



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Israel and Palestine Report May 2023

Jews, Muslims, and Christians have lived together in what is now Israel and Palestine for centuries. Following the Holocaust, millions of Jews settled in Israel to establish their own nation-state with the right of self-defense. Israelis and Palestinians have been in an ongoing conflict since the UN recognized the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 as a Jewish homeland. Most Arab countries refused to recognize the legitimacy of Israel's creation. They launched several wars to destroy Israel since 1948. Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Iran, and many Arab countries have expressed genocidal intent to destroy the nation of Israel. The Hamas charter explicitly [calls for the destruction of the state of Israel](#).

Following its victories in the wars against it, Israel took effective control in 1967 of the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. Thousands of Israeli settlers have built settlements in these occupied territories in contravention of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention: "*The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.*" The settlers have an ideology akin to the American doctrine of Manifest Destiny, believing that God gave Jews the right to settle in the ancient lands of Judah and Israel. This ideology is supported by Likud, the party of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Hamas, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Hezbollah still reject the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish homeland, citing Palestinian habitation in what is now Israel and Palestine for 2000 years since Romans drove Jews into exile. They have launched hundreds of attacks on towns in Israel and settlements in the West Bank. Israel has responded to the attacks with military force in Gaza, the Israeli occupied West Bank, and Lebanon. In April 2023 during Ramadan, Israeli troops invaded the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Israel justifies its use of force as legitimate self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Since 2008, there have been an estimated 5333 [Palestinian civilian fatalities](#) in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, over half caused by Israeli bombs and missiles. During the same period, 293 Israeli civilians died from Palestinian attacks. In 2022, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) [killed an estimated 153 Palestinians](#), the highest Palestinian death toll since 2005. Most fatalities occurred during military raids against suspected Palestinian militants. On January 26, 2023, the IDF raided the Jenin Refugee Camp in the West Bank in the largest raid on refugees [since 2002](#).

[24 Israelis were killed](#) inside Israel and the occupied West Bank by Palestinians in 2022, the highest number since [2014-2015](#). A Palestinian gunman [killed seven Israeli civilians](#) at a synagogue in occupied East Jerusalem on January 27, 2023.

Prime Minister Netanyahu is committed to the [continued expansion of](#) Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank. Israeli-imposed [movement restrictions in the West Bank and Gaza](#) prevent normal life for the Palestinian population. Forced evictions in the West Bank [disproportionately affect women](#), whose homes also serve as their places of work. In 2007, Israel and Egypt imposed a [naval blockade](#) on the 2.35 million residents of Gaza that is still in effect.

Genocide Watch recognizes the situation in Israel and Palestine to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination, Stage 5: Organization, Stage 6: Polarization, and Stage 8: Persecution.**

Genocide Watch recommends:

- Israeli and Palestinian leaders must relaunch direct talks to resolve their conflicts based on the national, political, and human rights of both Israelis and Palestinians.
- Palestinian leaders and Arab states must recognize Israel's right to exist as a legitimate nation-state.
- Israel must halt the expansion of illegal settlements and dispossession of Palestinians in the West Bank.
- Israeli authorities must investigate Palestinian deaths and hold IDF soldiers accountable for illegal killings.
- The United States should condition its annual \$4 billion in military aid and weapons sales to Israel on Israeli adherence to a ceasefire, peace talks, and a halt to new Jewish settlements in the West Bank.