees

The issue of the future of the Palestinian refugees is perhaps the most intractable problem left to resolve. The situation at the moment means that Palestinian refugees cannot return to their country. However, Israel has given the right for any Jew from anywhere in the world to live in Israel as a Basic Law of the state. Palestinians demand their right to return, compensation and citizenship as stipulated in international law and UN General Assembly Resolution 194. Many Israelis see this as endangering the Jewish character of the state as there might no longer be a Jewish majority.

UN General Assembly Resolution 194:

“ Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible. ”

The refugee crisis was created during the 1947-49 conflict. In 1948, the Palestinian Arab population stood at 1.4 million of whom around 750,000 became refugees.¹⁹ About half probably left out of fear and panic, while the rest were forced out to make room for Jewish immigrants from Europe and from the Arab world. The disinherited Palestinians spread throughout the neighbouring countries, where they have maintained their Palestinian national identity and the desire to return to their homeland. Israel still refuses to allow them to

return despite the United Nations affirming that the refugees had a right to return. Israel confiscated their property and did not pay compensation. Of the 3.9 million UN registered Palestinian refugees, 1.2 million remain in one of the 59 official refugee camps in the region.²⁰ Most hope one day to return to their homes. Refugees often show visitors their keys and deeds to their homes but their homes have been either destroyed or occupied by Jewish immigrants. After the 1948 war, Israeli armed forces destroyed over 400 Palestinian villages, the rubble of which can often be seen in Israeli countryside.²¹

“Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I don't blame you, since these geography books no longer exist. Not only the books do not exist - the Arab villages are not there either.”²²

Moshe Dayan then Israeli Defence Minister

Arab states refused to absorb the refugees arguing it was Israel's responsibility to take them back. Only Jordan gave refugees citizenship. To cater for the needs of the refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was set up in 1950. It registered 914,000 refugees.

REFUGEE CAMP PROFILES

Field of Operations	Official Camps	Registered Refugees	Registered Refugees in Camps
Jordan	10	1,639,718	287,951
Lebanon	12	382,973	214,728
Syria	10	391,651	109,466
West Bank	19	607,770	163,139
Gaza Strip	8	852,626	460,031
Agency total	59	3,874,738	1,235,315

Figures as of 30 June 2001²³

Typically, the refugee camps are overcrowded and a hazard to health, particularly because of untreated sewage. Jabalia camp in Gaza has 101,605 refugees²⁴ living in 1.4 km². In Beach Camp, Gaza, the sand is infected with parasites, and as a result, by the age of four, 85 per cent of children in the camp are infected with roundworm.²⁵

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)

Until the 1960s the Palestinians were largely viewed merely as a refugee issue. But in 1964, the PLO was founded which gave the Palestinians a new political momentum. Its first conference took place in East Jerusalem and issued a Palestine National Charter calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state in all of what was mandate Palestine. The PLO's importance increased after the 1967 war when the Al Fatah faction took over, led by Yasser Arafat. In 1971 the PLO and Arafat were expelled from Jordan and moved to Lebanon. The Palestinian presence there was one of the many factors that triggered the 1975 Lebanese civil war. Israel then undertook two invasions of Lebanon, one in 1978 and the other in 1982, with the

aim of smashing the PLO. The 1982 invasion was larger and directed by the then Defence Minister, Ariel Sharon. In all, 19,000 people died in this assault and the siege of West Beirut.²⁶ The PLO was forced to depart from Lebanon under international supervision.

The massacre of around 900 Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Shatila refugee camp²⁷ by Lebanese Phalange militias sparked worldwide horror especially as Israeli forces who were in control of the area did nothing to stop the three day massacres. Sharon was found to bear "indirect but personal responsibility" by the Israeli enquiry into the massacres and had to resign as Defence Minister.²⁸

In 1988 the PLO formally recognised Israel's right to exist and accepted a two state solution as the way forward. This was reiterated in September 1993, and since then the PLO has had to transform from being a state in exile to a working authority on the ground in the Occupied Territories.

The Occupation

The central issue for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip is the continuing Israeli occupation. It has affected every aspect of their daily lives for 35 years. Palestinians feel that the fact that there is a foreign occupation of their land has often been forgotten or ignored in the international debate on the Palestinian question.

Israeli forces occupied the area of the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the 1967 war. As yet the occupation has not ended. Palestinians argue that this occupation is just as wrong as the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, or the Indonesian occupation of East Timor. Until the 1993 peace process, nearly every country in the world had repeatedly condemned this occupation and called for it to end.

The policies of the Israeli occupation forces frequently violate international law. Palestinians are denied freedom of movement. Land is confiscated. Water is taken. Palestinians have been expelled or detained without trial.



Impact on Economy

From 1991 Israel began putting restrictions on Palestinian movement through a pass system, in what was the genesis of a policy called the "closures".²⁹ This had a massive impact on the Palestinian economy. In March 1993 following the killing of Israeli civilians by Palestinian terrorists this was reinforced with the introduction of permanent roadblocks, which in particular cut off Jerusalem from the West Bank for most Palestinians. There was also widespread use of curfews. Gaza was under a dusk to dawn curfew from May 1988 to May 1994 during the first Intifada.³⁰

According to the distinguished Israeli journalist Amira Hass, Israeli policy towards the economy of the occupied territories is based on two factors: "bringing cheap Palestinian labour into Israel and preventing the development of an independent economic sector in the territories."³¹

House demolitions

“ They demolish my house and another 26 houses the same night . . . ”

Dr. El-Fara, *Palestine is Still the Issue*, Carlton, Sept 2002

Israel feels that the demolition of Palestinian houses is necessary for a number of reasons – settlement expansion, punishment, homes are built without a permit, although such permits are almost impossible to obtain.³² According to the Israeli Action Committee Against House Demolitions, over 9,000 Palestinian homes were demolished between 1967-2001 making 50,000 Palestinians homeless. Since September 2000, 5,100 Palestinians have been made homeless according to the Israeli human rights group, B'tselem. Homes of families of suspected terrorists have also been demolished.

Water

Water is a scarce and precious commodity in the region. Of the water that originates in the West Bank aquifers, the Palestinian population only has access to about 20 per cent.³³ According to B'tselem, the average Palestinian on the West Bank consumes about 60 litres a day, the average Israeli consumes about 350. In the summer of 2002, more than 200,000 Palestinians were living in 218 communities that do not have a water network and forced to buy water from Israeli water company tankers at three to five times the usual price.³⁴ The settlements have prioritised access to water resources in the both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip in particular suffers greatly not only from water shortages but also from poor quality which in many cases makes the water unfit to drink.³⁵

Water was one of the issues to be resolved during final status negotiations.

Water Sources



Settlements in the Occupied Territories

The building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been one of the most damaging policies of the Israeli military occupation. They are illegal under international law, and have been condemned by the UN. Israeli governments have sanctioned and financially assisted the setting up of these settlements on what was once Palestinian land. This breaches the Fourth Geneva Convention of August 1949 by transferring people in territory under belligerent occupation. Although the international community, including the United Nations Security Council, has routinely condemned such moves, nothing has yet been done to stop them.

The settlement building started soon after the war in 1967 based on plans put forward by the then Labour Minister, Yigal Allon.³⁶ Settlement expansion escalated after the election of the Likud Prime Minister, Menachem Begin in 1977. Ariel Sharon, now the Israeli Prime Minister, was instrumental in much of the settlement planning and soon became the acknowledged settlers' champion. The settlers have state subsidies and are provided with security by the army.

Unlike Palestinians, Jewish settlers live under domestic Israeli law rather than under military rule. Settlers are also armed and have frequently opened fire on Palestinians. On 25 February 1994 Baruch Goldstein, a settler from the settlement of Kiryat

Arba just outside Hebron massacred 29 Palestinian Muslims at prayer in the Ibrahimi mosque in the city. However, in a security operation in the following weeks it was the Palestinians who suffered curfews and closures. Ambulances were denied access to the sick and wounded and children were stopped from going to school. The Israelis considered this to be necessary for their security.

“**In a single occupied territory, Israel is operating a system of separation with discrimination by law. It is doubtful that any comparable system has existed since the end of apartheid in South Africa.**”³⁷

B'tselem: The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories

From 1987-2002 Israeli settlers were responsible for the killing of 124 Palestinians often in revenge attacks.³⁸ Human rights groups argue that settlers have often operated outside of the law.³⁹ A report compiled by Israeli security officials was presented to the Israeli Prime Minister in August 2002. This urged the government to take action to stop the settlers in Hebron creating facts on the ground⁴⁰ however, it also included removing Palestinians from their homes.

“**The Arabs must be made to feel afraid, since the IDF (Israeli army) isn't doing it. They aren't afraid of the IDF, so we have to make them fear us. When the settlers put up a roadblock, the Arabs stay two kilometres away. When the IDF does it, they aren't afraid.**”⁴¹

Lenny Goldberg from Beit El settlement

Why were settlements built?

The early settlements were designed to establish strategic points in the West Bank particularly in the Jordan valley. Other settlements were designed to restrict Palestinian urban growth and were often located on hilltops overlooking Palestinian towns and villages. Some settlements were established by settlers themselves and were later given official recognition.

“**When I came to the West Bank and saw all these settlements, Israeli settlements on the tops of the hills, you know, surrounding all the cities, so you feel that they are over you, they are superior, and you are the - the ant, the - the insect, down, you know. And you know this is your land, it's nobody else's land, this is our land. But still they are the ones who are on the tops, and they have all the weapons, and they control also everything in the West Bank.**”

Palestinian woman, *Palestine is Still the Issue*, Carlton, Sept 2002

Settlements now occupy 41.9 per cent of the West Bank land area.⁴²

Settlements during the peace process

By the time of the Oslo Accords in 1993 there were over 120,000 settlers in the West Bank, 4,500 in the Gaza Strip and 160,000 in East Jerusalem.⁴³ Instead of a freeze or a decline in their growth, settlements still expanded during the peace process. In fact between 1993 and 2,000 the number of settlers in the West Bank nearly doubled. No settlements were

given up during the entire peace process. Palestinians argue that this contradicted the peace agreements, which stated **"the two sides view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit, whose integrity will be preserved during the interim period."** There were periodic crises during negotiations over new Israeli settlement plans not least over the Israeli decision to build the settlement of Har Homa lying between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Many Israelis during the interim period seized as much Palestinian land as possible prior to final agreement. In 1998, the then Israeli Foreign Minister, Ariel Sharon, told settlers that:

“**Everybody has to move, run and grab as many hilltops as they can to enlarge the settlements because everything we take now will stay ours . . . Everything we don't grab will go to them.**”⁴⁴

The report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee headed by former Senator George Mitchell called for a freeze on all settlement expansion but as yet the Israeli government has not responded to international concerns.⁴⁵

NUMBER OF SETTLEMENTS		
	No of settlers	Palestinian population
West Bank	206,000	1.8 million
Gaza Strip	7,000	1.1 million
East Jerusalem	170,400	0.2 million
Total	383,400	3.1 million ⁴⁶

“**Something has to be done about the problem of the settlements, the settlements continue to grow and continue to expand . . . It's not going to go away**”

US Secretary of State, Colin Powell⁴⁷

Other Israelis question the sense in holding on to settlements, which have to be protected by the Israeli army. The security needs of the settlers and settlements has limited the autonomy that Palestinians started to enjoy during the peace process.

The Israeli group, Peace Now, states that since the election of Ariel Sharon in February 2001 44 new settlements have been established in the West Bank.⁴⁸

UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW:

Fourth Geneva Convention (1949): article 49 (6):

“**The Occupying Power (Israel) shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.**”

The United Nations Security Council has reaffirmed the illegality of settlements on numerous occasions: Resolution 465 referred to it **"as a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention."**

Jerusalem

The future of Jerusalem is a highly emotive issue that has often held up or stalled peace talks. Jerusalem is a city that is sacred to the three great monotheistic religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam as well as inhabited by both Israelis and Palestinians. People worldwide have very close connections with the city and to many, the future of the city and its holy places are a matter of the utmost importance.

It remains the most disputed city in the world. In the 1947 UN partition plan Jerusalem was given a special status. It was to have been placed under international custodianship in a 'corpus separatum'. During the course of the 1947-49 conflict, the city was fiercely fought over and the result was that it was divided between an Israel occupied West Jerusalem and a Jordanian occupied East Jerusalem. The Old City fell under Jordanian control. This changed during the June war of 1967 when the Israelis captured the West Bank including East Jerusalem. Israel expanded the borders of municipal Jerusalem and annexed it to the state of Israel against international law. To this day only Costa Rica and El Salvador have established embassies in the city of Jerusalem even though the US has declared that it will move its embassy to the city.

Control of the city

Ever since the occupation of the city in 1967 the Israeli government has sought to unify the city under its control and prevent the establishment of a Palestinian capital in the city. One of its first actions was to demolish the ancient Maghariba quarter which was home to 650 Palestinians. They did this to enlarge the prayer area adjacent to the Wailing Wall.⁴⁹ Arab lands were confiscated, houses demolished even mosques. Settlements were built in East Jerusalem on Palestinian land. By 1993 the number of Jews in the eastern part of city equalled the Palestinian population.⁵⁰ In the Old city, settler groups have expanded their presence in the non-Jewish areas.



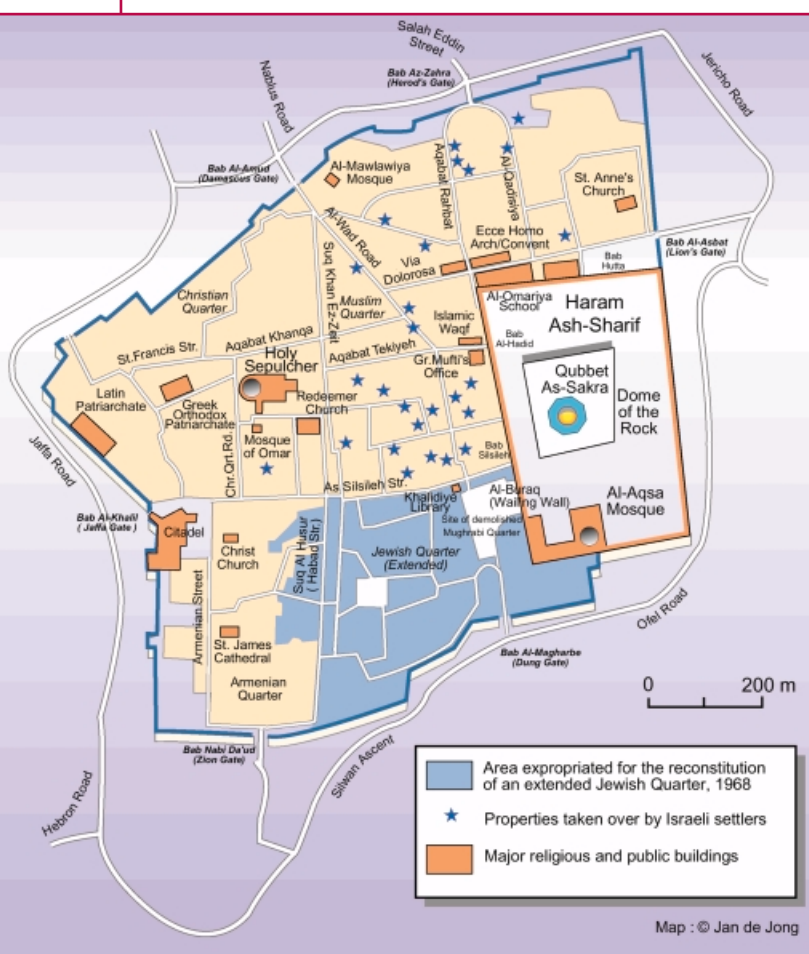
In March 1993 entry requirements for Palestinians entering the city were introduced. From this moment on, many Palestinians were not able legally to visit the holy city even for worship, visiting their families or for medical reasons.

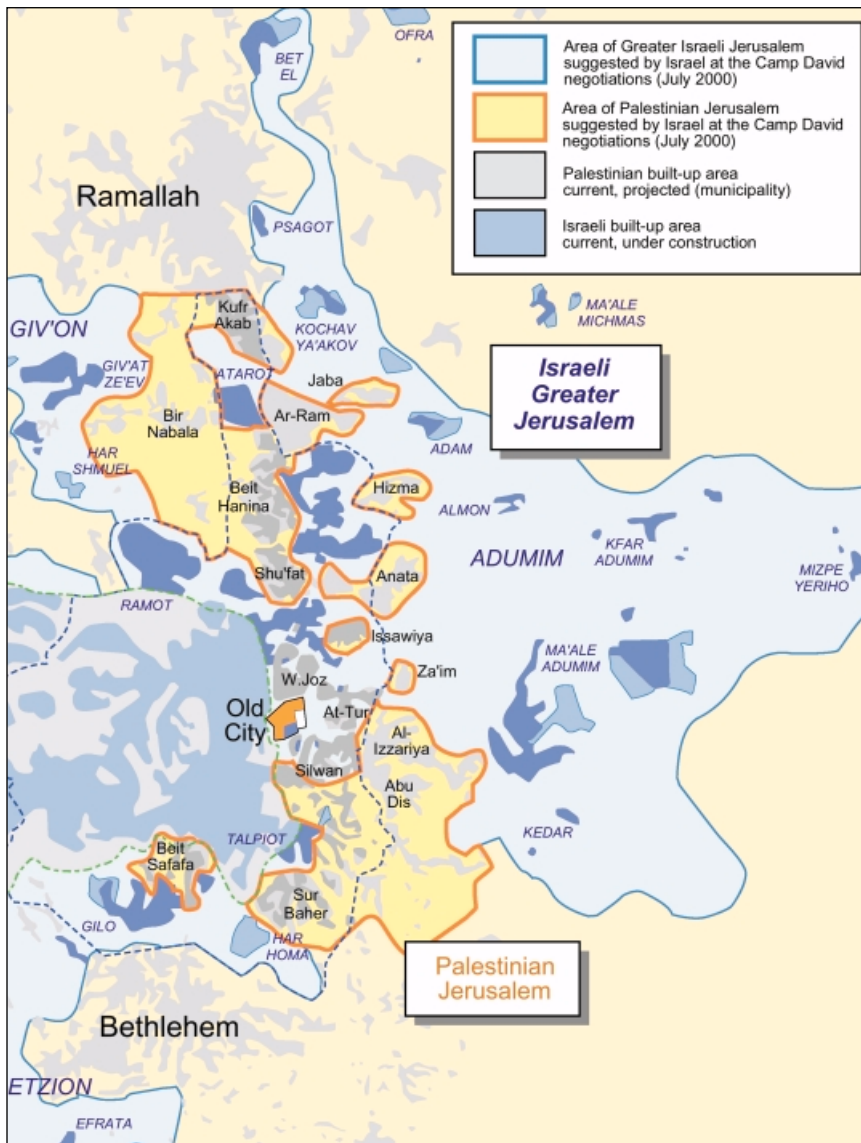
Religious sites

The city contains sites holy to all three monotheistic faiths. For Christians there is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, reputed site of Christ's crucifixion, and resurrection.

The main area of contention is what is known to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary (Haram al-Sharif) and to Jews as Temple Mount. A platform of only 35 acres, it is probably the most contested piece of real estate in the world. For Jews it is the site of the second Temple, and various fanatical groups such as the Temple Mount Faithful have set up organisations to rebuild the temple and destroy the Al Aqsa mosque. Many Israeli Jews are demanding prayer rights on the platform. For Muslims, this is where the prophet Muhammad made his miraculous night journey to heaven. There are huge Muslim congregations at Friday prayer times. Jews pray at the Wailing or Western wall.

Israel says it gives full access to all to these sites but the vast majority of the 3.5 million Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian, who live in the Occupied Territories are not allowed to visit Jerusalem and therefore unable to pray at its holy sites.





Living conditions of Palestinians

Although Israel says it has unified the city, there is a clear division between the Arab and Jewish areas of the city. The Arab areas are largely overcrowded and bear all the signs of a lack of municipal funding. The Jewish areas are better off and in a better condition.⁵² Palestinians protest that the manner in which the municipal zoning is carried out does not allow for natural expansion of their areas hence the overcrowding. As a result they claim that they are forced to build without permission. In response the Israeli authorities demolish these illegal Palestinian houses.

Possible solutions

There have been numerous plans for the resolution of the holy city. To most outsiders, it is clear that any solution to the issue must be inclusive not exclusive. It is a city of global importance and not the preserve of one religion or one nationality. The international community must be clear in its commitment to this principle. The closure of the city to the majority of the indigenous Palestinian population presents not only a serious human rights violation but also a lasting threat to peace. A failure to take into account Muslim concerns about their rights could lead to further tension, and make it much harder for Israel to be accepted not just regionally but further a field.

Jerusalem in negotiations

In the 1993 Oslo Accords the future of Jerusalem was to be discussed in permanent status negotiations. The Israeli position formally was that the city remains the eternal, un-divided, capital of Israel. The Palestinian position was that East Jerusalem should become the capital of a future Palestinian State. During negotiations at Camp David in July 2000 and later at Taba, Israeli negotiators looked at issues of handing over some sovereignty to the Palestinian state over Arab quarters of East Jerusalem but no agreement was reached.

Settlements in Jerusalem

The settlements in and around Jerusalem expanded rapidly before, and during the Oslo process. The Jewish settler population in East Jerusalem is now estimated to be in the region of 170,000.⁵¹



The Peace Process

The start of the peace process came at the Madrid conference of November 1991 that followed the Gulf War. This aimed at achieving a comprehensive Middle East peace but it was a separate bilateral channel between Israelis and Palestinians that made the breakthrough.

The Oslo Accords

In 1993, after decades of violent conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, leaders from each side agreed to the signing of an historic peace accord. On 13 September, Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation signed the Declaration of Principles on the White House lawn watched over by a smiling President Bill Clinton. The Oslo Accords, as they came to be known, had followed historic letters of recognition. Israel recognised the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people whilst the PLO recognised the right of Israel to exist and renounced violence.

Although Clinton presided over the signing ceremony, it was the Norwegian government, which played the main part in helping to broker this deal through a secret channel that was opened up between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators. The US had in fact been largely kept out of the picture.

The reaction of the Arab World was largely to accept the accords but to question the wisdom of a weakened, diplomatically isolated PLO signing a deal from such a position. Ever since the PLO appeared to side with Iraq during the Gulf crisis of 1990-91, it had suffered diplomatically and financially. Israel and Jordan signed a peace deal in 1994 and countries all over the world started relations with Israel. However, the Palestinian economy had to rely on donor countries financing the peace process.

There was considerable opposition from both Israelis and Palestinians. The Israeli Likud party opposed the signing of the Accords. Many Israelis feared for their future security. Israeli settlers feared that they would be evacuated and

forced to return to Israel. Many leading Palestinian factions opposed the accords. Palestinian refugees feared that their interests would be ignored. Palestinian intellectuals pointed to, in their view, the absence of balance between the powers given to Israel and the PLO. There were also concerns that there was no mention of the need to end the occupation, no commitment to establishing a Palestinian state or to end the settlement expansion.

The contents of the Accords

The Accords outlined a timetable for a series of interim agreements leading to a permanent agreement on ending the conflict after a period of five years. The most difficult issues – Jerusalem, refugees, borders, settlements and water were to be left until last.

The agreements envisaged a step by step process during which Israeli forces would redeploy initially from the Gaza Strip and the oasis of Jericho in the West Bank. In May 1994 a Palestinian Authority was established to look after the interests of the Palestinians in these areas. In June 1994, Yasser Arafat was permitted to return to the Occupied Territories.

Although the fledgling authority has powers in the field of education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation and tourism, Israel felt that its prime concern, was to take over the policing of the Palestinian population centres. Instead of Israeli soldiers having to patrol the densely populated Palestinian cities and refugee camps, it would now be a Palestinian police force. Seven more cities in the West Bank were handed over to the Authority in 1995 leaving only Hebron undecided. This was finally resolved in an agreement in 1997. The West Bank was divided up into different areas of authority. By the end of the peace process the Palestinian Authority only had full security and civilian control of 17 per cent of the West Bank.⁵³

The new authority was not a sovereign body. It had no control over foreign and defence matters, land or water. Israel maintained full powers and above all still controlled the borders.

Palestinian elections

In January 1996, the first ever Palestinian general elections were held in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. An 88 member legislative council was formed and Yasser Arafat was elected as the first President of the Palestinian Authority.

Arafat has ruled largely without reference to this legislative council. There are also serious concerns as to the levels of corruption and human rights abuses in areas under the Authority's control.⁵⁴



Agreements signed between Israel and PLO

- Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, 13 September 1993
- Agreement on the Gaza Strip and Jericho Area, 4 May 1994
- The Israeli-Palestinian Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Oslo II), 28 September 1995
- The Hebron Protocol, 15 January 1997
- Wye River Memorandum, 23 October 1998
- The Sharm al-Sheikh Memorandum, 4 September 1999

The Camp David Summit

In July 2000, President Clinton convened a summit between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, led by the Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak and the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. This summit aimed to seal a final agreement between both parties but broke down principally on the lack of agreement about Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees. The failure after two weeks to reach an agreement was subsequently blamed almost exclusively on Arafat. Ehud Barak insisted that he had made the most generous offer ever made to a Palestinian leader, the return of almost all of the occupied territories, which Arafat consistently refused.

The Palestinians maintained the deal on offer was insufficient. In their opinion it offered only a cantonised Palestinian state, which did not have real independence, and proper controls of borders, water and airspace. During later negotiations particularly at Taba in January 2001, the two parties were much closer to a deal, and the Israeli offer was drastically improved but all too late. The impending election of hardliner, Ariel Sharon, and the months of violence had soured the atmosphere and created further distrust between the two sides. Since the election of Ariel Sharon there has been little process forward on the political front.

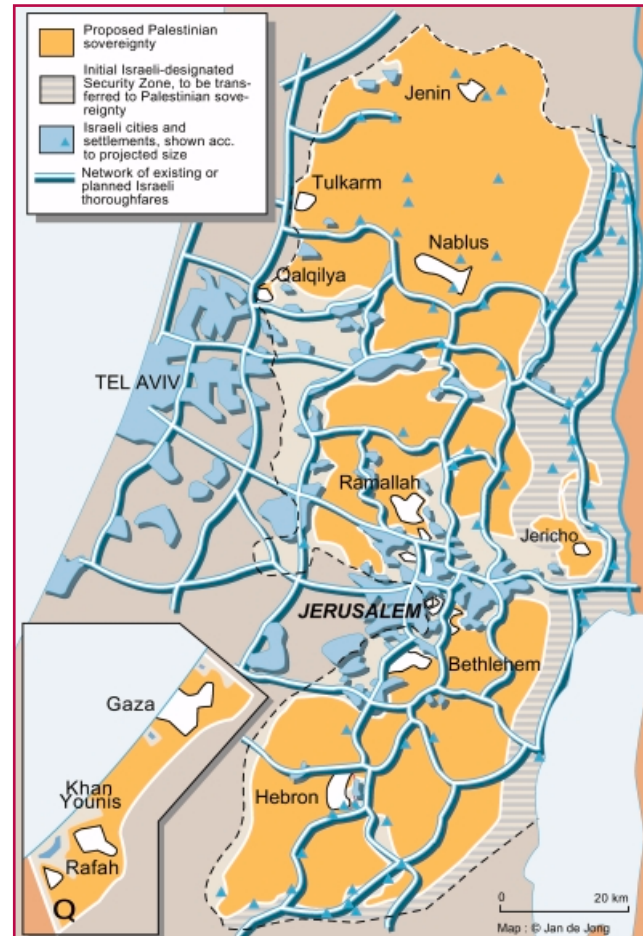
“ Since the beginning of the violence, the fact of the matter is that there is no more Oslo agreement. It does not exist anymore.”⁵⁵ ”

Quote – Ariel Sharon

Why did the peace process fail?

The peace process was undermined by numerous factors including a lack of trust, and continued violence. The start of the suicide bombings from 1994, largely organised by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, aimed mostly at targets inside Israel undermined Israeli support. For Palestinians, it was Israel's steadfast refusal to end the most hated policies of the occupation that made them question the peace process. Above all, Israeli settlements flourished with 70,000 acres of Palestinian⁵⁶ land being confiscated between 1993 and 2001.

Projection of the West Bank Final Status Map presented by Israel, Camp David, July 2000



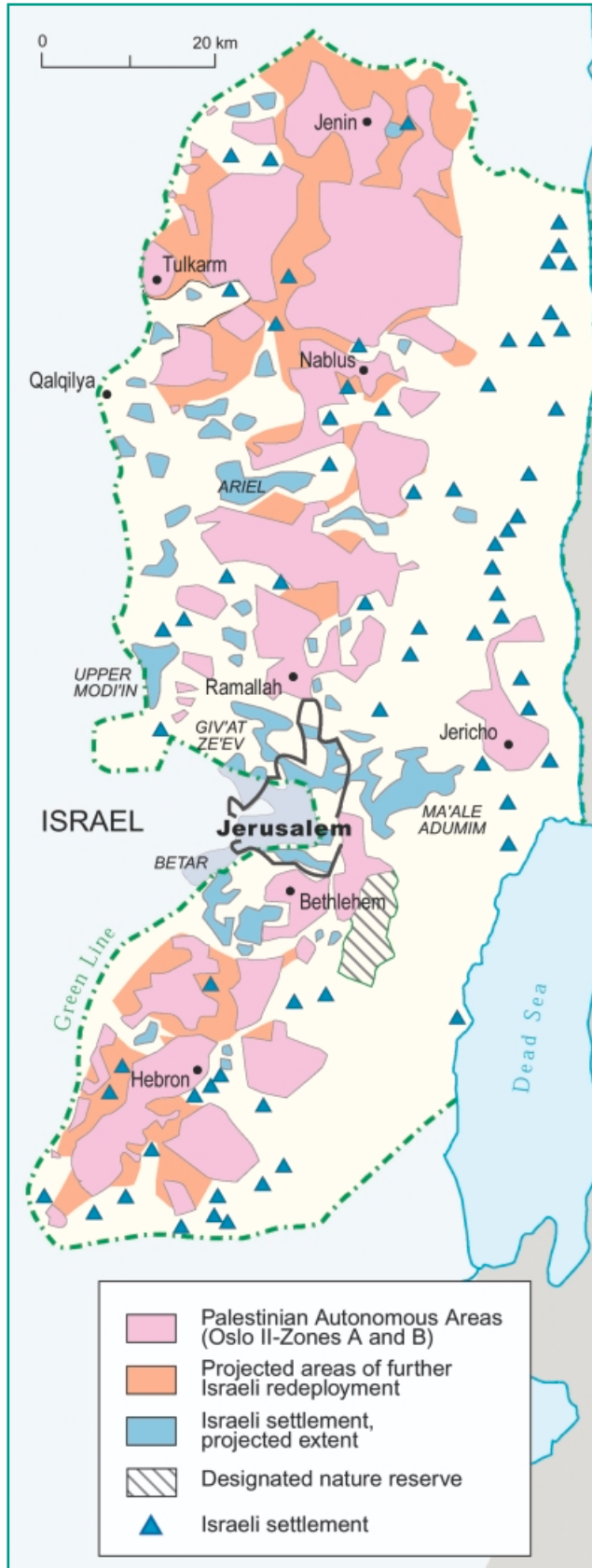
The Accords were never properly implemented with both sides claiming that the other had failed to live up to signed agreements. Rabin made it clear that although there was a timetable he was not bound by it. "There are no sacred dates".⁵⁷ Hence final status talks did not begin on time. Further redeployments were interminably delayed. The airport in Gaza was opened late, and no Gaza port was ever built. Palestinian prisoners were not all released. The Palestinian economy still suffered as a result of Israeli closures, which inhibited the freedom of movement and trade of goods. Israelis considered that Palestinian suicide bombings and hostile rhetoric were evidence that little had changed among Palestinians.

The assassination of Yitzhak Rabin

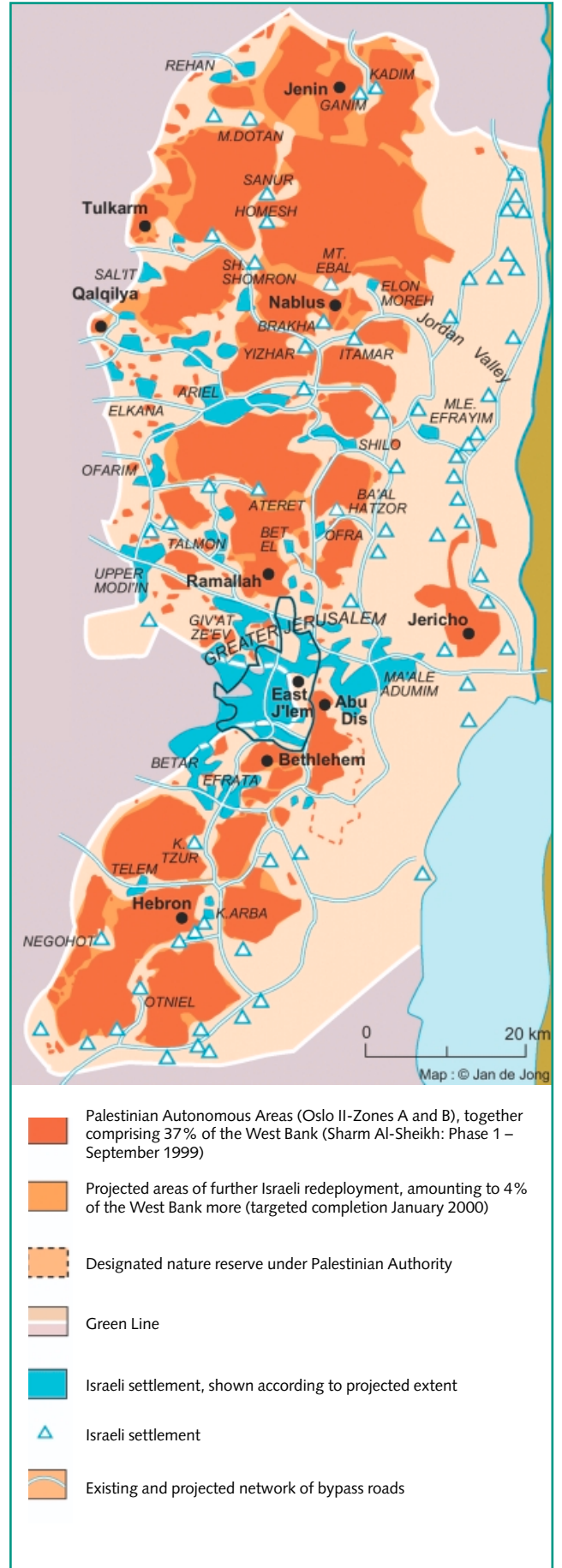
On 4 November 1995 Rabin was assassinated at a peace rally in Tel Aviv by a Jewish extremist, Yigal Amir. The world expressed dismay and Israel was shocked that a Jew would kill a Jew. The extreme right wing settler movement was castigated, as was the Likud leader, Binyamin Netanyahu who many, including Rabin's wife, accused of creating the atmosphere of incitement. Many commentators feel that the killing of Rabin dealt a fatal blow to the peace process, saying that he might possibly have had the ability to convince the Israeli public to accept painful deals. Others consider that Rabin lacked the courage to argue for a deal, and point to his failure to stop settlement expansion.

Maps

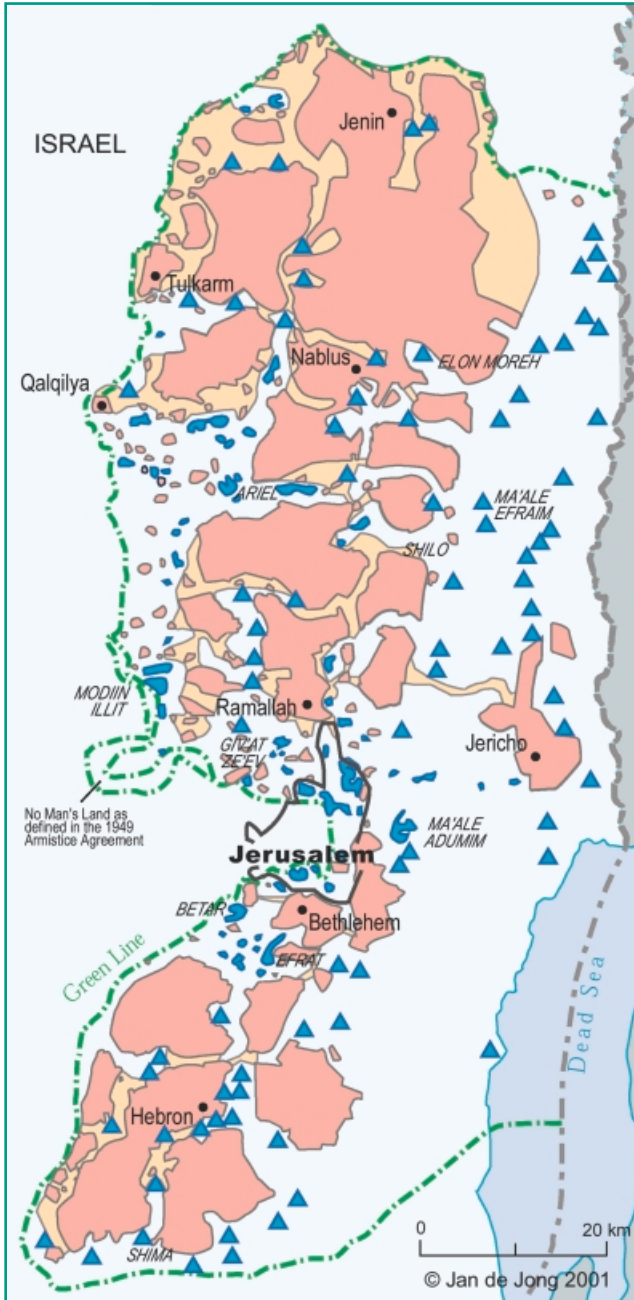
Wye Memorandum, 1998



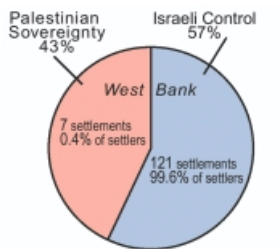
Projection of Further Israeli Redevelopment according to the Sharm-el-Sheikh Memorandum 1999



**Palestinian Sovereign Areas
According to the Sharon Proposal, 2001**

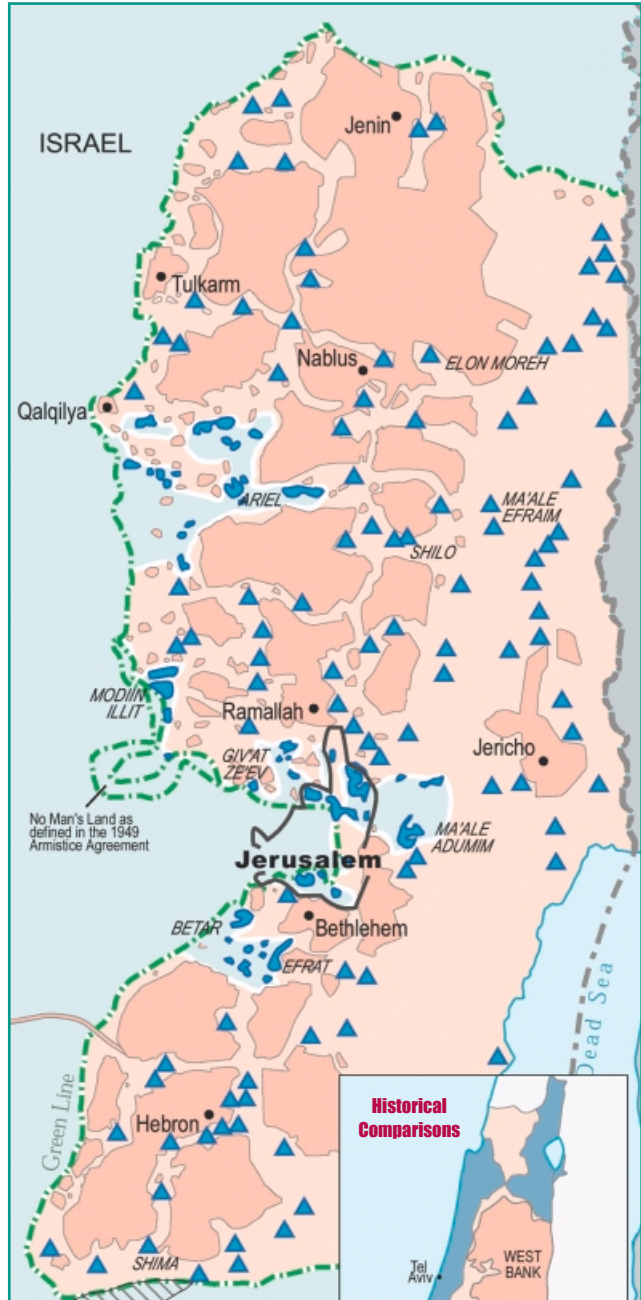


**West Bank Sovereignty Areas
with number of Israeli settlements
and percentage of settlers
excluding East Jerusalem**

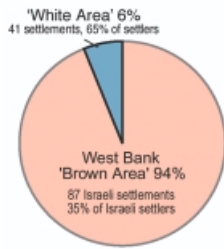


- Palestinian Autonomous Areas A & B (41% of West Bank)
- Projection of Palestinian Sovereign Areas envisioned by Sharon (43% of the West Bank)
- Israel Sovereignty
- Israeli settlements / selected settlement built-up areas

**Final Status Map Presented by Israel - Taba, January 2001
Based on a 6% West Bank Territorial Transfer to Israel**



**West Bank Sovereignty Areas
with number of Israeli settlements
and percentage of settlers
excluding East Jerusalem**



- Palestinian Autonomous Areas A & B
- Palestinian Sovereignty 'Brown Areas'
- Palestinian Sovereignty 'White Areas'
- Israeli Sovereignty 'White Areas'
- Israeli territory offered as part of a 3% land swap
- Israeli settlement

The Al Aqsa Intifada

Violence between Israelis and Palestinians broke out the day after the visit of Ariel Sharon, then leader of the opposition party, Likud, to the Haram Ash Sharif/Temple Mount on 28 September 2000. The visit was designed to try to stake an Israeli claim to this religious site. It escalated still further following the shooting of eleven-year-old Mohammed al-Dura as his father tried in vain to shield him during a battle at a road junction in the Gaza Strip.

Chances of a peaceful negotiated settlement were limited despite further attempts up to the election of Ariel Sharon in February 2001. The Israeli government has since then been uncompromising in its position that it will not negotiate with the current Palestinian leadership. They accuse the leadership of not only failing to curb Palestinian attacks on Israelis but in some cases encouraging them. Palestinians counter that Arafat is unable to do so whilst the police forces are being bombed, and when these forces are unable to move around the Palestinian areas. The Palestinian Authority is accused of fomenting hatred towards Israel through its schools and media. Sharon has held Arafat personally responsible and has even sent Israeli forces to invade his compound in Ramallah keeping him held there for months.

This is what became known as the Al Aqsa Intifada, an uprising that followed the first Intifada that lasted from 1987-1993. It differs from the first uprising in many ways, above all the levels of violence on both sides. Israeli forces have used far greater force accounting for a much higher Palestinian casualty rate. Palestinians have been killed at demonstrations, checkpoints, and whilst residential areas and police stations were being bombed. In the early months the casualties were nearly all Palestinian. After one month 145 people had died, all but eight of them were Palestinian.⁵⁸ Initially most Palestinians still did not use firearms, however, increasingly this became the case and more seriously the number of suicide bombings escalated.

There has been great damage to the Palestinian economy, environment, society, and psyche. On the Israeli side, Palestinian suicide bombers have caused numerous casualties inside Israel. Unlike the first Intifada, Palestinian armed factions have been very active. The year 2001 saw more Palestinians and Israelis killed than any year during the entirety of Israel's 35-year-old occupation.⁵⁹ Whilst Israel has found it tough to defeat the Palestinians, it is also unclear how Palestinians could win.

Victims

As of August 2002 more than 2,200 lives have been lost and more than 24,000 people injured.

	Killed	Injured
Israelis	610 ⁶⁰	4,487 ⁶¹
Palestinians	1,711 ⁶²	20,114 ⁶³

“ If we thought that instead of 200 Palestinian fatalities, 2,000 dead would put an end to the fighting at a stroke, we would use much more force . . . ”

Prime Minister Ehud Barak⁶⁴

The Israeli use of force

Human rights organisations have consistently complained that the Israeli Defence Forces have used excessive force. Many of the Palestinian casualties have been innocent civilians. American Physicians for Human Rights carried out a survey in October 2000, which showed that of the first 1,134 Palestinian casualties 26 per cent were admitted to hospitals with wounds to the head.⁶⁵

“ Shooting an unarmed youth is totally illegal. I am very disturbed by the number of children who were killed over the last year and a half. Was each one of these incidents a case where there was no choice and we had to shoot to kill? This is a question that should disturb all of us. ”

Former Shin Bet chief, Major General (res.) Ami Ayalon in an interview on Channel One's "Yoman" program, February 1, 2002.

“ It won't be possible to reach an agreement with them before the Palestinians are hit hard. Now they have to be hit. If they aren't badly beaten, there won't be any negotiations. Only after they are beaten will we be able to conduct talks. I want an agreement, but first they have to be beaten so they get the thought out of their minds that they can impose an agreement on Israel that Israel does not want . . . They must be beaten: the Palestinian Authority, its forces, and the terrorists . . . if they aren't beaten there won't be any political horizon. ”⁶⁶

Ariel Sharon.

“ I can be convinced of one thing, an Israeli who takes aim, even an Israeli sniper, is taking aim at those engaged in terrorism. Unfortunately, in every kind of warfare there are cases of civilians who are accidentally killed . . . ”

Dori Gold, *Palestine is Still the Issue*, Carlton, Sept 2002

The Israeli army has used F-16s, Apache attack helicopters, tanks, bulldozers and other lethal weaponry to deadly effect. The one tonne bomb that killed Saleh Shehadeh on 23 July 2002 was the 48th used during the Intifada by the Israeli air force.⁶⁷

Assassinations

According to B'tselem, by August 2002, there had been at least 79 extra-judicial assassinations of Palestinians along with 37 bystanders.⁶⁸ Israeli officials argue that this was necessary to prevent further suicide bombing attacks.

Human rights groups argue that as there is no judicial process, this is a blatant violation of the right to life. The European Union has also criticised the policy.⁶⁹

The siege of the Palestinians

Since the start of the Intifada, Israeli forces have reinforced the closures and the siege, maintaining that this was necessary to prevent further attacks on Israelis. This suffocated the Palestinian economy. In Gaza the level of poverty may have risen as high as 70 per cent according to the UN.⁷⁰

Checkpoints, roadblocks, tanks and barbed wire all prevent Palestinian movement. It can take up to 36 hours for Palestinians to cross the Israeli checkpoint that separates the northern and southern parts of the Gaza Strip.⁷¹ Moreover, since the uprising began there has been no possibility of Gazans travelling to the West Bank. There have been regular dusk to dawn curfews. Israel has now begun to build a large separation fence between the West Bank and Israel.

“ We are sick and tired of the Israelis running our lives. If I want to travel, I need their permission. Even the Legislative Council cannot meet in plenary because of the travel restrictions. The Intifada was caused by the daily humiliation the Israelis subject us to. ”

Marwan Kanafani, Palestinian Legislative council Member⁷²

The Palestinian Authority has struggled to pay salaries to its 125,000 public sector employees not least because of tax revenues owed to it from Israel. By August 2002, the IMF estimated this figure to be at \$600 million.⁷³

According to one estimate, 64 Palestinians have died due to prevention of access to medical treatment since the start of the Intifada.⁷⁴

The digging of ditches around Palestinian cities has also restricted movement. For example, when the Israeli army laid siege to Birzeit in March 2001, it tore up a 400 metre strip of road, digging two trenches three metres deep on the road connecting the university to Ramallah. This cut off more than 30 villages and 65,000 civilians from getting to Ramallah.⁷⁵

The humanitarian situation

The quality of Palestinian life has deteriorated significantly since the outbreak of the Intifada.

A USAID funded survey in July 2002 found that 30 per cent of Palestinian children under five suffered from chronic malnutrition and 21 per cent from acute malnutrition. It showed that nearly a third of Palestinian households could no longer afford staple products such as bread and rice.⁷⁶

Neighbour Practice

There has been widespread criticism of the Israeli army's use of Palestinians as human shields, to walk in front of soldiers, to remove suspicious objects or to enter Palestinian homes to see if they are booby trapped. This is now called "neighbour practice" by the Israeli army.

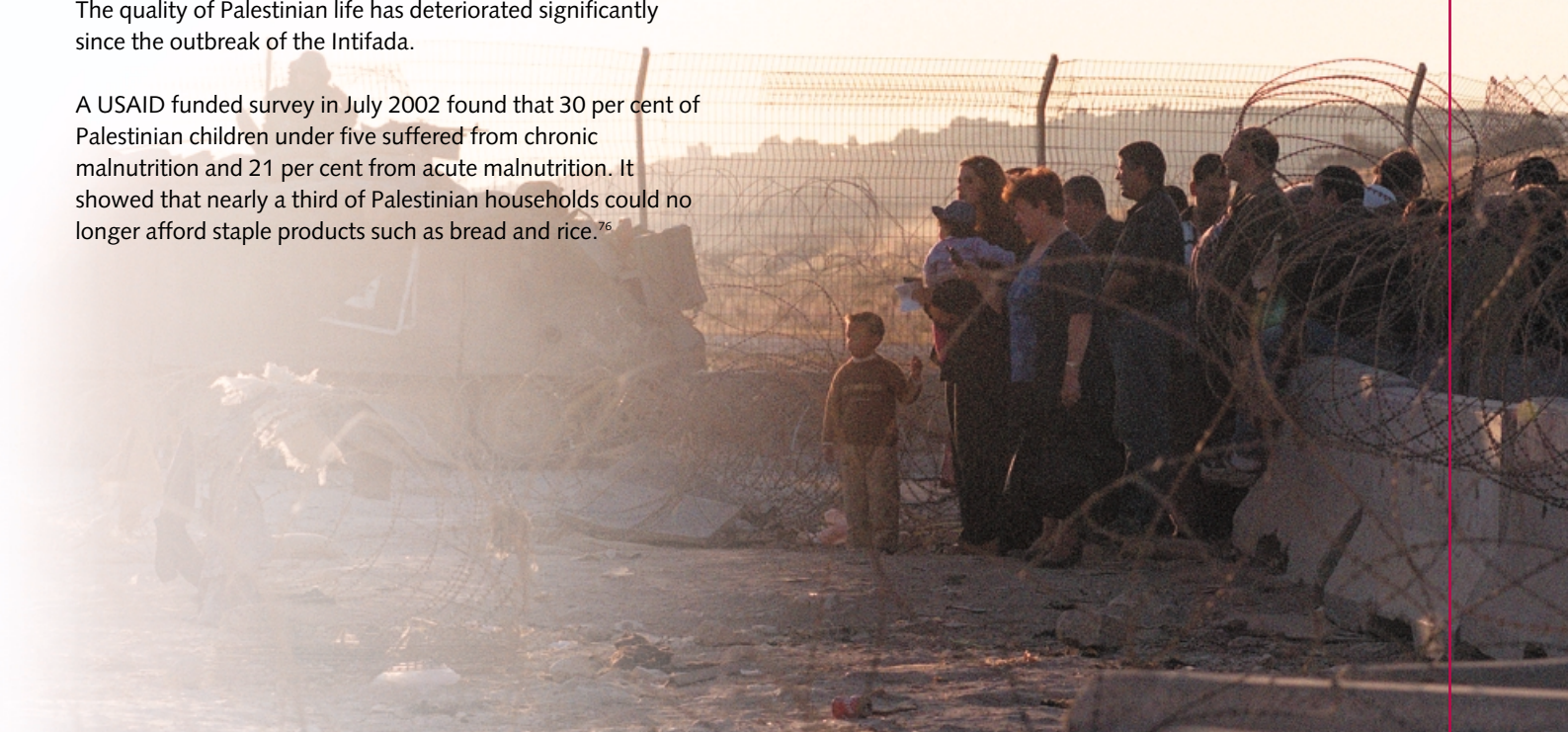
Ze'ev Schiff, Ha'aretz military correspondent: "Neighbour practice" is a method that is a disgrace to the army.⁷⁷

Operation Defensive Shield

Following a spate of suicide bombings in which more than 100 Israelis were killed, Ariel Sharon instigated "Operation Defensive Wall" on 29 March 2002 lasting officially until 21 April. This was the largest and most destructive invasion of Palestinian cities in the West Bank. The aim was to target "terrorists" and prevent them from attacking Israeli targets but the actions also hit hard on civilians.

- Palestinian ministries were ransacked. Israeli forces removed or destroyed all the files on student's results for the last eight years.⁷⁸
- Over 6000 Palestinians were arrested.⁷⁹
- 878 homes were demolished or destroyed leaving 17000 Palestinians homeless.⁸⁰
- 50 schools were damaged, 11 totally destroyed.⁸¹
- Round the clock curfews affected over 1 million Palestinians.⁸²

The most infamous event was the full scale Israeli siege of Jenin refugee camp. Israeli bulldozers flattened large sections of the camp destroying a total of 160 buildings.⁸³ The hospital in Jenin confirmed the deaths of at least 52 Palestinians whilst 23 Israeli soldiers were killed.⁸⁴ The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1405 to establish a UN fact-finding team to investigate, but due to the Israeli refusal to cooperate with it, the mission was abandoned. A UN report criticised the Israeli forces for preventing medical and humanitarian aid from reaching the Palestinians.⁸⁵ It did not back the Palestinian claim that a massacre had taken place.



The suicide bombings

Since September 2000 there have been more than 70 suicide bomb attacks launched against Israelis.⁸⁶ For the first time in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the streets of Israel have become a regular part of the battlefield. Innocent women and children have been among the victims in bars, nightclubs, streets and elsewhere around Israel. Rightly condemned around the world as acts of terrorism this united the Israeli public behind Sharon's tough policies.

Other than the psychological effects on Israeli society, these attacks have alienated global public opinion. At the same time, they have also devastated the Israeli economy, hit tourism, and made many Jews think again about living in Israel. No longer are the bombers just from Islamic groups such as Hamas but from all sectors of society. Some bombers have been women. The first female suicide bomber struck in January 2002. Her name was Waafa Idrees. She was 28 years old and was an ambulance volunteer.⁸⁷

Palestinians are divided in their support for this. Some see the suicide bombers as martyrs, and the only way to strike at Israel. Others believe that attacks are morally repugnant, counterproductive and clearly crimes committed by extremists.

“ How can young people prepared to lose their life in the prime of their youth be dismissed as terrorism? Doesn't it at least raise a question about the reasons that push them into such acts? That is what the world, including the democratic world, should be asking itself, instead of not bothering about Palestinian rights. ”

Dr Haidar Abdelshafi, Daily star, Lebanon, 27 July 2002

“ Who's a terrorist? Aida Fatahia was walking in the street; Ubei Daraj was playing in the yard. She was the mother of three; he was nine years old. Both were killed last week by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) bullets, for no reason. Their killing raises once again, in all its horror, the question of whether Palestinian violence is the only violence that should be called terrorism. Is only car bombing terrorism, while shooting at a woman and child is not? ”⁸⁸

Israeli journalist, Gideon Levy

Israeli Conscientious Objectors

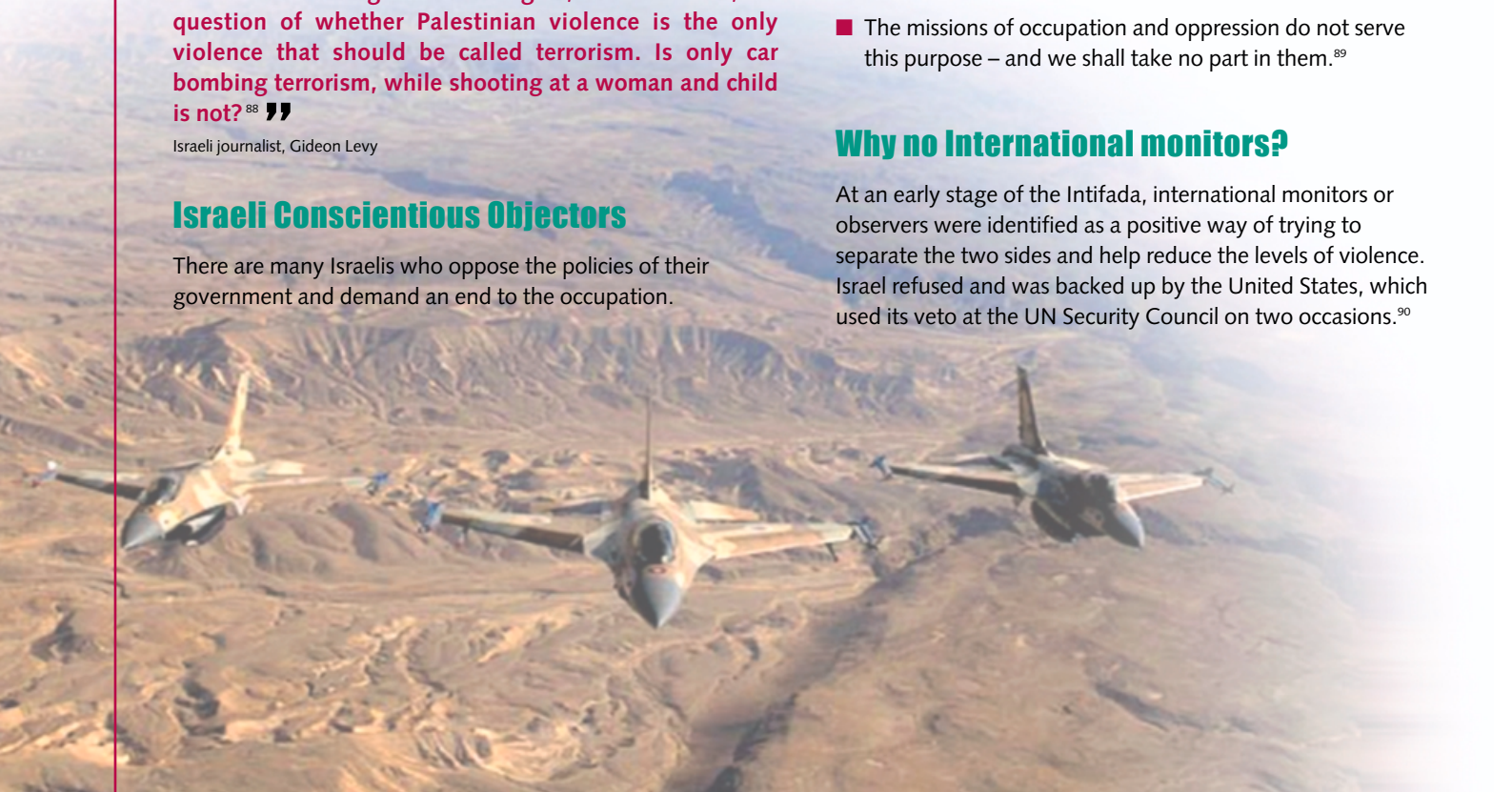
There are many Israelis who oppose the policies of their government and demand an end to the occupation.

Most famously, there have been 478 Israeli reservists who have signed a petition outlining their refusal to serve in the Occupied Territories:

- We, reserve combat officers and soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces, who were raised upon the principles of Zionism, sacrifice and giving to the people of Israel and to the State of Israel, who have always served in the front lines, and who were the first to carry out any mission, light or heavy, in order to protect the State of Israel and strengthen it.
- We, combat officers and soldiers who have served the State of Israel for long weeks every year, in spite of the dear cost to our personal lives, have been on reserve duty all over the Occupied Territories, and were issued commands and directives that had nothing to do with the security of our country, and that had the sole purpose of perpetuating our control over the Palestinian people. We, whose eyes have seen the bloody toll this Occupation exacts from both sides.
- We, who sensed how the commands issued to us in the Territories, destroy all the values we had absorbed while growing up in this country.
- We, who understand now that the price of Occupation is the loss of IDF's human character and the corruption of the entire Israeli society.
- We, who know that the Territories are not Israel, and that all settlements are bound to be evacuated in the end.
- We hereby declare that we shall not continue to fight this War of the Settlements.
- We shall not continue to fight beyond the 1967 borders in order to dominate, expel, starve and humiliate an entire people.
- We hereby declare that we shall continue serving in the Israel Defense Forces in any mission that serves Israel's defense.
- The missions of occupation and oppression do not serve this purpose – and we shall take no part in them.⁸⁹

Why no International monitors?

At an early stage of the Intifada, international monitors or observers were identified as a positive way of trying to separate the two sides and help reduce the levels of violence. Israel refused and was backed up by the United States, which used its veto at the UN Security Council on two occasions.⁹⁰





Who supplies the weapons?

The United States has been the main supplier of weapons to Israel over many decades. In 2001 Israel received \$1.28bn⁹¹ in military aid. These funds are used almost solely to purchase US weaponry.

On 23 July Israel bombed the Gaza Strip using US made F-16s. The aim was to assassinate a key Hamas military leader but the one tonne bomb dropped in a heavily populated area of Gaza killed 15 Palestinians including nine children. Ariel Sharon described this mission as a "success".⁹² US export regulations only allow the sale of weapons if it is for "legitimate self-defence or internal security".

British arms policy

Although the US remains Israel's largest weapons supplier Britain also supplies weapons to Israel.

“ We are doing everything we can to bring peace and stability to the Middle East. ”⁹³

British Prime Minister Tony Blair

The Israeli use of British arms against the Palestinian civilian population contradicts a written assurance that the Israeli government gave Britain on 29 November 2000 that 'no UK-originated equipment nor any UK-originated systems, sub-systems (or) components are used as part of the Israel army's activities in the territories.'⁹⁴

Since the start of the Intifada, the Blair government has supplied Israel with ammunition, large calibre weapons, anti-tank missiles, armoured vehicles, and parts for combat helicopters.⁹⁵ The total value of arms exports nearly doubled from £12.5 million in 2002 to £22.5 million in 2001.⁹⁶

In July 2002 the British government announced that it was modifying its exports guidelines to allow military aircraft components to be sold for USF-16 fighter planes destined for Israel.

British parts and weapons have been used against Palestinians. In March 2002 it was revealed that British Centurion tanks had been used against Palestinians - in breach of Israel's own assurances.⁹⁷

International Law

The policies of the Israeli government and its forces frequently violate international law.

Israel is a signatory and high contracting party to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which gives the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, protected status. Israel alone denies that the Convention applies to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The conventions outlaw collective punishments, transfer and deportation, torture, excessive force. For example, policies such as demolishing houses violate Article 53 of the Conventions.

However, Israel continues to receive support from the US, diplomatically, economically and militarily. A powerful pro-Israeli lobby reinforces this relationship. Fortune Magazine lists America Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) as the fourth most powerful lobbying group in Washington.⁹⁸

What hope for the future?

Most commentators believe that there is a possible deal between the two sides once the violence has stemmed and perhaps when there is a change of leadership on both sides. It is widely accepted that a viable, independent Palestinian state is essential to resolve this dispute together with appropriate security measures for both peoples. The Arab summit in Beirut in March 2002 offered full peace between Arab states and Israel in return for an Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. This plan was widely supported in the international community.

“ What we're speaking about is our willingness to negotiate with the Palestinians, their self government . . . and we are willing to create a Palestinian self governing entity, some call it a Palestinian state, which will address the real needs of the Palestinians. ”

Dori Gold, *Palestine is Still the Issue*, Carlton, Sept 2002

Illan Pappé, the Israeli historian, believes that the aim must be to **"provide circumstances for hope rather than despair."**⁹⁹

“ What we're speaking about is our willingness to negotiate with the Palestinians, their self government . . . and we are willing to create a Palestinian self governing entity, some call it a Palestinian state, which will address the real needs of the Palestinians. ”

Dori Gold, *Palestine is Still the Issue*, Carlton, Sept 2002

“ We are not against the Jews that's why I have Jewish friends, . . . We are against politically, the governments of Israel and the Army of Israel who denies our rights . . . And I hope to have peace here, peace with the Israelis . . . but with dignity, this is very important for us, with dignity it means that our full rights . . . The Palestinians will never be destroyed . . . we are not the Red Indians, we will not be cancelled from history just like this. No. ”

Dr. Dahlan, *Palestine is Still the Issue*, Carlton, Sept 2002

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Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction:
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■ Refugees

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■ Settlements

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<http://www.fmep.org>

■ Education

An Najah University: <http://www.najah.edu>

Birzeit University: <http://www.birzeit.edu/>

■ Health

Gaza Community Mental Health Project:
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- 16 Figures from the **CIA World Factbook**
- 17 See statistics tables on population and refugees.
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