



The War is Shaking the Foundations of Israel: ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT



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October 7, 2023, has already entered into the history of Israel as a tragic date. For one single day, what is known as Otef Aza (the Israeli localities around the Gaza Strip) ceased to be part of Israel. The Simchat Torah massacre took place on Israeli soil at a time when there were not enough soldiers, and intelligence had not anticipated the danger. This happened long after 1948, when Jews were thought to have found a safe haven, but that day was like those of the worst exiles.

This dark day in Israel's history leaves us empty. That day changed us all. We are no longer the same people, and it is no longer the same country. That day changed us because we were faced with certain aspects of Jewish history that we thought we had surpassed. This tragic day will also change the fate and way of life of many Jewish communities around the world. But this too shall be overcome. Below is simple educational material prepared for teachers, with a pedagogical approach for students.



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The return of the Jews to their historical and religious homeland has encountered great difficulties. For instance, the Arabs; particularly those living in the Land of Israel, refused the Jewish settlement of these lands. After World War I, the British received a mandate from the League of Nations (the precursor to the United Nations, UN) to administer the Land of Israel, which was then called Mandatory Palestine.

Although the League of Nations agreed to create a "Jewish national home," the Arabs responded with increasing violence, ending any possibility of coexistence. In 1921, 1929, 1936, and 1939, there were violent and increasing incidents, which led the Jews to create their first self-defense movement in 1920, the Haganah. Later, due to divergent objectives, the Irgun (Etzel) and Lehi were formed. With the creation of Israel on May 14, 1948 (5 Iyar, 5708), the three movements integrated into what is today the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).



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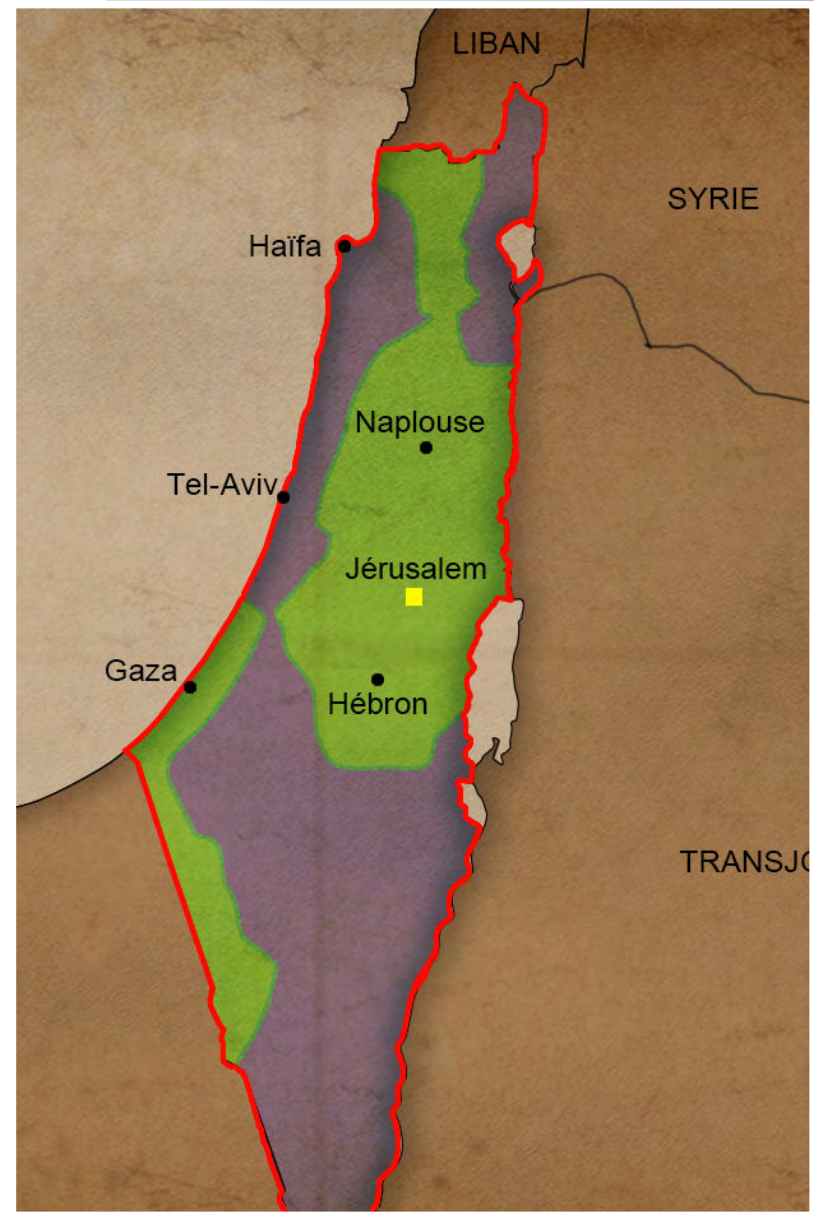
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The UN partitioned the Land of Israel into two states

Faced with escalating violence, the United Kingdom decided to terminate its mandate and transferred the responsibility to the United Nations. On November 29, 1947, the UN partitioned the Land of Israel into two states, one Jewish and the other Arab, with Jerusalem as an international city. The Palestinians rejected the plan and intensified assaults against civilians, attacking moshavim, kibbutzim, roads, and isolating Jerusalem, which had a Jewish population of 100,000. Throughout the country, there were no more than 600,000 native Jews and those who had arrived during the various Aliyahs from 1881 until the creation of the state.

https://api.histoire-j.com/sites/default/files/user/274/corpus/5f3fc88062a5d_09_palestine_britannique.jpg



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1948 - 1956

Following the declaration of independence by David Ben-Gurion, the British withdrawal, and Arab aggression, the invasion of Israel by Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon (limited participation), Iraqi troops, and other Arab countries from around the world ensued. After more than a year of armed conflict, which cost the lives of 6,000 Jews (1% of the population), Israel was victorious. The territories assigned to the Arab state fell into the hands of Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. Thousands of Arab refugees fled Israel to neighboring countries because of the war, and the Israeli Arabs living in the country today (21% of the population) are full Israeli citizens. The borders remained unchanged until June 4, 1967.

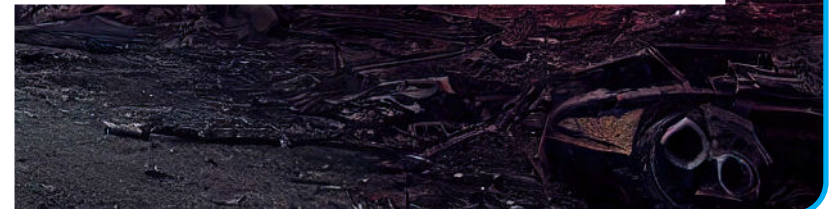
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG95PmoeAkM>



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1956

The Arab states and the Arabs who lost the war did not accept the existence of the internationally recognized State of Israel, and from what is known today as the Gaza Strip, groups of fedayin (Arab terrorists) attacked the south of the Jewish state. This act, coupled with Egypt's blockade of the Straits of Tiran in 1956, led to a swift Israeli military campaign that conquered the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. Under international pressure, Israel returned the conquered territories, and UN contingents were deployed between Egypt and Israel to protect the borders.



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1956-1967

From 1956 to June 4, 1967, the situation was still not peaceful. In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established with the goal of unifying the various existing paramilitary groups and intensifying the struggle against the Jewish state. Thus, Arab terrorism spread to various parts of the world at least until 1991, as a means of struggle against the Jewish state. In May 1967, the joint threat of Syria, Jordan, and Egypt to drive the Jews into the sea, the increase in terrorism from Gaza, the blockade of the Straits of Tiran, and the withdrawal of UN forces led Israel to a preemptive war that surprised the world: the Six-Day War (from June 5 to June 11, 1967). At the end of the war, Israel unified Jerusalem, divided since 1948; conquered all of Judea and Samaria, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula, as can be seen on the following map.

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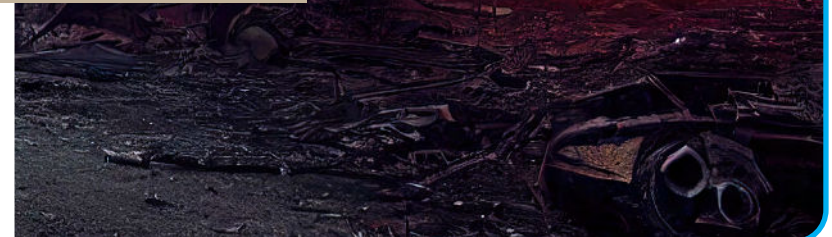


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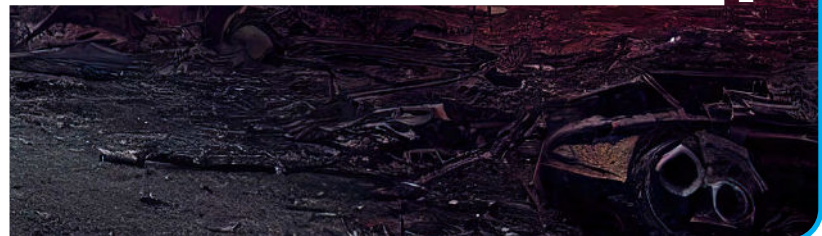


1977-1979

Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan, and the intelligence services' political errors regarding the military situation before the surprise war ultimately weakened the Labor Party, which had been in power since the creation of the state. In 1977, Menachem Begin came to power. Despite his firm nationalist convictions and opposition to ceding territories in exchange for peace, he hosted Egyptian president Anwar el-Sadat in Jerusalem in 1977. In 1979, the first peace agreement between Israel and a powerful Arab country like Egypt was signed. Israel agreed to return the Sinai Peninsula in three stages, while Egypt committed to establishing diplomatic, tourist, and trade relations with Israel. This agreement, signed in the United States with President Carter, is called the **Camp David Accords**.



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1970-1982 | PLO and Hezbollah

Since the arrival of Arab refugees and terrorists to Lebanon in 1970, after being expelled from Jordan where they were massacred, **the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)** took control of parts of Lebanon and committed numerous attacks against northern Israel. In 1982, in the context of a Lebanese civil war, Israel invaded part of Lebanon, reached Beirut, and forced the PLO leaders and terrorists to withdraw to Tunisia. Meanwhile, in 1979, an Islamic revolution in Iran brought an extremist Shiite Islamic government to power, which persists to this day. In 1982, Iran created **Hezbollah** in Lebanon, a group aiming to liberate Palestine from Zionist control and expel the Jews from Lebanon. With its terrorist actions against Israel and Jews worldwide, Hezbollah plays a major role that continues to strengthen to the present day.



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1992 | The Madrid Conference

The pacifist momentum initiated by Egypt would not be in vain. As the Soviet Union collapsed, **the Madrid Conference** was convened. For the first time, representatives from Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan would talk directly with Israel. Jordan would represent the Arabs. The importance of this conference enabled countries like China, India, and the declining USSR to establish direct relations with Israel in 1992.



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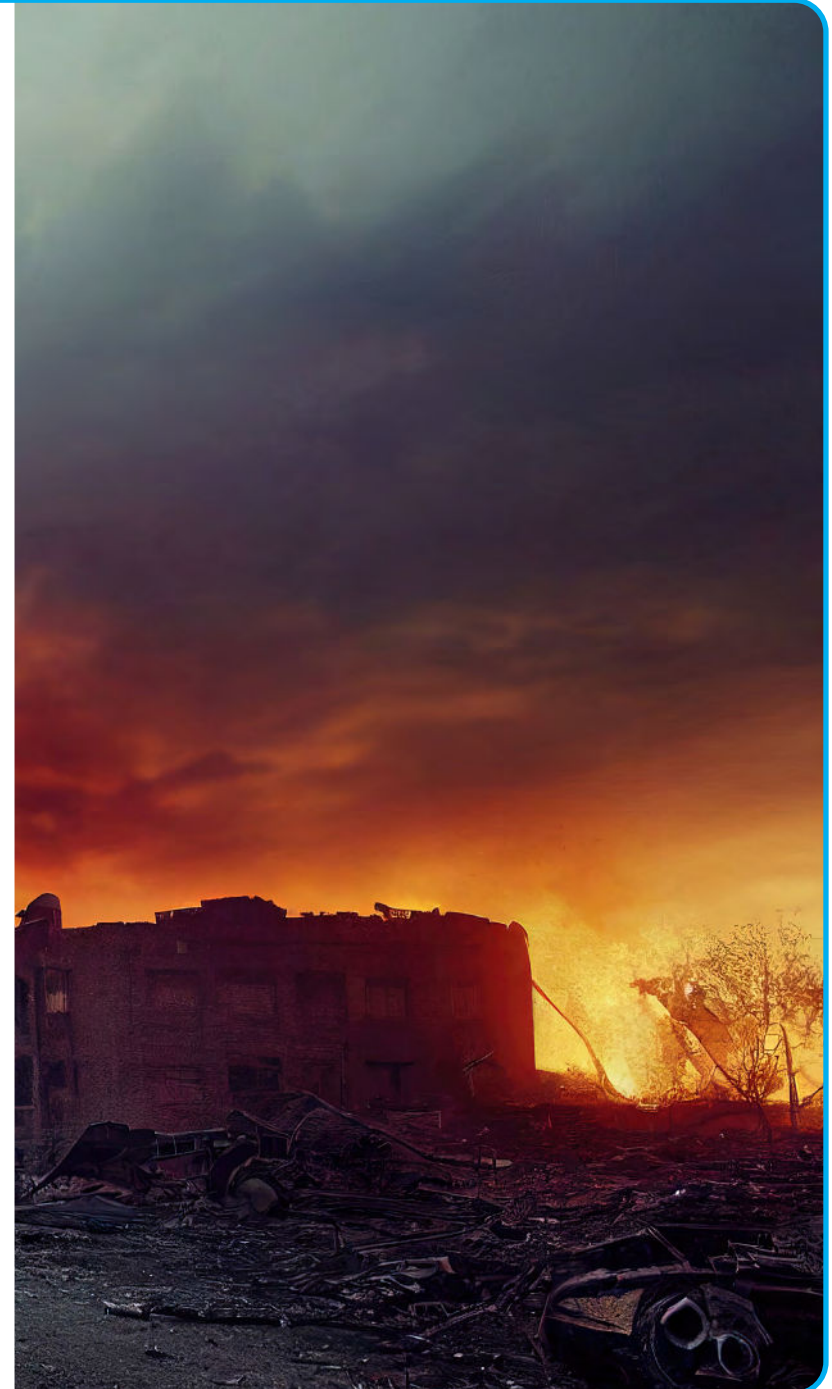
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"land for peace" or "security for peace"

The disappearance of the USSR as a superpower and the strengthening of the United States encouraged direct dialogue between Israel and the PLO. Secretly, from 1992, the government of Yitzhak Rabin began to develop this dialogue.

In Israel, political and social divisions deepened regarding the possibility of dialoguing with terrorists responsible for the death of Jews. Groups demanded "land for peace," while others called for "security for peace," without ceding territory that would endanger Israel's existence.



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1993 | The Oslo Accords

In 1993, US President Bill Clinton, Israelis Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, and Palestinian Yasser Arafat signed the Oslo Accords.

- Israel and the PLO (now called the Palestinian National Authority) recognized each other.
- The Palestinians committed to ceasing armed struggle against Israel.
- Israel would gradually withdraw from Gaza, several settlements in northern Samaria and Jericho in initial steps to creating a Palestinian state.
- A permanent agreement was to be signed by 1999.
- The status of Jerusalem, the so-called "Right of Return" for Palestinian refugees, the future of Jewish localities, and secure borders for Israel remained unresolved. The failure of this agreement is evident today.



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1994 | Peace agreement with Jordan

Peace agreement with Jordan signed in 1994 between Yitzhak Rabin and King Hussein.

- Israel yielded 300 km² of disputed land to Jordan.
- Israel provided thousands of liters of potable water to Jordan.
- Jordan and Israel exchanged ambassadors.
- Cooperation in the fight against Palestinian terrorism from Hamas. Indeed, in 1987, the Islamic Hamas was born in Gaza as a terrorist group opposed to any solution recognizing a Jewish state. For Hamas, Israel should not exist, and an Islamist state should be created in its place, with Jews as a religious minority.



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Despite commitments made in the Oslo Accords, two major events among others, have undermined them: the Palestinians have done little to stop Hamas, even encouraging and legitimizing it, leading to an increase in attacks and a stalemate in negotiations. Additionally, the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by an Israeli religious Zionist has rekindled fears of social and political fractures in Israel.



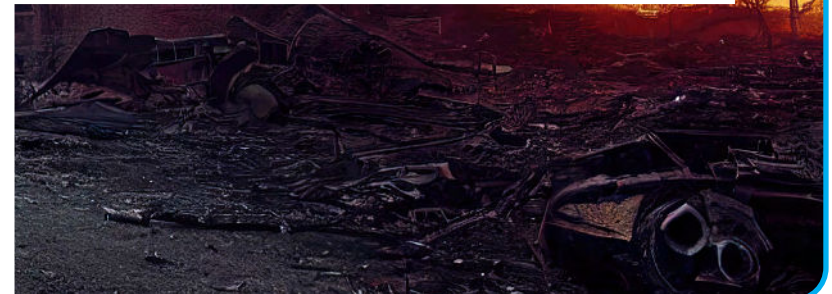
The Family of P.M. Rabin at His Funeral | ISRAELI TVSIKA: GPO



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2000 | Withdrawal from Lebanon and Camp David Summit

After the Labor Party returned to power, following a brief period of Likud rule, Prime Minister Ehud Barak took two complex political actions. On one hand, he proceeded with the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, which has been occupied by Hezbollah to this day. On the other hand, the Camp David II peace summit proved to be a failure. US President Bill Clinton met with Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat for a new summit. The Israeli Prime Minister was ready to give up 97% of the disputed territories, split Jerusalem, symbolically accept the Right of Return for refugees and their descendants, and exchange territories so as not to displace the majority of Jewish residents. Arafat, fearing backlash from Palestinian extremists, refused this generous offer. A few months later, he initiated the second Intifada to disrupt the internal cohesion of Israeli society. The outcome was almost 5 years, from September 2000 to mid-2005, of violent terrorist attacks against Israel, resulting in the deaths of over 1,000 Israelis and 4,000 Palestinians.



Eli Ben Yachou - LAVAM



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2005 | The Disengagement

In August 2005, another dramatic event fractured Israeli society. A centrist government led by Ariel Sharon decided on a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and four Jewish communities in northern Samaria. The military forcefully evacuated about 8,500 Jews from Gaza, who left behind their crops, greenhouses, synagogues, and homes. The Palestinian Authority (PA) took control of Gaza, but the population supported Hamas, which proceeded with a coup d'etat. Israel tightened security for Gaza but continued to provide fuel, food, electricity, and other resources. Despite this, there have been several armed conflicts with Hamas since 2008 to the present, as the group has made life unbearable for kibbutzim and towns around Gaza, launching over 35,000 projectiles and digging tunnels to infiltrate Israel.



Flickr - Israel Bardugo,



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2006 | The Second Lebanon War

In 2006, the Second Lebanon War broke out following the killing of 8 soldiers by Hezbollah. The war, led by Ehud Olmert, had an uncertain outcome, but a "quiet" border was established from that date to mid-2023. Since 2009, Likud has governed Israel (with the exception of 2022) and has accepted the concept of two states in the Land of Israel. Peace talks have been paralyzed by an increase in terrorist attacks from Gaza and Iranian interference, by supporting terrorist groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.



MILNER MOSHE - LA'AM



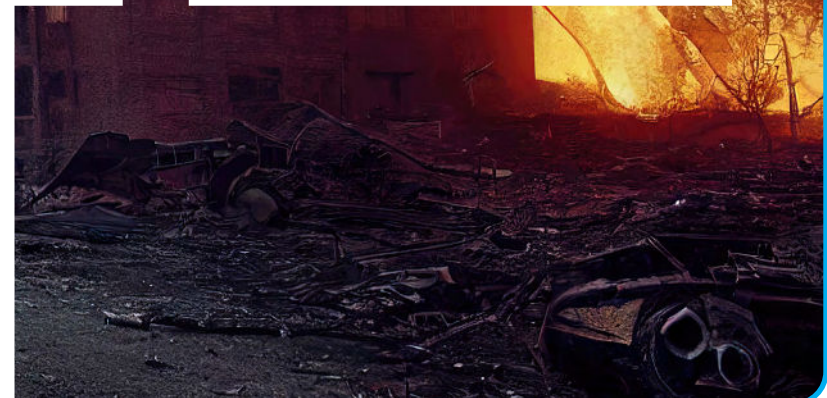
MILNER MOSHE - LA'AM



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Main points of contention between Israelis and Palestinians

- Palestinians want to establish a state within the pre-Six-Day War boundaries.
- They want to divide Jerusalem into two national capitals.
- They reject the presence of any Israeli presence in a prospective future Palestinian state.
- Israel refuses the so-called "Right of Return" for Palestinians because it would mean the demographic end of Israel as a Jewish state.
- The PA recognizes Israel only as a state, but NOT as a Jewish state.
- The Gaza Strip should be part of a unified Palestinian state connected to the West Bank in some way.



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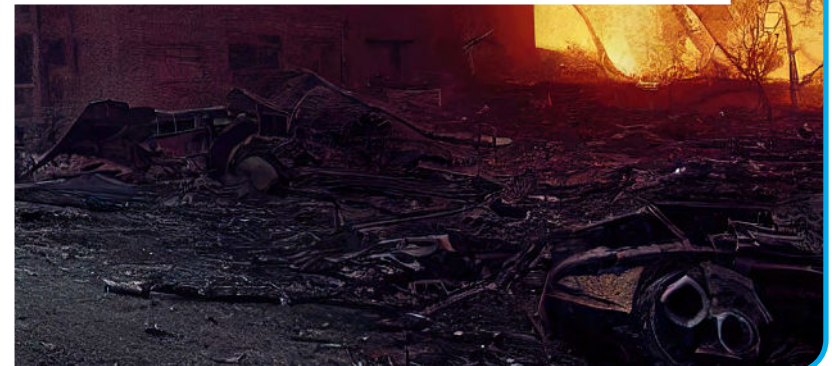
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Why is there no peace?

- The conflict is not only territorial, but also religious.
- A Jewish state with historical Jerusalem as its capital contradicts certain Islamic ideologies.
- The undeclared goal of the PA is the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, but it does not accept it as a demilitarized state. For Israel, this is an unacceptable requirement.
- Iran mobilizes a number of armed organizations opposing any existence of Israel.



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