

# POV

## HISTORY OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

*The history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has a convenient elasticity; it changes dramatically depending on who is telling it and where they start the story. Therefore, it is important to note that a historic timeline of events concerning this conflict is always difficult to present in an objective manner. For this reason, certain events of the timeline include both a Palestinian (on the right side) and an Israeli (on the left side) perspective.*

### 1880–1914

The Zionist movement was founded in response to the worsening persecution of European Jews and out of the desire to join the community of modern nation-states that defined Europe. Thousands of Jews began immigrating to Palestine, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire.

An Israeli Perspective	A Palestinian Perspective
<p><b>November, 1917</b></p> <p>The British government, in the <b>Balfour Declaration</b> (signed by their Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour and drafter in part by U.S. President Wilson, stated its support for “the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people.” Lord Rothschild, to whom the letter was addressed, was a leading British Zionist.</p> <p>Issuing of the statement was motivated by both sympathy for the Zionist cause and by British desire to rally Jews to the side of the Allies. The spirit of the time emphasized the “self-determination of small nations,” and the British thought that supporting Zionism was the easiest way of securing lasting British influence of the region east of the Suez Canal.</p>	<p><b>1915</b></p> <p>In an exchange of ten letters between Sir Henry McMahon, Britain’s high commissioner in Egypt, and Sharif Hussein bin Ali, Emir of Mecca and King of the Arabs (and great, great grandfather of King Abdullah of modern-day Jordan), Britain pledged to support Arab independence if Hussein’s forces revolted against the Ottomans.</p> <p>The exchange of letters became known as <b>the Hussein-McMahon correspondence</b>. Hussein envisioned a unified Arab state stretching from Aleppo (Syria) to Aden (Yemen).</p>

### 1918

As a result of World War I, Britain wins control over the area of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire. The area becomes known as British-mandate Palestine. [A **mandate** is an authorization to govern over conquered territory]. From 1918 to 1948, Britain governs over the Jews and Arabs living in this territory.

### 1921

Britain gives the area of British-mandate Palestine east of the Jordan River to Emir Abdullah, to form the Hashemite Kingdom of TransJordan. This area is now known as the country of Jordan. The first major intercommunal violence of the mandate period erupts along the Jaffa-Tel Aviv border on May Day, leaving scores of Jews and Arabs dead.

Jews described the violence as a “pogrom” or “riots.”	Palestinians term the violence a “revolt.”
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1929

The second major intercommunal violence erupts in Jerusalem, spreading throughout the country, particularly in Hebron, where sixty-seven Jews are killed.

1936

In April, in response to the killing of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam by the British, Arab residents of British Mandate Palestine begin “rioting,” causing intercommunal violence, and the seizure of a shipment of illegal arms destined for the Hagana, or Jewish defense force. The “rioting” lasts until 1939, when the British, in part to obtain Arab support for the recently erupted war with Germany, ban most land sales to Jews.

In April, in response to the killing of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam by the British, Arab residents of British Mandate Palestine begin the “Great Arab Revolt,” causing intercommunal violence, and the seizure of a shipment of illegal arms destined for the Hagana, or Jewish defense force. The “revolt” lasts until 1939, when the British, in part to obtain Arab support for the recently erupted war with Germany, ban most land sales to Jews.

November 1947

The General Assembly of the United Nations recommended the partition of British-mandate Palestine into two separate states, one for Jews and one for Arabs. Fighting breaks out soon thereafter, as all the surrounding Arab states rejected the partition plan.

Zionist leaders accepted the proposed partition for tactical and strategic reasons.

Palestinians considered the proposal unrepresentative of the demographic distribution of Jews and Arabs living in Palestine at that time, and so rejected it.

1948

In May, Zionist leaders proclaimed the state of Israel. Fighting breaks out between the newly declared state of Israel and its Arab neighbors as British troops are leaving the country.

The war is known by Israelis as the “Milhemet Ha-atzma’ut,” or “War of Independence” by Israelis.

Some 700,000 Palestinians leave what had been British-mandate Palestine. Israel gains control over large tracts of land, including some five hundred Palestinian villages.

The war is known as “al-Nakbah” or “the Catastrophe,” by Palestinians. Some 700,000 Palestinians flee or are driven from what had been British-mandate Palestine. Israel annexes large tracts of land and destroys some five hundred Palestinian villages.

Jordan establishes control over the West Bank with the tacit agreement of Israel and Egypt establishes control of the Gaza Strip. Control of Jerusalem is split between Israel in the west and Jordan in the east.

On December 11, the UN General Assembly passes Resolution 194, stating that Palestinian refugees who wish to return to their homes should be permitted to do so and that those who do not wish to return should be compensated by the state of Israel.

1948–1967

Ongoing skirmishes between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

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May, 1964

Following an Arab League decision, 422 Palestinian national figures meet in Jerusalem under the chairmanship of Ahmad Shuqeiri, who founded the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and laid down the structure of the Palestine National Council (PNC), the PLO Executive Committee, the National Fund and the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA). The meeting also approved a Palestinian national covenant and basic law.

June 5, 1967

In what Israelis call the “Six Day War,” Israel conducts a pre-emptive attack against Egypt and gains control over territory formerly controlled by Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Israel gains control over the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan. In six days, Israel roughly triples the size of the territory under its control.

Israel begins establishing settlements in Gaza, the Sinai Peninsula, and the West Bank, which right-wing Israelis refer to by the biblical names “Judea and Samaria” and consider the biblical lands of the Jewish people.

In an attack that begins what became known as the “al-Naksah,” or “the Setback,” to Palestinians, Israel seizes Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian territory. The Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip are captured from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, and the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan.

Israel begins establishing settlements in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Sinai Peninsula. Palestinians view this as a violation of international law regarding territory seized during war.

Iraq sends forces into Jordan to support the war, even though Jordan had not requested such action.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) moves its operations from the West Bank to Jordan.

In response to the war, the UN Security Council passes Resolution 242, which calls for the “withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict [in official UN languages other than English the article “the” precedes “territories,” thus implying that Israel has to return all the conquered territory]; termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.” This resolution, with its formula of “land for peace,” is the basis of for all subsequent peace negotiations between Israel, Palestinians, and the surrounding Arab states.

September, 1970

Frustrated with and feeling threatened by the Palestine Liberation Organization’s involvement in Jordanian politics, King Hussein declares war on the PLO and imposes martial law. Three thousand people lost their lives in the fighting that ensued between the Jordanian and the PLO forces. In a peace agreement brokered by the Arab League and by Gamel Abdel Nasser, leader of Egypt, the PLO agreed to move its headquarters from Jordan to Lebanon. This was one of Nasser’s last acts as leader of Egypt, as he died later that month of a heart attack.

September 5, 1972

Palestinian gunmen kill 11 Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics.

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## October 6, 1973

Egypt and Syria organize a surprise attack on Israeli forces in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights on the day of the Jewish fast of Yom Kippur and the Muslim month of Ramadan, in which the annual fast is performed. The war lasted for 3 weeks, ending on October 22 on the Syrian front and October 26 on the Egyptian front.

Israelis refer to the war as the Yom Kippur war. Israel saw the war as a military victory because it maintained possession of the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights.

Arabs refer to the war as the Ramadan war. Egypt and Syria made initial gains but retreated after Israeli counter-attacks. Because they successfully carried out a surprise attack, the war was a political victory for Egypt and Syria. Though they overextended their forces and did not succeed in regaining control over the Sinai Peninsula and Golan Heights, Israel's military vulnerabilities were exposed, particularly because the U.S. air-lifted a large supply of weapons to Israel, without which Israel might not have been as successful in defending its territory.

## October, 1973

The UN Security Council passes Resolution 338, which calls for an immediate cease-fire and the immediate commencement of negotiations toward the implementation of UNSCR 242 with the goal of "establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East."

## 1974

The Arab League declares the P.L.O. the sole spokesman for the Palestinian Arabs.

## 1975

In what has become an annual event, the first "Land Day" protests by Palestinian citizens of Israel erupt to protest Government confiscations of Palestinian land and other discrimination in access to land and housing.

## July 4, 1976

Israeli commandos rescue 98 Israeli and Jewish hostages in Entebbe, Uganda, held by Palestinians who hijacked an Air France Airbus.

## 1978–1981

President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel and President Jimmy Carter of the United States sign the Camp David accords. Israel agrees to hand back the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in return for peace and normalization. This was significant because it was the first time an Arab country signed a peace treaty with Israel and thus accepted the state's existence. Signing the Camp David accord made Sadat unpopular among many Egyptians as well as Arabs living outside Egypt.

Egypt is expelled from the Arab League as a reaction to the peace agreement with Israel. Yet in 1980, Egypt and Israel establish diplomatic relations. This led directly to the assassination of President of Egypt Anwar Sadat on October 6, 1981, by 3 soldiers of the Egyptian Army. The hitherto unknown organization, the Liberation of Egypt, claims responsibility.

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June 6, 1982

Israel invades Lebanon and establishes a “security zone” in Southern Lebanon in order to block *Hezbollah* (a Lebanese Shi’a Muslim group whose name means “Party of God” in Arabic) forces from staging attacks on Northern Israeli communities from Lebanon. The Israeli Army reaches Beirut and succeeds in driving out Yasser Arafat’s Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Arafat moves his organization to Tunisia.

September 16, 1982

An official Israeli inquiry found Defense Minister Ariel Sharon indirectly responsible for the killings of 2000 unarmed Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Israel-allied Christian militias, saying he did nothing to stop the militias from entering the camps.

Israel-allied Christian militias enter the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps (housing Palestinian refugees) in Beirut and massacre about 2,000 unarmed Palestinians after Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters are forced out of Lebanon by Israel. The Israeli army occupied the camps at the time.

1983–1985

Israel makes a phased withdrawal from most of Lebanon, except for a “security zone” in south.

December 9, 1987

A Palestinian *Intifada* [“uprising” in Arabic] begins in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israel tried to suppress the “riots” and “disturbances,” with police and army forces, curfews, closing of universities, arrests, deportations and restrictions on economical activities. But a united Palestinian public continued its protests and demonstrations for six years. Some believe that as a result of the *Intifada*, Israeli public opinion changed and the majority of Israelis became in favor of entering into peace negotiations with the Palestinians. More than 20,000 people were killed or injured between 1987 and 1993.

The *Intifada* was in protest of continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and involved demonstrations, strikes, riots and violence. The most symbolically important act of the *Intifada* was the stoning of Israeli security forces and civilians, often performed by young men and boys. What made the *Intifada* stand out from earlier forms of protests was its duration and its wide public support, including women. The *Intifada* also marked the first time that Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza became significantly involved in the movement against Israeli occupation. Until then, most of the opposition was organized from outside the occupied territories by the PLO.

December 14, 1988

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat condemns all forms of terrorism and recognizes the state of Israel. U.S. President Ronald Reagan authorizes the U.S. to enter into a “substantive dialogue” with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Israel remains hostile to the PLO. Jordan renounces all territorial claims to the West Bank. The next day, in a clear show of support for the PLO, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 53/196, which “reaffirmed the inalienable rights of” Palestinians and Syrians in the Golan, called on Israel not to exploit natural resources in the occupied territories.

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## October 1991

The Madrid Peace Conference takes place in Madrid, Spain. The conference includes delegations from Israel, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and the Palestinians. The Madrid conference marks the first time most of the Arab parties (except for Egypt) and Israel sat down at a table together. The conference is organized along **bi-lateral** [involving or participated in by two nations] lines as well as **multilateral** [participated in by more than two nations] lines.

## January–September 1993

Secret talks between Israeli and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) negotiators begin in Oslo, Norway. On September 13, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sign a Declaration of Principles in Washington on the basis of the negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian teams in Oslo, Norway.

Israel recognized the PLO and gave them limited autonomy (in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza) in return for peace.

The PLO in turn gave up its claims to Israel's territory as defined by its borders before the 1967 war. The Palestinians also agreed to end the *Intifada* and establish security in the West Bank and Gaza.

The trade-offs made became known as “land for peace.” Because they could not resolve all the issues right away, the two sides agreed to make gradual steps towards a final settlement of the conflict. The process by which the two sides would gradually exchange land for peace and work out the more difficult issues standing in the way of a final agreement became known as the “Oslo peace process.”

What was significant about Oslo is that it ended the **existential** [of, relating to, or affirming existence] conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. The two sides were no longer claiming that the other did not have the right to exist as a state or peoples on that land and both pledged to work towards a final agreement that would settle all outstanding issues between them.

## 1994

In February a militant Jewish settler kills 29 Palestinians praying at the main mosque in Hebron, the West Bank. In May, Israel and the PLO reach the “Cairo Agreement,” which included an Israeli military withdrawal from about 60% of the Gaza Strip (Jewish settlements and their environs are excluded) and the West Bank town of Jericho. Further Israeli withdrawals were anticipated during a five year period in which a permanent resolution would be negotiated on the issues of Jerusalem, settlements, Palestinian refugees and Palestinian sovereignty.

On July 1, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat makes a triumphal return to Gaza to take up his new position as head of the new Palestinian self-rule Authority (PA), after nearly 12 years of running the PLO from Tunisia. On October 26, a comprehensive peace treaty between Israel and Jordan is signed. The peace treaty ended the conflict between the two countries that dated back to the war of 1967, when Israel gained control of Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan.

## 1995

On September 28, Arafat and Rabin sign the Taba agreement (known as Oslo II) in Washington to expand Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza and allow Palestinian elections (held on January 20, 1996). However, on November 4, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by Yigal Amir, an orthodox Jewish student opposed to Israeli withdrawals from the occupied West Bank. Shimon Peres becomes Prime Minister of Israel.

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## February–March 1996

A series of *Hamas* suicide bomb attacks kills 57 Israelis. Shimon Peres suspends negotiations with Syria. *Hamas* is an Islamist political group founded in 1988 that opposes Israel and rejects the Oslo peace process and other negotiations. *Hamas* is not an abbreviation but a nickname, and comes from the Arabic for “zeal.” The full name is *Harakatu Mujawamati Islamiya*, or Islamic Resistance Movement.

## 1996

In May, Likud candidate Binyamin Netanyahu wins the election for prime minister, defeating incumbent Shimon Peres, of the Labor party. Netanyahu had campaigned against the Labor party’s approach to the peace process, promising that he would provide “Peace with Security.” Yet in September, violence claims the lives of 61 Arabs and 15 Israeli soldiers over Israel’s opening of an archaeological tunnel site close to Muslim shrines in Jerusalem.

## January 17, 1997

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel hands over 80% of the West Bank town of Hebron to Palestinian rule, but holds on to the remainder, where several hundred Jewish settlers live among 20,000 Palestinians.

## October 23, 1998

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu signs the Wye River Memorandum outlining further Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank. The Wye River Memorandum resulted from meetings between President Bill Clinton and Netanyahu at the Wye Plantation in Maryland. The U.S. had been pressuring Israel to end 18 months of stagnation of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

## 1999

On May 19, Labor Party leader Ehud Barak is elected Prime Minister of Israel, defeating Likud party incumbent Binyamin Netanyahu. Barak campaigned on a platform of bringing an end to all of Israel’s conflicts with all its neighbors, Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. On September 5, 1999, Israel and the Palestinian Authority sign a revised deal based on the stalled Wye River accord, aimed at reviving the Middle East peace process. On November 8, 1999 final status talks resume between Israel and the Palestinians.

## 2000

In February a summit between Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat breaks up over a disagreement on a promised Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank under the revised Wye accord. Final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are deadlocked as the deadline for a **framework agreement** [basic guidelines for an eventual final agreement for peace between Palestinians and Israelis] is missed. In March, Israel hands over part of the West Bank to Palestinians as part of a land transfer agreed to at the Wye River conferences of 1998. The land amounted to 6.1% of the total of the West Bank.

On May 23, 2000, Israel unilaterally withdraws from the area of Lebanon it was occupying since 1982. And in July, a peace summit between Palestinian and Israeli leaders and negotiators at Camp David ends deadlocked over competing claims to Jerusalem and the issue of Palestinian refugees. Palestinians and Israelis accused each other of not being willing to make the compromises necessary for an agreement.

Israel believes its offer of handing over 95% of the West Bank and Gaza to Palestinians for the formation of a Palestinian state to be generous.

Palestinians believe they should not have to accept less than 100% of the West Bank and Gaza because the total of both territories only comprises 22% of what was originally Palestine.

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Israel views its condition of maintaining control over settlements and security zones in the West Bank to be not only reasonable but also necessary for its national security.

Palestinians also view the Israeli proposal as unacceptable because it would divide the Palestinian state into disconnected regions; a situation that would not free them from Israeli occupation and would not make for a truly independent state.

In this atmosphere of stalemate and recrimination, on September 28, 2000 Ariel Sharon, the leader of **Likud** [Israel's right-wing political party], visits the Temple Mount, known to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif ("Noble Sanctuary") with 1,000 Israeli soldiers. A Palestinian protest of Sharon's visit turns violent and sparks demonstrations and violence that have continued until today.

Sharon and his supporters state that the Palestinian violence was planned before his visit to the Temple Mount and that the Palestinians are only using his visit to the Mount as an excuse for their attacks.

Because Jews do not normally visit the Temple Mount except as tourists and because Sharon made his visit accompanied by 1,000 soldiers during a delicate part of the peace process, Sharon has been criticized for trying to provoke a Palestinian reaction that would undermine the peace process.

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has used the term "Terror Intifada" to describe the violence committed by Palestinians since September 2001.

Israelis point to Palestinian attacks on Joseph's tomb (in West Bank town of Nablus) on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2000 and Rachel's tomb (in West Bank town of Bethlehem) as proof that Palestinians do not respect Jewish holy sites and therefore should not be granted sovereignty over the Temple Mount.

Palestinians term their demonstrations and attacks the "al-Aqsa *Intifada*," in the name of the mosque on the Haram al-Sharif and state that the *Intifada* is fueled by frustration over continued Israeli occupation of the majority of the West Bank and parts of the Gaza Strip.

The Al Aqsa *Intifada* is significant because it marks the first time Palestinian citizens of Israel have participated in protests and demonstrations against Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israelis cite the participation of Arab Israelis in the recent *Intifada* as a reason not to allow Palestinian refugees to return to live in Israel.

Arab Israelis have stated that they are protesting the continued occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as the treatment of Arab Israelis within Israel. According to the Nazareth-based Arab Association for Human Rights, there are huge gaps in local government budgets for Jewish and Arab towns and municipalities.

In October, President Clinton presides over a summit between Palestinians and Israelis at the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. The summit attendees announce a cease-fire and plans to bring an end to the Palestinian-Israeli violence but the cease-fire comes undone soon after it is formed. With his governing coalition teetering on the edge of collapse, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak gives his resignation to the country's president on December 10, stating that he wants to seek a new mandate from the Israeli people. In other words, he hoped to get re-elected on the platform of continuing to work towards a final peace agreement with the Palestinians, and thereby regain the authority to take the steps necessary to achieve such an agreement. Barak ran as the Labor Party's candidate against Likud Party candidate Ariel Sharon.

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February 7, 2001

Likud Party (Israel's right wing) candidate Ariel Sharon is elected as Prime Minister of Israel, beating Ehud Barak by more than 20 percentage points. Sharon campaigned on the platform of "Peace with Security," and promised that he would take a different approach to the Palestinian conflict than the Oslo Peace Process approach. Palestinians are long-time critics of Ariel Sharon because of his role in Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and his support of Israel's settlement activity.

February 14, 2001

Following the deaths of eight soldiers and civilians killed when a Palestinian bus driver ploughed his vehicle into a waiting line of passengers, Israel reimposes a total blockade on the occupied territories.

Palestinians claim that the blockades prevent medical and humanitarian supplies from reaching Palestinians and prevent Palestinians from attending their jobs in Israel and traveling between towns in the occupied territories.

On March 7, Ariel Sharon formally takes office as Israeli prime minister, heading a fragile seven-party coalition and a government team comprising a third of the 120-member Knesset. Veteran Labor leader Shimon Peres serves as Foreign Minister, after talking his party into joining Ariel Sharon's rightwing government of national unity. In April, Israeli troops seize territory controlled by the Palestinians for the first time since the start of the Oslo process. Israeli troops seize the Gaza Strip and divide the territory into three parts.

In May, the Mitchell Commission calls for an immediate ceasefire, to be followed by confidence building measures and ultimately by renewed peace negotiations. Mitchell also calls for a freeze on expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. Additionally, the European Union accuses Israel of using "disproportionate" force in the occupied territories and calls on it to dismantle Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In June, a suicide bomber kills 19 young Israelis at a nightclub in Tel Aviv. Yasser Arafat orders his forces in the occupied territories to enforce a ceasefire.

The next month, on July 4, 2001, the Israeli security cabinet votes to give the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) a broader license to target Palestinian terrorists. Formerly, the IDF was only permitted to assassinate terrorists actually on their way to committing an attack. The new guidelines allow the IDF to act against known terrorists even if they are not on the verge of committing an attack.

Israel has stated that it must undertake preventive action against imminent terrorist threats and that in the small minority of cases where arrests are impossible (mostly due to the lack of Israeli jurisdiction in PA areas), it is forced to carry out other types of preventative operations it terms "active self-defense."

Israel states that international law in general, and the law of armed conflict in particular, recognize that individuals who directly take part in hostilities cannot claim immunity from attack or protection as innocent civilians. Israel states that it only acts in a manner that is in compliance with the principles and practice of armed conflict, and makes every effort to avoid involvement of innocent civilians.

Palestinians have taken issue with Israel's policy of "targeted assassinations," stating that these killings constitute extra-judicial executions, where the victims have been killed without trial and without the chance of a fair legal process designed to examine the allegations brought forward against them.

Palestinians state that under the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel as the Occupying Power has the right to arrest and bring to trial those suspected of violent hostile activities. However, under the same Convention, extra-judicial executions are willful killings, which constitute war crimes and are subject to universal jurisdiction.

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On August 10<sup>th</sup>, in retaliation for a Jerusalem suicide bombing on the previous day, Israeli warplanes fire missiles at and level the headquarters of the Palestinian police in the West Bank city of Ramallah. The militant Islamist group Hamas claimed responsibility for the bombing. Israeli Special Forces also seize the offices of the Palestine Liberation Organization at Orient House in East Jerusalem. Several days later, Israeli tanks move into the West Bank city of Jenin and open fire on the Palestinian police station, destroying it. This is the biggest incursion into Palestinian-controlled territory since 1994. The move is strongly criticized by Washington, which is coming under increasing international pressure to step up its intermediary role in the region. Nevertheless, on August 28, 2001 Israeli troops move into the West Bank town of Beit Jala, near the southern outskirts of Jerusalem. The U.S. and Britain strongly condemn the Israeli action. Throughout the late Summer and Fall Israel occupies major Palestinian cities for various lengths of time, including Jerico, Ramallah and Tulkarm.

Though the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has escalated since the October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001 assassination of the Israeli hard-line Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi by Palestinian militants, there are positive signs of a renewed interest in peace talks. In a speech to the United Nations on November 15<sup>th</sup>, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres spoke of Israeli support for Palestinian independence and a Palestinian state.

Since the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the Bush administration has shown more of an interest in bringing Israel and the Palestinians to negotiations, greatly in response to requests from Arab and Muslim governments that are supporting the U.S. war against terrorism. On October 2, Bush announced a dramatic break with his administration's previous Middle East policy by stating that he is prepared to back the creation of a Palestinian state and U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell is expected to outline a new American initiative for restoring negotiations between Israel and Palestine.

*This timeline was compiled by Negar Katirai while working as a Research Associate at the Council on Foreign Relations. Thanks also to Dr. Mark LeVine, University of California-Irvine, for reviewing this document.*

Most of the information in this timeline is based on the BBC's "In Depth: Middle East Peace Process" website: [http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/in\\_depth/middle\\_east/2000/mideast\\_peace\\_process/newsid\\_340000/340237.stm](http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/in_depth/middle_east/2000/mideast_peace_process/newsid_340000/340237.stm) as well as the "Washington Post's War and Peace in the Middle East" website: <http://washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/world/issues/mideastpeace> the United Nation's Question of Palestine website: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/qpal/index.html> and the U.S. State Department's website on the Middle East Peace Process: [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/nea/peace\\_process.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/nea/peace_process.html)

The information on the Israeli perspective was put together using the Israeli Government's official website, produced by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/home.asp> Information on the Palestinian perspective was compiled using the Palestinian National Authority's official website: <http://www.pna.net/Peace/Index.html> and the Palestinian National Authority's Ministry of Information's website: <http://www.minfo.gov.ps/>