



## Lesson 129

### The Conflict between Israel and Palestine

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Today we are going to look at the situation surrounding Israel. For decades there has been conflict between the Jews and Muslims of the area. This conflict has often led to outbreaks of violence. So, in today's lesson we will review the history of how this region came to look like it does, and then we will look at what happened there on October 7th, and its aftermath.

## **Israeli and Hamas War**

### **Why Jews migrated to Palestine**

The Zionist movement was a large-scale migration of Jews into Palestine that ultimately began the conflict we see today. Roughly 200 years ago, over 99% of all the Jews in the world lived in Europe, with the remaining fraction of a percent living in Palestine. However, due to widespread antisemitism and persecution, the Jews decided that Europe was not an ideal place for them to live and they needed to relocate. The new location of choice was Palestine, the home of their Jewish ancestors. So in the 1880s, the first wave of immigration began, which became known as the Zionist movement. The first wave ended in 1903, then a second wave started that year which lasted until 1914. The third and fourth waves took place after the first two, which brought hundreds of thousands of Jews to Palestine, many of whom were fleeing the Holocaust in Europe. The only thing that stood in their way were the people who already occupied Palestine. The Arabs didn't favor the influx of Jews in Palestine, with many of them viewing it as European colonialism. It didn't take long for the hatred Arabs had against Jews to turn into violence. In 1802, when an Arab was shot by a Jewish guard, over 200 Arabs attacked a Jewish settlement. This was only one of the first actions of violence between the two groups, and even though Jews were able to split Palestine into two counties: Israel for the Jews, and the rest for the Arabs, violence still continues until this day.

### **History of Israeli and Palestinian conflict**

The history of Israel's conflict with Palestine dates back to the 1800s. In the late 1800s, persecution of Jews in Europe led to the formation of the Zionist movement in 1897, aiming to create a Jewish state in Palestine. As Jews moved in, tensions with Arabs escalated, especially during British control after World War I. Britain's support for Zionist ambitions and the two-nation theory fueled violence, marked by events like the Jaffa riots in 1921 and The Great Revolt in 1936. Despite casualties and unrest, Israel officially became a country on May 14, 1948, intensifying the conflict. Subsequent years saw massacres, occupations, United Nations directives, agreements, and continued hostilities, with Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2008, 2012, and 2014 resulting in significant Palestinian casualties. The complex and enduring conflict persists.

## **What is Hamas?**

Today the biggest opponent to Israel is Hamas; that is the acronym for their full Arabic name, which translated is: Islamic Resistance Movement. The group was formed in 1987 at the beginning of the first Palestinian uprising by a Palestinian refugee in the Gaza Strip, since then it has grown to over 20,000 members. It is mainly located in the Gaza Strip, but it is also present in the West Bank, and Palestinian refugee camps in other countries. Hamas is, simply, a Sunni Muslim group but it has many roles. It is the second biggest political party in the Palestinian territories; it has controlled the Gaza Strip since 2007 (after the 2006 legislative elections where the party won the most seats). On the other hand, the West Bank is ruled by Fatah, their rival party. Israel has enforced a blockade since Hamas took over, which has severely weakened their economy. Hamas also has a military side and was designated a terrorist group, by the United States, in 1997. The leaders of Hamas today are Yehia Sinwar (in Gaza) and Ismail Haniyeh (who lives in exile); a poll from last Summer shows that Palestinians don't like that fact that the Gaza Strip and West Bank are not united, and more than half would vote to make Haniyeh president. Hamas wants to destroy the country of Israel and instead form an Islamic Palestinian state. Hamas has conducted many violent tactics to get closer to their goal, including suicide bombings, kidnapping, rockets, and cyber espionage. The conflict between Hamas and Israel has been on and off for decades.

## **The Events of October 7, 2023**

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched operation "Al-Aqsa Flood." This was a surprise terrorist attack against Israel's southern Gaza border. Over 8000 rockets were launched toward Israel, which was followed by 3000 Hamas fighters invading Israel and attacking the military sites, and small cities living close to the border. Over 1,000 Israelis were killed with most of them being civilians, and an additional 253 were taken hostage. Hamas claimed the attack was "a necessary step and a normal response to confront all Israeli conspiracies against the Palestinian people." Israel's government claimed that during the attack Hamas committed war crimes, such as torturing their victims. However, Hamas says they did not commit such crimes. This conflict has been the worst in recent history, and it doesn't show signs of being resolved soon.

## **Israel's retaliation**

After Hamas' attack on Israel in early October, Israel had to retaliate. On October 17, 2023, Israel attacked the largest hospital in Gaza (Al-Shifa Hospital). Gaza had also been using it to shelter tens of thousands of displaced people. This bombing killed many people and injured some, including people who had been seeking shelter. "Reports of the number of fatalities vary widely. The Gaza Health Ministry reported 342 injured and 471 killed. The Anglican diocese that manages the hospital reported 200 people killed. US intelligence agencies assessed a death toll between 100 and 300," Wikipedia. It was only 10 days later, on October 27, 2023, that Israel began an invasion on the ground. Israel's retaliation attacks against Gaza has killed about 25,000 people, and now Palestine accuses Israel of war crimes.

## **Violence against women**

The effect that this conflict has on women (and children) is deadly. Hamas is a conservative (Sunni) Muslim party and they govern the Gaza Strip according to those values: Sharia law. This means that women were at a disadvantage before the latest conflict began. Of the Gaza Strip's approximately 2.3 million people, 1.9 million have been displaced thanks to Israel's attacks - and around a half of those being women and girls. In the past men used to be the majority of the casualties in the Israel/Hamas struggle, now 70% of the Palestinian deaths have been women and children. The United Nations estimates that two mothers die every hour in Gaza. Violence from the war isn't the only thing that is threatening these people, it is also their lack of essentials like food, shelter, and medical supplies. The Hamas fighters are also assisting in the plight that women are facing. On October 7th they went out of their way to assault and torture women before they killed them. Because of the scale of the attack, the chaotic aftermath, and the Jewish custom of burying their dead quickly we will never know the scale of Hamas' brutality. At least 60 women have been found dead with evidence that they were assaulted. That we know of so far, there are four survivors (three women and one man), but they will probably never speak to the press; what little we do know comes from witnesses that hid or what people found afterwards. And we cannot forget all of the women that Hamas is still holding hostage. This conflict has led to a lot of suffering and there is ample evidence of violence against women from both sides.

## **Other countries involved in conflict**

The Israel-Palestine conflict involves more than those two countries. Many countries have taken sides on the issue, with a few being directly or indirectly involved. Qatar is one of these countries. Qatar gained the favor of Hamas because of its actions in the past, such as when it accepted their exiled leaders. It also has not stated publicly that the Hamas attacks are wrong, and it blamed Israel for escalating the violence. Because of this, Hamas is sometimes willing to listen to Qatar, which has made the country a mediator in the conflict with Israel. Qatar has been able to negotiate the release of hostages Hamas had captured from Israel, and negotiate the release of foreigners in Gaza (so they wouldn't be killed in the fight between Israel and Palestine), among other accomplishments. This hasn't been the only time Qatar has been a middle-man between countries; being able to negotiate with opposing sides is one of the methods Qatar has used to increase its influence in the region. Another country involved in the conflict is Iran. Unlike Qatar, Iran has directly chosen a side to support, that side being Hamas. It's speculated that Iran was involved in the October 7th terrorist attack, although Iran denies this. What Iran can't deny, is that it gives Hamas money and helps train its fighters. Leaders in Iran have congratulated Hamas for the violence against Israel. Iran's Supreme Leader has said: "We kiss the hands of those who planned the attack on the Zionist regime ... The Zionist regime's own actions are to blame for this disaster." Besides Iran and Qatar, other countries have spoken out on the conflict, such as Syria and Lebanon who both blame Israel for provoking the violence. Outside the middle east, the United States and much of Europe have sided with Israel and condemned Hamas. Russia and China haven't publicly taken a side, however they did support a cease fire at a United Nations meeting.

## What's happening today

People across the world want there to be a ceasefire between Israel and Gaza because so many civilians are being killed as simple collateral damage for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. There was previously a ceasefire in November but that didn't last long (only one week). The problem is, Gaza is holding Israelis captive and refuses to let them go until a ceasefire. Israel, on the other hand, refuses to agree to a ceasefire until all the captives are returned (the ones still alive- they keep accidentally killing some of them). "The U.S. and Arab mediators appear to be seeking a middle ground in which hostages would be released in stages over a two-month period in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, more desperately needed humanitarian aid would be allowed into Gaza, and Israeli forces would partially withdraw," *AP News*.

## In Summary:



Due to persecution, Jews migrated to Palestine which became known as the Zionist movement.



Israel and Palestine have a history of conflict since the 1800s that has resulted in unrest, riots, etc.



Hamas is a conservative Sunni Muslim group that has controlled Gaza since 2007.



Hamas staged a surprise attack against Israel on October 7, 2023.



Israel performed retaliation attacks that destroyed a hospital and began a ground invasion in Gaza.



Women are being tortured and killed. In Gaza, they are in need of basic necessities.



Countries like Qatar and Iran have gotten involved in this conflict.



Talks of a ceasefire have been going on, but both sides demand different requirements for this agreement.

Official Youth Prophecy Group website:  
[youthprophecygroup.org](https://youthprophecygroup.org)

If you have any questions or comments on any of the material contact us at:  
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[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeltzVajTXgSQL-o2XOq\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeltzVajTXgSQL-o2XOq_g)

Link to YPG Zoom meetings which are at 10:00am Pacific Time on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays of the month:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87170293849>