

Israel and the Palestinian Territories



Israel is located in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is bordered by Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Israel has a population of roughly 8.2 million people (including Israeli settlers who live in Golan Heights, an Israeli-occupied part of Syria, and in East Jerusalem, a disputed part of the West Bank territory). Most of the population is concentrated in and around the city of Tel-Aviv and around the Sea of Galilee (also known as Lake Tiberias). Seventy-five percent of Israelis are Jews. Most of the non-Jewish population is Muslim Arab, while small minorities identify as Christian Arab or with other religious and ethnic groups.

The West Bank is located to the east of Israel and also borders Jordan. The Gaza Strip borders the Mediterranean Sea just north of Egypt. Roughly 4.5 million Palestinians live in these territories. An additional six to seven million Palestinians live in neighboring Arab countries, mainly Jordan and Lebanon. The vast majority of Palestinians are Muslim (mostly Sunni), but some are Christian.

This case study focuses on Israel and the Palestinian territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The people who live in the area have different beliefs about what this land should be called, who should govern it, and who has a right to live there. The state of Israel was created in 1948, but it has not been recognized by all people or states in the Middle East. Israel's borders have shifted over the course of a decades-long conflict that continues today. The adjacent territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are widely recognized as Palestinian territories, but the borders between Israel and these territories continue to be a

subject of disagreement. This text acknowledges this complex and contentious history.

What are major events in the history of Israel and the Palestinian territories?

Israel was carved out of territory called Palestine. Under the Ottoman Empire, Palestine was part of the province of Syria and inhabited predominantly by Arabs who had lived there for over a thousand years. Jews living in countries around the world also considered part of Palestine the home of their ancestors (who had been exiled by the Romans in the first century).

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Jewish immigrants arrive in the land that would become Israel, July 1947. After the Holocaust and the creation of Israel, Jewish immigration increased.

At the end of World War I, Britain took control of Palestine. The British had made conflicting promises about this territory during the war. They agreed to help set up an independent Arab state that united all Arab areas of the former Ottoman Empire, but they also pledged to establish a national home for Jews in Palestine. This led to conflicting claims over the land of Palestine.

Following World War II, Britain gave responsibility for the Palestinian mandate to the United Nations. In 1947, the UN created a plan to divide the mandate into two states—one Jewish and one Arab—with the city of Jerusalem designated as an international zone. At the time, about 1.3 million Arabs and 600,000 Jews lived in the Palestinian mandate.

“The great historic phenomenon of the Jewish return to Palestine is unique because the position of the Jewish people as a homeless people, and yet attached with an unbreakable tenacity to its birthplace, is unique. It is that phenomenon that has made the problem of Palestine an issue in international affairs.”

—Moshe Shertok, head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, May 1947

Zionist leaders accepted the UN’s plan, but Arab leaders rejected it. As British troops withdrew from Palestine, Jewish forces tried to secure the territory that the UN plan designated as the Jewish state. The Arab population resisted, but Jews seized control of the areas with major Arab populations. About 400,000 Arabs fled. In May 1948, Zionists announced the independence of the state of Israel.

The creation of Israel led to the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Transjordan (present-day Jordan) invaded Israel to defend Palestinian Arabs’ claim to this land. The Arab states could not match Israeli forces, and Zionists seized a large portion of the land that the UN had designated for the Palestinian Arabs.

Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip, and Transjordan claimed what was left of the for-



Palestinian refugees displaced after the creation of Israel, at a refugee camp in Damascus, Syria, January 1948.

UN Photo #349763.

mer Palestinian mandate, including the West Bank and part of the city of Jerusalem. Each state in the war signed a cease-fire agreement but still did not officially recognize Israel. Without a treaty, the cease-fire lines in effect became the borders between Israel and its neighbors.

Most of the Arab population in the territory that became Israel—over 700,000 people—were now refugees. The Israeli army forced out Palestinian Arabs who did not flee. By 1949, only 160,000 Arabs lived within Israel's borders. Most Palestinians lived in refugee camps in surrounding Arab countries.

What began as a struggle between Arab and Jewish inhabitants in Palestine had turned into a larger Arab-Israeli conflict. Since Israel was surrounded by countries hostile to its very existence, Israelis lived in constant fear of attack. Arabs saw Israel as an occupying force and Palestinians as a people fighting for liberation.

History of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 1948: After a victory in the June 1967 War, Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip (previously under the control of Transjordan and Egypt, respectively) and assumed responsibility for governing the one million Palestinians living in these territories. At this time, Palestinian resistance organizations began to play a more active role. They were disillusioned with the Arab leadership that had failed to liberate Palestine and lost additional territory to Israel. They hoped to retake their land, establish a Palestinian state, and govern themselves.

The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was an organization that coordinated several resistance groups. Led by Yasir Arafat, the PLO emphasized Palestinian nationalism. This focus on Palestinian national identity increased attention to the Palestinian cause. In addition to leading the armed struggle against Israeli occupation, the PLO provided social services and took on diplomatic initiatives.

“Armed revolution in all parts of our Palestinian territory to make of it a war of liberation.”

—Yasir Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, February 1969

“[Yasir Arafat] put the Palestinian cause on the map and mobilized behind his leadership the broadest cross section imaginable of Palestinians.”

—Khalil E. Jahshan, an Arab-American, in an interview after Arafat's death, November 2004

In 1987, Palestinian resistance groups began a protest movement that lasted for five years known as the *intifada*. In the years leading up to the *intifada*, Israel's government had intensified its policy of building settlements for Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza territories. The Israeli government confiscated Palestinian land, arrested and detained Palestinians, and implemented discriminatory taxes and regulations. In response, Palestinians began a series of strikes and protests. Over time, the uprising became more violent.

“I was driving to Jerusalem when I got to the first Arab village, Husan. They'd put a big garbage dumpster in the road, forcing cars to slow down. While I was going slow, about 40 of them came out. They threw rocks, breaking all the windows on the left side.”

—Herzl Nissan, an Israeli settlement resident, describing the *intifada*, October 1989

“All the girls my age fought in the first Intifada; we were in the streets throwing rocks and blocking roads and screaming at the protests just like the men.”

—Raja Mustafa, a Palestinian who was sixteen when the *intifada* started, in an October 2015 interview



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Palestinians wait at an Israeli checkpoint in 2004 near Ramallah, in the West Bank, to move from one town to another. Checkpoints limit Palestinians' ability to travel, for example to work, to visit family, and to receive medical care.

During the *intifada*, Palestinian political groups formed outside the PLO, including some more extreme resistance organizations. The emergence of these organizations and the fall of the Soviet Union—one of the PLO's major supporters—led the PLO and Israel to agree to begin negotiations toward a two-state solution (a plan that would set up an independent state of Palestine alongside Israel). The PLO officially recognized Israel in 1988, in an effort to bring Israel to the negotiating table and to encourage U.S. support for a peace plan that would bring about a Palestinian state.

“The general trend and the overwhelming majority is going with the line calling for peace and a two-state solution.”

—Bassam Abu Sharif, senior adviser to
Yasir Arafat, November 1988

Negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian leaders took place near Oslo, Norway in 1993. In a set of agreements known as the Oslo Accords, Israel accepted the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians,

but not as a state. The PLO recognized Israel's right to exist in peace and renounced the use of violence. Israel remained the ultimate authority in the West Bank and Gaza. But a new Palestinian government, called the Palestinian Authority, was allowed to manage daily affairs in half of the Gaza Strip and the main cities of the West Bank (except East Jerusalem, which both sides claimed as the capital of their state). The Palestinian Authority, which was led by Arafat, established its own police force and held elections.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were scheduled to conclude a final agreement by May 1999 to create a Palestinian state to exist side by side with Israel. That agreement was never fulfilled. Divisions within Israeli and Palestinian societies and violence from militant groups on both sides disrupted the negotiation process.

“We have to say that Oslo did not address all our needs. It created economic isolation for us, political instability, and now the Palestinian Authority has been forced to take up

the role of occupier. In many ways our situation is worse than before."

—Sayed Abu Musamih, a Palestinian leader in the Gaza Strip, June 1996

After a second and more violent *intifada* began in 2000, efforts at diplomatic negotiations resumed with talks in Taba, Egypt. No agreement was reached, and violence resumed.

"The Taba talks were unprecedented in their positive atmosphere and expression of mutual willingness to meet the national, security and existential needs of each side.... The sides declare that they have never been closer to reaching an agreement and it is thus our shared belief that the remaining gaps could be bridged."

—A joint statement issued by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators following the Taba negotiations, January 2001

During negotiations in 2005, the Palestinian Authority renounced the *intifada* and made efforts to halt attacks on Israel. Israel, in turn, reduced military activity in the West Bank and removed Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip.

In 2006, legislative elections led to a divided Palestinian government, stalling negotiations. Hamas, a Palestinian resistance organization that rejects a two-state solution, established a government in the Gaza Strip. (The United States and Israel say Hamas is a terrorist organization. Hamas calls itself an Islamic national liberation and resistance movement.) Israel saw Hamas as a security threat and responded by blockading Gaza with the hope of weakening Hamas. The blockade, which is still in place, tightly controlled the movement of goods, services, and people—creating major difficulties for civilians in Gaza. Violence also intensified on both sides.

"In the first Intifada in 1987, our message was we will not accept occupation forever. We will not

accept subjugation. We want peace. We are still fighting to end the occupation. We still want peace."

—Dr. Saib Uraikat, chief Palestinian peace negotiator, September 2003

A long stretch of violence in the summer of 2014 ended with an open-ended truce that continues to be in place as of November 2017. The truce does not include a cease-fire, and both sides occasionally violate it.

In January 2017, countries from around the world gathered for a Middle East peace conference to lay the groundwork for resumed negotiations toward a two-state solution. The conference was mostly symbolic—the Palestinians were absent and the Israeli government dismissed the gathering, claiming it favored the Palestinians. With numerous unresolved issues, it remains unclear what internationally-mediated diplomatic efforts can achieve.

"The urgency remains. The two sides remain very distant in a relationship of distrust that is particularly dangerous."

—Jean-Marc Ayrault, French foreign minister, at a Middle East peace conference, January 2017

What has U.S. policy been toward Israel and the Palestinian territories?

U.S. policy toward Israel has reflected the close relations between the countries. After the Holocaust, President Truman supported the creation of a Jewish state and lobbied extensively for the UN partition plan. Members of the U.S. State and Defense Departments were more hesitant. They worried this would damage relations with oil-rich Arab countries, leading those countries to form alliances with the Soviets instead. When Zionist leaders declared Israel's independence, the Truman administration recognized the new state immediately and approved a \$100 million loan for Israel.

“United States policy with relation to the Palestine settlement is postulated upon the continuing existence of the State of Israel. The sovereignty of Israel is a fact so far as the United States is concerned and this government could not agree to any diminution of its sovereignty except with the consent of the Government of Israel.”

—Robert McClintock, U.S. State Department official, June 1948

The United States became actively involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict during the October War of 1973, sending thousands of tons of military supplies to Israel. This increase in military assistance directly countered the Soviet Union, which had been providing arms to Arab nations fighting Israel.

After the 1973 oil embargo by Arab nations highlighted U.S. dependence on Arab oil, U.S. policymakers shifted toward a diplomatic approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Camp David Accords of 1978 was a significant diplomatic achievement, although it focused more on achieving stability between Israel and surrounding Arab states than on addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In the early 1990s, President George H.W. Bush's (1989-1993) administration began an effort to negotiate an Israeli-Palestinian settlement. The Madrid Conference in 1991 brought Israelis and Palestinians into diplomatic contact after a decade of intense violence. The Conference focused on demands from the Palestinian delegation, led by Palestinians from the occupied territories. The talks also paved the way for a series of future meetings between Israeli and Palestinian officials.

“We can and must find a way to move ahead toward a solution that addresses both Israel's legitimate security needs and the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people.”

—U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, March 1989

At this time, the issue of Israeli settlements became a major source of tension in the U.S.-Israeli relationship. For years, the Israeli government had built settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to encourage Jews to populate the occupied territories. Settlement activity violated an international agreement—the Geneva Conventions—signed by Israel in 1951.

“The occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”

—Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 49, Paragraph 6, 1949

In 1990, Israel began its biggest settlement construction project to date. The Bush administration considered Israel's settlements a major obstacle in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and, during the Madrid Conference, requested that Israel freeze the settlements. When Israel refused, Bush declared that the United States would cut financial aid to Israel if it did not back off of this settlement project. This was the first time a U.S. administration had enforced its opposition to Israeli activity in the occupied territories. A newly elected Israeli government eventually agreed to freeze some of the settlement construction. Nevertheless, many concerns about Israeli settlements remain.

“No force in the world will stop this construction. We say to ourselves, and to the Gentiles of the world and to the next generations, here will be our homeland, here will be our home, forever and ever.... We will build, and I hope very much that we will also obtain guarantees [of monetary loans from the U.S.].”

—Yitzhak Shamir, prime minister of Israel, January 1992

“The establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian

territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.”

—United Nations Security Council
Resolution 2334, December 2016

During President Bill Clinton’s (1993-2001) administration, the United States took a leading role in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. Clinton oversaw the concluding phases of the Oslo Accords. But, when the Israeli government ramped up settlement construction in violation of the Oslo agreements, the Clinton administration did not take action. At the very end of his term, Clinton convened another round of talks to outline a two-state solution, but negotiations failed.

The focus of U.S. policy toward Israel and the Palestinian territories shifted under President George W. Bush (2001-2009). Some members of the Bush administration opposed pressuring Israel to make any concessions toward the Palestinians. The administration prioritized disempowering Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups, which fit the anti-terror focus of the Bush administration’s Middle East policy.

“Ultimately, it [a cease-fire] will be useless because Hamas has to be destroyed. How can a group determined to wipe Israel off the face of the earth ever become a partner in the peace process?”

—A Bush administration official, quoted in
the *New York Times*, June 27, 2003

President Barack Obama’s (2009-2017) administration took a more critical stance toward Israel, describing settlement construction as an obstacle to a two-state solution. In December 2016, the Obama administration did not veto a UN Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlement construction in the West

Bank—despite calls to do so from many members of the U.S. Congress. This decision broke a longstanding U.S. pattern of shielding Israel from UN actions that would formally declare Israeli settlements illegal.

“The United States has been sending a message that settlements must stop privately and publicly for nearly five decades.... One cannot simultaneously champion expanding Israeli settlements and champion a viable two-state solution that would end the conflict.”

—Samantha Power, U.S. ambassador to the
United Nations, December 2016

President Donald Trump’s (2017-) administration has sided with Israel. Israel is the leading recipient of U.S. military assistance. In public statements, President Trump has not condemned the construction of Israeli settlements. At the same time, his administration sent a delegation to meet with Arab leaders throughout the Middle East to discuss a framework for a what the president refers to as a “peace deal.”

What are perspectives on U.S. policy among Israelis?

While Israelis hold a range of perspectives on U.S. policy, they tend to appreciate Israel’s close alliance with the United States. Most Israelis fear that they are under constant threat of attack, so U.S. policies that defend Israeli settlements and counter groups like Hamas are often viewed favorably. Israeli officials grow concerned when U.S. administrations take a more neutral stance toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and expect Israel to compromise with Palestinian demands.

More extreme groups within Israel do not recognize any Palestinian governing body and believe that Israel should not engage in diplomatic negotiations with the Palestinians. These groups resent U.S. pressure to participate in negotiations, especially toward a settlement that would require Israelis to withdraw from currently occupied territories.

“We are here to stay forever. There will be no more uprooting of settlements in the land of Israel. This is the inheritance of our ancestors. This is our land.”

—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, August 28, 2017

At the same time, some Israelis see the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as unjust and illegal. They disagree with U.S. policy that enables Israel to maintain settlements on land that the UN granted to Palestinians. Some want the United States to place diplomatic pressure on the Israeli government to respect Palestinian territory.

Other Israelis believe that the United States has no place intervening in the region's affairs and should let Israelis and Palestinians resolve issues on their own.

What are perspectives on U.S. policy among Palestinians?

For decades, many Palestinians felt ignored by U.S. policy. Even when the United States did not take an explicitly pro-Israel stance, Palestinians noted that U.S. policymakers prioritized relations with Arab states over the Palestinian people, who did not have a state of their own. Critics argue that the United States has worked to maintain stable relationships with Arab leaders to protect its own political and economic interests rather than responding to Palestinian demands.

Today, Palestinians continue to see an imbalance in U.S. intervention in the conflict. Many feel that U.S. policymakers pressure Palestinian leaders to make significant compromises during diplomatic negotiations while allowing Israel more flexibility. Some have criticized U.S.-led diplomatic negotiations as meaningless processes that allow Israel to maintain its occupation and continue human rights abuses against Palestinians.

“Process, meetings, and handshakes have so far been a shield to Mr. Netanyahu's not making decisions.”



U.S. First Lady Melania Trump, President Trump, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, and Israeli First Lady Nechama Rivlin at the president's residence in Jerusalem, May 22, 2017.

Public Domain, Mark Neyman, Government Press Office of Israel.

—Saeb Erakat, a Palestinian negotiator during U.S.-led peace talks, October 1997

Palestinians also note differences in how the United States responds to violence committed by the two sides, claiming that the United States does not take Palestinian security as seriously as Israel's. To many, such an imbalance is an example of how racism influences U.S. intervention in this conflict and in the Middle East more broadly.

“The American Muslims for Palestine is concerned with a specific form of Islamophobia we call ‘Creeping Normalcy,’ which are efforts to normalize Israel's occupation of Palestine....”

—Statement on the homepage for the activist organization American Muslims for Palestine, 2017

“When somebody kills an Israeli, they say we are terrorists, but when one of us is killed, it's forgotten in a day.”

—A Palestinian who participated in the first intifada, October 1989

Many Palestinians saw hope in Obama's advocacy for a two-state solution and his

more critical stance toward Israeli settlements. Palestinian leaders expressed reserved appreciation after the Obama administration did not veto the 2016 resolution condemning Israeli settlement activity. They made it clear that Palestinians expect more active support from the United States.

“We praise the countries that voted for the resolution. We emphasize the need to turn such a resolution into action, not only to halt settlements but to eradicate Israel’s occupation in all its forms.”

—Hazem Kassem, a spokesman for Hamas, in response to a UN resolution condemning Israeli settlement construction, December 2016

Some Palestinians have less faith that the U.S. government can ever be a reliable ally. Groups across the Arab world see the history of U.S. policy in the Middle East as racist and anti-Muslim. Palestinians who hold this view doubt that U.S. intervention will ever reflect Palestinian interests.

How do Israelis envision their country’s future?

There are Israelis who remain committed to the idea that God promised Jews the land that was once the mandate of Palestine. They support Jewish settlements as a way to realize that right and ward off security threats. These Israelis do not consider Israel an occupying power in the West Bank and resist the idea of a Palestinian state.

“A nation can’t be an occupier in its own land.”

—Yossi Dagan, regional council head for Israeli settlements in the northern West Bank, quoted in the *LA Times* November 2016

Many Israelis support some version of a two-state solution. Some believe this is the only path to peace and stability. Others go further to argue that a two-state solution is a matter of justice, criticizing the Israeli government’s occupation and treatment of Palestinians. Still others believe that establishing a Palestinian state will make Israel more secure by removing the pressure created by Arabs within Israel fighting for rights.

“Peace Now is a movement of Israeli citizens who see the achievement of peace, compromise, and reconciliation with the Palestinian people and the Arab states as a necessary guarantee for the future, security and character of the State of Israel.”

—Vision statement of the Peace Now movement, founded in 1978, still active in 2017

A majority of Israelis are conflicted about Israel’s occupation of the West Bank. Many Israelis say they would support withdrawing from the West Bank and ending military control over Palestinians if this guaranteed Israel’s security as a Jewish-majority state. Yet these



An Israeli settlement as seen from Bethlehem in the West Bank, 2012.

Zein Khleif. Used with permission.

same Israelis fear that moving Israel's borders would make the country less secure.

“I believe that if we didn't have the settlements we would have a peace agreement, so we would have lower costs for the military, for security; we would have more investment, we would have peace.”

—Hagit Ofra, official at Peace Now,
August 2011

A Palestinian minority living within Israel's borders seeks equal rights as Israeli citizens. These Palestinians see themselves as a marginalized group within the Israeli state and envision a future in which their civil and human rights are protected just as Jewish citizens' rights are protected.

“We are the Palestinian Arabs in Israel, the indigenous peoples, the residents of the States of Israel.... Defining the Israeli State as a Jewish State....excludes us.... Therefore, we call for a Consensual Democratic system that enables us to be fully active in the decision-making process and guarantee our individual and collective civil, historic, and national rights.”

—The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, in a December 2006 document

Most Israelis believe Israel should remain a Jewish state rather than move toward a single state shared by Arabs and Jews. (The idea of a single state is often referred as the “one-state solution” to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.) Nearly every Israeli wishes to live in a country that can exist in peace with its neighbors. Disagreement arises over how to accomplish these goals. Given the history of violence and failed negotiations with Palestinians, an increasing number of Israelis who support the idea of peace wonder whether and how soon it is likely to be achieved.

How do Palestinians envision their future?

For many Palestinians, the rights of full statehood are a priority when envisioning their future. These include the rights to govern themselves, control their own borders, move freely inside their country, and have full access to its resources. All of these conditions require an end to Israeli occupation.

When engaging in diplomatic negotiations with Israel, the goal of a two-state solution is non-negotiable for most Palestinian political leaders.

“We will deal with any president elected by the American people on the principle of achieving permanent peace in the Middle East based on the two-state solution.”

—Nabil abu Rudaineh, Palestinian
Authority presidential spokesman,
November 2016

Palestinian leaders also insist that Palestinian refugees living throughout the Middle East have the right to return to the land that was formerly Palestine, as promised by the United Nations. Some Palestinians living in neighboring countries wish to continue their lives there with continued access to education, healthcare, and social services. Palestinians living in the occupied territories, especially in the Gaza Strip, call for equal access to resources and an end to restrictions imposed by Israel on how goods and people travel through the area.

Some Palestinians hold more extreme views and believe that Israel must cease to exist before a Palestinian state can achieve its full potential. Hamas has a charter that calls for the destruction of Israel, though not all Hamas leaders govern with this as a priority. Many Palestinians support Hamas not only for its harsh stance toward Israel but also because it has provided economic, health, and educational services to Palestinians in Gaza.



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This image shows the barrier that separates Israel and the West Bank, September 2010.

“ Hamas does not wage a struggle against the Jews because they are Jewish but wages a struggle against the Zionists who occupy Palestine.”

—Khaled Meshaal, a leader of Hamas living in exile in Qatar, May 2017

“ Palestine is a land whose status has been elevated by Islam, a faith that holds it in high esteem, that breathes through it its spirit and just values and that lays the foundation for the doctrine of defending and protecting it.... Palestine is the cause of a people who have been let down by a world that fails to secure their rights and restore to them what has been usurped from them.... Palestine symbolizes the resistance that shall continue until liberation is accomplished.”

—Hamas’ “Document of General Principles and Policies,” published May 2017

The two Palestinian governing bodies of the Gaza Strip and West Bank have different visions about how to meet Palestinian needs and achieve an eventual Palestinian state. While Hamas does not recognize Israel and is willing to use violence to achieve its goals, the Palestinian Authority has denounced violence and is open to negotiations with Israel. The Palestinian Authority seeks to create a single Palestinian government that controls both territories and presents a unified front.

While these divisions have been a barrier to a unified government and have created various hardships for the Palestinian population, Palestinians across the territories continue to envision a day when they will have a unified, independent nation.

Conclusion

In the coming days, you will have an opportunity to consider four options for U.S. policy in the Middle East. Each of the four options is based on a distinct set of values and beliefs. As you weigh the options, consider

how what you have learned so far shapes your beliefs about the following questions:

- What values and interests should motivate U.S. policy in the Middle East?
- What should the United States do when the values and interests that motivate its policy conflict?
- To what extent should the United States be involved in the affairs of the Middle East?

After considering the four options, you will be asked to create your own option that reflects your beliefs about what U.S. policy in the Middle East should be. You may borrow heavily from one option, combine ideas from several options, or take a new approach altogether.

Supplementary Resources

The Modern Middle East: General History

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**Additional Topics: Orientalism;
Islamism; Women in the Middle East;
Arab Spring**

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Thompson, Elizabeth F. *Justice Interrupted: The Struggle for Constitutional Government in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Online Resources

Brown University Library <<http://libguides.brown.edu/mes>>. An excellent source of internet resources on the Middle East.

Maps of the Middle East <www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east.html>. The Perry-Casteñada Map Collection at the University of Texas.