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Israel's Invasion of Palestine Before the Gaza War and the Future of Palestine

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Abstract

Since the arrival of the first Jewish settlers in Palestinian lands, Israel has systematically occupied and annexed these territories using various methods. The wars with Arab countries in the region, which began after Israel's declaration of independence in 1948, pushed Israel into an aggressive and paranoid stance, prompting it to employ every available method to protect its initial gains and, later, to achieve its targeted geographical boundaries. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent expansion of Israeli occupation following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War led to the forced displacement of the Palestinian population, in violation of fundamental human rights principles. The creation of settlements for Jewish immigrants at every opportunity, along with the international community's indifference to these inhumane acts, has made this one of the most significant tragic realities of modern times. The massacre of tens of thousands of innocent people by the Israeli army, beginning with the events of October 7, represents a major step toward the conclusion of Israel's occupation efforts. The forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes under the pretext of eliminating terrorism in Palestinian territories can be seen as the ultimate result of the occupation policy pursued since Israel's establishment. However, Israel's disproportionate retaliations, violations of established international norms and the laws of war, and attacks on civilians, including hospitals, will have serious repercussions for international relations, particularly in the Middle East. The aim of this study is to examine the causes and consequences of Israel's occupation and subsequent policies, from its initial presence in Palestinian territories to the ongoing Gaza conflict.

Keywords: Gaza, Israel, Palestine, Occupation, Future

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İsrail'in Gazze Savaşı Öncesinde Filistin'i İşgali ve Filistin'in Geleceği

Özet

İlk Yahudi yerleşimcinin Filistin topraklarına yerleştiği günden itibaren İsrail farklı yöntemlerle Filistin topraklarını sistematik bir şekilde işgal ve ilhak etmeye başlamıştır. Kuruluşunu ilan ettiği 1948 ve sonrasında başlayan bölge deki Arap ülkeleriyle yaşanan savaşlar, İsrail'i agresif ve paranoyak bir yapıya sokmuş, öncelikle elde ettiği kazanımları korumak, sonra da hedeflediği coğrafi sınırlara ulaşmak için her türlü yöntemi uygulamaya koymuştur. 1948'de İsrail Devleti'nin kurulması ve devamında 1967 Arap-İsrail Savaşları sonrası İsrail'in işgali genişletmesi, bölgede yaşayan Filistin Halkını, tüm insan hakları kurallarını hiçe sayarak, zorla yerlerinden yurtlarından edilmesi, Yahudi göçmenlere her fırsatta yerleşim yerleri açılması, daha vahim olanı dünya kamuoyunun insanlık dışı zulme görmemezlikten gelinmesi günümüzün en önemli trajik gerçeği haline getirmiştir. 7 Ekim süreciyle başlayan ve on binlerce masum insanın İsrail ordusu tarafından katledilmesi İsrail`in işgal sürecinin sonuna doğru en büyük hamlesi olduğunu göstermektedir. Filistin topraklarındaki terörü yok etme bahanesiyle yüzbinlerce Filistinliyi yaşadıkları yerlerden zorla göç ettirmesi ise kuruluşundan itibaren sürdürdüğü işgal politikasının nihai bir sonucu olarak görülebilir. Ancak İsrail'in orantısız misillemeleri, yerleşik uluslararası normları ve savaş hukuklarını ihlali ve hastaneler de dahil olmak üzere sivillere yönelik saldırılarının uluslararası ilişkilere ve özellikle Orta Doğu bölgesine ciddi yansımaları olacaktır. Çalışmanın amacı, İsrail`in Filistin topraklarına gelişinden itibaren, günümüzde yaşanan Gazze savaşına kadar süregelen işgali ve sonrası siyasetini neden ve sonuçlarını incelemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gazze, İsrail, Filistin, İşgal, Gelecek

Introduction

In 1946–1947, during debates within Jewish domestic politics on the potential partitioning of Palestinian territories between Jews and Palestinians, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the leader of the revisionist movement, identified Arabs, Palestinians, and the British as adversaries who would oppose the borders of the "promised land" as outlined in the Torah. Within this context, the establishment of a Jewish state was envisioned as achievable through a guerrilla war against these adversaries, framed as a war of liberation.[1]

A primary objective was the active pursuit of illegal immigration and settlement policies to create a Jewish majority in Palestine. Key military principles emerged, including the use of force to respond to Arab aggression against Jews and the establishment of the Jewish state through pressure on the Arab population.[2] The unification of forceful strategies against Arabs diminished political debates and fostered a unified effort toward a shared goal.

During this critical period, when Jewish immigration to Palestine was crucial for both military reinforcement and territorial control, U.S. President Harry S. Truman supported

[1] Joseph Heller, *The Birth of Israel, 1945–1949: Ben-Gurion and His Critics* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 256–59.

[2] Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 217–20, 225–26.

the Jewish cause by pressuring Britain to permit 100,000 Jews to immigrate to Palestine.[3] While Ben Gurion sought to maintain U.S. support, he simultaneously institutionalized a policy rejecting integration with Middle Eastern Arab culture, embedding this principle into his administration's policies.[4] This orientation underscored segregation as a core element of the adopted security strategy, with Ben Gurion's unwavering stance playing a decisive role in its continuity.[5] Consequently, This strategy allowed Ben Gurion's approach of using force as a means of ensuring the Jewish state's future to dominate political discourse. The public was both encouraged and, at times, coerced into participating in these efforts. The persistent use of force as a solution to security issues aligns with this ideological framework. The popularity of Ben Gurion's ideas among ultra-nationalist Jewish groups further validated this perspective.[6] Ultimately, his doctrine was reflected in the policy of establishing the Jewish state through a strategy of "offensive defense."

Occupied by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War, the 38-year occupation of the Gaza Strip officially ended with Israel's withdrawal in 2005 and the evacuation of Israeli settlers. Following the withdrawal, elections held on January 25, 2006, resulted in Hamas winning a majority in the 132-seat Palestinian Parliament, securing 76 seats. Consequently, Hamas took control of both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian National Authority, under Hamas, formed a government.

However, Israel and Western states refused to recognize the elected Hamas government, and did not acknowledge Hamas as a legitimate political actor. In response, Israel imposed a series of political and economic sanctions aimed at undermining Hamas's authority in the region. These measures included restricting the entry of medicine, food, and fuel into Gaza and severely limiting Palestinian freedom of movement.[7]

With Hamas taking over the administration of Gaza, Israel further tightened its sanctions. On September 19, 2007, the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip was declared a "hostile territory" as part of counter-terrorism efforts, aiming to pressure Gaza by limiting the flow of goods into and out of the region.[8]

The root cause of the conflict in the Palestinian territories lies in the policies surrounding the Jewish population today. Through planned population and occupation strategies, settlers were moved to Palestinian territories without the consent of the region's inhabitants. As part of this occupation plan, which spans over a century, Israel's population reached 9.2 million people by 2023. Beyond Israel's borders, approximately 8.2 million Jews live worldwide, with 6 million residing in the United States and 2.2 million in other

3 Gregory Harms and Todd M. Ferry, *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction* (Miami: Pluto Press, 2008), 89.

4 Joan Comay, *Who's Who in Jewish History* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 55.

5 Amos Perlmutter, *Military and Politics in Israel* (London: Frank Cass, 1969), 54.

6 Fred J. Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 100–137.

7 Ahmet Hamdi Topal, "İsrail'in Gazze Ablukası ve Mavi Marmara Saldırısı," *Public and Private International Law Bulletin* 32, no. 1 (2012): 104–5.

8 Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Security Cabinet Declares Gaza Hostile Territory," September 19, 2007, accessed November 12, 2023, http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Communiques/2007/Security+Cabinet+declares+Gaza+hostile+territory+19-Sep-2007.htm

countries.[9] According to the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, 70,000 Jews migrated to Israel in 2022.[10] On the one hand, on the other hand, through Israel, the Palestinian people in the region while the processes of intimidation, displacement, and massacre continue. Similar to the templatizing approach of 200 years ago,[11] the Middle tempts to solve the problems in the East in a single session led to the Jewish occupation continuing its search for legitimacy.

For more than a century, the Palestinian territories have been under occupation, and the resistance group Izz al-Qassam Brigades has been fighting in the "Aqsa Flood" operation along the Israel-Gaza border. During their October 7 operation, they infiltrated nearby Jewish settlements and launched attacks. As a result of these attacks, more than 1,200 people were killed, over 5,132 were injured, and more than 250 individuals, mostly military personnel, were taken hostage.[12]

The aim of this study is to examine Israel's systematic occupation of Palestinian territories, from its initial presence to the present day. It also analyzes the consequences of Israel's occupation of Gaza, which began after the October 7 attacks, including the killing of thousands of people and the displacement of hundreds of thousands from their homes. Additionally, the study explores Israel's future political behavior and the causes and consequences of its post-occupation policies.

1. Invasion Activities Before and After Zionism

Although the Jewish population in these lands increased during the Ottoman rule, Jews were scattered in many countries, especially in Russia, due to previous deportations. Nationalism, one of the main ideologies that influenced the shaping of the international system in the 19th and 20th centuries after the French Revolution in 1789, also impacted the future of the Jewish community, which had not yet established its state until this date. The nationalism movement created the idea of separating from the empires they were attached to and establishing their own countries on a global scale, and Jewish communities, like other nations, were influenced by this idea and sought to live in their own countries in security.

From the late 19th century onwards, the anti-Semitic treatment faced by Jewish communities in Europe and Russia, combined with the centuries-long desire of the Jewish community to return to Eretz Yisrael, led to the rise of Zionism—a political movement advocating for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. While many Jews from Russia emigrated to America, Jewish nationalism began to take root in Russia and Eastern Europe with the establishment of the Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) movement. A small

[9] TRT Haber, "İsrail'e Yahudi göçünde son 20 yılın en yüksek rakamına ulaşıldı", September 27, 2022, https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/israile-yahudigocunde-son-20-yilin-en-yuksek-rakamina-ulasildi-711843.html (Date of Access: November 22, 2023).

[10] Zvika Klein, *Israel receives 70,000 new immigrants in 2022, highest rate in decades*, The Jerusalem Post, December 22, 2022, https://www.jpost.com/aliyah/article-725547 (Date of Access: November 22, 2023).

[11] Gilead Sher, Comparing the "Deal of the Century" with Previous Plans, *INSS*, February 2, 2020, https://www.inss.org.il/publication/trump-deal-comparative-review/ (Date of Access: November 22, 2023).

[12] Global Security, "Operation Iron Swords," November 19, 2023, accessed November 22, 2023, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/operation-ironswords-2023-11-19.htm

group of Hovevei Zion members arrived in Jaffa in 1882, during the Russian pogroms[13], in search of a suitable area to establish their settlement.

The Ottoman State's Land Code of 1858 had a significant impact on shaping Jewish settlement activities. Most of the settlements established during this period were purchased from large landowners who took advantage of this law. Following the implementation of this law, almost all land in Palestine, except for private land in small towns, was classified as state land under various categories. As will be discussed in the following sections, this law continued to be used to establish new settlements, even in the territories occupied after 1967.[14]

The first development that shaped the establishment of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories was the First Aliyah[15], the Jewish immigration to Palestine between 1882 and 1903, especially from Eastern Europe and Yemen. A few thousand Jews who arrived in Palestine in 1882 would constitute the first wave of immigration of the First Aliyah. Yesud haMa'ala, the first organization aimed at buying land and establishing settlements in Palestine, was formed in March 1882. The settlers were mostly individuals and families who were under the influence of Hovevei Zion and Bilu (Beit Ya'acov Lechu V'nelcha). Lacking economic resources and practical skills, the majority of this young group of secular and socialist youth failed to realize a common goal and left Palestine.[16]

The Jews who immigrated to Palestine settled in plains and valleys that were not favored by Arabs for settlement. A total of three moshavot (plural of moshavot) were established by the end of 1882, the first of which was Rishon leZion, the traditional form of settlement in which members cultivated their land independently, unlike the communally administered kibbutz (first Degania Alef in 1909) and moshav (first Nahalal in 1921). By the end of 1903, 5,000 Jews were residing in the 28 moshavot established in Palestine. Although no supreme authority set a standard practice, the moshavot established common provisions for self-government.[17] Thus, the Jews defined a different lifestyle in Palestine from the Arabs and saw themselves differently.

In 1904, the Second Aliyah, which was influenced by the pogroms in Tsarist Russia, became closely associated with the Socialist-Zionist movement. This new group of politically well-organized socialist nationalists developed a new form of rural settlement, the kibbutz, in response to problems with the Moshavot and the Baron's officials there. The first kibbutz, Degania, as well as Tel Aviv and the first defense organization, Hashomer, were founded in 1909 by Jews who immigrated to Palestine during the Second Aliyah. Neighborhoods such as Jaffa and Ahuzat Bayit were also established during this period. In total,

[13] Pogrom is a Russian word meaning riot; it refers to attacks by civilian members of one ethnic group on civilian members of another group because of the group to which they belong. It has often been used to describe anti-Semitic movements in Russia.

[14] Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 41.

[15] Aliyah is Hebrew for "going up; ascension", and today it means "ascent" migrations to the lands that had been taken for granted.

[16] S. Ilan Troen, *Imagining Zion: Dreams, Designs, and Realities in a Century of Jewish Settlement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 10.

[17] Troen, *Imagining Zion*, 10.

approximately 40,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine during the Second Aliyah, which ended with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. By 1918, an estimated 7,499 Jews were living in 43 agricultural settlements.[18]

Palestine was invaded by British forces during the 1917-1918 wars and officially came under British Mandate rule in 1922. Reluctant to bear the economic burden of the investments required for the control of Palestine, the Palestinian rulers tended to support the World Zionist Organization (WZO), which constantly made new investments and encouraged Jewish immigrant entrepreneurs to spend capital for the development of the country.[19]

Step by step, the Jews began to develop their institutions in Palestine and developed formulas to expand settlements. In this regard, the Jewish Agency was established concerning the Balfour Declaration[20] and was recognized by the British authorities. Furthermore, the Israeli parliament (Asefat HaNivharim, transformed into ha-Knesset in 1949) was established in 1920 as part of the Jewish public yishuv in Palestine. It was officially recognized by the King's Order of 1921, which granted the Jews autonomy in their internal affairs. These two institutions directed settlement strategies. Meanwhile, religious views also played a role in shaping settlement policy. During the Reconstruction period, the settlement process was multifaceted, leading to a conflict between urban densification and rural coexistence and regional growth.[21]

The Third Aliyah, which took place between 1919 and 1923, was a continuation of the Second Aliyah. This group was similar to the Second Aliyah in that it was young, educated, organized, and secular. This young group changed the character of the yishuv, founded the Histadrut, a nationwide labor organization, and played an important role in the establishment of the Haganah, the first defense organization. It also provided labor for the construction of new roads and houses and the start of industry, strengthening Jewish agriculture. Until 1920, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) was able to purchase land to a limited extent. Still, the Land Transfer Act of 1920, which was enacted after the arrival of Sir Herbert Samuel, a Zionist Jew, to the British administration in 1920, made it easier for the JNF to purchase land. In 1922, 15 new rural settlements were established. With the financial support of the active Jewish diaspora, Jews aimed to purchase arable land, which was generally not densely populated. In 1914, the amount of agricultural land increased from 54,000 acres to 437,000 acres in 1922.[22] As can be seen, the policies of the British Administration played an active role in allowing Jewish organizations to purchase land and establish settlements, and thus in determining the borders of the future Jewish state.

18 Seth J. Frantzman and Ruth Kark, "The Muslim Settlement of Late Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine: Comparison with Jewish Settlement Patterns," *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013): 80–81.

19 Arnon Golan, "European Imperialism and the Development of Modern Palestine: Was Zionism a Form of Colonialism?" *Space and Polity* 5, no. 2 (2001): 136.

20 The Balfour Declaration was the initiative of Arthur Balfour, Foreign Secretary in the British war cabinet under Lloyd George, which resulted in the establishment of a Jewish state - Israel - in Palestine.

21 Emre Yüksek, "Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory Before and After the Peace Process" (Master diss, Middle East Technical University, Institute of Social Sciences, 2011), 21.

22 Frantzman and Kark, *The Muslim Settlement of Late*, 80-81.

During the Fourth Aliyah (1924-1929), approximately 70,000 immigrants from Russia, Romania, and Lithuania, mostly from Poland, immigrated to Palestine. In addition to the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, the additional taxes imposed on banks, businessmen, and merchants in Poland as part of the economic reform left Jews, who were largely engaged in this sector, in a difficult situation and paved the way for Jewish emigration. For this reason, the Fourth Aliyah was composed of educated professionals with private capital who came with their families. This capitalist concentration in the immigrant population caused the Fourth Aliyah to be known as "bourgeois immigration".[23]

In 1922, Arabs were the overwhelming majority in Palestine against Jews, who accounted for only 11% of the population, while in 1939, 400,000 Jews made up 30% of the total population. The British immigration policies that allowed Jewish immigration to Palestine were eventually resented by the Arab elite in Palestine. The idea that the British supported the Zionist takeover of Palestine led to the emergence of the national Palestinian movement, which was initiated by Muslim elites, and supported by many Christian elites. In 1920, 1921, and 1929, Arab resistance led to violent riots. These riots led the British to impose some restrictions on Jewish immigration.[24] The Fifth Aliyah (1929-1939) can be divided into two large separate waves of immigration, one from 1929 to 1931 and the other from 1932 to 1936.

The second four-year wave of immigration brought approximately 180,000 Jews to Palestine. The first period, as mentioned above, was characterized by rising tensions between Arabs and Jews and social unrest. As a result of the aggressive attitudes and campaigns of both groups, the violence that started in Jerusalem on August 22 and 23, 1929 spread throughout Palestine.[25]

In 1931, the Irgun Zvai Leumi, an illegal militia force formed by a group of Haganah opponents, declared war against the Arabs and aimed to expel the British from Palestine and declare independence. In line with these aims, the Irgun responded to Arab uprisings with Zionist uprisings.[26] The expulsion of the Wadi al-Hawarith Arabs to the vicinity of Tulkarem was an important development in terms of symbolizing the lands lost to the Zionist Movement and Jewish civil institutions, and the uprisings that started in reaction to this were concentrated in the Haifa region and the Jezreel Valley, where most of the kibbutzes and mosques were located.[27] After the Great Arab Revolt, Arab workers and Jewish immigrants who migrated to the port cities came face to face. There are four main reasons for the beginning of the regionalization process in Zionist practice from 1936 onwards. First, the Arab riots between 1936 and 1939 created serious security problems and created the need to establish additional settlements to protect existing settlements, roads, and other areas. The second factor was that the Arab revolts were aimed at

23 Aharon Kellerman, *Society and Settlement: Jewish Land of Israel in the Twentieth Century*, SUNY Series in Israeli Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 51–52.

24 Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi 1914-1995* (İstanbul: Alkım Yayınevi, 2007), 200.

25 Charles K. Rowley and Jennis Taylor, "The Israel and Palestine Land Settlement Problem: An Analytical History, 4000 B.C.E.–1948 C.E.," *Public Choice* 128, no. 1/2 (2006): 53.

26 Rowley and Taylor, "The Israel and Palestine," 53.

27 Yüksek, *Barış Sürecinden Önce*, 22.

destroying the Jewish communal entity, but as a result of Jewish urban and agricultural development, 64% of the goods and services consumed were of their production.

Third, the British Mandate rulers backed away from their promise of a "National Homeland" and began to limit immigration. Therefore, the Jews had to put more effort into the continued development of this homeland. Finally, many plans for the partition of Palestine drew the borders according to the location of settlements.[28] The disputes caused by the Fifth Aliyah, which changed the population balance in Palestine to the detriment of the Arabs, fed the idea of defense of the settlements, and defense strategies were formulated during this period of revolt. As a result of the evacuations that had already taken place due to some security issues and the events of 1936-1939, the Haganah and the kibbutz movement developed a defense strategy against the ongoing mass attacks and created a network of communication between the two. Conflicts were often caused by the distribution of resources. While the Arabs claimed that resources were insufficient, the Jews claimed that Palestine could support another half a million inhabitants if new industrial developments took place.[29]

As Nazi-initiated racism spread across Eastern Europe, the Zionists spent large sums to encourage Jewish immigrants to seek asylum in Palestine. In 1938, Ben Gurion presented a program known as the "immigration intifada", which was based on mass illegal immigration.[30] This illegal immigration (Aliyah Bet- Ha'apalah) exceeded the immigration limit of 75,000 set for the next five years in the British White Paper of 1939, and 92,000 Jews immigrated to Palestine during the Second World War (1939-1945).[31] With this wave of immigration, which changed the population balance in cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa, Jews who came to Palestine and joined the kibbutzim increased settlement efforts and experienced difficulties in this transition process. In addition, many immigrants, who were more attracted to the idea of living in big cities, were afraid to go to remote areas in the Jezreel Valley and Galilee.[32] As a reflection of this, settlers who feared the harsh working conditions in the rural settlements preferred to work in sectors such as industry or construction and thus preferred the big cities.

28 Kellerman, *Society and Settlement*, 56.

29 Yüksek, *Barış Sürecinden Önce,* 24-25.

30 Yechiam Weitz, "Jewish Refugees and Zionist Policy during the Holocaust," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 2 (1994): 355.

31 Shoshana Neuman, "Aliyah to Israel: Immigration under Conditions of Adversity," IZA Discussion Paper no. 89 (December 1999): 8.

32 Dalia Ofer, "Holocaust Survivors as Immigrants: The Case of Israel and the Cyprus Detainees," *Modern Judaism* 16, no. 1 (1996): 9.

Table 1: Chronology of Important Dates Before the State of Israel

Years	Chronology of Important Dates
1878	First Zionist agricultural colony in Palestine (Petah Tikva)
1882	25,000 Jewish immigrants begin to settle in Palestine, mainly from eastern Europe
1891	Baron Maurice de Hirsch, a German, founds the Jewish Colonization Association in London to aid Zionist settlers in Palestine
1896	Der Judenstaat, a book advocating the establishment of a Jewish state, is published by Austro-Hungarian Jewish writer Theodor Herzl. Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) begins operations in Palestine
1897	Zionist Congress calls for a home for Jewish people in Palestine Pamphlet by founder of socialist Zionism, Nahman Syrkin, says Palestine "must be evacuated for the Jews". First Zionist Congress in Switzerland sets up the World Zionist Association (WZO) and petitions for "a home for the Jewish people in Palestine".
1904	Tensions between Zionists and Palestinian farmers in Tiberias area
1904-1914	40,000 Zionist immigrants arrive in Palestine; Jews now total 6% of the population.
1917	Balfour Declaration; British Secretary of State pledges support for "a Jewish national home in Palestine". Ottoman forces in Jerusalem surrender to British General Allenby
1919-1933	35,000 Zionists immigrate to Palestine. Jews now total 12% of the population and hold 3% of the land
1922	League of Nations Council approves Britain's Mandate for Palestine British census of Palestine: 78% Muslim, 11% Jewish, 9.6% Christian, total population 757,182
1924-28	67,000 Zionist immigrants come to Palestine, half of whom are from Poland, raising Jewish population to 16%. Jews now own 4% of land
1939	Zionist leader Jabotinsky writes: "... the Arabs must make room for the Jews in Eretz Israel. If it was possible to transfer the Baltic peoples, it is also possible to move the Palestinian Arabs." British House of Commons votes in approval of a White Paper which plans conditional independence of Palestine after 10 years and the immigration of 15,000 Jews into Palestine each year for the next 5 years
1948	Report claims that between 175,000 and 250,000 Palestinians have been forced from their homes

Source: Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing Of Palestine*, (Oxford: Publications Oneworld, 2011), 326-330.

Figure 1:United Nations Partition Plan, adopted as General Assembly Resolution 181 (29 November 1947)

Source: Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing Of Palestine*, (Oxford: Publications Oneworld, 2011), 333.

Table 2: Palestine: Distribution Of Population By District Showing Percentages Of Palestinians And Jews, 1946

DISTRICT	PALESTINIAN	JEWISH
ACRE	96	4
BAYSAN	70	30
BEERSHEBA	99	<1
GAZA	98	2
HAIFA	53	47
HEBRON	99	<1
JAFFA	29	71
JERUSALEM	62	38
JENIN	100	0
NABLUS	100	0
NAZARETH	84	16
RAMLA	78	22
RAMALLAH	100	0
SAFAD	87	13
TIBERIAS	67	33
TUL-KAREM	83	17

Source: Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing Of Palestine*, (Oxford: Publications Oneworld, 2011), 334.

2. Invasion Activities After the Establishment of the State of Israel

In 1947, towards the end of the negotiations with the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, which was created to investigate and propose a solution to all problems related to the Palestinian issue and consisted of representatives of 11 member states, Zionist groups increased their attacks on the Arab community and British and United Nations (UN) forces. According to Tessler, Jewish forces implemented the Dalet Plan to force the Arab population to abandon their property and to gain control of the borders. The Haganah also determined another plan that was in line with the Dalet Plan and accordingly, Jewish forces tried to take control of the territories assigned to the Arab state by the UN. As a result of this war, Israel took control of a larger territory than the borders set by the 1947 UN resolution, including the Negev region.[33]

After the 1948 war, newly arrived immigrants and war refugees settled on the properties of Arabs who had fled or been expelled. Many abandoned houses suitable for settlement near Jerusalem also belonged to Arabs. Arab assets in former Arab enclaves[34] in mixed-population areas such as Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jaffa were also confiscated. Most of the 72,000 settler refugees of the 1948 war found refuge in the old Arab towns, of which about 30,000 continued to live there permanently.[35]

After Israel gained its independence in 1948, it developed a new form of settlement, the development city. The development of this settlement pattern was influenced by the integration of migrants into the economic system, the establishment of new settlements in low-populated areas to reduce regional population imbalances, the opening of border areas for settlement to ensure independence and security, changing the basic structure of the urban system by delimiting coastal areas, and creating integrated and egalitarian regional systems by establishing urban service centers. For these reasons, the establishment of development cities is not an aspiration but a necessity.[36]

With the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel occupied a much larger territory than anticipated, covering the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula. This larger-than-expected Israeli gain had a direct impact on settlement policies. Until 1967, the settlement policy was to provide accommodation for immigrants, whereas, after 1967, militarist and religious views and security issues began to influence settlement policies more. This change was driven both by the concern that declining migration waves would not provide sufficient settlement in the occupied territories and the sense of self-confidence created by the success of the Six-Day War.

Post-1967 war Israeli actions such as annexation, expulsion, and the establishment of new settlements violate international law. The United Nations (UN) has frequently condemned Israel's hasty annexation of East Jerusalem and surrounding villages and towns. Title 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the annexation of occupied territory. Title 49 prohibits the forcible transfer or expulsion of inhabitants of occupied territories, regardless

33 Yüksek, *Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory*, 30-31.

34 In political geography, a political territory that is completely within the borders of another political territory is called an enclave territory.

35 Golan, "European Imperialism," 1.

36 Kellerman, *Society and Settlement*, 73.

of the cause, yet Israel has caused many Palestinian Arabs to flee their homes. The same title prohibits the occupying power from transferring its population to the occupied territories.

Indeed, as early as 1981, records show that 90,000 Israeli Jews were settled in the officially illegally annexed Jerusalem area, while 30,000 Jews were settled in 100 nahals (military settlements), villages and towns authorized, planned and financed by the Israeli Government.[37] The absence of a clause in the Geneva Convention prohibiting the establishment of security outposts was used by the Israeli government to support settlements that were later civilian but initially established for military purposes.[38] Apart from political forces and individuals, settlers have also been influential in Israeli politics.

The settlement movement in the territories occupied in 1967 was predominantly in line with the maximalist view. Maximalist Zionists advocated the expansion of Greater Israel to include the lands of the former Jewish kingdom, in contrast to the minimalist approach, which advocated the consolidation of a Jewish state in the controlled territories in accordance with pragmatic thinking. The Greater Israel Movement, which was formed by right-wing parties in Israel, also advocated increasing settlements in the occupied territories in line with the maximalist view.[39]

After 1967, the Israeli policy, which is more influenced by the maximalist view, has increased the construction of settlements that disrupt the structure of the West Bank. This settlement policy implemented by Israel on the occupied territories, especially on the West Bank, and the historical and religious theses it puts forward regarding the territories will both create an obstacle to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Middle East and postpone peace in the Middle East.

After the 1967 War, Gaza was one of the territories that Israel occupied and implemented settlement policies on. According to Allon, who emphasized the importance of Gaza for Israel's defense and security, withdrawing from the Gaza Strip would endanger Israel's security. The establishment of new settlements in Gaza also meant preventing the free movement of the Palestinian movement, which was on the rise in the 1970s, and proving the permanence of the Israeli presence in the region.[40]

After the Six-Day War, many plans were made to consolidate Israeli security in the Gaza Strip. The most well-known plan, described by the Yitzhak Rabin government as "putting our finger on the problem", aimed at establishing settlements in Nahal Netzarim, South Gaza, Kfar Darom, Katif, Nahal Morag, South Rafiah, and the industrial areas in the north of the Gaza Strip. Based on this view, which appears frequently in government decisions, there appears to be a positive attitude toward settlements in the southern Gaza Strip, despite the complete collapse of the concept of security.

37 Janet Abu-Lughod, "Israeli Settlements in Occupied Arab Lands: From Conquest to Colony," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 11, no. 2 (1982): 17.

38 Ann Mosely Lesch, "Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967–1977," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7, no. 1 (1977): 27.

39 Yüksek, *Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory*, 45.

40 Izhak Schnell and Shaul Mishal, "Place as a Source of Identity in Colonizing Societies: Israeli Settlements in Gaza," *Geographical Review* 98, no. 2 (2008): 246.

With a population of over 400,000, Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, but in 1978 it housed only 500 Jewish settlers. The siege of Gaza by the Israeli army and the lack of an escape route for Palestinians prevented its evacuation during the war. The 50,000-population difference between pre-war Egyptian Authority estimates and post-war censuses conducted by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is due to people temporarily abroad who did not return; Egyptian overestimates of the population; wartime evacuations to the east and west; and underreporting in the Israeli census. Despite this decline, the Gaza Strip remained too densely populated for settlements.[41]

Israel's seizure of Arab areas in West Jerusalem after its establishment and Arab opposition prevented the implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) of 1947, which called for the "protection of Jerusalem under an international regime". Following Israel's occupation of West Jerusalem, Jordan occupied the rest of Jerusalem and Jerusalem remained divided between Jordan and Israel until 1967.

Taking advantage of the outbreak of the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel occupied East Jerusalem, and began taking measures to Judaize it. UN General Assembly Resolutions 2253 and 2254 and UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 262, which condemned Israel's measures to change the status of East Jerusalem and expressed the invalidity of this activity, were not successful in getting Israel to step back.[42]

In the first phase immediately after the Six Day War, Israel focused its land and settlement policies exclusively on East Jerusalem, with Jerusalem receiving the largest share of settlement policies and investments. By bringing East Jerusalem under its sovereignty, Israel aimed to prevent its future re-division. Secondly, the settlement policies covered the entire West Bank, taking into account strategic and demographic considerations and future territorial concessions.[43]

Even though Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem drew international outcry due to the cultural and religious value of the city, in the immediate aftermath of the June 1967 war, a total of 135 houses were demolished and 650 people were evacuated in a short period of one week. Although compensation was offered to the owners of the properties, it did not make sense as these lands were Waqf lands, meaning that they were not the private property of the inhabitants. In 1968, the Israeli government began the expropriation of property and announced that 116 dunams of land in Jerusalem would be confiscated for public use. This decision aimed to develop the neighborhood for the settlement of Jewish families and thus restore the Jewish presence in Jerusalem.[44] With these policies, Israel has tried to change the multicultural and multi-religious character of Jerusalem and to give it the character of a Jewish city.

In 1976, different plans were presented for the further expansion of settlements in the Jerusalem area. The first plan, presented by the Minister of Housing, Shmuel Shaked, was

41 Abu-Lughod, "Israeli Settlements," 29.

42 Türkkaya Ataöv, *Kudüs ve Devletler Hukuku* (Ankara: Yonca Matbaası, 1981), 38-48-49.

43 Michael Romann, "Territory and Demography: The Case of the Jewish-Arab National Struggle," *Middle Eastern Studies* 26, no. 3 (1990): 375.

44 Michael Dumper, "Israeli Settlement in the Old City of Jerusalem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21, no. 4 (1992): 37.

the most influential in its implementation. It proposed the establishment of 2 or 3 cities around Jerusalem, with a city of 1,200 families in Givan and an urban settlement of 250 families in Gabel Muktam. All these satellite cities would cover an area beyond the annexed area and would form the basis for future annexation attempts.[45]

While the plans presented agreed on the expansion of Jerusalem, they differed on how it would be done. In the West Bank, which Israel occupied after the Six-Day War, as in the Gaza Strip, Arabs, the indigenous inhabitants of the territories, lived together with Arabs who had been forced to leave their homes in Palestine after the 1948 war. The Israelis preferred to use the biblical names Judea and Samaria for the West Bank.[46] Using these names was a choice to support Israel's historical and religious rights over the land.

In the months following the war, the Levi Eshkol government did not set a clear policy towards the establishment of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Initially, most members of the government opposed the establishment of civilian settlements, arguing that the territory should be retained as a bargaining chip for future negotiations, as had been considered for other territories. However, these demands were overcome by pressure from both some interest groups and from within the government.[47] As a result, as early as September 1967, the first settlement in the West Bank, Kfar Etzion, a kibbutz, was established between Hebron and Jerusalem. From September 1967 to the end of 1970, 16 new Israeli settlements were established in the West Bank. From 1971 to the end of 1976, Israeli occupiers established 21 new settlements in different parts of the West Bank.[48]

By 1974, Israel had acquired 1.5 million of the total 5.5 million dunams of the West Bank (27.3% of the West Bank). This land was used for a variety of purposes, including building settlements, expanding into the territory, and establishing military camps. Settlements Approximately 350,000 dunams of land in the West Bank, mostly agricultural land, have been used for settlements. Israel has concentrated its construction efforts, especially in the area around Jerusalem, where 76,000 people have lived. The reasons for the existence of these settlements can be seen as industrial, agricultural, military, purely for housing purposes, or a combination of these. This was intended to make it difficult to evacuate the area in the event of a future peace. From the Nazi camps According to survivor Dr. Shahak, the Jewish settlements in the West Bank aim not only at permanent annexation but also at permanent ghettoization. This would keep the population under control and facilitate colonial rule.[49]

In the 1977 elections, with the formation of the Likud Government, the peace talks between Egyptian President Mohamed Anwar Sadat, Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin, and United States of America (USA) President Jimmy Carter took place at Camp David in 1978. Although the agreement signed on September 17 granted the Palestinians the right to

45 *"Israeli Settlements Policy," MERIP Reports, no. 59 (1977): 20*.

46 Abdul-ilah Abu Ayyash, "Israeli Planning Policy in the Occupied Territories," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 11, no. 1 (1981): 111–12.

47 Yehezkel Lein, *Land Grab: Israel's Settlement Policy in the West Bank*, ed. Yael Stein (Jerusalem: B'Tselem, May 2002), 11.

48 Ayyash, "Israeli Planning Policy," 111.

49 Seth Tillman, "The West Bank Hearings: Israel's Colonization of Occupied Territory," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 7, no. 2 (1978): 75.

establish a civilian administration in the West Bank and Gaza, within a month, the World Zionist Organization, with the support of the Jewish Agency, put forward a five-year settlement plan to be implemented in Judea and Samaria.[50] While Israel was engaged in peace negotiations, it was also creating fait accompli situations by surrounding Arab towns in the West Bank with Jewish settlements, which would create obstacles to the promises made in the negotiations. Although representatives of the Israeli government made some verbal statements about withdrawal during the Camp David negotiations, there was no serious Israeli commitment to withdrawal in the agreement. With this agreement, Israel succeeded in removing Egypt from the conflict in the Middle East and gained freedom in the implementation of settlement policies in the West Bank thanks to the position of legal authority it gained with the signing of the agreement.[51]

Until the 1982 Lebanon War, Israel's attitude towards the Palestinians in the occupied territories was determined by the assumption that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was an obstacle to the process that began with the Camp David Accords. The Israeli government believed that with the decline of the PLO's influence in these territories, the Palestinians would adapt to the terms of autonomy that would not prevent Israel from continuing its colonialist policies. Israel turned to Arab peasants, whom it believed it could manipulate more easily than the profile of PLO members, and formed the Arab Village Union as an alternative to the PLO.[52]

All policies were implemented during the ceasefire between the Palestinians and the Israelis between June 1981 and May 1982. The territorial losses suffered until this period and the pressure and economic situation of the Palestinians prevented this project from achieving the expected results. Therefore, the invasion of Lebanon was particularly effective in breaking the resistance in the West Bank and Gaza and in creating the perception that the occupation of these territories was permanent.

After the 1967 war, the expansionist policies and settlement plans implemented by the Israeli governments, the lack of a clear diplomatic step, the oppression of Palestinian Arabs as an obstacle to the security of the state, the radicalization of settler movements and other radical movements The provocative actions of the groups led to the outbreak of the Intifada[53] in December 1987.[54] Thus, the Intifada was the first significant uprising of Palestinians against Israel's 20-year occupation policy and led to visible changes in Israeli politics and society. The Israelis faced the fact that the Palestinians did not want to live under the Israeli occupation and received the message that the continuation of the occupation would harm Israel as well.

After the intifada, settlers became more fearful and less accommodating when considering the benefits of living in the West Bank, and the conflicts caused them to disengage from

50 Ibrahim Matar, "Israeli Settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 11, no. 1 (1981): 99.

51 Yüksek, *Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory*, 74-75.

52 Yüksek, *Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory*, 75.

53 Intifada means "to shake off, to shake off" in Arabic, but in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it has acquired the meaning of "uprising".

54 Yüksek, *Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory*, 75.

other Israelis. Throughout the Intifada, settlers living in the West Bank suffered serious damage for economic reasons rather than religious and national goals.[55] An example of this economic impact is the drop in the price of building Jewish settlements in the West Bank after December 1987. The decrease in the number of Israelis who believe that they can live a normal life in these territories may explain the decrease in demand that caused the price drop.[56]

In 1989, as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, massive immigration of Russian Jews to Israel began while the Intifada was ongoing, and the two developments influenced each other. 200,000 Jews immigrated to Israel in 1990 and 176,000 in 1991, increasing the population by 10%. In this two-year period, the number of settlements established by the Ministry of Settlement increased by about 2000%.[57] The Israeli government saw this Jewish immigration as an advantage that could be used against the rapid Arab population growth. The Israeli government encouraged the new immigrants to settle in the West Bank, but only a very small number of the immigrants who arrived in Israel in this wave settled in the West Bank, where security and violence problems were experienced as a result of the Intifada.

In 1994, Rabin and Arafat signed the Gaza and Jericho Agreement, in which the issue of autonomy, which was included in the Camp David Accords, was revisited. This agreement set out a five-year transformation plan for Gaza and the West Bank. In the agreement, the Israeli side also agreed to hand over control of Jericho to the Palestinians; since Jericho was close to Jordan and there were very few settlements, it was considered the most suitable option to be given to Palestinian control.[58]

The Interim Oslo II Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza signed between Israel and the PLO in September 1995, did not impose any restrictions on settlements, like the DOP (Declaration of Principles/Oslo I) and the Gaza Jericho Agreement. The security of the settlements was again left to the responsibility of the Israel Defense Forces, while the negotiations on a permanent status were to be concluded no later than May 4, 1996, to begin with the negotiations. This decision meant that the issue of settlements, which was not addressed in the agreement, would be discussed in these negotiations along with Jerusalem, borders, and refugees.[59]

The Oslo II Agreement divided the West Bank into zones A, B and C, excluding East Jerusalem. In Area A, which comprised only 1% of the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority had full authority over security and administration; in Area B, which covered 27% of the West Bank, civilian responsibilities were given to the Palestinian Authority,

55 Yüksek, *Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory*, 75.

56 Mark Tessler, "The Intifada and Political Discourse in Israel," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19, no. 2 (1990): 47–48.

57 Matt Evans, "Defending Territorial Sovereignty through Civilian Settlement: The Case of Israel's Population Dispersal Policy," *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 3 (2006): 590.

58 Avi Shlaim, "Israeli Politics and Middle East Peacemaking," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24, no. 4 (1995): 21.

59 Institute for Palestine Studies, "The Peace Process," Special Document File, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25, no. 2 (1996): 134.

while security was Israel's responsibility; and finally, Area C, which comprised the rest of the West Bank, was placed under Israeli control.[60]

In 1999 and 2000, in an environment of widespread settler attacks on Palestinian farmers and intensified settlement activity, the tense political environment following the failed Camp David negotiations and the provocative visit of Likud leader Sharon to the Al-Aqsa mosque triggered the Second Intifada. The Intifada, which began in September 2000, undermined the belief in the continuity and viability of settlements outside the territories annexed by Israel. Nevertheless, the status of these areas and their settlers was not discussed. Even before Barak's defeat, the search for an Israeli unilateral policy in the occupied territories had begun. This policy, called "partition" in Israel, was supported by Sharon, who won the 2001 elections because he opposed a final status agreement.[61]

In the second half of 2002, the Quartet (UN, US, EU, and Russia) prepared a Road Map to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that began with the Second Intifada, which proposed that settlement outposts established after March 2001 be evacuated and that the Israeli government halt all settlement activities as stated in the Mitchell Report. By making settlements a secondary issue, the Quartet failed to address the territorial disputes at the heart of the conflict. The outposts established before Sharon and the existence of 200 settlements in the West Bank, home to 400,000 Israelis, were not mentioned by the Quartet.[62]

In November 2005, Ariel Sharon, together with some prominent Likud members, formed the liberal centrist Kadima[63] party as a result of opposition within Likud to the Gaza Disengagement and unilateral policies to evacuate 4 settlements in the West Bank.

In June 2006, despite Olmert's apology after the Israeli bombing of a family in Gaza, the attacks ended the period of calm since March 2005. Israel and Hezbollah's mutual attacks, which received both support and criticism in the international arena The Second Lebanon War continued until the UN-brokered ceasefire came into effect on August 14.[64]

By 2007, Israel's settlement expansion activities and the construction of bypass roads continued, harming the daily lives of Palestinians and undermining the future Palestinian state. The settlement activities in the West Bank during this period were aimed at ensuring territorial integrity, especially between small settlements, and separating East Jerusalem from the West Bank, thus severing the Palestinian connection with each other. In 2007, announcements regarding the expansion of settlements near East Jerusalem revealed the aim of creating an unbreakable link between the settlements on both sides of the Separation Wall and the East Jerusalem settlements.[65]

In 2009, the "two states for two peoples" solution remained a proposal supported by a significant majority of the Israeli public. However, the idea of returning to the 1967 borders and evacuating all settlements was supported by as little as 15%. Nearly 40% of the public

60 Yüksek, *Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory*, 77-78.
61 Geoffrey Aronson, "Settlement Monitor," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no. 3 (2001): 142.
62 Aronson, "Settlement Monitor," 142–43.
63 Kadima means "forward" in Hebrew.
64 Ian J. Bickerton, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 203–33.
65 Yüksek, *Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory*, 79.

favored not evacuating the settlements under any circumstances. Those who favored the evacuation of settlements advocated the evacuation of smaller, isolated settlements under a permanent agreement. The fact that the majority of the Jewish people favored a two-country solution while at the same time opposing the evacuation of the settlements is in line with Israeli policies until this period.[66]

In the chaotic environment created by the Arab Spring, while the US has stopped its pressure on Israel, one of its most important allies in the Middle East, the Netanyahu Government has started to continue its old expansionist practices and rhetoric. Although it criticized the Abbas government's resolute stance on settlements and called for a return to peace negotiations, the Netanyahu government showed that it was not ready for peace talks with its expansionist settlement policies. Moreover, although Abbas' stance on settlements is perceived as a precondition, Netanyahu's frequent calls for Abbas to recognize Israel as a Jewish State is also a precondition that will guide the negotiations. Israel's goal was to get the Palestinians to accept this recognition and to keep all sovereignty rights over the country in Jewish hands. Abbas, on the other hand, refused to recognize Israel as a Jewish state because it would prevent the return of refugees, a problem that was expected to be resolved in the final status negotiations. In this case, since the disagreements between the two sides had been identified even before the negotiations began, the settlement process was blocked.

The Abbas administration, which did not receive the support it expected from the Obama Administration for the establishment of a Palestinian state, mobilized for UN membership as of the end of 2009.

As Palestine targeted the UN General Assembly in September 2011 to apply for UN membership, the international community began to warm up to the idea. At a time when Israelis were focused on domestic politics and relations with the Palestinians took a back seat, Abbas chose to defend Palestinian rights through diplomatic means while mobilizing Palestinians for the Palestinian Spring. Unlike Abbas, who was very hopeful about UN membership, Prime Minister Fayyad argued that UN membership would not bring significant change for the Palestinians unless Israel ended the occupation.[67] Abbas' quest for Palestinian representation at the UN, which was also considered a way to prevent the Palestinian uprising under the influence of the Arab Spring, was unacceptable to the Israeli government. Israel was frightened by the fact that if Palestine's membership to the UN was accepted, Palestine would be able to raise its demands against Israel before the International Court of Justice and that if Palestine gained state status, Israel would be in the position of occupying the territory of another state. Israel objected to Palestine gaining this status without making any concessions, claiming that this initiative by Palestine would break the Oslo Accords.

The ten-month settlement freeze was not enough for Abbas to return to negotiations for reasons such as not covering Jerusalem and not halting ongoing construction. Although

66 Yüksek, *Israeli Settlements in the West Bank Territory*, 85-86.

67 "Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories," *Middle East Peace Foundation* 21, no. 4 (July–August 2011): 1–8.

talks were held between the US, Israel and Palestine about a month before the expiry of the suspension, they failed to reach a conclusion, and Israel could not be persuaded to extend the suspension. The fact that Israel resumed settlement construction at the end of 2010, without any development, demonstrated that Obama's settlement policies had failed. US officials, who had recently abandoned settlement-oriented speeches, argued that the focus should be on resuming negotiations. Although the legitimacy of settlements is still a problem in the US, this policy shift has resulted in Israel's further acceleration of settlement activities.

The third Netanyahu government was the most right-wing government in Israel's history and the one in which the settlers were the most active in decision-making mechanisms. The failure to conclude the negotiation process with Palestine, the US's close stance to Israel, and its failure to maintain pressure on settlements led to the continuation of Israel's settlement activities. During this period, Israeli settlement policies were mostly condemned by European states; it was repeated that they were against international law and not recognized. Although Israel argued that it continued its settlement activities within the framework of natural growth arising from needs, Abbas argued that all activities should stop by the Road Map and that he would return to negotiations only in this way. Since the beginning of the Oslo peace process, the issue of settlements in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been a major sticking point in the negotiations and has now become a key point on which measures must be taken for negotiations to start.

3. Reflections of Israel's October 7 Attack on the International System and Relations

On October 7, the Izz al-Qassam Brigades crossed the Israel-Gaza border in what they dubbed the "Aqsa Flood" operation, infiltrating and attacking nearby Jewish settlements. As a result of the attacks, more than 1,200 people were killed, more than 5,132 were injured and more than 250 were taken hostage, mostly military personnel.[68] Using the October 7th attacks as a pretext, Israel launched a ground operation in addition to air strikes against Gaza not only caused the deaths of thousands of Palestinians more than 50 people coming from different parts of the world to practice their profession. more journalists and media workers have had their lives taken away.[69]

The most profound impact of this war, which started in the Gaza Strip, will of course be seen in the Middle East region. For the predominantly Muslim countries of the region, the war is not just about the Gaza war, but also about Jerusalem, which is why it is on the agenda of the international organizations of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation decisions were closely monitored. But mostly at the call level the inadequacy of policy proposals has led to criticism from their peoples.[70] A collective

[68] Global Security, "Operation Iron Swords," (2023, November 19). https://
www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/operation-ironswords-
2023-11-19.htm?_m=3n%2e002a%2e3768%2ezq0ao0aunu%2e3i1y

[69] The International Press InstituteGaza war: As killings of journalists continue, IPI reiterates call to protect safety of the press and civilians, "International Press Institute," (2023, November 21), https://ipi.media/ipi-reiterates-call-to-protectsafety-of-the-press-and-civilians-israel-gaza-war/

[70] El-Fetouh, A. A. "Why did the Muslim leaders bother to convene? Middle East Monitor," (2023, November 14), https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231114-

coercive action by Muslim states against Israel grouping is considered to be a very remote possibility.

While the majority of partner countries in the international alliance system made statements in support of Israel, Turkey continued to stand by the Palestinian people in their just cause against Israel.

The ongoing war in the Palestinian territories is a process of mutual attrition for both Israelis and Palestinians, with babies, children and women being killed and innocent people being harmed. Mirjana Spoljaric, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, has said that it is unacceptable that civilians in the Gaza Strip have no safe place to go. The trauma of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has affected the entire Palestinian population. A sustainable and humane peace is the solution. Israel's attempts to whitewash its policy of violence should not be tolerated by the United States and European countries. The cost is to be complicit in the whole crime.

4. Conclusion

Israel's invasion of Palestinian territories, and the occupation of the ancient city of Jerusalem, which has become an international rather than a regional issue, stems from the desire of Jewish religious and faith groups to fulfill a millennia-old dream. This land, considered sacred by the Jewish community, and Jerusalem, where their first temple was established, represented a grand dream and goal to be achieved until the early 1900s. The Arab-Israeli wars that began in 1948, and continued thereafter made Israel increasingly aggressive and desperate. Any possibility that might threaten the preservation of their long-sought dream became a target that had to be destroyed. According to the Jewish holy book, the community has become economically stronger as a result of continued efforts to seize control of Palestine, the promised holy land (Arz-ı Mevud). In pursuit of their millennia-old ideal, they established networks of influence across various fields, built large companies and amassed economic assets, and gained the support of powerful states with global influence.

In 1947, Jews arriving in Palestinian territories wrote on a ship, "The Germans destroyed our families and our homes, you and don't destroy our hopes." This and similar desperate statements from the immigrants, who then forcibly displaced the indigenous Palestinian population at gunpoint, depict a tragic reality that the world has yet to fully comprehend. Historically, this land belongs to the Palestinians. The claims of the Zionists, driven by geopolitical and faith-based politics, are not only controversial but also unacceptable as a replacement for historical reality. Instead of Zionist narratives of settlement in these lands, the historical continuity of the indigenous population should be prioritized.

Thus, it is precisely Antonio Gramsci's (1891-1937) "crisis" that applies here, in which "the old is dying, and the new cannot be born, and in this interim period, many symptoms of the disease appear." The war in Gaza is an ongoing, centuries-old conflict that remains

why-did-the-muslim-leaders-bother-to-convene/Ellenberg, J. (2006, July 24).
Proportionate Response. *Slate*. https://slate.com/human-interest/2006/07/
does-one-israeli-death-really-equal-47-american-deaths.html

unresolved. It is a fact that the colonial past continues to exacerbate the conflicts and diseases it left behind. The importance of addressing these wars and occupations in a historically integrated manner has become increasingly apparent. What was initially defined as the Ottoman-British conflict, later evolving into the Arab-Israeli conflict, and now the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, remains one of the world's most volatile and explosive issues. It is likely to extend beyond the region and become a global problem in the future.

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Israel's expansionist policies, which began with the immigration of Jews from outside the region to the Palestinian territories, escalated with the need for settlements and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. These policies culminated in the occupation of Gaza following the October 7 attacks. The policy of expelling unarmed Palestinians, including women, children, and the elderly, from Gaza and condemning them to settlements in the Sinai Desert has turned the occupation into a massacre watched by the entire civilized world. The findings of this study indicate that Israel's settlement policy has been a state policy since 1948, expanding the occupation through inhumane methods against the Palestinian people at every opportunity.

All international mediation and diplomatic efforts for peace between Israel and Palestine have failed to produce effective results and have not ended Israel's actions that disregard international law. It appears that the State of Israel, backed by the United States and the Jewish diaspora—who control global trade—will continue its expansionist policies until Gaza and then the West Bank are cleared of the Palestinian population.

As a result, the Palestinian people, trapped under the pressure of radical Islamic organizations and the State of Israel, are losing hope that a lasting and peaceful solution will be reached in the near future. This situation has already become a historical shame for humanity in the eyes of the civilized world.

Declarations

1. **Ethics committee approval:** Not needed for this study.

2. Author contribution: The author declares that no one else has contributed to the article.

3. Competing interests: The author declares no competing interests.

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