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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Are Jews indigenous to Israel? A 1986 working test against four genome studies

Martínez Cobo's 1986 test sets four elements of indigeneity. Four genome studies, the 1931 census and Israel's 2026 count bear on each.

Indigeneity Zionism Population Genetics International Law Israel



In 1986, United Nations Special Rapporteur José Martínez Cobo wrote the working test of indigeneity cited most often in this debate. It describes peoples "having a

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historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories" who "form at present non-dominant sectors of society."

Four peer-reviewed genome studies published between 2010 and 2020 report Middle Eastern or Levantine ancestry in Jewish populations, alongside European and other admixture. Israel's 1948 founding declaration calls the land "the birthplace of the Jewish people." The test's present-tense clause meets a present-day count. In its own official count, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics put "Jews and Others" at 76% of a preliminary 10.244 million residents in April 2026.

Key Findings

- Martínez Cobo (1986), document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7/Add.4, paragraph 379, sets out a working definition with 4 elements. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the General Assembly 143 to 4 with 11 abstentions, contains no definition of the term (United Nations General Assembly, 2007).
- Behar, Yunusbayev, Metspalu and colleagues (2010), in an abstract that gives no count of individuals, compared 14 Jewish diaspora communities with 69 non-Jewish populations: "Most Jewish samples form a remarkably tight subcluster that overlies Druze and Cypriot samples but not samples from other Levantine populations or paired Diaspora host populations." Beta Israel, Bene Israel and Cochini Jews cluster with neighbouring populations in Ethiopia and western India.
- Agranat-Tamir, Waldman, Martin and colleagues (2020), modelling 14 present-day groups against 93 ancient individuals, found both Arabic-speaking and Jewish populations compatible with more than 50% Middle Eastern-related ancestry. The authors state that this proxy does not establish direct descent from Bronze Age Levantines.
- The Government of Palestine's 1931 census counted 174,610 Jews, 16.9% of 1,035,821 people enumerated. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counted 7.790 million "Jews and Others," 76% of 10.244 million, in April 2026; this is Israel's own official count and is preliminary.
- Article five of the Pittsburgh Rabbinical Conference's 1885 Declaration of Principles expected "neither a return to Palestine." The 1937 Columbus Platform reversed it,

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affirming Palestine's "upbuilding as a Jewish homeland."

Do Jews meet the most cited working test of indigeneity?

José Martínez Cobo, Special Rapporteur of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, set out a working definition with **4** elements in 1986.

The elements are historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies, distinctness, present non-dominance, and a determination to transmit ancestral territories and identity (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7/Add.4, paragraph 379). The record on the Jewish case bears differently on each element.

Paragraph 379 reads in full: "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems." Paragraph 378 introduces the text as a definition "for the purposes of international action." It is a rapporteur's working definition, not adopted law.

The instrument later adopted by the General Assembly does not supply one. A text search of resolution 61/295 of 2007, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, finds no use of "defin" anywhere in its preamble or 46 articles. Article 33(1) relies on self-identification instead: "Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions."

Bangladesh abstained in the vote, and its delegate gave the missing definition as a reason: "In particular, indigenous peoples have not been defined or identified in clear terms."

Paragraph 380 adds a structural point. It says continuity "may consist of the continuation, for an extended period reaching into the present, of one or more" listed factors. No single factor

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is therefore a necessary condition in the text.

Element (paragraph 379)	Wording	Record set beside it here
Historical continuity	"a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies"	Atzmon and colleagues, 2010; Behar and colleagues, 2010; Census of Palestine, 1931
Distinctness	"consider themselves distinct from other sectors"	Pittsburgh Platform, 1885; Columbus Platform, 1937
Non-dominance	"form at present non-dominant sectors of society"	Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026, Israel's own official count
Transmission	"determined to preserve, develop and transmit"	Basic Law: Nation-State, 2018; Law of Return, 1950

Who says Jews are indigenous to the land, and since when?

The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel was read on **14 May 1948**. Its opening sentence, in the Avalon Project text at Yale Law School, reads: "ERETZ-ISRAEL [(Hebrew) - The Land of Israel] was the birthplace of the Jewish people." This is the founding instrument's own statement of origin, and every later claim of a Jewish tie to the land restates it.

The Declaration was signed by 37 members of the People's Council, David Ben-Gurion first. Its recitals set out its own historical chain: the First Zionist Congress of 1897, the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, the League of Nations Mandate, and the General Assembly resolution of 29 November 1947. These recitals record what the founding text asserts. They are not independent historical findings.

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs restated the tie in 2015, writing of "Jews voluntarily establishing homes and communities in their ancient homeland, and alongside Palestinian communities." That is the stated legal position of a party to the dispute, published to argue that settlements fall outside Article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The same 2015 page states: "At the same time, Israel recognizes that the Palestinians also entertain claims to this area."

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The claim also has a named scholarly line. In 2007, S. Ilan Troen published "De-Judaizing the Homeland: Academic Politics in Rewriting the History of Palestine" in Israel Affairs (Troen, 2007, peer-reviewed). It appeared in a themed issue titled "Postcolonial Theory and the Arab-Israel Conflict." Its first page quotes Chaim Weizmann's December 1945 letter to President Truman, that "Palestine, for its size, is probably the most investigated country in the world."

The strongest form of the claim is ancient origin in the land, and the primary record states it directly. The founding text uses the word "birthplace," and the Foreign Ministry uses "ancient homeland." Both are Israeli state texts, dated 1948 and 2015, and both are the party's own words.

What does genome research find about Jewish diaspora ancestry?

Atzmon, Hao, Pe'er and colleagues analysed **237** unrelated individuals from seven Jewish groups in The American Journal of Human Genetics in 2010 (peer-reviewed). They found "distinctive Jewish population clusters, each with shared Middle Eastern ancestry, proximity to contemporary Middle Eastern populations, and variable degrees of European and North African admixture." The groups were Iranian, Iraqi, Syrian, Italian, Turkish, Greek and Ashkenazi.

The sample was not random. Subjects were recruited through communities in the New York region, Seattle, Thessaloniki, Athens and Rome, and at Sheba Medical Centre. They "were included only if all four grandparents came from the same Jewish community."

European admixture ran from 30% to 60% across the Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Italian and Syrian groups; this is a range across four groups, not a figure for any one. Iranian and Iraqi Jews were "the most distant and differentiated" of the Jewish groups. The authors also name the nearest non-Jewish neighbours: "Besides Southern European groups, the closest genetic neighbors to most Jewish populations are the Palestinians, Bedouins, and Druze."

Behar, Yunusbayev, Metspalu and colleagues compared 14 Jewish diaspora communities with 69 Old World non-Jewish populations in Nature in 2010. The figures here come from the

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abstract, which gives no count of individuals. The authors wrote: "Most Jewish samples form a remarkably tight subcluster that overlies Druze and Cypriot samples but not samples from other Levantine populations or paired Diaspora host populations."

Behar and colleagues name the exceptions. Ethiopian Jews (Beta Israel) and Indian Jews (Bene Israel and Cochini) "cluster with neighbouring autochthonous populations in Ethiopia and western India, respectively, despite a clear paternal link between the Bene Israel and the Levant." Their conclusion is that the results "trace the origins of most Jewish Diaspora communities to the Levant."

Martínez Cobo's paragraph 380 lists "Common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands" as one alternative factor among several. The text does not name genetic evidence as a way of showing it. Atzmon and colleagues end with a limit on what the genetics carries: "both the flow of genes and the flow of religious and cultural ideas have contributed to Jewishness."

Does ancient Levantine DNA link to Jews alone?

Agranat-Tamir, Waldman, Martin and colleagues modelled present-day groups against ancient genomes from the Bronze Age Southern Levant (Cell, 2020, peer-reviewed). They reported that "both Arabic-speaking and Jewish populations are compatible with having more than **50%** Middle Eastern-related ancestry." The finding covers both groups in the same sentence.

The authors attach a limit to that finding in the accepted manuscript: "This does not mean that any these present-day groups bear direct ancestry from people who lived in the Middle to Late Bronze Age Levant or in Chalcolithic Zagros; rather, it indicates that they have ancestries from populations whose ancient proxy can be related to the Middle East." The 50% is a combined proxy for Bronze Age Levantine and Chalcolithic Zagros ancestry. It is not a share of "Canaanite" ancestry. The ancient sample was new genome-wide data for 73 individuals, pooled with published data into 93 individuals from nine sites that shared "Canaanite" material culture.

Haber, Gauguier, Youhanna and colleagues analysed more than 500,000 genetic markers in 1,341 new samples, all of them Lebanese (PLoS Genetics, 2013, peer-reviewed). They

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compared these with published data for 48 populations, including Jewish, Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian, Druze and Bedouin samples. In their multidimensional scaling analysis, "Sephardi Jews cluster tightly with the Levantine groups," while "Ashkenazi Jews are drawn towards the Caucasus and Eastern Europe."

Haber's population tree is a separate analysis and divides the region differently. One branch, leading to Europeans and Central Asians, includes "Lebanese, Armenians, Cypriots, Druze and Jews, as well as Turks, Iranians and Caucasian populations." A second holds "Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians, as well as North Africans, Ethiopians, Saudis, and Bedouins." The authors read the pattern as showing that "recent genetic stratifications in the Levant are driven by the religious affiliations of the populations within the region." They add that their ancestry maps "should be used as a guide rather than a precise representation."

Neither paper ties Levantine ancestry to one present-day group. Agranat-Tamir and colleagues place both Jewish and Arabic-speaking groups above the same 50% line. Haber and colleagues find Sephardi Jews clustering with Levantine neighbours. The question of Palestinian indigeneity, tested against the same instruments, is covered in a separate report.

Does diaspora break the continuity the test requires?

Martínez Cobo's paragraph 380 says continuity "may consist of the continuation, for an extended period reaching into the present, of one or more" factors. Among them is occupation of ancestral lands "or at least of part of them." The text lists these factors as alternatives and states no requirement of unbroken residence. The Government of Palestine's census of 18 November 1931 counted **174,610** Jews in the territory.

Those 174,610 Jews were 16.9% of the 1,035,821 people the census enumerated. Moslems numbered 759,712 (73.3%) and Christians 91,398 (8.8%). The census classified people by religion, not nationality, so it has no "Arab" or "Palestinian" column. The tables were preliminary: Superintendent of Census E. Mills reserved discussion for the General Census Report published in 1933.

Palestine's enumerated population by religion, 1931

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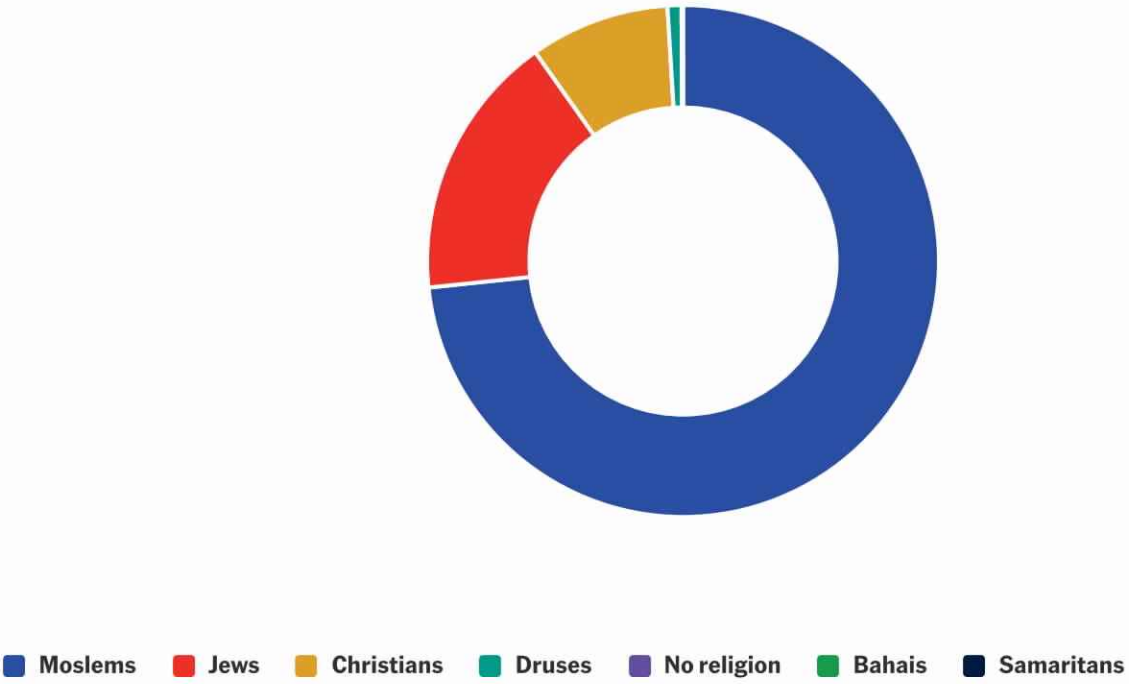
CENSUS OF 18 NOVEMBER 1931, PRELIMINARY TABLES; TOTAL 1,035,821



Source: Government of Palestine, 1932, Census of Palestine 1931. Official record.

The second count measures where Jews live now. Sergio DellaPergola's chapter in the American Jewish Year Book 2024 estimates Israel's core Jewish population at 7,153,000 on 1 January 2024. On his figures, that is about 45.5% of a world core Jewish population of 15,736,800. The remaining 8,583,800 live in the diaspora (DellaPergola, 2025).

These are the author's own estimates, not a government count. The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics hosts the file but did not write it. DellaPergola puts the world core Jewish population at 11.0 million in 1945.

Read against paragraph 380, the two counts record part of a people present in the land at two dates, 1931 and 2024. In the first count Jews were a minority of the enumerated population. In the second, just under half of the world's Jews lived in Israel. Neither figure measures residence before 1931, and the census is the earliest count in this record.

Can a majority population still count as Indigenous?

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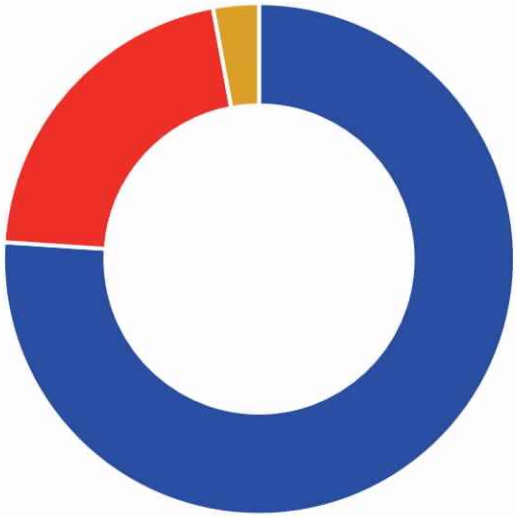
Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counted **7.790 million** "Jews and Others," 76% of a preliminary 10.244 million residents, on the eve of the 78th Independence Day in April 2026. This is Israel's own official count. Martínez Cobo's definition describes indigenous peoples as those who "form at present non-dominant sectors of society."

"Others" is the Bureau's own category. It covers non-Arab Christians, members of other religions, and people registered as not classified by religion, so 7.790 million is not a figure for Jews alone. The same release counts 2.157 million Arabs (21.1%), a category covering Moslems, Arab Christians and Druze. It also counts 296,000 foreigners (2.9%), using data from the end of 2025.

From 2023 the series includes foreigners staying in Israel, so it does not run continuously with earlier years. The Bureau records Israel's population at 806,000 when the state was established in 1948.

Israel's population by Bureau category, 2026

THOUSANDS, PRELIMINARY, TO 22 APRIL 2026; FOREIGNERS AS OF END 2025. PARTS SUM TO 10,243 AGAINST A PUBLISHED 10,244 BY ROUNDING



Jews and Others Arabs Foreigners

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026, Israel's Independence Day 2026. Israel's own official count.

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DellaPergola gives a separate Jews-only figure of 7,153,000 for 1 January 2024. It uses a different definition and a different date, so it is not directly comparable with the Bureau's category.

The study's paragraph 376 sets the context for that clause: indigenous peoples consider themselves "the historical successors of the peoples and nations that existed on their territories before the coming of the invaders," while the invaders' historical successors "now form the predominant sectors of society." Paragraph 379 states its elements together in one definition, and the non-dominance clause is written in the present tense. Paragraph 380 makes only the continuity factors alternatives. The text sets no rule for weighing one element against another, and it names no people to which any element applies.

What does the only binding indigenous peoples treaty require?

International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 was adopted on 27 June **1989**. Its Article 1(1)(b) covers peoples "regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries." Such peoples, "irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions."

The Convention entered into force on 5 September 1991. Under its Article 38 it binds only the states that ratify it. Article 1(2) adds a second footing: "Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of this Convention apply." Article 1(3) limits the reach of the word itself: "The use of the term peoples in this Convention shall not be construed as having any implications as regards the rights which may attach to the term under international law."

The Convention names no people. It fixes its reference point at conquest, colonisation, or the establishment of present state boundaries, and leaves the choice of moment to whoever applies it. A comparison of these treaty criteria across the whole population of the territory appears in a separate report.

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The second instrument rests on a different footing. Resolution 61/295, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, was adopted on 13 September 2007 by recorded vote. It defines nothing and treats identity as a matter for the people concerned under Article 33(1). Article 3 states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination," and Article 46(1) bars any reading that would "dismember or impair" the territorial integrity of sovereign states.

Recorded vote on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2007; ABSENT STATES APPEAR IN NO LIST



Source: United Nations General Assembly, 2007, resolution 61/295, recorded vote, A/61/PV.107. Official record.

The result is two instruments on two footings. The 1989 treaty tests descent and self-identification. The 2007 declaration contains no definition of the term.

Has Jewish self-identification with the land ever been disputed internally?

A rabbinical conference near Pittsburgh declared in **November 1885**, in article five of its Declaration of Principles: "We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state." Kaufmann Kohler convened the conference and Isaac Mayer Wise presided.

The dissent matters under Martínez Cobo's paragraph 381. That paragraph rests membership on "self-identification as indigenous (group consciousness)." Paragraph 382 preserves "the sovereign right and power to decide who belongs to them, without external interference."

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The 1885 text is quoted here from the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which publishes it in its Platforms series. That body was founded on 9 July 1889, so it did not adopt the 1885 declaration; it is the successor body that publishes it. "The Jewish state" in article five belongs to the register of ancient Temple restoration, as the clause on "sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron" shows. The text predates the First Zionist Congress of 1897 and the 1948 Declaration.

The reversal came 52 years later. The Columbus Platform of 1937 affirmed "the obligation of all Jewry to aid in its upbuilding as a Jewish homeland by endeavoring to make it not only a haven of refuge for the oppressed but also a center of Jewish culture and spiritual life." In its Miami Platform of 24 June 1997, the same movement wrote that "In 1885 the framers of the Pittsburgh Platform of Reform Judaism declared that they no longer expected Jews to return to a national homeland in Palestine." It also recorded that the position had been reversed by 1937.

The record after 1937 runs in one direction. The movement's platforms of 1976, 1997 and 1999 each return to the subject, and none restores the 1885 clause.

Article five contains no count, share or survey result. It records what one gathering of rabbis declared in November 1885, not what Reform congregants or American Jews believed. Under the group-consciousness factor, it is a dated internal dissent with a dated reversal.

Does Israeli law ground its claim in nativity or history?

The Knesset's **2018** Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People states in clause 1(b) that the State "is the nation state of the Jewish People in which it realizes its natural, cultural, religious and historical right to self-determination." The Knesset labels its English translation unofficial. The clause joins a natural right and a historical right in one sentence.

Clause 1(c) adds: "The realization of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is exclusive to the Jewish People." Clause 5 states that the State "shall be open to Jewish immigration, and the ingathering of the exiles." The law contains no equality clause and no individual-rights clause. That is a fact about the text, not a finding about how the State treats anyone.

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The Law of Return of 1950 uses the vocabulary of return. Section 1 reads: "Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an oleh." The translator's note defines the term: "oleh (plural: olim) means a Jew immigrating, into Israel."

Section 4 extends that status to those already present or born in the land. It provides that "every Jew who was born in this country, whether before or after the coming into force of this Law, shall be deemed to be a person who has come to this country as an oleh under this Law." The text is quoted from the English version published by the Knesset. The statute therefore describes even a native-born Jew in the language of arrival.

Across the three enacted or founding texts, the vocabulary is birthplace (1948), return (1950), and a "natural" and "historical" right (2018). The statutes ground the tie in a people's history in the land. The Law of Return frames individual nativity as equivalent to return. Neither statute contains any figure; counts of immigrants under the Law belong to the Central Bureau of Statistics.

Where do scholars disagree about calling Jews indigenous?

Of **5** named scholarly works published between 2006 and 2022, 2 set out a settler-colonial reading of Israel (Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2006). The other 3 stand on the opposing side of that reading (Troen, 2007; Ukashi, 2018; Dowty, 2022).

Only 3 of the 5 are peer-reviewed articles, and none is a measurement.

Patrick Wolfe's essay in the Journal of Genocide Research holds that "Settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal," and that "invasion is a structure not an event" (Wolfe, 2006). He also marks a difference between his main comparison case and Israel: "Ideologically, however, there is a major difference between the Australian and Israeli cases." The Australian justification, he writes, was not "that we had been on the land primordially and were merely returning home."

Lorenzo Veracini's book, as its publisher Pluto Press describes it, "argues that the conflict is best understood in terms of colonialism, as like many other societies, Israel is a settler

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society" (Veracini, 2006). It compares Israel with South Africa, French Algeria and Australia.

On the other side, Ukashi's article in Peace and Conflict Studies argues for reconsidering Zionism as an Indigenous emancipation movement (Ukashi, 2018). It is a peer-reviewed interpretive essay. The argument parallels Zionism as an Indigenous rights movement, a framing examined in a separate report. Dowty's essay for the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Washington, titled "Is Israel a settler colonial state?", argues against the settler-colonial characterisation; it is signed faculty commentary and was not peer-reviewed (Dowty, 2022). Troen's 2007 article stands opposite Wolfe by its title, "De-Judaizing the Homeland."

Work	Type	Reading
Wolfe, 2006	Peer-reviewed theoretical essay	Settler-colonial framework
Veracini, 2006	Scholarly book	Israel as a settler society
Troen, 2007	Peer-reviewed article	Title: "De-Judaizing the Homeland"
Ukashi, 2018	Peer-reviewed interpretive essay	Zionism as Indigenous emancipation
Dowty, 2022	University centre essay	Against the settler-colonial label

Methodology and limitations

The evidence was drawn from four tiers, each labelled by type where it is used. Primary and official records include Martínez Cobo's 1986 study and General Assembly resolution 61/295 with its recorded vote in A/61/PV.107. They also include ILO Convention No. 169, the 1948 Declaration, the Basic Law of 2018, the Law of Return of 1950 with its 1970 amendment, the 1931 Census of Palestine, and the Central Bureau of Statistics release of 2026. The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs pages of 2015 are cited as a party's own stated position.

Peer-reviewed research comprises four genome studies. Atzmon and colleagues (2010) sampled 237 individuals under a four-grandparent rule. Behar and colleagues (2010) are cited from the abstract alone, so no sample size is given. Agranat-Tamir and colleagues (2020) are quoted from the accepted author manuscript, which may differ in wording from

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the published Cell text. The 1,341 samples in Haber and colleagues (2013) are all Lebanese; their Jewish and Palestinian comparison data come from 994 previously published samples across 48 populations.

The 1931 census figures are preliminary tables classified by religion. The 2026 Bureau figures are preliminary, rest on the 2022 census, and include foreigners from 2023 onward. DellaPergola's figures are his own estimates, measured against his revised 2023 base. Shares not printed by a source (16.9%, 73.3%, 8.8% and 45.5%) are computed from that source's own counts and totals.

The scholarly works are interpretive. Troen (2007) is cited by title and venue only, and Veracini (2006) by the publisher's description. No body publishes a count or share of indigeneity for any people in the region. The instruments define criteria and name no people.

Conclusion

The opening question was whether Jews are indigenous to Israel when measured against the working test cited most often. The test's own text frames the answer in parts: its continuity factors are alternatives, while its non-dominance clause is written in the present tense.

On continuity, the genome studies report Middle Eastern or Levantine ancestry in most of the Jewish groups they sampled, alongside European and other admixture. The founding text of 1948 names the land a birthplace, and the 1931 census found 174,610 Jews living there before the state existed. On distinctness, the internal dissent recorded here, from 1885, was reversed by 1937 and not restored in any later platform. On transmission, the statutes speak of a natural and historical right and frame even native birth as return.

On non-dominance, Israel's own official count puts "Jews and Others" at 76% of residents. Atzmon and colleagues name Palestinians, Bedouins and Druze, after Southern European groups, as the closest genetic neighbours of most Jewish populations, and the binding treaty names no people at all.

The working test describes peoples who "form at present non-dominant sectors of society." For a people most of whose diaspora communities Behar and colleagues trace to the Levant,

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and whose state now holds the majority there, the text names no element that carries the weight. What can one people's ancestral tie decide when the same ancestry runs through the neighbours who share it?

Frequently Asked Questions

Which states voted against the Declaration, and why?

Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States voted against it on 13 September 2007. Canada's delegate said it "has no legal effect in Canada, and its provisions do not represent customary international law." Australia's delegate said it "will not be binding on Australia and other States as a matter of international law."

Does the Law of Return cover people who are not Jewish?

Yes. Section 4A, inserted by the Knesset in 1970, extends the same rights to "a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew." It excludes "a person who has been a Jew and has voluntarily changed his religion."

How does Israeli law define who is a Jew?

Section 4B of the Law of Return, added in 1970, defines a Jew as "a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion." The definition opens "For the purposes of this Law," and the same amendment carried it into the Population Registry Law through section 3A.

What did the 2010 genome study find about the Khazar theory?

Atzmon, Hao, Pe'er and colleagues (2010) found their data "incompatible with theories that Ashkenazi Jews are for the most part the direct lineal descendants of converted Khazars or Slavs." That finding rests on their 237-person sample, recruited under the four-grandparent rule.

Does Israel's government acknowledge Palestinian claims to the West Bank?

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The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote in 2015 that the West Bank "is best regarded as territory over which there are competing claims which should be resolved in peace process negotiations." The same page states that "Israel recognizes that the Palestinians also entertain claims to this area." Both statements are the party's own stated position.

How many people did the 1931 census count as nomadic?

The Government of Palestine counted 66,553 nomadic people in 1931, all recorded as Moslem, against 969,268 settled people. Beduin were enumerated by a separate count that was not taken at the same time as the main census.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Did the IDF stage October 7 to justify invading Gaza? Four Israeli reviews and one kibbutz, hour by hour

Israel's own inquiries record Hamas's plan held for years, readiness measures not taken and a late response; none assigns the IDF a planning role.

October 7 | Israel Defense Forces | Intelligence Failure | Kibbutz Be'eri | Hamas



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No inquiry on the record assigns the IDF a role in planning the 7 October 2023 attack. The IDF's own Be'eri inquiry (11 July 2024) counts **approximately 340** attackers in that one kibbutz, about 100 of them Hamas Nukhba operatives, and concludes that the army "failed in its mission to protect the residents." Those are the army's own figures, not independently verified.

The claim that the IDF staged the attack draws on two documented facts. First, the Israel Security Agency's own 2025 investigation records that Hamas invasion plans were detected in 2018 and again in 2022. Second, a UN commission found in June 2024 that Israeli fire likely killed at least 14 Israeli civilians that day, a finding on which the IDF's inquiry reaches a different conclusion for the Be'eri house. Alongside those facts, four Israeli reviews record a plan held and not acted on, readiness measures not taken, and a response their authors describe as lacking command and control.

Key Findings

- The IDF's own Be'eri inquiry (Israel Defense Forces, 2024) counts approximately 340 attackers in Kibbutz Be'eri on 7 October 2023, about 100 of them Hamas Nukhba operatives. It finds that "the IDF failed in its mission." These are the army's own figures, self-reported and not independently verified.
- The Israel Security Agency's investigation of its own conduct (Israel Security Agency, 2025) records that Hamas invasion plans were detected in 2018 and again in 2022. In the agency's words, the plans were "never fully processed as an imminent threat."
- The IDF's own review of 25 of its investigations (Israel Defense Forces, 2025) found that "not a single significant action" was taken among line forces or reserves in the critical hours before the attack.
- Jones and Pinfold (2025), citing a 2024 magazine essay, report that 32 IDF battalions were deployed in the West Bank and two around Gaza on the eve of the attack.
- Israel's State Comptroller (2025) found that none of at least six attempts to formulate a national security concept was approved.

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Who carried out the October 7 attack, according to the record?

The IDF's own Be'eri inquiry, published on 11 July 2024, estimates that **approximately 340** attackers entered Kibbutz Be'eri, "including about 100 Nukhba terrorist operatives of Hamas." The army published this count about its own battle, and no outside body has verified it. The inquiry's verdict is that "the IDF failed in its mission to protect the residents of Kibbutz Be'eri."

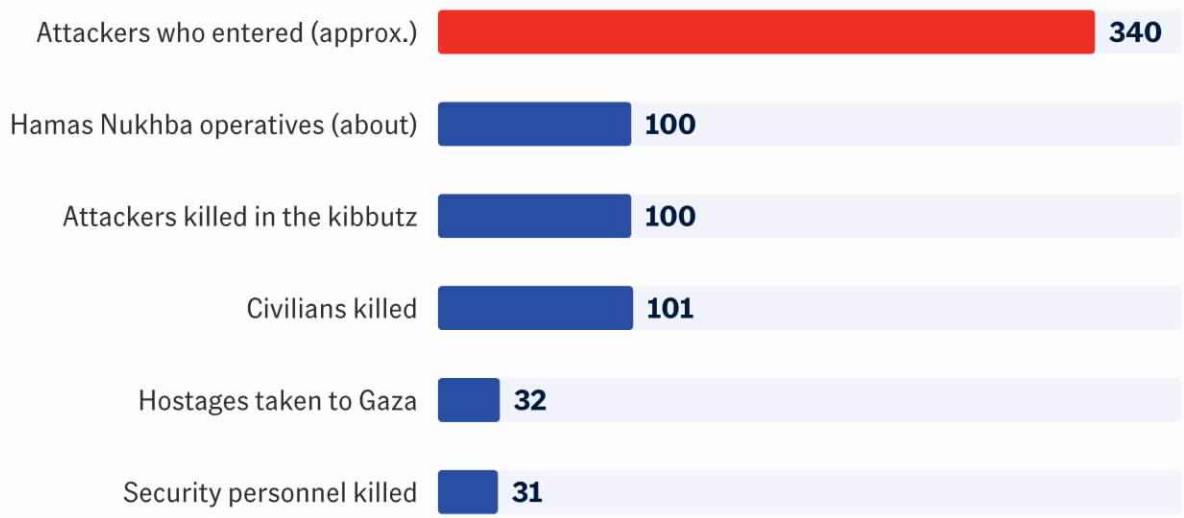
Maj. Gen. (res.) Mickey Edelstein and a team conducted the inquiry over "around three months." Chief of the General Staff LTG Herzi Halevi summarised it, and it was presented to Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant. Halevi wrote that the IDF "did not fulfill its mission to defend the residents in the most grave manner." The inquiry gives its own toll for the kibbutz:

- 101 civilians killed
- 30 hostages from Be'eri and two others taken into Gaza
- 31 security personnel killed
- about 100 attackers killed within the kibbutz

It also states its own limit: it "does not reflect the full picture of what occurred on that day."

Kibbutz Be'eri, 7 to 8 October 2023, as the IDF counts it

THE ARMY'S OWN INQUIRY, SELF-REPORTED AND NOT INDEPENDENTLY VERIFIED



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Source: Israel Defense Forces, 2024, Battle of Kibbutz Be'eri inquiry (the IDF's own count).

A UN body reached the same attribution across the whole attack. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry, in report A/HRC/56/26 (14 June 2024), concluded in paragraph 90 that members of the military wings of Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, together with Palestinian civilians who directly participated, "deliberately killed, injured, mistreated, took hostages and committed sexual and gender-based violence against civilians." The same report concludes in paragraph 97 that "Israel has committed war crimes, crimes against humanity" in Gaza. Its findings therefore address conduct by both parties.

Both documents name the attackers. Neither describes any IDF role in planning or directing the assault.

Did Israel have Hamas's attack plan years in advance?

Yes, on the agency's own account. The Israel Security Agency's 2025 investigation into its own conduct, relayed by The Times of Israel and Ynetnews, records that Hamas invasion plans were detected in **2018** and again in 2022. In the agency's words, "these plans were never fully processed as an imminent threat, which led to a lack of preparation."

This foreknowledge is one of the two documented facts the staging claim draws on. That claim holds that the IDF planned or permitted the attack to obtain a pretext for invading Gaza. The foreknowledge itself is not contested: it is the agency's own admission.

The agency's account goes further. Its head, Ronen Bar, said that had the agency acted differently, in the years before the attack and on its night, "the massacre would have been avoided," as The Times of Israel reported on 4 March 2025. The same report records that the agency's summary pointed to Hamas's ground-invasion plan, the document known as Jericho's Walls, as "not handled correctly over several years."

What the agency's account documents is a sequence of detection followed by a failure to treat the plan as imminent. It is a party investigating itself, and its findings have not been

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independently reviewed. The account describes a plan held and not acted on. It describes no Israeli part in the plan's authorship, its timing or its execution.

The same distinction runs through the bank's other sources on what Israeli intelligence held. The Institute's report on what Israeli intelligence knew before October 7 reads the agencies' own reviews in sequence. The sections below take the plan's path from Hamas's side and then from the army's.

Did Hamas rehearse the assault before carrying it out?

Baram and Ben Israel (2025), peer-reviewed in Intelligence and National Security, report that Hamas practised its plan in **May 2023** "in the same manner it executed it on October 7." They write that "the significance of this intelligence was not fully grasped."

The same authors report that Unit 8200, Israel's signals intelligence unit, acquired Hamas's attack plan, the "Walls of Jericho," in a 2022 operation "a year and a half earlier." That date matches the second detection the Israel Security Agency records in its own 2025 investigation.

The authors' main conclusion is that "a critical aspect of the failure was in the analysis of the intelligence received about Hamas' intentions and capabilities, not a lack of intelligence collection capabilities." They name a second factor: "an over reliance on technology in intelligence collection on the expense of intelligence assessment." In their account, this "led to a false sense of security and diminished the value of human analysis."

They describe Israel's Gaza warning system as three layers:

- Shin Bet human sources on Hamas leadership plans
- military intelligence signals and imagery collection
- the border barrier with its sensors

They argue that the 48 to 72 hour notice the early-warning doctrine assumed for calling up reserves "became obsolete when facing an enemy positioned just meters away."

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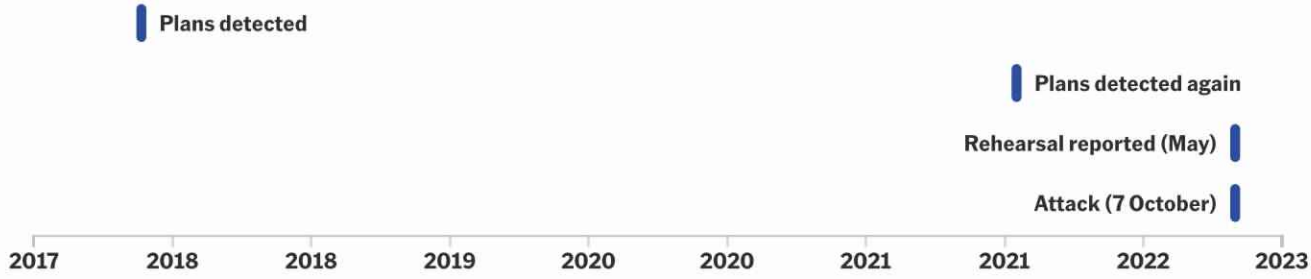
The article is interpretive scholarship, not an inquiry. It sources the 2022 acquisition to an unpublished investigation report, and neither that nor the May 2023 exercise is a finding of the authors' own research. The article was corrected after first publication, and the corrected version is the one cited here.

Hamas's invasion plan and Israeli intelligence, 2018 to 2023

DETECTION DATES AS THE AGENCY STATES THEM; THE REHEARSAL AS BARAM AND BEN ISRAEL REPORT IT



Source: Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet), 2025, its own investigation as relayed by the press; Baram and Ben Israel, 2025.

On this record, the preparation and the rehearsal sit with Hamas. The Israeli side appears as the holder of intelligence it did not act on.

What did the army do with the final night's warning signs?

The IDF Chief of the General Staff's summary of the Turgeman expert review, published on **10 November 2025**, finds that in the critical hours before the attack "not a single significant action" was taken among the line forces or reserves. This is the IDF reviewing its own investigations, quoted here in the Institute's translation from Hebrew. The review finds that a warning on the night was "possible and even required."

The review determined that the surprise "did not emerge from a vacuum of information; quite the opposite." Varied information accumulated during the night of 6 to 7 October against a background of "high-quality, unusual information" held by various IDF bodies. Even so, the team found that no one among the commanders or the intelligence community assembled a picture of the enemy situation. No intelligence picture was formed, and no professional discussion of the warning level was held.

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The team also looked further back. Information gathered by the surveillance soldiers over the preceding months indicated unusual enemy activity, and in its words quality analysis "could have highlighted the change in the sector." Among the six explanatory factors it lists, the second is an intelligence failure "in understanding reality, in understanding the threat, and in not providing warning." The third is the absence of engagement with the "Jericho Wall" plan.

The review's scale is stated in the summary:

- LTG Eyal Zamir appointed the team on 22 March 2025, headed by Maj. Gen. (res.) Sami Turgeman.
- It examined 25 IDF investigations in depth and found their quality ranged from "professional and comprehensive" to "unsatisfactory."
- It interviewed about 80 officials with roles relevant to 7 October and the preceding years.

The published page is the IDF's summary of the team's report, not the report itself, which has not been published. As the IDF's own reviewers describe the final night, the information existed and was not used. The summary records inaction on available signals. It records no direction of events.

How many battalions were guarding the Gaza border that morning?

Jones and Pinfold (2025), peer-reviewed in The RUSI Journal, report that on the eve of the attack "in total, 32 IDF battalions were deployed in the West Bank, leaving only **two** around Gaza." The deployment followed an assessment that the most pertinent threats came from the West Bank. The authors cite the figure to a 2024 essay in Mosaic magazine, not to their own measurement.

IDF battalions by sector, eve of 7 October 2023
AS RELAYED BY THE AUTHORS FROM A 2024 MAGAZINE ESSAY

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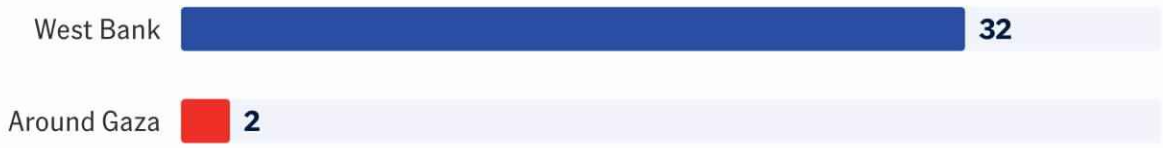

Source: Jones and Pinfold, 2025, The RUSI Journal, relaying a 2024 magazine essay.

The same authors report that the IDF's Southern Command "had no active intelligence assessments on known Hamas commanders, nor did it undertake a proper investigation of the scale and calibre of training exercises." They add that these had been "repeatedly flagged up by low-level intelligence personnel."

They write that analysts "did identify a clear shift in the modus operandi of Hamas that pointed to a potential game-changing attack." However, "such assessments never carried sufficient weight to shift prevailing assumptions." They also argue that reforms favouring real-time targeting intelligence came "at the expense of strategic early warning."

Their central argument concerns political responsibility: "Israel's intelligence agencies deferred to the prevailing, but incorrect, assumptions and short-sighted policy priorities set by the Prime Minister's Office." It stands here as the authors' argument, not the finding of any inquiry. The authors limit their own conclusions: "unless or until a formal state inquiry into those failures is conducted, these findings are only partial." Their article does not draw on the IDF's February 2025 investigation summaries or the Israel Security Agency's March 2025 findings.

The staging claim turns on a pretext for invading Gaza. Against that claim, the reported force posture on the eve of the attack placed the bulk of the army's battalions in another territory.

Did the army prepare its forces for war during 2023?

The IDF's Turgeman review summary of **10 November 2025** records that senior military officials warned during 2023 that Israel's enemies perceived an internal weakening that raised the likelihood of escalation. The review is the IDF's own finding about itself. It finds

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that despite the warning, "the required military actions to improve readiness and adjust force deployment were not taken."

The review lists, as its fifth explanatory factor, "a substantial and persistent gap" at every level of command between the reference threat and the operational response. It reads most of its six factors as extending over several years and many formations: "a systemic, organisation-wide, multi-year failure." The sixth factor is a flawed decision-making process and use of force on the night of 7 October itself.

The IDF's Be'eri inquiry of 11 July 2024 reaches the same point from the ground. "The IDF was not prepared for the extensive infiltration scenario that occurred on October 7th," it states. Forces had trained for "isolated and specific infiltrations," and as a result "there were no additional reserve forces in the area that could have been sent to Kibbutz Be'eri."

The two IDF documents were written 16 months apart by different teams. Both describe readiness measures that were not taken in the months before the attack. Neither records forces readied ahead of 7 October for a ground operation in Gaza.

The Turgeman team also recorded what remained unexamined. It recommended that the Chief of Staff complete investigations into topics it found had not been covered, chief among them "the handling of the information that arrived over the years and the systemic and operational aspects of the 'Jericho Wall' plan." Its own remit excluded relations between the IDF and other security bodies. Its readiness findings therefore describe the army alone.

How long did Be'eri residents fight before the army took over?

The IDF's Be'eri inquiry of 11 July 2024 records that "for the first **seven hours** of combat, the kibbutz residents defended themselves." Until 13:30, the fighting "was primarily conducted by the civilian rapid response teams and kibbutz residents." That is the army's own account of its own response, self-reported and not independently reviewed.

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Time on 7 October 2023	What the IDF's own inquiry records	Source
First **seven hours**	Kibbutz residents defend themselves	IDF Be'eri inquiry, 2024
Until **13:30**	Combat mainly by civilian rapid response teams and residents	IDF Be'eri inquiry, 2024
By **18:00**	About 700 IDF soldiers and security forces in the kibbutz area	IDF Be'eri inquiry, 2024

The inquiry describes the early hours as "characterized by a lack of command and control, a lack of coordination, and a lack of order among the different forces and units." It finds that this "led to several incidents where security forces grouped at the entrance to the kibbutz without immediately engaging in combat." Chief of the General Staff Halevi wrote that forces waited outside "while the massacre continued inside. This situation is extremely grave and cannot occur."

The inquiry also finds failures in the protection of civilians:

- "The security officials did not provide sufficient warning to the residents of Kibbutz Be'eri about the infiltration of terrorists during the initial hours."
- "In some cases, security forces fought to defend a position and evacuate and treat wounded soldiers before doing so for civilians."
- "There were instances where IDF soldiers acted inappropriately in their conduct towards civilians."

The toll it records, 101 civilians killed in Be'eri, is the IDF's own count.

The hour-by-hour sequence matters to the staging claim because of what a staged operation would imply about timing and readiness. The army's own inquiry records a force that arrived hours after the attack began, assembled at the gate without engaging, and reached about 700 personnel only by early evening.

Did Israeli fire kill Israeli civilians on October 7?

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The UN Commission of Inquiry and the IDF's own Be'eri inquiry reached different conclusions about the same day, a month apart in 2024. In conference room paper A/HRC/56/CRP.3 of 10 June 2024, the Commission found that at least **14** Israeli civilians were "likely killed as a result of Israeli Security Forces fire." The IDF's inquiry of 11 July 2024 found that no civilians inside the besieged Be'eri house were harmed by tank shell fire.

Point	UN Commission, 10 June 2024	IDF inquiry, 11 July 2024
Civilians killed by Israeli fire	**13** in Be'eri "likely" by "tank shelling and crossfire"; one by helicopter fire while being taken from Nir Oz	"No civilians inside the building" harmed by tank shells; **two** injured by shrapnel outside
"Hannibal Directive"	"Strong indications" it was used in several instances	Not mentioned on the published page
Hostages' deaths in the house	Tank fire ordered "even at the cost of civilian casualties," as quoted from a commander	"Most of the hostages were likely murdered by the terrorists"

The Commission states its own limits. In its footnote 75 it writes that it "has not seen the official directive," which reports describe as a procedure "to prevent capture of Israeli Security Forces by enemy forces." It cites a video statement confirming that "at least one individual tank team knowingly applied" the directive near Nir Oz. That crew "could not confirm whether the people they saw were alive or dead." The Commission records the order to fire on the Be'eri house as Brigadier General Barak Hiram was quoted in a later media interview.

The IDF states its own hedges. Its finding is offered "based on the information reviewed and to the best of their understanding," and it says "further inquiries and reviews of additional findings are necessary." It describes the tank fire as a joint decision by commanders "with the intent to apply pressure to the terrorists and save the civilians held hostage inside." These are the IDF's conclusions about its own conduct.

Both accounts concern deaths during the response to an attack already under way. Neither document addresses who planned that attack, and the dispute between them over specific deaths remains open on the published record.

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Has any inquiry examined the government's role before the attack?

Israel's State Comptroller found on 11 November 2025 that none of **at least six** attempts to formulate a national security concept was approved by the State Security Cabinet or the government. The Comptroller called this "a long-standing failure in which the political echelon has not fulfilled its obligation." The finding concerns strategic direction, not intelligence on Hamas.

The Comptroller also found that heads of the National Security Council since 2008 did not submit an updated concept. The release describes the report as "not a substitute for a comprehensive audit," and it assigns no accountability for 7 October.

Review	Date	What its own terms leave out
IDF Be'eri inquiry	11 July 2024	Covers sequence, combat and force conduct at one kibbutz
IDF Turgeman review summary	10 November 2025	Excludes "the space between the political and military echelons"
State Comptroller special report	11 November 2025	Says nothing on intelligence collection, analysis or warning

The Turgeman team examined IDF investigations "without examining the space between the political and military echelons or between the IDF and parallel security bodies." It also found that the handling of information over the years and the Jericho Wall plan had not been adequately investigated.

Jones and Pinfold, writing in April 2025, state that "no evidence has emerged to date that the political echelon was informed of Jericho Walls." They also note that no formal state inquiry had been conducted when they wrote.

On the record cited here, then, no published review has examined what the political echelon knew of Hamas's plan before 7 October. That is the decision layer any orchestration claim would require.

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Methodology and limitations

The evidence comes from three source types, each labelled where it is used.

Official and primary records published by a party to the events. These are:

- the IDF's operational inquiry into the battle for Kibbutz Be'eri (11 July 2024)
- the IDF Chief of the General Staff's summary of the Turgeman expert review (10 November 2025), a Hebrew page quoted here in the Institute's translation
- the Israel Security Agency's findings on its own conduct (2025), which reach the public through press relays by Ynetnews and The Times of Israel, both of 4 March 2025

Each is an Israeli body's account of its own conduct. None has been independently reviewed. The State Comptroller's release (11 November 2025) is the statement of Israel's state audit institution. Its full report was not linked from the release and was not read.

Peer-reviewed research. Baram and Ben Israel (2025) and Jones and Pinfold (2025) are both interpretive scholarship drawing on published reporting. Figures they relay, including the 32 and two battalions and the May 2023 rehearsal, are cited as reported, not as the authors' measurements.

A UN commission, named as holding its conclusions. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry's report A/HRC/56/26 and its conference room paper A/HRC/56/CRP.3 appear as the Commission's own positions, dated and by symbol. The Commission records that it sent "six requests for information and access to the Government of Israel" and received no response.

Limitations. Casualty figures differ across bodies and are never combined in one sentence. The IDF's Be'eri totals and the Commission's Be'eri figures rest on different counts. Where the two disagree, as on the Be'eri house, both are shown with their own hedges. The published IDF material is summaries; the full Turgeman report is unpublished.

Conclusion

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Did the IDF stage the attack to obtain a reason to invade Gaza? Read in its own documents, Israel's security apparatus appears as an institution that held Hamas's plan and did not act on it, not one that authored the attack.

The portrait is consistent across every axis these sources measured:

- **Foreknowledge.** The Israel Security Agency, investigating itself, records the plan detected in 2018 and 2022. Hamas, in the account Baram and Ben Israel relay, rehearsed it in May 2023.
- **Deployment.** On the eve of the attack, as Jones and Pinfold relay a 2024 magazine essay, 32 battalions sat in the West Bank and two around Gaza.
- **The final night.** The IDF's own reviewers found that "not a single significant action" was taken in the critical hours.
- **The response.** The army's own Be'eri inquiry has residents fighting alone for seven hours. On the IDF's own count, 101 of the kibbutz's civilians were killed.

Where Israeli fire is recorded, in the Commission's finding of at least 14 civilians likely killed, it falls inside a response to an attack already under way. The IDF's own inquiry reaches a different conclusion for the Be'eri house.

One layer remains unopened. The army reviewed itself without the political echelon in its remit, and the Comptroller audited strategy without touching intelligence. The question of who knew what about the Jericho Wall document above the army therefore sits outside every published review. As long as that layer stays closed, how far can a public settle questions of intent from the record, rather than from inference about the gap?

Frequently Asked Questions

Who led the IDF's inquiry into the battle for Kibbutz Be'eri?

Maj. Gen. (res.) Mickey Edelstein and a team conducted it over "around three months," according to the IDF's own published inquiry of 11 July 2024. Chief of the General Staff Herzi

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Halevi summarised it, and it was presented to Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant. It was the first of the IDF's 7 October inquiries.

What is the "Hannibal Directive" referred to in the October 7 record?

The UN Commission's paper A/HRC/56/CRP.3 (10 June 2024) describes it, citing reports, as a procedure used "to prevent capture of Israeli Security Forces by enemy forces," and states that it "has not seen the official directive." The IDF's Be'eri inquiry page does not mention the procedure. It uses the word "directive" only for orders that all forces enter the fight and that civilian protection comes first.

Why do sources spell the Hamas plan as both "Walls of Jericho" and "Jericho Wall"?

Baram and Ben Israel (2025) write "Walls of Jericho" in English. The IDF's Hebrew summary of the Turgeman review (10 November 2025), in the Institute's translation, renders it "Jericho Wall." Both refer to the same Hamas ground-invasion plan.

Does the State Comptroller's report say anything about intelligence warnings?

No. The State Comptroller's 11 November 2025 release covers the absence of an approved national security concept and the political echelon's strategic direction of the IDF. It says nothing about how the intelligence services collected, analysed or warned on Hamas's plans.

Did the UN Commission receive information from Israel for its 2024 reports?

The Commission's report A/HRC/56/26 (14 June 2024) records that it sent "six requests for information and access to the Government of Israel" and that "no response was received." Its findings rest on its own interviews and the digital material it collected.

How many officials did the IDF's expert review interview?

The IDF's summary of the Turgeman review (10 November 2025) records interviews with about 80 officials with roles relevant to 7 October and the preceding years. The review is the IDF's own assessment of its own investigations. Its remit excluded the political echelon and the IDF's relations with other security bodies.

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Did the authors of the peer-reviewed studies see classified material?

Neither article reports access to classified material. Baram and Ben Israel (2025) drew their account of the attack from published reporting and an unpublished investigation report they quote. Jones and Pinfold (2025) write that enough material is in the public domain, "notably in the printed media," for their analysis, and state that their findings are "only partial" pending a formal state inquiry.

Sources

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- Zitun, Yoav, 2025. The policy that turned Hamas into a monster, the eroded deterrence: Shin Bet admits it made mistakes on October 7, investigation finds attack could have been prevented. Ynetnews, 4 March 2025. https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sju9cseoyl. Press report (relay of the agency's findings).

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A UN commission concluded in 2025 that Israel committed four of five genocide acts in Gaza. What its five papers say, about all parties, by paragraph.

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The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Does Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry admit its data is flawed? Its own posts and lists, read one by one

Gaza's health ministry has published its own count of incomplete records, its exclusions and its corrections. What each dated post records.

Gaza Health Ministry | Casualty Data | Gaza War | Data Completeness | Capture-Recapture



It acknowledges incomplete and missing records, in its own words and on its own count. The Gaza Ministry of Health, a party to the war whose figures are not independently verified, stated on 24 July 2024 that **9,715** of the people it had counted as killed to 30 June 2024 had data that was not yet complete, beside 28,185 whose records were complete. The ministry operates under the Hamas-led authority governing Gaza. It has also published a standing list of five groups of dead it does not count, a statement on how its dates of death were recorded and audited, and dated additions to its total by committee approval. What it describes is unfinished and missing records. The BBC reported in April 2025 that the ministry denied manipulating its figures, and a peer-reviewed estimate built on the

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ministry's own record strata put traumatic-injury deaths above the ministry's count (Jamaluddine and colleagues, 2025).

Key Findings

- **9,715 not yet complete:** as of 30 June 2024, the ministry's own split was 28,185 records with complete data and 9,715 without, a party to the war reporting its own count, not independently verified (Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024 to 2026, message 5651).
- **Five excluded groups:** the ministry stated on 7 January 2024 that its count leaves out the missing under rubble, unidentified hospital arrivals, unidentified bodies returned by Israel, family burials outside hospitals, and Gaza and North Gaza after its information system stopped in November 2023. This is its own scope statement (Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024 to 2026, message 4739).
- **37,900, not 37,877:** the two halves of the ministry's 30 June 2024 split sum to the total in its 1 July daily report rather than its 30 June report, a one-day slip in its own published figures (Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024 to 2026, messages 5576, 5578 and 5651).
- **64,260 traumatic-injury deaths** (95% CI 55,298 to 78,525) to 30 June 2024, against the ministry's own reported 37,877. The peer-reviewed estimate was built on the ministry's two record strata plus obituaries (Jamaluddine and colleagues, 2025).
- **5.3 against 7.8 deaths per 1,000:** the death rate among Gaza residents on ministry-reported deaths ran below the rate among UN agency staff to 10 November 2023, in a Lancet correspondence letter that was not peer-reviewed (Huynh, Chin and Spiegel, 2024).

What has the Gaza health ministry itself said is incomplete?

The Gaza Ministry of Health posted on 24 July 2024 that **9,715** people in its count of the dead to 30 June 2024 had data that was not yet complete, beside 28,185 whose data it had finished (message 5651). These figures are a party to the war reporting its own count, not independently verified. The same post defines what "incomplete" means.

The ministry's definition separates two counts. Its general martyr count is everyone who reached the hospitals. Its complete-data count is everyone whose data the ministry has finished. In the ministry's usage, then, an incomplete record is a death inside the general count whose details the ministry has not yet closed. The post describes unfinished records. It does not describe false ones. The ministry's publishing practice is set out in more detail in what the Gaza health ministry publishes about its own count.

The second admission runs the other way. On 7 January 2024 (message 4739), the ministry listed five groups its count leaves out:

- the missing and bodies trapped under rubble;
- the unidentified who reached hospitals;
- the unidentified whose bodies Israel handed over;
- those buried by their families without passing through a hospital;
- the victims in Gaza and North Gaza after the information system stopped in November 2023.

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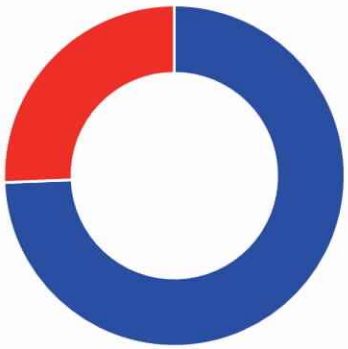
No later post on the ministry's channel, as read on 10 September 2026, withdraws that statement.

So the ministry's own account names two distinct gaps. One is incomplete records inside the count. The other is deaths outside it. The first concerns the quality of entries the ministry holds. The second concerns entries it says it cannot yet make. Neither statement estimates how large the excluded groups are.

How the ministry split its count at 30 June 2024
RECORDS WITH COMPLETE AND NOT-YET-COMPLETE DATA; THE TWO PARTS SUM TO 37,900



Complete data Not yet complete

Source: Ministry of Health, Gaza (2024 to 2026), message 5651, 24 July 2024. A party to the war, its own count, not independently verified.

Who says the ministry admitted a third of its records were flawed?

JNS, an Israel-focused news service, ran the headline on 15 April 2024 that "Hamas admits one-third of its data on Gazan deaths is 'incomplete'." The Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a Washington policy institute, published the same reading on 9 April 2024 under the title "Hamas-Run Gaza Health Ministry Admits to Flaws in Casualty Data." Neither figure the two outlets relayed appears in the ministry's own documents that this report could read.

Both outlets relayed a pair of figures attributed to the ministry. The first, from a ministry report of 3 April 2024, was 12,263 incomplete records. The second, from a report of 6 April, was 11,371 of 33,091. The Foundation for Defense of Democracies links them to the ministry's Telegram posts of those dates (messages 5258 and 5271). On 2 May 2024 the Foundation for Defense of Democracies followed with an analysis titled "Gaza Health Ministry Cannot Provide Names for More Than 10,000 It Says Have Died."

The ministry's own publications from that week contain three items:

- On 3 April 2024 it posted a named list of 21,323 records covering deaths to 29 March (message 5261).
- Its daily report gave a cumulative total of 33,091 on 5 April (message 5267).
- Its daily report gave 33,137 on 6 April (message 5272).

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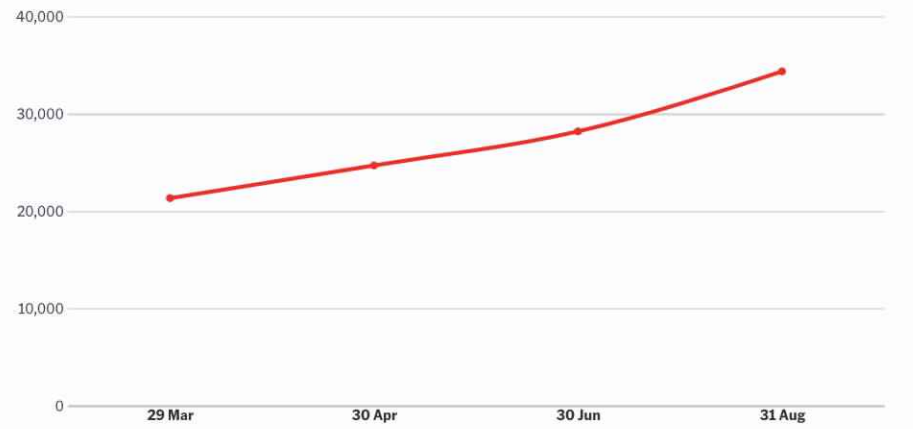
Neither 12,263 nor 11,371 appears in the ministry's channel text, its daily reports either side of 6 April 2024, or its four list documents of 2024, searched on 10 September 2026. The pair reaches the public through third-party readings of the ministry's daily emergency report (طوارئ يومي). That PDF is posted only to Telegram, which serves message text but no file. The pair is cited here to the outlets that published it.

The list and the total are built differently, so the gap between them is not a count of unidentified dead. The list's closing footnote sets its own cut-offs. Ministry-registered deaths in Gaza run to 10 November 2023, deaths in the south run to 29 March 2024, and deaths at Nasser hospital run to 14 February 2024. The total, by the ministry's own definition, counts everyone who reached a hospital. The nearest figure the ministry itself attaches to the word "incomplete" is its 30 June split above.

Records on the ministry's named lists, 2024

NAME-BY-NAME LISTS OF DEATHS WITH COMPLETE DATA, BY CUT-OFF DATE



Source: Ministry of Health, Gaza (2024 to 2026), list documents of 29 March, 30 April, 30 June and 31 August 2024. A party to the war, its own count, not independently verified.

Did the ministry concede its recorded dates of death were weak?

The Gaza Ministry of Health stated on **29 July 2024** that each date of death had been registered either on the family's report or on the date the body reached the hospital. It added that a committee had then been formed to audit the actual date (message 5663). This is the ministry's own account of its records, published by a party to the war and not independently verified.

The same statement reports what the audit found: a number of martyrs had been under 18 at death but were registered several months later. The ministry gave no count of how many records the audit changed.

The Foundation for Defense of Democracies' analysis of 9 April 2024 reported that a ministry statistical report treated a record as incomplete if it lacked any of identity number, full name, date of birth or date of death. The ministry's published lists bear on the last of those fields. None of the four list documents of 2024 carries a date-of-death column. The string "تاريخ الاستشهاد" (date of martyrdom) appears in no column header of any of them. The lists publish date of birth, and one of the four does not publish even that.

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Ministry list	Date of birth column	Date of death column	Source
To 29 March 2024	**Yes**	No	Message 5261
To 30 April 2024	**No** (address added)	No	Message 5404
To 30 June 2024	**Yes**	No	Message 5651
To 31 August 2024	**Yes**	No	List of 31 August 2024

The 30 April 2024 list also drops the provenance column that labels each record's origin, so even the field set changes from round to round. A description of "the fields the ministry publishes" holds for one document at a time.

Taken together, the 29 July statement and the column headers mean two things. A date of death on a ministry record is the family's report or the hospital arrival date, unless the audit committee has since revised it. And that date is not printed in the published lists at all.

The ministry's 30 June split matches its 1 July total

The two halves of the Gaza Ministry of Health's 30 June 2024 split sum to **37,900**.

That is the cumulative total in its daily report of 1 July 2024 (message 5578), not the 37,877 its 30 June report gave (message 5576). Both are the ministry's own counts, published by a party to the war and not independently verified.

The slip has a measurable consequence. Subtracting the 28,185 complete records from the 30 June total of 37,877 gives 9,692, not the 9,715 the ministry published. The figure of 9,692 is the one Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025) report as the ministry's unidentified decedents at that update.

The same one-day offset appears in the ministry's annual reporting. The Health Annual Report, Palestine 2024 gives 45,553 martyrs and 108,379 injuries for the period from 7 October 2023 to 31 December 2024. Those are exactly the figures in the ministry's daily report of 1 January 2025 (message 6197). Its 30 December 2024 report gave 45,541 (message 6194), and no report was issued on 31 December.

Ministry document	Cumulative martyrs	Reference
Daily report, 30 June 2024	**37,877**	Message 5576
Daily report, 1 July 2024	**37,900**	Message 5578
Split for 30 June 2024 (28,185 plus 9,715)	**37,900**	Message 5651
Daily report, 30 December 2024	**45,541**	Message 6194
Daily report, 1 January 2025	**45,553**	Message 6197
Annual report, "to December 31, 2024"	**45,553**	Health Annual Report, Palestine 2024

The annual report also prints category counts against a different base from the total beside them. It lists 13,319 children, 7,216 female and 3,447 elderly martyrs, each "with complete data till October 7, 2024." Beside them it prints 43,587 martyrs with complete data at 11 December 2024. The three categories sum to 23,982, no men's category is published, and the 1,057 healthcare-worker count overlaps all three. The report prints these figures without a note on their differing dates.

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The differences are small against the totals. They show that a ministry period-end figure behaves like the next morning's daily report.

How many records has the ministry added by committee approval?

The Gaza Ministry of Health added **233 records** to its cumulative total on 23 March 2025. It described them as records completed and approved by the judicial committee following the notifications and missing-persons file (message 6377). This is the ministry's own count, published by a party to the war and not independently verified. The additions reflect approvals on that date, not deaths on that date.

Two further rounds followed:

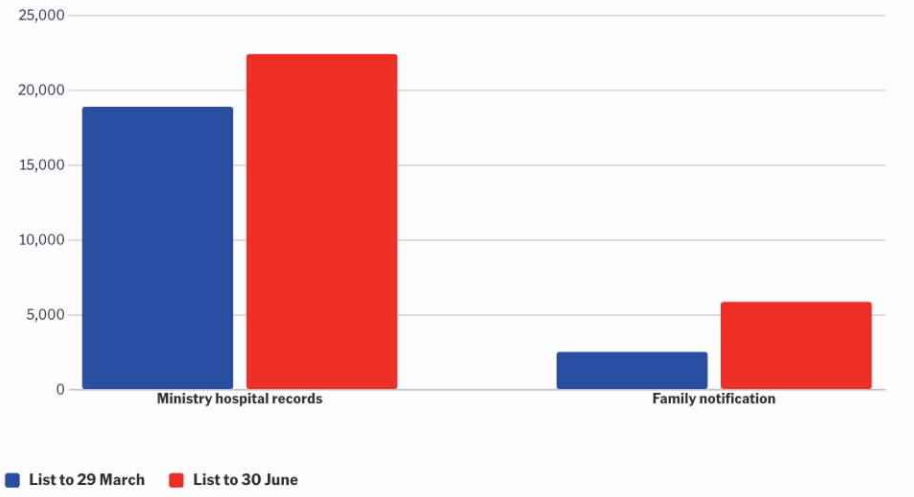
- 280 records on 30 August 2025 (message 6900), described in the same terms.
- 160 records during August 2026 (message 7600), attributed to a "لجنة اعتماد الشهداء" (martyrs' approval committee).

Revision has also removed names. The BBC reported on 22 April 2025, under the headline "Gaza health ministry denies manipulating death toll figures," that the ministry's head of statistics confirmed more than 3,000 names had been removed from its list in August and October 2024, as a precautionary measure pending full checks. A ministry official told the BBC it was "a revision and verification process," not a removal process. The ministry's own record-level corrections are traced in the corrections to Gaza's death lists.

The list documents themselves show the inputs growing. Each record in the 29 March and 30 June 2024 lists carries a provenance label: either ministry records or notification by relatives. Between those two lists, records drawn from family notification grew from 2,478 to 5,817.

Where the listed records came from

RECORDS BY THE MINISTRY'S OWN PROVENANCE LABEL, TWO 2024 LISTS



Source: Ministry of Health, Gaza (2024 to 2026), list documents of 29 March and 30 June 2024. A party to the war, its own count, not independently verified.

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The published record of revision therefore runs in both directions. Committee approvals add records and checks remove them, and family notification feeds a growing share of the list. The ministry announces the additions by count and date. The removals are documented here through that press report.

Does an acknowledged data gap mean the toll was falsified?

A Lancet correspondence letter by Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024) compared reported deaths over 35 days to 10 November 2023.

It found ministry-reported deaths at **5.3 per 1,000** Gaza residents, below the 7.8 per 1,000 reported among UNRWA's Gaza staff. The letter was editorially reviewed, not peer-reviewed, and its Gaza figures are the ministry's own count, not independently verified.

The letter's measured base was 101 UN agency staff deaths and 11,078 Gazan deaths over 35 days. The two rates sit over two different populations: Gaza's residents and the agency's Gaza staff. The authors' inference is that a staff rate above the population rate is inconsistent with inflation of the population figure.

The authors limit their finding in their own words. They wrote that mortality "might have been under-reported by the Gaza MoH due to decreased capacity," and that "difficulties obtaining accurate mortality figures should not be interpreted as intentionally misreported data." The letter's title, "No evidence of inflated mortality reporting from the Gaza Ministry of Health," is a statement about the absence of a signal. It is not a validation of the count.

The letter's scope is narrow. It covers one window of 35 days early in the war, from publicly available data. It was published online on 6 December 2023, in the issue dated 6 January 2024. Its single sentence on accuracy in earlier conflicts carries no citation, a point examined in how Gaza's casualty counts have been tested.

Reported deaths per 1,000, to 10 November 2023
TWO RATES OVER TWO POPULATIONS, 35 DAYS



Source: Huynh, Chin and Spiegel, 2024, The Lancet correspondence, not peer-reviewed. Gaza figures are the ministry's own count, not independently verified.

The ministry's acknowledgements of incomplete records and the letter's test address different questions. The acknowledgements concern unfinished entries and excluded groups. The letter tests whether the early total ran high against a comparison population, and it found no sign that it did.

Did the peer-reviewed estimate read the gaps as overcounting?

Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025), a peer-reviewed capture-recapture study in The Lancet, estimated **64,260** deaths from traumatic injury in Gaza from 7 October 2023 to 30 June 2024 (95% CI 55,298 to 78,525). The Gaza Ministry of Health, a party to the war whose count is not

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independently verified, reported 37,877 for the same date. The study's estimate sits above the ministry's count, not below it.

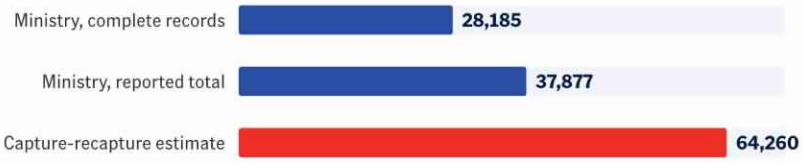
The authors put the ministry's under-reporting at 41%. That share is measured against the estimate of 64,260: the gap is 26,383 deaths, which is 41% of 64,260 and 70% of 37,877. The interval is wide. The estimate covers traumatic injury only. It excludes deaths from disrupted healthcare, food insecurity, water and sanitation failure, and disease.

The study left out the ministry's 9,692 unidentified decedents at the 30 June update, and 930 people reported missing were removed from the survey list. Its two ministry inputs were 22,368 hospital morgue records and 5,817 records from the ministry's online mortality survey. These match the provenance column of the ministry's own 30 June 2024 list exactly. The third input was obituary pages scraped from social media.

That match fixes what kind of evidence the study is. It is an academic estimate built on the ministry's two record strata. It is not a separate count of the dead. Two of its three lists are self-reported, and the third is the hospital list of a party to the war.

The figure of more than 70,000 that circulates in press coverage of this study is not the capture-recapture estimate. It is the authors' extrapolation, applying the same under-reporting rate to the ministry's October 2024 figure of 41,909. They worded it as "probably exceeded 70 000."

Three figures for the same date, 30 June 2024
ESTIMATE COVERS TRAUMATIC INJURY ONLY; 95% CI 55,298 TO 78,525



Source: Jamaluddine and colleagues, 2025, The Lancet, peer-reviewed; Ministry of Health, Gaza (2024 to 2026), a party to the war, its own count.

Do the ministry's own caveats survive when its total is relayed?

Crawford (2025), a Costs of War report from Brown University that is not peer-reviewed, gives **67,075** killed in Gaza as of 3 October 2025. That figure is the Gaza Ministry of Health's own count, published by a party to the war and not independently verified. Crawford took it from the United Nations "Palestinian Casualties" dashboard, so the figure passed from the ministry to the dashboard before reaching the paper.

Crawford's statement on accuracy is reported rather than found: "Recent analysis by public health experts suggests that the number of fatalities reported by the Gaza Ministry of Health, which faces many obstacles to making a full account of the deaths, may be a significant undercount of the violent deaths." The paper collects no casualty data of its own.

The ministry publishes several things alongside its totals:

- the split between complete and incomplete records;
- the five excluded groups;

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- the 29 July 2024 caveat on dates of death;
- the dated committee additions;
- separate category lists.

It publishes no breakdown between combatants and noncombatants. The paper's Table 1 carries a civilian share of about 80%, which Crawford derives from a Guardian report of Israeli military data, not from the ministry.

The paper also sums the ministry's killed and injured into 236,505 casualties, more than 10% of a pre-war population of about 2.2 million. That share counts casualties, not deaths.

How the ministry's total reached the paper



The ministry's own count, a party to the war, not independently verified.

Source: Crawford, 2025, Costs of War, Brown University, not peer-reviewed; Ministry of Health, Gaza (2024 to 2026).

Each step on that path carries the total forward. The ministry's completeness split and exclusions do not travel with it. A reader who meets 67,075 in the paper meets a single number. A reader of the ministry's own channel meets the same figure beside the ministry's own statements of what its count does and does not hold.

Methodology and limitations

The evidence comes from four source types.

The ministry's own publications. These are official records of a party to the war, read directly on 10 September 2026:

- the four list documents with cut-offs of 29 March, 30 April, 30 June and 31 August 2024;
- the daily statistical reports cited by message number;
- the completeness, exclusion and date-of-death statements;
- the Health Annual Report, Palestine 2024 and 2025.

The two annual reports are published in Ramallah. Their Gaza sections rest on reports issued by the ministry and its partners, so they are a second ministry voice on the same count rather than a separate check.

Peer-reviewed research. One study is used: Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025), a three-list capture-recapture estimate with its analysis code and anonymised data published.

Editorially reviewed correspondence. One letter is used: Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024), with its comparison over 35 days.

A university report that is not peer-reviewed. One report is used: Crawford (2025), which compiles other bodies' counts.

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Press and policy-institute analyses (the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, JNS and the BBC) are cited only for what they published.

Retrieval. The ministry's fatality lists exist on no government web host. Its only publication venue is its media office's Telegram channel, which serves message text but no files. The four list PDFs were read from a public mirror of the posted files. The March file matches the ministry's own stated size, record count and column set.

The figures 12,263 and 11,371. These were searched for across the channel text, the daily reports either side of 6 April 2024, and the four list documents. The daily emergency report they are said to come from could not be retrieved as a file.

Reconciliation. All reconciliations here are arithmetic on the ministry's own published figures. No named list was subtracted from a total to produce an unidentified count.

Limitations. The ministry's list schema changes between rounds. Its period-end totals carry a one-day offset. The capture-recapture interval runs from 55,298 to 78,525. Every ministry figure is self-reported and not independently verified.

Conclusion

So does the ministry admit to flawed data? On its own pages it acknowledges incomplete and missing records, in specific and dated terms. As of 30 June 2024 it reported 9,715 records not yet complete. Since 7 January 2024 it has listed five groups of dead its count leaves out. It has said its dates of death came from families or hospital arrivals and were then audited. It has announced committee approvals that add records months after the deaths. Every one of these is the ministry's own account, a party to the war, not independently verified.

The admissions describe unfinished and missing records, not invented ones, and they sit beside slips the ministry has not flagged. Its 30 June split matches its 1 July total. Its annual report prints a year-end figure from the following morning. When the peer-reviewed estimate was built on the ministry's own two record strata, it put traumatic deaths at 64,260 to 30 June 2024, well above the ministry's own 37,877.

What remains open is how far an admission should travel. A ministry whose own fine print says its list is incomplete in both directions, missing details on deaths it counts and missing deaths it cannot yet count, sees that fine print dropped as its total moves from dashboard to paper to headline. When a single relayed number reaches a newsroom, a court filing or a classroom, what does the public lose in the caveats the issuing body itself wrote down?

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does the Gaza health ministry publish its fatality lists?

The Gaza Ministry of Health publishes its lists through its media office's Telegram channel. Its website, moh.gov.ps, has posted no file since 21 October 2023, and its media library of 2,536 PDFs holds no casualty list. A reader looking for the lists on a government website will not find them there.

Does the ministry publish separate lists for children and women?

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Yes. Alongside the combined list for the 30 April 2024 round, the Gaza Ministry of Health posted separate lists for children, women, the elderly and the orphans of martyrs (messages 5406 to 5412). The practice continued through its 15 June and 15 July 2025 rounds. These lists are its own count, not independently verified.

How many children does the ministry say have been killed?

The ministry's Director General stated on 23 March 2025 that 15,613 of 50,021 martyrs were children, 872 of them under one year old. This is the ministry's own count, published by a party to the war (message 6379). The Health Annual Report, Palestine 2025 later gave children as 30% of 71,271 martyrs from 2023 to 2025, also the ministry's own count.

What is the ministry's most recent cumulative total?

The Gaza Ministry of Health's daily report of 10 September 2026 gave 73,670 cumulative martyrs and 174,682 injuries. It counted 1,359 martyrs since the ceasefire of 11 October 2025 and 831 bodies recovered from the rubble (message 7607). All of these are its own reported figures.

Is the Palestinian Health Annual Report a separate check on Gaza's figures?

No. The Health Annual Report, Palestine 2024 and 2025 are published by the Ministry of Health in Ramallah. Their Gaza sections state that they rest on reports issued by the ministry and its partners, plus a health-facility monitoring system. They restate the same underlying count.

Why are some ages and birth dates in the lists hard to read?

Date formats differ by record source inside a single list. In the 29 March 2024 list, rows drawn from ministry records print full years, while rows from family notification print two-digit years. In the 31 August 2024 list, decedents aged 97 to 101 carry birth years printed as 27, 24 and 22, so the age column is the check on each date.

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The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Did early Zionist leaders see expelling Palestinians as necessary? The founding texts against the 1937 royal commission

The 1882 to 1897 founding programs list no removal of Arabs; Britain's Peel Commission proposed transfer, compulsory in the last resort, in 1937.

Zionism | Peel Commission | Population Transfer | Jabotinsky | 1948 Refugees



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The movement's founding programs did not, and the clearest dated support for transfer by a named Zionist leader comes late. Britain's Palestine Royal Commission recommended, in July 1937, that partition include "an exchange of population," compulsory "in the last resort." Gil S. Rubin, in The Historical Journal in 2018, argues from archival findings that Ze'ev Jabotinsky began advocating transfer of Palestine's Arab population shortly after the Second World War broke out.

The three public founding programs of 1882, 1896 and 1897 list no removal of the existing population among their means. Theodor Herzl's private diary had already contemplated moving "the penniless population across the border" in June 1895. The idea appears early in private writing and late in official planning. Historians divide on how central it was: Nur Masalha's 1992 study, as its publisher describes it, examines transfer as a proposed solution from the late nineteenth century to 1948, while Benny Morris's 2004 archival history rejects a single master plan of expulsion for 1948.

Key Findings

- Britain's Palestine Royal Commission recommended in July 1937 that partition include "an exchange of population," compulsory "in the last resort" for the Plains, including Beisan (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937, Chapter XXII, paragraphs 36 and 43).
- None of the three founding programs of 1882, 1896 and 1897 lists removal of the existing population among its means. The Basel Program names 4 means, covering settlement, organisation, consciousness and diplomacy (First Zionist Congress, 1897; Herzl, 1896; Pinsker, 1882).
- The Commission estimated about 225,000 Arabs in the area of its proposed Jewish State, against some 1,250 Jews in the area of the proposed Arab State (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937, paragraph 39).
- Ze'ev Jabotinsky wrote on 4 November 1923 that he considered it "utterly impossible to eject the Arabs from Palestine." In the same essay he conditioned that view on a Jewish majority secured behind an "iron wall" (Jabotinsky, 1923).

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- Rubin (2018), a peer-reviewed article, argues that Jabotinsky began advocating transfer of Palestine's Arab population shortly after the Second World War broke out. Morris (2004) rejects a single master plan of expulsion for 1948.

Did early Zionist leaders treat expelling Arabs as necessary?

Britain's Palestine Royal Commission wrote in **July 1937** that partition "must mean more than drawing a frontier and establishing two States." It continued: "Sooner or later there should be a transfer of land and, as far as possible, an exchange of population" (Chapter XXII, paragraph 36). The explicit requirement first appears in that British plan. The clearest dated endorsement by a Zionist leader in this record follows it.

The premise holds for one named leader by the war years. Gil S. Rubin (2018), in a peer-reviewed article in The Historical Journal drawing on new archival findings, argues that shortly after the Second World War began, Jabotinsky "had begun to advocate for the transfer of the Arab population from Palestine." Rubin calls this "an aspect of his thought previously unknown" and attributes the shift to the war.

The idea also predates 1937 in private writing. Theodor Herzl's diary entry of 12 June 1895, published in English in the 1960 edition edited by Raphael Patai, reads: "We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country." Herzl did not publish that entry, and it does not appear in the plan he set out the following year.

The base rate sits in the public texts. Leon Pinsker's pamphlet (1882), Herzl's The Jewish State (1896) and the Basel Program (1897) set the movement's stated requirements, and none lists removal of an existing population among them. Jabotinsky's 1923 essay, written by the movement's leading maximalist, rejected ejection outright. Read together, the texts show a dated progression. A private notion appears in 1895, the public programs omit it, and an official British proposal arrives in 1937. Rubin dates Jabotinsky's turn to the war that followed.

The dated documents behind the question

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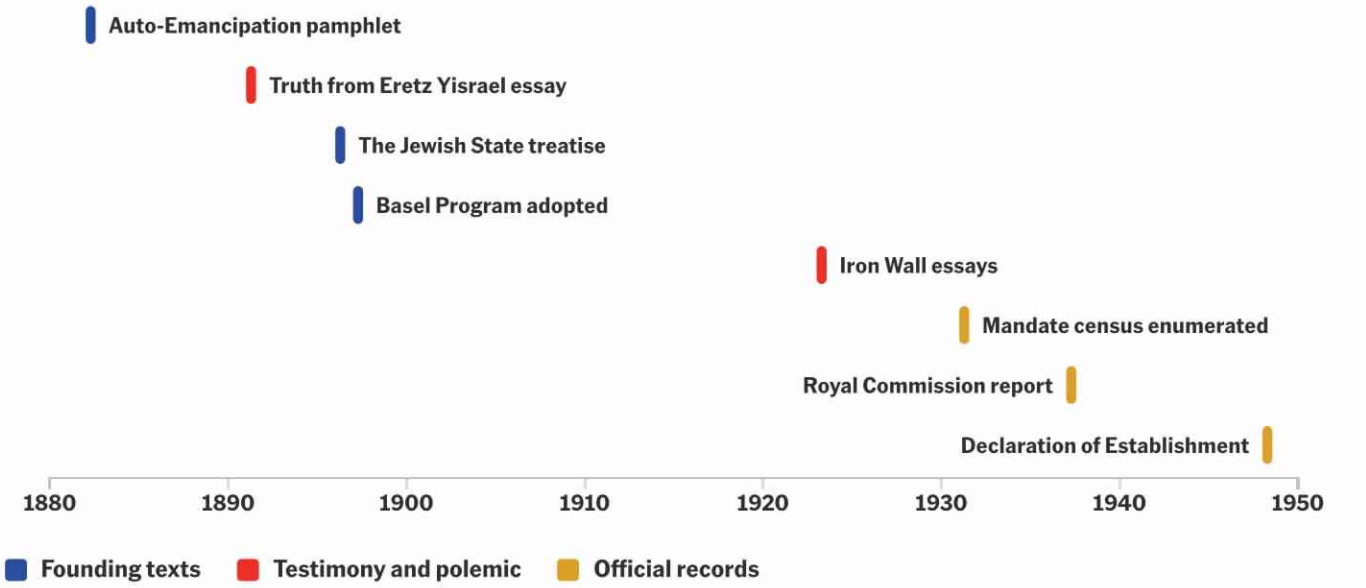
FOUNDING TEXTS, TESTIMONY AND OFFICIAL RECORDS, 1882 TO 1948



Source: Pinsker (1882); Ahad Ha'am (1891); Herzl (1896); First Zionist Congress (1897); Jabotinsky (1923); Government of Palestine (1932); Palestine Royal Commission (1937); Provisional Government of Israel (1948).

Who argues transfer was built into Zionism, and since when?

Nur Masalha's Expulsion of the Palestinians, published in **1992** by the Institute for Palestine Studies, a Palestinian research institute, holds the strongest form of the view. Its publisher describes "the transfer of the indigenous Palestinian population to neighboring Arab lands" as "one of the proposed solutions" to the problem early Zionism faced. The book's subtitle sets the period as 1882 to 1948.

The publisher calls the book "the most comprehensive study to date on the concept of 'transfer' in Zionist thinking from the late nineteenth century up to the 1948 war." The Library of Congress catalogues it under population transfers of Palestinian Arabs and under the history of Zionism. That description and the catalogue record are the parts of the book used here. Its own pages are not quoted.

Ilan Pappé carries the argument into the war itself. His The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine (Oneworld, 2006) argues that the 1948 displacement was a planned ethnic cleansing. The book's title is the best-known statement of that characterisation. Pappé writes from a stated

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moral position. His characterisation is a legal and moral one, and it is reported here as his thesis, dated 2006.

The documentary record supports part of the premise. Transfer was discussed across the period Masalha covers. Herzl's diary raised it in 1895, and the Peel report wrote it into an official plan in 1937. Masalha's publisher frames transfer as "one of the proposed solutions." That wording describes a recurring proposal, not a requirement written into the movement's programs. A recurring idea in leaders' writing and a stated precondition in its founding instruments are different claims, and they are tested separately in the sections that follow.

What did the founding programs of 1882 to 1897 require?

The Basel Program, adopted by the First Zionist Congress in **August 1897**, names one aim: "a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine." It lists four means. These are settlement of "agriculturists, artisans, and tradesmen," federation of Jews into groups, "the strengthening of the Jewish feeling and consciousness," and steps toward "governmental grants." None of the four concerns the existing population.

The two texts that preceded Basel set the terms it inherited. Leon Pinsker's Auto-Emancipation, published anonymously in German in 1882 after the pogroms in the Russian Empire, called for "the creation of a Jewish nationality, of a people living upon its own soil." It did not fix that soil to Palestine. Pinsker asked for a land "sufficiently extensive to allow the settlement of several millions."

Theodor Herzl's The Jewish State (Vienna, 1896, quoted from the 1946 English text) framed sovereignty as something governments would help obtain. He wrote: "The Governments of all countries scourged by Anti-Semitism will be keenly interested in assisting us to obtain the sovereignty we want." Herzl weighed "Palestine or Argentine?" and left the territory open. His plan lists no removal of an existing population among its measures.

Text	Stated requirement	Source
Auto-Emancipation (**1882**)	A territory for "the settlement of several millions," not fixed to Palestine	Pinsker, 1882

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Text	Stated requirement	Source
The Jewish State (**1896**)	Sovereignty obtained with the help of governments "scourged by Anti-Semitism"	Herzl, 1896
Basel Program (**1897**)	"a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine," by four means	First Zionist Congress, 1897

The Basel text also omits antisemitism. Its rationale comes from Pinsker and Herzl, not from the program itself. The English wording quoted here is the contemporary Jewish Encyclopedia translation. Later translations render the German "öffentlich-rechtlich gesicherte Heimstätte" differently, for example as "a home for the Jewish people in Eretz-Israel secured under public law."

Did early Zionists know the land was already farmed?

Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginzberg) wrote in **1891**, after about three months in Palestine, that "in the entire land, it is hard to find tillable land that is not already tilled." His essay "Truth from Eretz Yisrael," serialised in the Hebrew daily Ha-Melitz, is the earliest dated statement in this record by a Zionist writer that the land was inhabited and cultivated.

He opened by setting aside the diaspora view: "From abroad we are accustomed to believing that the Arabs are all desert savages, like donkeys, who neither see nor understand what goes on around them. But this is a big mistake." He reported that Arabs in the cities "understand our deeds and our desires in Eretz Yisrael" but did not yet see them "as a threat to their future."

His warning named the point at which the question would sharpen: "if the time comes when the life of our people in Eretz Yisrael develops to the point of encroaching upon the native population, they will not easily yield their place." He also described the colonists' conduct. They "walk with the Arabs in hostility and cruelty, unjustly encroaching on them, shamefully beating them for no good reason, and even bragging about what they do." The quotations are from Alan Dowty's English translation, published in Israel Studies in 2000.

Ahad Ha'am identified a population and predicted resistance. He proposed no removal. Dowty's introduction calls the essay "the first, and for some time the only, serious

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commentary with at least a glimmer of recognition that relations with the Arab population would be one of Zionism's most severe tests." Dowty also notes that "only two paragraphs" of the essay address the issue. In Dowty's reading, Ahad Ha'am treated the Arabs as "an obstacle to be overcome rather than an opposed party" and did not see the matter as a political problem in 1891.

The essay shows that by 1891 the existing population was known to at least one prominent Zionist writer. The documents that followed are traced in a separate report on early Zionism's "Arab question".

Did Jabotinsky's Iron Wall call for expelling the Arabs?

Ze'ev Jabotinsky wrote in the Berlin weekly Rassvet on **4 November 1923**: "I consider it utterly impossible to eject the Arabs from Palestine." In the same essay he argued that Zionist colonisation can proceed "only under the protection of a power that is independent of the native population, behind an iron wall, which the native population cannot breach."

The two halves travel together in the text. Jabotinsky opened by rejecting his reputation as one "who wants to have them ejected from Palestine." He wrote that "There will always be two nations in Palestine," and continued, "which is good enough for me, provided the Jews become the majority." He offered "to take an oath binding ourselves and our descendants that we shall never do anything contrary to the principle of equal rights, and that we shall never try to eject anyone."

The same essay rules out consent: "There can be no voluntary agreement between ourselves and the Palestine Arabs. Not now, nor in the prospective future." It defines Zionist colonisation as an aim "Palestine Arabs cannot accept." Agreement would come only after force had made resistance hopeless. At that point Arab moderates might discuss "a guarantee against Arab displacement, or equal rights for Arab citizen." The second essay, "The Ethics of the Iron Wall," published on 11 November 1923, answers the charge that the first was immoral. The English quoted here is the Jabotinsky Institute's typescript translation from the Russian.

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His position did not stay fixed. Gil S. Rubin's 2018 article in The Historical Journal, "Vladimir Jabotinsky and Population Transfers Between Eastern Europe and Palestine," argues that he began advocating transfer of Palestine's Arab population shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War. Rubin writes that before the war Jabotinsky was "a staunch advocate of minority rights for Jews in Europe and for extensive autonomy for the Arab population in Palestine." He links the shift to Jabotinsky's expectation that millions of Jewish refugees would immigrate to Palestine.

Shlomi (2025), a peer-reviewed study in the Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, traces the Revisionists' diplomacy at the League of Nations. Shlomi treats Jabotinsky's wider political character as an open historiographical dispute.

How many Arabs lived inside the proposed 1937 Jewish state?

The Palestine Royal Commission estimated in 1937 that **about 225,000 Arabs** lived in the area its plan allotted to the Jewish State. It labelled the figure "an approximate estimate supplied to us" (Chapter XXII, paragraph 39). This minority, created by the partition map rather than by any founding program, is the population the Commission had in view when it turned to transfer.

The same paragraph sets the asymmetry. "In the area allotted to the Arab State there are only some 1,250 Jews." On those estimates, the Arab minority in the proposed Jewish State was 180 times the Jewish minority in the proposed Arab State. In Jerusalem and Haifa, which the plan kept under Mandatory administration for a period, the Commission counted "about 125,000 Jews as against 85,000 Arabs." Its conclusion followed: "If then the settlement is to be clean and final, this question of the minorities must be boldly faced and firmly dealt with."

Minorities inside the 1937 partition map
APPROXIMATE ESTIMATES SUPPLIED TO THE COMMISSION, 1937

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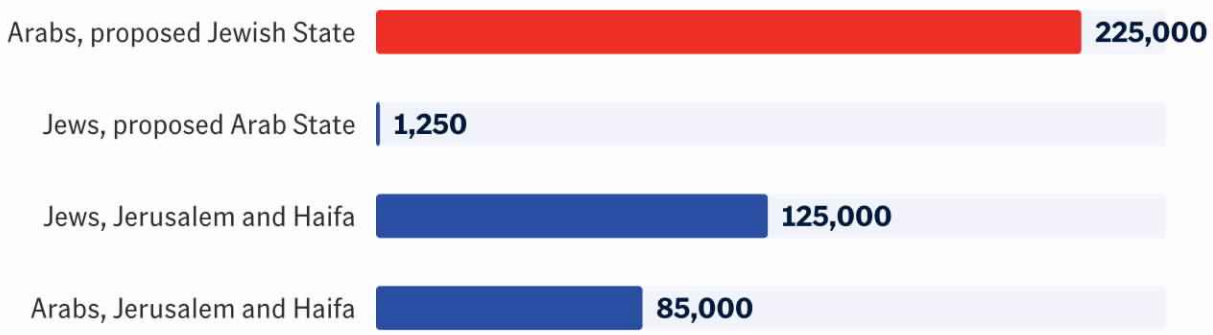

Source: Palestine Royal Commission (1937), Chapter XXII, paragraph 39; approximate estimates, not an enumeration.

The enumerated base is six years older. The Government of Palestine's census, taken at midnight on 18 November 1931 under Superintendent of Census E. Mills, counted 1,035,821 people. Of these, 759,712 were Moslems, 174,610 were Jews (16.9% of the enumerated total) and 91,398 were Christians. The nomadic population of 66,553 was enumerated separately.

The census classified by religion, not nationality, and has no "Arab" column. Any Arab total derived from it is a derivation, not a census figure. The Commission's own phrases, "About 1,000,000 Arabs" and "some 400,000 Jews," are rounded characterisations inside its argument, not counts.

Who first put compulsory transfer into an official plan?

The Palestine Royal Commission, a British government-commissioned review, wrote compulsion into its plan in **1937**. For the Plains, including Beisan, and for "all such Jewish colonies as remained in the Arab State," it recommended that "it should be part of the agreement that in the last resort the exchange would be compulsory" (Chapter XXII, paragraph 43). No earlier government instrument in this record carries such a provision.

The sequence in paragraphs 42 to 44 runs from agreement toward compulsion. First, if land could be made available "for the re-settlement of Arabs living in the Jewish area, the most strenuous efforts should be made to obtain an agreement for the exchange of land and population." Transfer would be scaled "to the extent to which new land is, or may within a reasonable period become, available for re-settlement." In the hill-country of North Galilee,

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a voluntary exchange might suffice. Paragraph 44 asks Parliament for a grant to fund transfer, "voluntary or otherwise."

The Commission cited a precedent in paragraph 40. This was the 1923 Greco-Turkish convention, which involved "some 1,300,000 Greeks and some 400,000 Turks." The Commission acknowledged that "Dr. Nansen was sharply criticized at the time for the inhumanity of his proposal," and that the operation "manifestly imposed the gravest hardships on multitudes of people." Paragraph 41 states where the analogy fails: "In Palestine there is at present no such surplus" of cultivable land.

The plan was a recommendation and was never carried out. The Palestine Partition Commission under Sir John Woodhead reported in 1938 that the Peel partition was impracticable. The 1939 White Paper, Cmd. 6019, set partition aside. The proposal was the Mandatory power's own review of its own obligations, and it is cited here as that.

Did Zionist leaders back voluntary or forced transfer after 1937?

Benny Morris's archival history, revised in **2004**, rejects both a single master plan of expulsion for 1948 and the claim that Palestinian departures were voluntary. No document read for this report records a Zionist leader choosing between voluntary and forced transfer after 1937. The dispute is over how far earlier transfer thinking shaped what happened.

Morris (2004), published by Cambridge University Press, draws on Israeli state and military archives. For the war itself, Morris attributes the exodus to causes that varied by locality and phase. These included military attack and fear of attack, expulsions in certain sectors, and flight. For the years before it, the leader this record can date is Jabotinsky: Rubin (2018) argues that his advocacy of Arab transfer began after the war broke out and ran counter to his lifelong political thought.

Nur Masalha's 1992 study covers the whole span from 1882 to 1948. His publisher presents transfer as one of Zionism's proposed solutions to the presence of the indigenous population. Ilan Pappé (2006) carries the argument into 1948, arguing that the displacement was a planned ethnic cleansing.

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Two documented facts frame the disagreement. First, the transfer passages in the Peel report preceded Jabotinsky's wartime turn as Rubin dates it. Second, Herzl's 1895 diary shows the idea in a founder's private writing four decades earlier. Morris's archival account and Masalha's study remain named, dated positions, and neither has displaced the other in the published scholarship.

The causes of the 1948 displacement are examined in a separate report on what caused the 1948 displacement.

Was transfer ever adopted as an official Zionist program?

The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, read on **14 May 1948**, makes an appeal in the Knesset's English text "to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship." Like the Basel Program of 1897, it carries no transfer provision.

The Declaration was signed by the 37 members of the People's Council, David Ben-Gurion first. It pledges "complete equality of social and political rights to all its citizens irrespective of religion, race or sex" in the Knesset's English text. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' English text renders the same clause with "all its inhabitants." Both are translations of the Hebrew original. The Declaration's recitals trace a chain from the First Zionist Congress of 1897 to the UN resolution of 29 November 1947. These are cited as what the founding text asserts, not as findings about conduct.

Neither of the movement's two formal instruments, the Basel Program and the Declaration, contains it.

The texts and the events diverge. Morris (2004) estimates from the archives that roughly 700,000 Palestinians left their homes and became refugees during the 1948 war, through the mix of causes he documents locality by locality. The Declaration's wording records what the founding text promised. The refugee figure records what happened during the same months. The relationship between the two is the subject of a separate report on whether Zionists wanted a state with as few Arabs as possible.

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Methodology and limitations

The report draws on three source types. Primary and official records: Pinsker (1882), Ahad Ha'am (1891), Herzl's treatise (1896) and his diary entry of 12 June 1895, the Basel Program (1897), Jabotinsky's essays (1923), the Mandate census of 1931, the Palestine Royal Commission report (1937), the Woodhead report (1938), the 1939 White Paper and the 1948 Declaration. Peer-reviewed scholarship: Shlomi (2025) and Rubin (2018). Scholarly books: Morris (2004), Masalha (1992) and Pappé (2006). Books are interpretive scholarship and are cited for arguments, not rates.

Every primary text was written in another language. Pinsker wrote in German, Ahad Ha'am in Hebrew and Jabotinsky in Russian. Each is quoted from a named English translation, and wordings differ across editions. The Peel report was read from an OCR layer of the Command Paper and is quoted by chapter and paragraph, since page numbering varies between scans. Its em dashes are avoided by quoting around them. The census figures come from the preliminary tables of 1932 and classify by religion. The Peel population figures are the Commission's approximate estimates.

Masalha (1992) is represented through its publisher's description and its Library of Congress record only. Morris (2004) is cited for its account of 1948; the Jewish Agency's own minutes were not read. Rubin (2018) is cited from its published abstract for its argument; its full text was not read.

The central interpretive question, how far transfer thinking before 1937 shaped what followed, remains a named dispute between Morris and Masalha. It is not a settled finding.

Conclusion

So did early Zionist leaders treat expelling Arabs as necessary? Not in the programs that founded the movement. By the Second World War, on Rubin's archival reading, Jabotinsky had begun to advocate transfer. Between those two points sits a British commission that wrote compulsion into an official plan first.

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The record draws a clear portrait across every axis measured. Pinsker, Herzl's treatise and the Basel Program list settlement, organisation and diplomacy, and no removal. Ahad Ha'am saw a cultivated, inhabited land in 1891 and warned that its people "will not easily yield their place." Herzl's private diary contemplated spiriting away "the penniless population" in 1895. Jabotinsky called ejection "utterly impossible" in 1923 while demanding an iron wall and a Jewish majority. The 1937 partition map placed about 225,000 Arabs inside a proposed Jewish State, and the Commission answered with exchange, compulsory in the last resort. Rubin dates Jabotinsky's advocacy of transfer to shortly after the Second World War began. The 1948 Declaration then promised "full and equal citizenship" in the months when roughly 700,000 Palestinians became refugees.

What the dated record sharpens is a question about where an idea lives. A notion can sit in a founder's diary for forty years, absent from every program, and then surface in a leader's advocacy after an imperial commission draws a map with a minority inside it. Whether that sequence describes an ideology waiting for its moment, or a movement responding to circumstances others created, is the question Morris and Masalha still answer differently. How does a society on either side of that map read the origins of the conflict it inherited, once it knows which documents came first?

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did Herzl tie a Jewish state to antisemitism?

Herzl wrote in 1896 that the plan's propelling force was "The misery of the Jews." He also wrote that modern antisemitism arose "as a result of the emancipation of the Jews" (Herzl, 1896). These are his own causal claims from 1896, presented as his argument.

Did Pinsker insist on Palestine as the territory?

No. Pinsker's 1882 pamphlet warned against choosing a land by "preconceived sympathies" and asked only that it be large enough for "several millions" (Pinsker, 1882). Herzl's 1896 treatise also left the territory open, so the Basel Program of 1897 was the first of the three founding texts to fix it as Palestine.

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Whom was the Basel Program's "home" meant for?

Gotthard Deutsch's entry in The Jewish Encyclopedia (1901 to 1906) reports the Congress's gloss. The home "was meant to be only for those Jews who either could not or would not assimilate in their respective dwelling-places" (First Zionist Congress, 1897). Deutsch also records that opponents argued the Congress confirmed "the assertions of the anti-Semites."

What immigration level did the Peel Commission recommend?

The Commission recommended a "political high level" of Jewish immigration, "fixed for the next five years at 12,000 per annum" (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937, Chapter X, paragraph 97). It also proposed a grant of £2,000,000 to the proposed Arab State.

Why did the Peel Commission call the obligations irreconcilable?

The Commission wrote that Britain's obligations to Arabs and Jews "have proved irreconcilable; and, as far ahead as we can see, they must continue to conflict" (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937, Chapter XX, paragraph 17). It concluded that "Partition seems to offer at least a chance of ultimate peace."

Is the Jabotinsky "Iron Wall" one essay or two?

There are two essays, published a week apart in Rassvet: "The Iron Wall (We and the Arabs)" on 4 November 1923 and "The Ethics of the Iron Wall" on 11 November 1923 (Jabotinsky, 1923). They are often conflated, and each quotation belongs to one of them.

When was the Peel report signed, and when was it published?

The six Commissioners signed it on 22 June 1937, and it was presented to Parliament in July 1937 as Cmd. 5479 (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937). Both dates are correct for their respective events.

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Ahad Ha'am set out the problem in 1891; the 1931 census counted Jews at 16.9%. The dated texts from Basel to Peel, quoted in their own words.

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What is the Fourth Geneva Convention, and does it apply to the West Bank? The treaty sentence, Israel's 1951 ratification and two Israeli rulings

Article 2 covers occupied "territory of a High Contracting Party." The ICRC, Israel, the Security Council and Israel's courts read it differently.

Fourth Geneva Convention | West Bank | International Humanitarian Law | Occupation | Israeli Supreme Court



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The Fourth Geneva Convention is the treaty concluded on 12 August 1949 as the "Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War." Its Article 2 extends it "to all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party, even if the said occupation meets with no armed resistance." Two dated readings of that sentence answer whether it reaches the West Bank. The International Committee of the Red Cross stated in 2024 that Israel occupies the West Bank and "is bound by the law of belligerent occupation." Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, stated in 1997 that the Convention is "only applicable to territory of a High Contracting Party" and does not apply there de jure. Israel's own Supreme Court separated two questions in 1979, applicability and enforcement, when Justice Witkon wrote that the Convention "does apply" to the area but "is not 'justiciable' in this Court."

Key Findings

- Israel signed the Fourth Geneva Convention on 8 December 1949 and ratified it on 6 July 1951. The one reservation on record concerns the Red Shield of David emblem, not Articles 2, 33, 47 or 49 (Geneva Convention (IV), 1949, with the ICRC participation record).
- The International Committee of the Red Cross stated in 2024 that Israel has occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since 1967 (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024). Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, stated in 1997 that the Convention does not apply there de jure and that Israel acts de facto under its humanitarian provisions (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997).
- The Security Council adopted resolution 2334 on 23 December 2016 by 14 votes to none, with 1 abstention by the United States. The resolution reaffirms Israel's obligations "under the Fourth Geneva Convention" (United Nations Security Council, 2016).
- In the Elon Moreh judgment of 22 October 1979, decided 5 to 0, Justice Witkon wrote that the Convention "does apply" to the area but is not justiciable in an Israeli court (Israeli Supreme Court, 1979).
- On 31 December 2014, Israel's Supreme Court denied a petition against punitive demolitions. It also held that disproportionate use of that power, which "amounts to collective punishment that is prohibited under international law, is precluded" (Israeli Supreme Court, 2014).

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Does the Fourth Geneva Convention cover the West Bank, on the record?

The Fourth Geneva Convention covers "partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party" under its Article 2. **Israel ratified it on 6 July 1951**, according to the ICRC's compilation of the depositary record. On the record, the West Bank answer consists of two dated readings of that clause: one by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and one by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The stakes are practical. The answer settles which rules govern daily life for people living in territory held by another state's army, and who can hold that army to those rules. The full second paragraph of Article 2 reads that the Convention "shall also apply to all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party, even if the said occupation meets with no armed resistance."

The ICRC sets out its reading in an article dated 26 July 2024. It states that Israel "occupies the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza, which constitute the occupied Palestinian territory," and concludes: "Thus, as an Occupying Power, Israel is bound by the law of belligerent occupation." The ICRC is a humanitarian organisation, not a court, and this is its own stated legal reading.

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, stated the opposite reading in a press release dated 14 July 1997: "Israel's position is that the Convention is only applicable to territory of a High Contracting Party. Neither the West Bank nor Gaza were previously under the control of a legitimate sovereign hence the nonapplicability of the Convention." The same release continues: "Nevertheless, Israel has undertaken to act de facto in accordance with the humanitarian provisions of the Convention."

The dated record on the Convention and the West Bank

TREATY ACTS, PARTY STATEMENTS, DECLARATIONS, A RECORDED VOTE AND TWO JUDGMENTS

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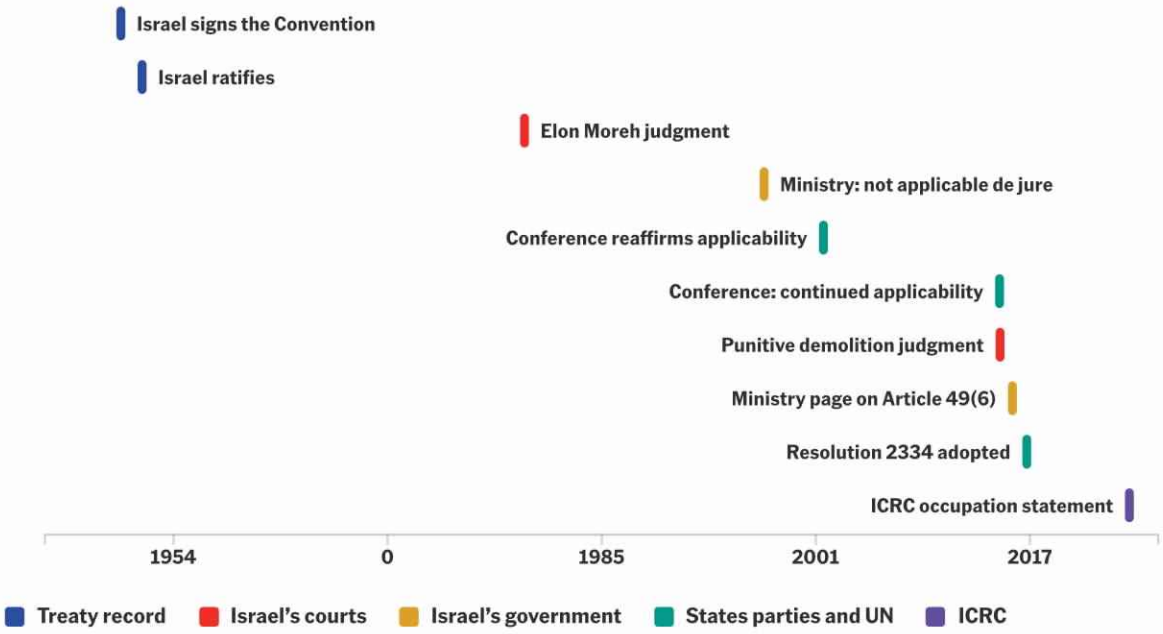

Source: Geneva Convention (IV), 1949, ICRC participation record; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997 and 2015 (a party's own statements); Conference of High Contracting Parties, 2001 and 2014; United Nations Security Council, 2016; Israeli Supreme Court, 1979 and 2014; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024.

Who holds that the Convention applies there, and since when?

The International Committee of the Red Cross dates its reading to **1967**. In 2024 it stated: "The ICRC's longstanding position is that, since 1967, Israel occupies the West Bank, including East Jerusalem." It adds that "The disputed status of a territory does not prevent the applicability of the law of occupation," and places those laws "primarily in the Hague Regulations of 1907, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and its Additional Protocol I and also in customary IHL."

States parties to the treaty have stated the same reading in two declarations circulated by the depositary, Switzerland. The Conference of High Contracting Parties declared on 5 December 2001, in paragraph 3, that "the participating High Contracting Parties reaffirm the applicability of the Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem." In paragraph 12 it added: "They reaffirm the illegality of the settlements in the said territories and of the extension thereof."

The Conference's declaration of 17 December 2014 reaffirmed the 2001 text. In paragraph 4 it emphasised "the continued applicability and relevance of the Fourth Geneva Convention." The 2014 text also addressed every side of the conflict. It stated that all parties, "and as such also non-State actors," must respect distinction, proportionality and precautions, and it

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expressed “deep concern about recurring violations of international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict.”

A conference declaration is a statement by the states that attended. It is not a court ruling and not a Security Council decision. Both texts speak for “the participating High Contracting Parties.” Neither lists the participants, gives their number or records a vote. The 2001 text describes itself as reflecting “the common understanding reached by the participating High Contracting Parties.”

The International Court of Justice addressed the same territory in advisory opinions dated 9 July 2004 and 19 July 2024. Both are advisory opinions requested by the General Assembly, not judgments in a contentious case between states. The Security Council recalled the 2004 opinion by its date in the preamble of resolution 2334, the vote examined in the next section.

How did the Security Council vote on Israel’s Convention obligations?

The United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2334 on 23 December 2016 by **14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention**, by the United States, according to the verbatim record S/PV.7853. Its preamble reaffirms “the obligation of Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.”

The record states that “A vote was taken by show of hands.” Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and Venezuela voted in favour. The President announced that the draft “has been adopted as resolution 2334 (2016).” An abstention by a permanent member is not a veto. The text voted on was draft S/2016/1100, submitted by Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal and Venezuela.

How the 15 Council members voted on resolution 2334
SHOW OF HANDS, 23 DECEMBER 2016

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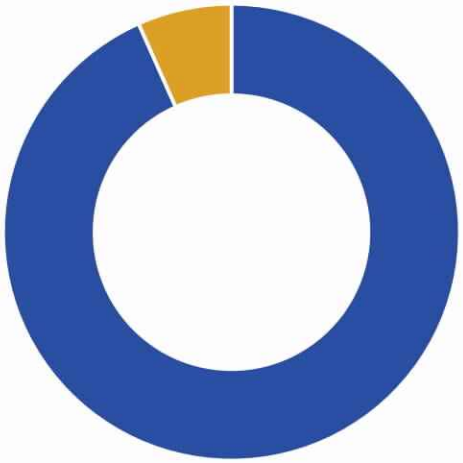

In favour Against Abstaining (United States)

Source: United Nations Security Council, 2016, S/PV.7853 (provisional verbatim record).

Three operative paragraphs bear on the Convention question. Paragraph 1 states that the establishment of settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 "has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law." Paragraph 3 states that the Council "will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations." Paragraph 5 calls on all states "to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967."

After the vote, Israel spoke as a non-member invited under rule 37, followed by the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine, invited under the Council's previous practice. Paragraph 12 asks the Secretary-General to report every three months on implementation. The verbatim record is marked "Provisional," and the final text appears in the Council's Official Records.

What does the Convention require of an occupying power?

The 1949 Convention's Article 49, sixth paragraph, states in full: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." The International Committee of the Red Cross applies that clause to the West Bank. Its 2024 article states that "Israel's settlements' policy in the West Bank contradicts the GCIV," citing Article 49(6).

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The first paragraph of Article 49 regulates movement in the opposite direction. It prohibits "Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not ... regardless of their motive." The same article contains an exception. It permits "total or partial evacuation of a given area if the security of the population or imperative military reasons so demand." Evacuees "shall be transferred back to their homes as soon as hostilities in the area in question have ceased," and the Protecting Power must "be informed of any transfers and evacuations as soon as they have taken place."

Article 33 governs punishment. It prohibits penalising a protected person for an offence not personally committed, and continues: "Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited." It adds two further sentences: "Pillage is prohibited." "Reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited."

The ICRC's 2024 article sets its settlement statement beside two others. It states that "deliberate attacks against Israeli civilians are in clear violation of IHL," and that the ICRC "recognizes Israel's right to take measures for the security of its population. However, these measures must respect the relevant rules of IHL and IHRL."

Article	Text, verbatim	Source
33	"Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited."	Geneva Convention (IV), 1949
49, first paragraph	"Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory ... are prohibited, regardless of their motive."	Geneva Convention (IV), 1949
49, evacuation	Permitted "if the security of the population or imperative military reasons so demand"	Geneva Convention (IV), 1949
49, sixth paragraph	"The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."	Geneva Convention (IV), 1949

Which five words in Article 2 does the dispute turn on?

The dispute over Article 2 turns on **five words**: "of a High Contracting Party." Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, read them in 1997 as excluding the West Bank and Gaza, because "Neither the West Bank nor Gaza were previously under the control of a legitimate sovereign hence the nonapplicability of the Convention."

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The phrase closes the second paragraph of Article 2. The Convention applies to occupation "of the territory of a High Contracting Party." On the Ministry's 1997 reading, the clause requires that the occupied land have belonged to a High Contracting Party before the occupation. On that reading, a territory without a prior legitimate sovereign falls outside the clause.

The International Committee of the Red Cross reads the same treaty as triggered by the fact of occupation, not by the prior holder's title. Its 2024 article states that "controversy in respect of Palestine's statehood has no bearing on this legal determination." It also states that "The disputed status of a territory does not prevent the applicability of the law of occupation." On this reading, the five words describe the situation the drafters had in view without restricting the treaty's reach.

The surrounding text shows how the drafters handled a related dispute about recognition. The first paragraph of Article 2 applies the Convention to armed conflict between High Contracting Parties "even if the state of war is not recognized by one of them." The second paragraph applies it "even if the said occupation meets with no armed resistance." Neither paragraph defines "the territory of a High Contracting Party," and the article itself does not say which reading of the phrase is correct.

Each reading has named holders. The ICRC holds one, and so do the participating parties at the 2001 and 2014 Conferences, which reaffirmed applicability to the territory "including East Jerusalem." The Security Council's 2016 preamble calls Israel "the occupying Power." Israel's Foreign Ministry holds the other, stated in its own 1997 text.

Did Israel enter a reservation when it ratified in 1951?

The ICRC's record of Israel's participation lists **one reservation**. Israel made it on signature on 8 December 1949 and maintained it on ratification on 6 July 1951. It concerns the emblem only: "Israel will use the Red Shield of David as the emblem and distinctive sign provided for in this Convention." None of the record's entries is a reservation to Articles 2, 33, 47 or 49.

The full reservation reads: "Subject to the reservation that, while respecting the inviolability of the distinctive signs and emblems provided for in Article 38 of the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field of August 12, 1949, Israel will use the Red Shield of David as the emblem and distinctive sign provided for in this Convention." The ICRC record cites the Final Record of the Diplomatic Conference, Volume I, page 348, as the source of this text.

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Israel ratified the treaty 16 years before the 1967 war, the date from which the ICRC counts the occupation. Israel's statement that the Convention does not apply de jure to the West Bank and Gaza therefore does not appear in the ratification instrument. It appears in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' later publications, including the 14 July 1997 release. That release pairs the non-applicability position with an undertaking "to act de facto in accordance with the humanitarian provisions of the Convention." In the record, Israel's position is a stated interpretation of Article 2, published by the government. It is not a treaty reservation entered with the depositary.

The ICRC record lists two further Israeli entries, dated 22 January 1968 and 10 February 1978. Both are declarations objecting to political declarations that Kuwait and Democratic Yemen made when those states acceded. They concern other states' accessions, not Israel's own obligations under the treaty.

The dispute concerns what Articles 2, 33, 47 and 49 mean for a specific territory, not whether Israel accepted them.

How did Israel's stated position change between 1997 and 2015?

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, published a page dated **30 November 2015** that argues its case "Quite apart from the question of whether the Fourth Geneva Convention applies de jure to territory such as the West Bank over which there was no previous legitimate sovereign." The page does not restate the outright non-applicability position of the Ministry's 14 July 1997 release.

The 2015 page argues on the terms of Article 49(6) itself. It states that "the case of Jews voluntarily establishing homes and communities in their ancient homeland, and alongside Palestinian communities, simply does not match the kind of forced population transfers contemplated by Article 49(6)." It adds that the clause "should not be seen as prohibiting the voluntary return of individuals to the towns and villages from which they, or their ancestors, had been forcibly ousted." Nor, in the Ministry's words, does it prohibit "movement of individuals to land which was not under the legitimate sovereignty of any state and which is not subject to private ownership."

On the status of the land, the Ministry states that "the West Bank is best regarded as territory over which there are competing claims which should be resolved in peace process negotiations." It adds: "At the same time, Israel recognizes that the Palestinians also

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entertain claims to this area." On private property, it states that Israeli settlements "have been established only after an exhaustive investigation process, under the supervision of the Supreme Court of Israel."

The page also addresses the war-crimes characterisation. It states that settlements "do not constitute a 'grave breach' of the Fourth Geneva Convention or 'war crimes', as some claim." It says the grave-breach characterisation arrived "only in the 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, to which leading States including Israel are not party," and attributes its introduction to "political pressure by Arab States." These are the Ministry's own statements of its legal position.

The two documents set the Ministry's argument on two different grounds. The 1997 release disputes whether the treaty applies to the territory at all. The 2015 page argues that, applicable or not, Article 49(6) does not reach voluntary settlement. In the second argument, the Ministry engages the article's text instead of setting it aside.

Can an agreement or annexation remove the Convention's protection?

The 1949 Convention's Article 47 states that protected persons in occupied territory "shall not be deprived, in any case or in any manner whatsoever, of the benefits of the present Convention." The article names three routes that cannot remove those benefits: changes to a territory's institutions, "any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territories and the Occupying Power," and "any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory."

Article 47 applies to persons "who are in occupied territory." It therefore rests on the same threshold as Article 2: it protects people in a territory already found to be occupied, and does not itself say which territories are occupied. The West Bank applicability dispute set out in the previous sections reaches Article 47 unchanged.

The International Committee of the Red Cross states its reading on annexation in its 2024 article: "Annexation has no effect on the legal status of the occupied territories under international law; nor does it have any bearing on the applicability of the law of belligerent occupation." This is the ICRC's view of the law, stated separately from the treaty text it relies on.

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Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, addresses agreements from a different angle. Its 2015 page states that the bilateral Israeli-Palestinian agreements "contain no prohibition on the building or expansion of settlements." It calls the reading of Interim Agreement Article 31(7) as a ban on settlement activity "unfounded." It describes the 2005 Disengagement Plan as "unilateral Israeli gestures of good will rather than the fulfilment of a legal obligation." The Ministry's argument concerns what the agreements require. Article 47 concerns whether any agreement can reduce the Convention's benefits for protected persons.

The Security Council's resolution 2334 of 23 December 2016 addresses territorial change by agreement directly. Its third operative paragraph states that the Council "will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations." The resolution treats negotiated change as the one recognised route.

Why don't Israeli courts enforce the Convention directly?

Israel's Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice, decided HCJ 390/79 (the Elon Moreh case) **unanimously, 5 to 0**, on 22 October 1979. Deputy President Landau declined to decide the case under Article 49(6). He reasoned that, "as part of treaty-based international law, it is not binding law in an Israeli Court." He held that the Hague Regulations, by contrast, "as customary international law, they do indeed bind the military administration in Judea and Samaria."

Justice Witkon separated applicability from enforcement in plain terms: "It is a mistake to think (as I have recently read in one of the newspapers) that the Geneva Convention does not apply to Judea and Samaria. It does apply, though, as noted above, it is not 'justiciable' in this Court." On whether voluntary settlement counts as a transfer under Article 49(6), he wrote that the question "is not easy, and as far as we know, it has yet to be resolved in international case law." He added that "my refraining from determination must not be interpreted as support for either of the parties."

The case concerned 17 Palestinian petitioners, registered owners of about 125 dunams at Rujeib, outside Nablus. They challenged a military requisition order covering about 700 dunams for a civilian settlement. The Court decided the case on the Hague Regulations, not the Convention. Landau accepted that requisition of private land for a civilian settlement "is potentially justified under Article 52 of the Hague Regulations." He found that the decision here was driven by political considerations, with "the military consideration ... subordinate to the primary, political decision to build the settlement."

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The Court annulled the order only as it applied to the petitioners' lands. It ordered the settlers and their structures removed from those plots and gave the respondents 30 days to comply. The judgment did not hold settlement unlawful in general and did not decide Article 49(6).

The English text quoted here is an unofficial translation published by the Cardozo Israeli Supreme Court Project, translated from a Hebrew version prepared by Nevo Press. The Hebrew governs.

Does the collective-punishment ban bind Israel outside the treaty?

The ICRC's customary international humanitarian law study states in **Rule 103** that "Collective punishments are prohibited." It describes the rule as "a norm of customary international law applicable in both international and non-international armed conflicts." A customary norm binds states through their practice, independent of any treaty's field of application.

The study cites Article 33, first paragraph, of the Fourth Convention among the rule's treaty sources, alongside Article 50 of the Hague Regulations and the Additional Protocols. It describes the prohibition as broader than criminal law, reaching "sanctions and harassment of any sort, administrative, by police action or otherwise." Its list of military manuals containing the prohibition includes Israel's. Rule 103 names no situation and addresses no blockade, closure or territory. Whether a specific measure is a collective punishment is a separate question, answered by those who have ruled on it.

Israel's Supreme Court addressed that question in HCJ 8091/14, delivered on 31 December 2014 with Justice Rubinstein writing and Justices Hayut and Sohlberg concurring. The petition by eight organisations challenged house demolitions under Regulation 119 of the Defence (Emergency) Regulations, 1945. At paragraph 23 the Court held that "the disproportionate use of said authority by the military commander, which amounts to collective punishment that is prohibited under international law, is precluded."

The petition was denied. At paragraph 27, however, the Court made continued deference conditional on evidence. It stated that proportionality "does not allow us to continue to assume forever" that demolition achieves deterrence "unless all of the data that properly confirms that hypothesis is presented to us for our review." It held that "State authorities must examine the measure and its utility from time to time." Justice Hayut recorded that a

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security-establishment committee had concluded, and the security community had adopted in 2005, that systematic demolition "should be stopped and should be reserved for extreme cases."

Read together, the two records show the prohibition Article 33 codifies applied in an Israeli courtroom as a rule of international law, without the Court resolving the Article 2 dispute.

Methodology and limitations

The evidence comes from four types of record, each labelled where it is used.

Primary treaty text and the ratification record. The Convention's articles are quoted from the treaty text printed by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Articles 4 and 6 from the Avalon Project's reproduction of the same text. Israel's signature, ratification and reservation come from the ICRC's compilation of the depositary's notifications. The depositary's own list, held by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, did not load on 23 November 2026. Article 33 reads "he or she" in both the ICRC printing and the ICRC treaty database; the sentences quoted here do not depend on that pronoun.

Party statements. Two Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs pages, dated 14 July 1997 and 30 November 2015, are the government's own statements of its legal position. They are cited as what the Ministry states, never as findings.

Statements by states and the ICRC. The 2001 and 2014 Conference declarations speak only for "participating" parties and record no count or vote. Resolution 2334's vote comes from the provisional verbatim record S/PV.7853. The ICRC's 2024 article and its customary-law Rule 103 are the ICRC's own legal readings, and Rule 103 carries no publication year on its page. The International Court of Justice's advisory opinions of 2004 and 2024 are named by date and are not relied on as evidence.

Domestic court judgments. Both Israeli Supreme Court judgments are quoted from unofficial English translations published by the Cardozo Israeli Supreme Court Project, and the Hebrew texts govern. The Elon Moreh translation prints its date as 10 October 1979. The Hebrew date it gives, 1 Cheshvan 5740, corresponds to 22 October 1979, the date used here. The 2014 translation misprints the Hebrew year, and 31 December 2014 is used. Landau distinguished the 1978 Beit El case, which upheld a requisition on the same Article 52 reasoning. That judgment is known here only through his discussion of it. Private individuals named in either judgment are referred to by role.

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Conclusion

So what is the Fourth Geneva Convention, and does it reach the West Bank? It is the 1949 treaty on civilians in war and occupation, which Israel ratified in 1951. On the West Bank, the record holds two readings of one clause rather than a single answer. The ICRC, the participating states at the 2001 and 2014 Conferences, and the 14 Council members who voted for resolution 2334 in 2016 treat the territory as occupied and the Convention as binding. Israel's Foreign Ministry, a party to the dispute, read the same five words in 1997 as excluding territory without a prior legitimate sovereign, while undertaking to act de facto under the humanitarian provisions.

The record is more specific than either reading on its own. Israel's only reservation to the treaty concerns an emblem. In 1979, in a 5 to 0 judgment, a justice of Israel's Supreme Court wrote that the Convention applies, while the Court treated it as outside its power to enforce. In 2014 the same Court barred demolitions amounting to collective punishment, relying on the international-law prohibition that Article 33 codifies. By 2015 the Ministry was arguing Article 49(6) on its own terms, "Quite apart from" the de jure question. The dispute over applicability remains open in the documents, while rules the Convention shares with customary law have reached Israel's courtrooms.

The record therefore leaves a question about what the dispute decides. A resident of the West Bank is covered by a treaty that one of Israel's own justices called applicable but not justiciable, by humanitarian provisions the government applies as an undertaking rather than an obligation, and by a prohibition the ICRC classifies as customary. Does the formal answer to whether the Convention applies still determine that resident's protection, or is the practical answer given case by case, one military order and one petition at a time?

Frequently Asked Questions

Who counts as a "protected person" under the Convention?

Article 4 of the 1949 text, as reproduced by the Avalon Project, defines protected persons as "those who, at a given moment and in any manner whatsoever, find themselves, in case of a conflict or occupation, in the hands of a Party to the conflict or Occupying Power of which they are not nationals." Nationality, not residence alone, determines who is covered.

Does the Convention stop applying after a long occupation?

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Article 6 of the 1949 text states that in occupied territory the Convention's application "shall cease one year after the general close of military operations." It then binds the Occupying Power, "for the duration of the occupation, to the extent that such Power exercises the functions of government," to a listed set of articles that includes Articles 27, 29 to 34, 47, 49 and 53 (Avalon Project).

Is East Jerusalem treated differently from the rest of the West Bank?

The ICRC's 2024 article and the Conference's 2001 declaration both name East Jerusalem expressly as part of the occupied territory. Resolution 2334 states that the Security Council "will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem," other than changes agreed by the parties.

Does the ICRC consider Gaza occupied as well?

The ICRC states in its 2024 article that it "considers Gaza to remain occupied territory on the basis that Israel still exercises effective control over the Strip," including its airspace, sea and land borders, except the border with Egypt. That article predates the October 2025 ceasefire.

Does the ICRC recognise Israeli security measures under occupation law?

The ICRC's 2024 article states that it "recognizes Israel's right to take measures for the security of its population," and that such measures "must respect the relevant rules of IHL and IHRL." On Gaza, it states that Israel is entitled to restrict certain goods for security reasons, subject to proportionality.

Did the Elon Moreh ruling bar settlements on private land?

No. Israel's Supreme Court held in 1979 that requisitioning private land for a civilian settlement "is potentially justified under Article 52 of the Hague Regulations" when military needs are the real reason. The order failed on the facts of that case, because the Court found that political considerations, not military ones, drove the decision.

Are the Oslo agreements a source of settlement rules?

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, stated in 2015 that the bilateral Israeli-Palestinian agreements, including the 1995 Interim Agreement, "contain no prohibition on the building or expansion of settlements." The Convention's Article 47 addresses a different question: whether any agreement between the occupied territory's authorities and the Occupying Power can deprive protected persons of the Convention's benefits.

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COGAT's own record shows a 2 March to 19 May 2025 nil-entry period; Israel's Supreme Court tied the term to disproportionate use in 2014.

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What is collective punishment in the Gaza blockade? Article 33, read against Israel's own records

The 1949 Geneva Convention bans penalties for offences a person did not commit. How the ICRC, Israel and Israel's courts read it for Gaza.

Collective Punishment | Gaza Blockade | Fourth Geneva Convention | International Humanitarian Law | COGAT



Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 defines the prohibition in 2 sentences: "No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited." The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) applied the term to Gaza on 14 June 2010, stating, as the BBC

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reported, that the closure "constitutes a collective punishment imposed in clear violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law." Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated in July 1997 that the Convention does not apply de jure to Gaza, while undertaking to act de facto by its humanitarian provisions. Israel's Supreme Court held in December 2014, in a case on home demolitions, that a disproportionate measure "amounts to collective punishment." COGAT's own portal, published by a party to the events, states that no aid entered the Strip between 2 March and 19 May 2025.

Key Findings

- **1949:** The Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 33, prohibits punishing a protected person "for an offence he or she has not personally committed" and states that "Collective penalties... are prohibited" (Geneva Convention (IV), 1949).
- **1987 Commentary, paragraph 3055:** The ICRC's customary-law study, Rule 103, extends the prohibition beyond criminal sentences to "sanctions and harassment of any sort, administrative, by police action or otherwise" (International Committee of the Red Cross, Customary IHL Database, Rule 103).
- **6 July 1951:** Israel ratified the Convention, with its only reservation concerning the emblem; on 14 July 1997 Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated, as its own position, that the Convention is "only applicable to territory of a High Contracting Party" and therefore not to Gaza (Geneva Convention (IV), 1949; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, 1997).
- **31 December 2014:** Israel's Supreme Court denied a petition against punitive demolitions while holding that disproportionate use of the power, "which amounts to collective punishment that is prohibited under international law, is precluded" (Israeli Supreme Court, 2014).
- **2 March to 19 May 2025:** COGAT's Aid Data dashboard, a party's own record, states that "no aid entered the Gaza Strip" in that period, "According to the directive from the political echelon" (COGAT, 2026).

What does collective punishment mean in the law of war?

The Fourth Geneva Convention, adopted on **12 August 1949**, states the rule in Article 33: "No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited." The definition rests on individual responsibility. A penalty imposed on a person for an offence another person committed falls inside the prohibition.

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Article 33 runs to 3 short paragraphs, and the other 2 widen its reach. The second reads in full: “Pillage is prohibited.” The third reads: “Reprisals against protected persons and their property are prohibited.” Protected persons are the civilians the Convention protects. The first sentence reads “he or she” both in the ICRC’s printing and in the ICRC’s treaty database, and no part of the prohibition turns on that wording.

Three features of the text frame every later dispute over Gaza. First, Article 33 names no territory, no blockade and no closure; its complete text speaks only of persons, offences, penalties, pillage and reprisals. Second, it does not define “collective penalties” beyond the individual-responsibility sentence that precedes it. The working scope of the term is therefore set by later readings, the most detailed being the ICRC’s customary-law study, set out below. Third, the prohibition attaches to punishment. A measure has to be a penalty before the question of who committed the offence arises.

That third feature is where the treaty term departs from a looser usage. Read against a paraphrase of collective punishment as any hardship borne by a whole population for the acts of some of its members, the treaty text is narrower in one respect and broader in another. It is narrower because it speaks of penalties rather than hardship. It is broader because it adds “all measures of intimidation or of terrorism” to penalties, with no requirement that those measures follow an offence at all.

The application of Article 33 to Gaza therefore turns on 3 questions the text leaves to readers: whether the Convention governs the Strip, whether a closure measure counts as a penalty, and where a lawful restriction ends. The sections below set out who has answered each, in their own words and on their own dates.

Which bodies apply the term to Gaza, and on what reading?

The International Committee of the Red Cross stated on **14 June 2010**, as reported by the BBC, that “the whole of Gaza’s civilian population is being punished for acts for which they bear no responsibility,” and that the closure “therefore constitutes a collective punishment imposed in clear violation of Israel’s obligations under international humanitarian law.” The ICRC is a humanitarian organisation, not a court.

Other bodies have used the characterisation in their own documents. Amnesty International published a 2008 document on the Gaza blockade, index MDE 15/021/2008, framing the blockade as collective punishment. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a July 2020 press release titled “Israel’s collective punishment of Palestinians illegal and an affront to justice: UN expert,” in the name of the Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territory, Michael Lynk. Each is that body’s own position, on its own

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reading of the law. A dated account of who has used the term appears in the record on why the Gaza blockade is called collective punishment.

Each of these characterisations rests on a prior legal step. Article 2 of the Convention extends it to "all cases of partial or total occupation," so its application to Gaza depends on whether the Strip is occupied territory. The ICRC's published reading on that point is dated July 2024: "The ICRC considers Gaza to remain occupied territory on the basis that Israel still exercises effective control over the Strip." The ICRC locates that control in Israel's control of Gaza's airspace, sea and land borders, with the exception of the border with Egypt. The same page states the ICRC's "longstanding position is that, since 1967, Israel occupies the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza."

The 2024 page is the reading on which the characterisation depends, not the characterisation itself. As published, it does not use the words "collective punishment" and does not call the restrictions on Gaza unlawful. It speaks as of mid-2024 and predates the October 2025 ceasefire. Israel's reading of the same question is stated in its Ministry of Foreign Affairs releases, set out in the section on applicability below.

Does the ban reach administrative measures, not just criminal sentences?

The ICRC's study of customary international humanitarian law, Rule 103, states that the prohibition "does not only apply to criminal sanctions but also to 'sanctions and harassment of any sort, administrative, by police action or otherwise'," wording the ICRC takes from **paragraph 3055** of its 1987 Commentary on the Additional Protocols. On the ICRC's reading, a collective penalty need not be a criminal sentence.

The rule itself reads in full: "Collective punishments are prohibited." The ICRC describes it as "an application, in part, of Rule 102 that no one may be convicted of an offence except on the basis of individual criminal responsibility." It then states that the prohibition "is wider in scope" than Rule 102, because of the administrative clause quoted above. Customary law, in the ICRC's usage, is law established by the practice of States rather than by a single treaty text.

The scope sentence bears directly on Gaza because a closure is not a criminal sentence. Restrictions on the passage of people and goods are administrative and economic measures, imposed through permits, quotas and crossing schedules. If the prohibition reached only criminal sanctions, such measures would sit outside it by definition. The ICRC's scope sentence places administrative sanctions inside it.

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The rule stops there. Its page names no situation: it does not mention a blockade, a closure or Gaza, and it gives no test for when an administrative restriction becomes a sanction. The ICRC states it as its own finding about what State practice establishes, and the treaty provision on the point remains Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The source of the administrative wording carries a further limit. Paragraph 3055 belongs to the ICRC's Commentary on the 1977 Additional Protocols, treaties to which Israel is not a party, by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs' own statement in 2015. Whether the administrative reading binds Israel therefore depends on whether the rule is customary, which is the question of the next section.

Is the prohibition binding on Israel beyond the treaty text?

The ICRC's customary-law study states in **Rule 103** that "State practice establishes this rule as a norm of customary international law applicable in both international and non-international armed conflicts," and it lists Israel's military manual among the manuals that contain the prohibition. On the ICRC's account, the rule does not depend on any single treaty for its force.

The ICRC cites 5 treaty sources for the rule: Article 50 of the Hague Regulations of 1907; Article 87, third paragraph, of the Third Geneva Convention; Article 33, first paragraph, of the Fourth Geneva Convention; Article 75(2)(d) of Additional Protocol I; and Article 4(2)(b) of Additional Protocol II. The ICRC notes that the 2 Additional Protocol provisions were "adopted by consensus." Its list of military manuals and national legislation is an illustrative "See, e.g." list, not a count of States.

Israel's own account of its treaty status appears in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs report on the 2014 Gaza conflict, dated May 2015 and released in June 2015, a party's own account of its conduct. Footnote 397 states: "Although Israel is also not a party to the 1977 Additional Protocols I and II to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, it abides by their provisions inasmuch as they reflect rules of customary international law."

Set side by side, the 2 records establish 3 points. Israel is a party to the Fourth Geneva Convention, which contains Article 33. Israel is not a party to Additional Protocol I, which carries a collective-punishment provision in Article 75(2)(d), and states that it abides by that Protocol where it reflects custom. The ICRC classifies the prohibition of collective punishments as custom in both kinds of armed conflict.

The 2015 footnote, as published, names no individual rule. Whether the Ministry accepts the ICRC's classification of Rule 103 in particular is not stated there, and the ICRC's study is the ICRC's own finding about State practice, not a treaty or a ruling.

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Does Article 33 apply to Gaza, in Israel's stated view?

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated on **14 July 1997** that "the Convention is only applicable to territory of a High Contracting Party," that "Neither the West Bank nor Gaza were previously under the control of a legitimate sovereign hence the nonapplicability of the Convention," and that "Israel has undertaken to act de facto in accordance with the humanitarian provisions of the Convention." That is Israel's own stated legal position.

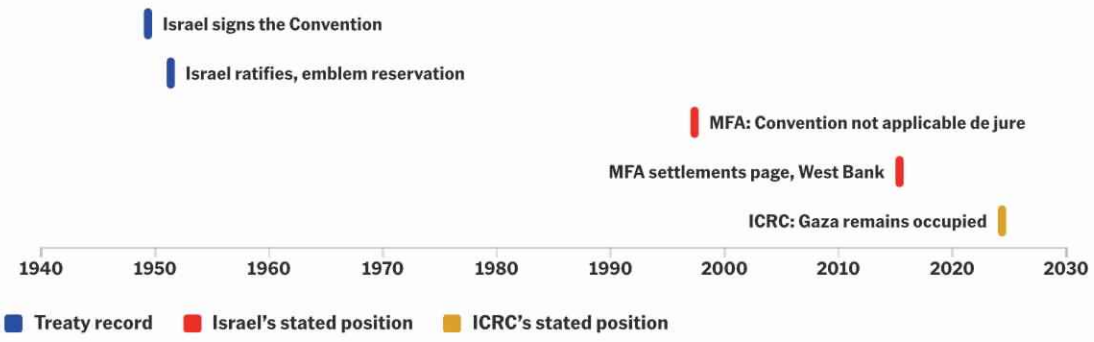
The clause the Ministry reads is Article 2, second paragraph, of the Convention: it "shall also apply to all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party, even if the said occupation meets with no armed resistance." The phrase "the territory of a High Contracting Party" is the hinge of the dispute. Israel's 1997 reading takes it to require a prior legitimate sovereign. The ICRC's 2024 reading takes the opposite view: "The disputed status of a territory does not prevent the applicability of the law of occupation," and "controversy in respect of Palestine's statehood has no bearing on this legal determination." The article itself does not say which reading is correct.

Israel's participation in the treaty is not in dispute. The ICRC's compilation of the depositary record shows Israel signed on 8 December 1949 and ratified on 6 July 1951. Its only reservation concerns the emblem, under which Israel uses the Red Shield of David. The applicability position is a stated legal reading, not a reservation to Articles 2 or 33.

The Ministry's later text is framed differently. Its page "Israeli Settlements and International Law," published on 30 November 2015, addresses the West Bank and argues that settlements fall outside Article 49(6) "Quite apart from the question of whether the Fourth Geneva Convention applies de jure to territory such as the West Bank over which there was no previous legitimate sovereign." That page does not restate non-applicability outright and does not address Gaza or Article 33. The 1997 release is the Ministry text that states the applicability position for Gaza in terms.

Israel and the Fourth Geneva Convention: the dated record

TREATY PARTICIPATION, ISRAEL'S STATED APPLICABILITY POSITION AND THE ICRC'S STATED READING



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Source: Geneva Convention (IV), 1949, with the ICRC state-party record; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, 1997; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024.

Can restricting goods for security reasons be lawful under these rules?

The International Committee of the Red Cross stated in **July 2024** that "while Israel is entitled to impose restrictions on the flow of certain goods into Gaza for legitimate security reasons, its unconditional obligation of humane treatment towards the population of Gaza requires that it respects the principle of proportionality in all circumstances." In the ICRC's reading, a restriction on goods is not unlawful because it is a restriction.

The same page states the security entitlement a second time, in its section on the West Bank. The ICRC "recognizes Israel's right to take measures for the security of its population. However, these measures must respect the relevant rules of IHL and IHRL," meaning international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The same passage records that "the ICRC has repeatedly stated that deliberate attacks against Israeli civilians are in clear violation of IHL."

Read with Article 33, the 2024 page draws the line between a lawful restriction and a prohibited penalty at proportionality and humane treatment, not at the existence of a security purpose. A security rationale is accepted as a lawful basis for restricting "certain goods"; the obligation of humane treatment toward the whole population is described as "unconditional." The question the page poses for any given measure is whether it stays within that test.

The page does not apply the test to a specific restriction. As published, it does not find that any measure in force in 2024 failed proportionality, and it does not describe the restrictions as collective punishment. The ICRC's 2010 statement, reported by the BBC, is the ICRC document that applies the term to the closure; the 2024 page is the one that states the test. The ICRC locates the laws of occupation "primarily in the Hague Regulations of 1907, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and its Additional Protocol I and also in customary IHL."

The 2 halves of the 2024 sentence therefore correspond to the 2 positions in the wider debate. Israel's stated rationale for the closure is security; the characterisation of the closure as collective punishment rests on its effect on a population that bears no individual responsibility. The ICRC's own text holds both premises in one sentence and makes proportionality the measure between them.

Where has an Israeli court drawn the line on collective punishment?

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Israel's Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice, held on **31 December 2014** in HCJ 8091/14 HaMoked v. Minister of Defense that "the disproportionate use of said authority by the military commander, which amounts to collective punishment that is prohibited under international law, is precluded." The judgment, written by Justice E. Rubinstein, is quoted here in the Cardozo Israeli Supreme Court Project's English translation; the Hebrew is the authoritative text.

The case concerned punitive home demolition under Regulation 119 of the Defence (Emergency) Regulations, 1945, not the Gaza closure. Eight organisations petitioned for a declaration that the use of the power is unlawful. The Court denied the petition: "Subject to Paragraph 27, we cannot grant the Petition." Its relevance here is the Court's own statement of where a lawful measure becomes prohibited collective punishment: at disproportion.

Paragraph 27 attached a condition to that holding. "I believe that the principle of proportionality does not allow us to continue to assume forever that choosing the drastic option of house demolition, or even of house sealing, achieves the desired purpose of deterrence, unless all of the data that properly confirms that hypothesis is presented to us for our review." The Court held that "State authorities must examine the measure and its utility from time to time, including conducting follow-up research on the matter."

The judgment also records the security establishment's own doubt. The Court quoted the Major General Shani Committee presentation, filed as an exhibit, stating that "within the context of deterrence, the measure of demolition is 'eroded'." Justice Hayut recorded that the security community adopted the Committee's conclusion in 2005 that systematic demolition for deterrence "should be stopped and should be reserved for extreme cases." The State's own account, cited by Justice Sohlberg, was that since 2005 the power had been exercised "only several times," a count of orders and buildings, not people.

The power survives domestic review on a statutory footing Justice Hayut set out: Regulation 119 "currently forms part of Israel's positive law, and its validity is maintained by virtue of the Preservation of Laws clause under section 10 of Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty." The Knesset's unofficial English translation of section 10 reads: "This Basic Law shall not affect the validity of any law that existed prior to the inception of the Basic Law." The petition failed, and the Court made continued deference conditional on data the State had not yet presented; both halves are the holding.

Which movement rules applied to Gaza residents before the war?

COGAT's "Status of Authorizations," current to 8 February 2022 and published by a party to the events, stated in its Gaza section that "As a rule, Palestinians are not granted departure

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through Ben Gurion Airport, with the exception of BMC permit holders and extremely exceptional unique humanitarian cases (**monthly quota of 20**)." BMC permits are those issued to senior Palestinian businesspeople. The quota of 20 was a ceiling, not a count of anyone who travelled.

The same clause, at page 17 of the 68-page document, set the general route abroad: departure "shall be through the Allenby Bridge Crossing, solely in escorted groups (shuttles)." The clause sits in Section B, whose subject is the Gaza Strip, and it governed departures from Gaza, not movement inside it. COGAT is the Israeli Ministry of Defense unit that administers the permit regime, and the document is that authority's own published policy, not a description of what happened to any traveller. The quotas and permit categories the instrument sets are read in detail in the record on Palestinian freedom of movement and the permit instrument.

The edition is dated and superseded in practice. It predates 7 October 2023 and the suspension of permits that followed, and no later edition was located on gov.il in September 2026. Its rules are therefore stated here in the past tense, as they stood on 8 February 2022.

The clause bears on the definition in one specific respect. Article 33 asks whether a penalty falls on persons for offences they did not personally commit. The Ben Gurion clause was framed for Palestinians as a class, "As a rule," with exceptions defined by permit category and humanitarian case rather than by any individual finding. The quoted clauses name no offence and state no rationale. Whether a general movement rule of that kind is a penalty at all, or a security restriction of the kind the ICRC's 2024 page accepts as lawful when proportionate, is the point on which the readings set out above divide.

Which halt in Israel's own aid record applied to everyone in Gaza?

COGAT's Aid Data dashboard, read on 10 September 2026 and published by a party to the events, states: "According to the directive from the political echelon, no aid entered the Gaza Strip between March 2 to May 19 2025." By its own wording, the halt applied to the whole Strip for about **11 weeks**, with no distinction by recipient, area or category of aid.

The dashboard is COGAT's own operational record at its own crossings, not an audited or independently verified tally. It carries its own qualifications: trucks classed as food "carry food items exclusively," mixed aid and shelter trucks "may also contain food items," and "Totals do not include fuel." Any cumulative or average figure spanning 2025 crosses the nil period, so the record supports no war-long daily rate without it.

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COGAT's earlier truck-level workbook, also its own count, records 32,946 trucks between 21 October 2023 and 31 May 2024. COGAT's tonnages rest on suppliers' self-declarations; its truck counts are tallies made at inspection, by COGAT's account in its July 2026 situation report. The crossing configuration changed across the war, on COGAT's own description of 15 December 2025.

Crossing configuration	Count	Source
Goods crossings operating before 7 October 2023	**2**	COGAT, 15 December 2025, in COGAT, 2026
Inspection points listed in December 2025	**5**	COGAT, 15 December 2025, in COGAT, 2026
Transfer and offloading points listed in December 2025	**3**	COGAT, 15 December 2025, in COGAT, 2026

The December 2025 document names the transfer points as Kerem Shalom for southern Gaza, Kisufim for central and Zikim for northern; the 2024 workbook names Erez, and no COGAT document read here equates the 2. The eleven-week halt is the record in this report that most plainly reached the population as a whole. COGAT's own text attributes it to a directive and states no offence. Whether the halt was a penalty, a security measure within the ICRC's proportionality test, or outside the Convention altogether on Israel's 1997 reading, are the 3 positions the earlier sections set out. The legal characterisation of aid restrictions in particular is read further in the record on whether blocking humanitarian aid to Gaza is collective punishment.

Methodology and limitations

The report was assembled from 4 source types: the treaty text, the ICRC's stated positions, Israel's government and court records, and COGAT's published records. The treaty text of the Fourth Geneva Convention is the primary record, quoted from the ICRC's printing, with Israel's signature, ratification and reservation taken from the ICRC's compilation of the depositary's record; the depositary's own page was not reachable when read in November 2026. The ICRC's customary-law study (Rule 103) and its July 2024 page on the occupying power are cited as the ICRC's own stated positions, not as treaty text or rulings. The ICRC's June 2010 statement is cited as reported by the BBC, and its full text was not separately read.

Israel's positions are drawn from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' 1997 release, its November 2015 settlements page and its May 2015 report on the 2014 Gaza conflict, each a party's own stated position. The domestic court record is HCJ 8091/14, read in the Cardozo project's English translation; the Hebrew governs, and paragraph numbers are cited because the translation's page numbers are unreliable.

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COGAT's records are a party's own published instruments and operational counts. The 2022 permit instrument records quotas, which are ceilings, not counts of permits issued. The Aid Data dashboard carries a date-range filter, so its figures describe the range selected when read on 10 September 2026; its tonnage figures rest on suppliers' declarations, with COGAT reporting divergence of "around 5%" on a day-to-day basis. No figure in this report is an average computed across the 2025 nil period.

Amnesty International and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are named as holders of the characterisation; their documents are not used as evidence for any figure. The 2010 ICRC statement and the 2024 ICRC page are different documents with different purposes, and only the first uses the term "collective punishment." Gaza-specific humanitarian indicators published by UN bodies for 2022 sit outside the evidence tiers this report draws on and are not reproduced.

Conclusion

So what is collective punishment in the context of the Gaza blockade? In the treaty's own words of 1949, it is a penalty imposed on a person for an offence that person did not commit, and in the ICRC's customary-law reading it reaches administrative sanctions as well as criminal sentences. Applied to Gaza, the term rests on 2 prior steps: that the Convention governs the Strip, which the ICRC affirmed in 2024 and Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected de jure in 1997, and that a given restriction is a penalty rather than a proportionate security measure.

The records assembled here draw a consistent portrait. Every reading quoted accepts that collective penalties are prohibited; Israel ratified the Convention in 1951, its military manual carries the prohibition on the ICRC's account, and its Supreme Court held in 2014 that disproportionate use of a security power "amounts to collective punishment." The ICRC's 2024 page accepts Israel's entitlement to restrict goods for security and binds that entitlement to proportionality. The dispute sits on applicability and on proportionality, not on the rule. And Israel's own records, published by a party to the events, contain measures written for Gaza's population as a class: a pre-war cap of 20 humanitarian airport departures a month, and an eleven-week period in 2025 in which, by COGAT's own count, no aid entered the Strip.

Israel's own court asked the State for data showing that a deterrent measure achieves its purpose before deferring to it indefinitely. The same question sits unasked of a measure that, in the restricting party's own words, reached everyone in a territory at once: what evidence would show that it was proportionate, who holds that evidence, and what would follow for the definition if it were never produced?

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Frequently Asked Questions

Is collective punishment a war crime?

The ICRC's customary-law study, Rule 103, records that the Statutes of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the Special Court for Sierra Leone list the imposition of collective punishments as a war crime. It also records that the Military Tribunal of Rome affirmed the rule's customary nature in the Priebke case in 1997. Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention itself prohibits collective penalties without classifying them.

Does human rights law prohibit collective punishment?

The ICRC's Rule 103 states that "human rights law does not explicitly prohibit 'collective punishments' as such," but that such acts "would constitute a violation of specific human rights, in particular the right to liberty and security of person and the right to a fair trial." The explicit prohibition is a rule of the law of armed conflict.

Does the Convention allow civilians to be evacuated from an area?

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits forcible transfers and deportations "regardless of their motive," but permits "total or partial evacuation of a given area if the security of the population or imperative military reasons so demand." The same article requires that evacuated persons be "transferred back to their homes as soon as hostilities in the area in question have ceased."

Does annexation remove the Convention's protections?

Article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states that protected persons in occupied territory shall not be deprived of its benefits "by any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory." The ICRC stated in July 2024 that "Annexation has no effect on the legal status of the occupied territories under international law."

Has the ICRC addressed attacks on Israeli civilians?

The ICRC's July 2024 page states that "the ICRC has repeatedly stated that deliberate attacks against Israeli civilians are in clear violation of IHL." The same passage recognises "Israel's right to take measures for the security of its population," subject to the rules of international humanitarian and human rights law.

How does COGAT weigh the aid entering Gaza?

COGAT stated in a July 2026 situation report that its tonnage data "is based on the self-declaration of humanitarian organizations and private sector providers," while pallet numbers are counted and compared with coordination requests during security clearance. COGAT, a party to the events, reports divergence of "around 5%" on a day-to-day basis.

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Why does Israel's Supreme Court review security measures against international law?

In HCJ 8091/14 (2014), the Court tested the use of Regulation 119 against the international-law prohibition on collective punishment and against proportionality, while holding that the regulation itself remains valid under section 10 of Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. The Court denied the petition and required the State to examine the measure's utility "from time to time."

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DATA REPORT UPDATED NOVEMBER 10, 2026

Why is the Gaza blockade called collective punishment? Who says it, and Israel's own record

COGAT's own record shows a 2 March to 19 May 2025 nil-entry period; Israel's Supreme Court tied the term to disproportionate use in 2014.

DATA REPORT AUGUST 13, 2026

Is Blocking Humanitarian Aid to Gaza Collective Punishment? Reading the Treaty Text, the Determinations Issued and Each Party's Own Counts

Four named bodies apply the term and no tribunal has entered the finding. What Article 33, the relief-passage rules and each party's counts record.

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COGAT's own permit instrument sets a standing quota of 74,300 for construction work in Israel, publishes no total, and records no count of anyone who crossed.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Have Gaza Ministry of Health casualty figures been reliable? Three past wars and two tests, figure by figure

Gaza's health ministry ran slightly above later tolls in three past wars; a 2025 Lancet estimate put mid-2024 deaths well above its own count.

Gaza | Casualty Counts | Ministry of Health | Mortality Estimation | Data Reliability



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Paired counts are printed for three past Gaza wars: 2008, 2014 and 2021. In each of them, the Gaza Ministry of Health's own tolls, published by a party to the conflict, ran above the United Nations' later post-war totals by **1.5% to 3.8%** of the ministry's count, a range Huynh, Chin and Spiegel stated in a Lancet letter published online in December 2023. Against the Israeli Foreign Ministry's own count, also a party's figure, the 2014 gap was 8.0%. In the current war the measured error runs the other way: a peer-reviewed capture-recapture estimate put traumatic-injury deaths to 30 June 2024 at 64,260 (95% CI 55,298 to 78,525), against the ministry's own reported 37,877 (Jamaluddine and colleagues, 2025).

Key Findings

- In the 2008, 2014 and 2021 wars, the Gaza Ministry of Health's own published tolls, a party's count, ran above the post-war totals they were set against by 1.5% to 3.8% of the ministry's count. A Lancet correspondence letter states the range without a citation (Huynh, Chin and Spiegel, 2024).
- For the 2014 war, the Gaza ministry's own 2,310 deaths exceeded the Israeli Foreign Ministry's own 2,125 by 185, an 8.0% gap on the Gaza count (Huynh, Chin and Spiegel, 2024).
- Over 7 October to 10 November 2023, the ministry's own reported deaths implied 5.3 per 1,000 Gaza residents. That was lower than the 7.8 per 1,000 reported among a humanitarian agency's Gaza staff (Huynh, Chin and Spiegel, 2024).
- A peer-reviewed estimate put traumatic-injury deaths to 30 June 2024 at 64,260 (95% CI 55,298 to 78,525). The Gaza Ministry of Health's own reported total for that date was 37,877, a gap equal to 41% of the estimate, which the authors report as under-reporting (Jamaluddine and colleagues, 2025).
- The ministry reported 28,185 decedents with complete data and 9,715 without as of 30 June 2024, so about 74% of the 37,900 the two sum to were complete, on its own count as a party to the war (Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024).

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Did the ministry's past war tolls run above or below the UN's?

The Gaza Ministry of Health's figure was the higher one in all **3** past wars for which paired tolls are printed: 2008, 2014 and 2021. The pairs come from an Associated Press explainer by Isabel Debre of 26 October 2023, which Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024) cite in The Lancet. Each ministry figure is a party's own count and is not independently verified.

For the 2008 war, the ministry published 1,440 deaths against a United Nations toll of 1,385. For 2014 it published 2,310 against 2,251, and for 2021 it published 260 against 256. The gaps are 55, 59 and 4 deaths. In none of the three pairs is the ministry's count the lower figure.

The United Nations side of each pair is a post-war toll issued by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). AP describes those tolls as "based on its own research into medical records." In Gaza, the medical records are the ministry's own hospital records. The record therefore does not establish that the two counts in each pair were drawn from separate record systems. OCHA's figures enter this report only through the AP relay, and they are reported here as what OCHA published.

The Lancet letter is correspondence: it was editorially reviewed but not peer-reviewed. Its authors, at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, did not compile the pairs themselves. Their data statement limits their own data to the ministry, UNRWA and OCHA for October and November 2023. The past-war numbers enter the letter from AP.

The relay covers three conflicts, not four. AP prints no pair for the November 2012 conflict, so the letter's phrase "previous conflicts" refers to 2008, 2014 and 2021 only. The Institute's four-war comparison sets out what each body published, including for 2012.

The direction across the three printed pairs is consistent. The ministry's total sits above the UN's, by margins of a few dozen deaths in the two larger wars and by four deaths in 2021. A ministry deliberately raising its totals and a ministry counting deaths that later reviews could not attribute would both leave that pattern, and the paired totals alone cannot separate the two. What the pairs do record is size: three gaps, each under 4% of the ministry's own figure.

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Who vouched for the ministry's track record, and on what citation?

Huynh, Chin and Spiegel wrote in The Lancet, online 6 December 2023, that ministry reporting had differed from "independent United Nations analyses" by **1.5% to 3.8%** in previous conflicts. The journal prints that sentence with no reference marker. It is a journal-published source for the claim that the ministry's past record is accurate.

The full sentence reads: "The Gaza MoH has historically reported accurate mortality data, with discrepancies between MoH reporting and independent United Nations analyses ranging from 1·5% to 3·8% in previous conflicts." Reference markers 1 and 2 close the sentence before it, which concerns political scepticism. Marker 2 also closes the sentence after it. The range itself is attached to no reference.

The arithmetic holds on the printed pairs. Four deaths out of the ministry's 260 for 2021 is 1.5%, and 55 out of its 1,440 for 2008 is 3.8%. The 2014 gap, 59 out of 2,310, is 2.6% and falls inside the range. On those three pairs, the ministry's past totals did sit within a few percent of the post-war UN tolls, as the letter states.

The range has a base the letter does not name. Every printed figure reproduces only with the ministry's own count as the denominator. Measured against the UN tolls instead, the same 2021 and 2008 gaps are 1.6% and 4.0%. The source of the pairs, AP's explainer of 26 October 2023, prints the three pairs and no percentage. The percentages are a calculation on a news article's figures, not the output of a study with a stated method.

The word "independent" is the letter's. AP's own strongest wording is that the ministry's counts "have held up to U.N. scrutiny." The letter also makes a wider claim than its source supports in one respect: "previous conflicts" covers the three wars AP printed, and the 2012 conflict is not among them.

No peer-reviewed study comparing a pre-2023 ministry count with any other body's count was located in a search of the biomedical and preprint literature and the open web on 10 September 2026. In print, the historical-accuracy claim is carried by three news-relayed pairs and one uncited sentence in a correspondence letter. The pairs show close agreement on

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totals. Whether the two sides of each pair were compiled independently is a question the published record leaves open.

Where did the widest recorded gap fall, and against whom?

The widest printed gap is **8.0%**, between the Gaza Ministry of Health and Israel's Foreign Ministry for the 2014 war. Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024) put it this way: "A comparison between the Gaza MoH and Israeli Foreign Ministry mortality figures for the 2014 war yielded an 8·0% discrepancy." Each figure behind it is a party's own count.

The underlying pair, printed by AP on 26 October 2023, is the Gaza ministry's 2,310 deaths against the Israeli Foreign Ministry's 2,125. The difference is 185. As a share of the Gaza ministry's count that is 8.0%, the figure the letter prints. As a share of the Israeli count it is 8.7%. Unlike the 1.5% to 3.8% sentence, this sentence carries a reference marker, and the marker points to the AP explainer.

The 8.0% is more than double the top of the range set against the UN tolls. The AP relay prints three counts for the 2014 war, and they span 2,125 to 2,310: the Israeli Foreign Ministry's own, OCHA's 2,251 and the Gaza ministry's own. The OCHA figure sits between the two governments' figures. It is 59 below the Gaza count and 126 above the Israeli one.

The order is the same as in the UN pairs: the Gaza ministry's total is the highest of the counts printed. Both government totals were compiled by parties to the 2014 war. The Lancet letter reports the comparison in a single sentence and gives no detail of how either government compiled its figure.

Printed gaps between the Gaza ministry's past tolls and other counts

GAP AS A SHARE OF THE GAZA MINISTRY'S OWN COUNT, THE ONLY BASE ON WHICH ALL THREE PRINTED FIGURES REPRODUCE

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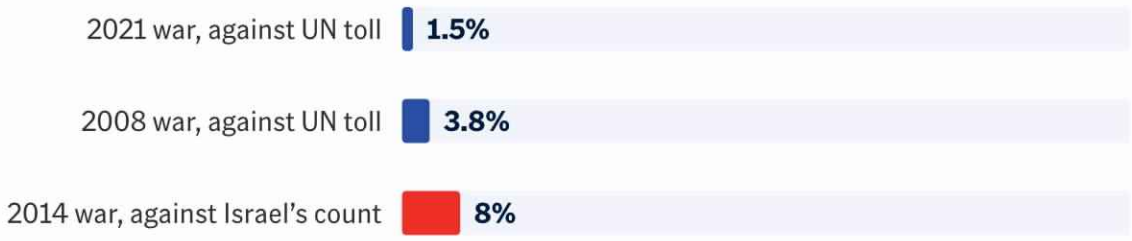

Source: Huynh, Chin and Spiegel, 2024, Lancet correspondence, editorially reviewed, not peer-reviewed. Every count in each pair is a party's own or a relayed post-war toll.

The figure measures a difference between totals. It does not check any individual record, and the letter does not say whether the 185-death difference reflects people counted by one government and not the other, or a different definition of who died in the war. Of the three counts AP prints for 2014, Israel's own was the lowest and the Gaza ministry's own the highest.

Did early-war reporting look inflated against UN staff losses?

Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024) compared the Gaza Ministry of Health's reported deaths in the war's first five weeks with staff deaths reported by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). They found the ministry's rate was the lower of the two, at **5.3 deaths per 1,000** Gaza residents.

The comparison rate was 7.8 per 1,000 among UNRWA staff in Gaza, as of 10 November 2023. The letter's own measurement covers 35 days from 7 October. In its words: "Cumulative reported deaths were 101 UNRWA staff members and 11 078 Gazans over 35 days." The Gazan figure is the ministry's own count as a party to the war. The staff figure is UNRWA's count of its own employees. The two rates rest on two denominators: Gaza's resident population and UNRWA's Gaza staff.

The inference is the letter's. It reads a staff rate above the population rate as inconsistent with inflation of the ministry's count. The verbatim finding is that "the MoH mortality rates are lower than the rates reported for UNRWA staff (5·3 deaths per 1000 vs 7·8 deaths per 1000, as of Nov 10, 2023)."

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Reported death rates in Gaza, first 35 days of the war

DEATHS PER 1,000, 7 OCTOBER TO 10 NOVEMBER 2023; TWO RATES OVER TWO DIFFERENT POPULATIONS



Source: Huynh, Chin and Spiegel, 2024, Lancet correspondence, editorially reviewed, not peer-reviewed. Resident rate from the Gaza Ministry of Health's own count.

The letter's title is an absence finding: "No evidence of inflated mortality reporting from the Gaza Ministry of Health." It does not describe the count as verified or accurate, and the letter's own text points the other way on completeness. Its authors wrote: "During this period, mortality might have been under-reported by the Gaza MoH due to decreased capacity."

The test covers the current war's first five weeks. It measures nothing before 2023, so it bears on the ministry's reporting in late 2023 and not on the 2008, 2014 or 2021 tolls. Within that window it is a published comparison of the ministry's count against a separately kept death register. Its strength is fixed by its design: it can register a ministry rate running implausibly high against the staff benchmark, and it found the reverse.

How large was the shortfall by mid-2024, on a peer-reviewed estimate?

Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025), in a peer-reviewed capture-recapture study in The Lancet, estimated **64,260** deaths from traumatic injury in Gaza between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024 (95% CI 55,298 to 78,525). The Gaza Ministry of Health, a party to the war reporting its own count, gave 37,877 for 30 June 2024.

The gap between the estimate and the ministry's figure is 26,383 deaths. The authors express it as 41% under-reporting, which is a share of the 64,260 estimate. The same gap is 70% of the

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ministry's 37,877, so multiplying the ministry's count by 1.41 does not recover the estimate. Even the interval's lower bound, 55,298, exceeds the ministry's 30 June 2024 figure by 17,421.

Capture-recapture, also called multiple systems estimation, works from the overlap between separate lists of the dead. The number of people who appear on more than one list is used to estimate how many appear on none. The study used three lists:

- hospital morgue records, with 22,368 identified decedents;
- the ministry's rolling online survey of relatives, launched on 1 January 2024, with 5,817 decedents;
- obituary pages collected manually from social media.

Two of those three lists are the ministry's own. The ministry's named list for 30 June 2024 labels 22,368 records "Ministry of Health records" and 5,817 "notification by the martyrs' relatives," which sum exactly to its 28,185 records (Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024). The study therefore offers an academic estimate built on the ministry's data. It is not a count of the dead taken separately from the ministry.

Traumatic-injury deaths to 30 June 2024: reported and estimated

GAZA STRIP, 7 OCTOBER 2023 TO 30 JUNE 2024; ESTIMATE 95% CI 55,298 TO 78,525



Source: Jamaluddine and colleagues, 2025, The Lancet, peer-reviewed; Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024, report of 30 June 2024, the ministry's own count, not independently verified.

The estimate covers deaths from traumatic injury only. It excludes deaths from the disruption of health care, food insecurity, failures of water and sanitation, and disease. The authors also excluded unidentified decedents and people reported missing from their input lists, which is the subject of the next question.

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Does a gap that size point to padding or to missed deaths?

The Gaza Ministry of Health named **5** categories of death its total excludes, in a statement of 7 January 2024 (message 4739 on its media office channel). This is the ministry's own scope statement as a party to the war, and each category describes a death left off the count rather than one added to it.

The two positions in circulation are named in print. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy published an analysis in 2024 under the title "Gaza Fatality Data Has Become Completely Unreliable." Les Décodeurs, the fact-checking desk of Le Monde, published on 13 October 2024 under the title "Why the Gaza health ministry's death count is considered reliable."

The ministry's five exclusions, never withdrawn, are:

- the missing and bodies trapped under rubble;
- unidentified people who reached hospitals;
- unidentified bodies handed over by Israel;
- people buried by their families without passing through a hospital;
- deaths in Gaza and North Gaza after the ministry's information system stopped in November 2023.

Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025) left out 9,692 unidentified decedents in the ministry's 30 June 2024 update, 26% of its cumulative 37,877, and 930 people reported missing. Their method estimates deaths that appear on none of the lists.

Khatib, McKee and Yusuf (2024), in a separate Lancet correspondence letter published online on 5 July 2024 that was editorially reviewed but not peer-reviewed, described the UNRWA staff comparison as having found "claims of data fabrication implausible." Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024) wrote that "difficulties obtaining accurate mortality figures should not be interpreted as intentionally misreported data."

The ministry's own announced additions run in the same direction. It added 233 records to its cumulative total on 23 March 2025 (message 6377) and 280 on 30 August 2025 (message

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6900). It described these as records completed and approved by a judicial committee following relatives' notifications and the missing-persons file. These additions are documented changes to the ministry's totals, and each added records rather than removing them.

What share of the mid-2024 total carried complete identifying data?

The Gaza Ministry of Health reported **28,185** decedents with complete data and 9,715 whose data was not yet complete, in a post of 24 July 2024 (message 5651). This is its own count as a party to the war.

About 74% of the 37,900 those two figures sum to carried complete records.

The post defines its two counts. The general count is everyone who reached the hospitals. The complete-data count is everyone whose data the ministry has finished. The named list behind the 28,185 publishes, for each record, a serial number, name, identity or document number, date of birth, sex, age and source. No column records a date of death.

The two figures do not reconcile with the ministry's own report for the date they describe. 28,185 plus 9,715 is 37,900, which is the total in the ministry's daily report of 1 July 2024 (message 5578). Its report of 30 June 2024 (message 5576) gives 37,877. Subtracting 28,185 from that figure leaves 9,692, not 9,715. The ministry's published arithmetic is one day out of step.

The same one-day offset runs through its annual reporting. The Health Annual Report, Palestine 2024 gives 45,553 deaths for the period to 31 December 2024. That is the figure in the daily report of 1 January 2025. The ministry's report of 30 December 2024 gives 45,541, and no report was issued on 31 December.

The difference between a named list and a cumulative total of the same date is not an unidentified count. The two are built differently: the total counts everyone who reached a hospital, the list counts only records the ministry has finished, and approved records are added to the total months later. The list format also changed between rounds. The list to 30

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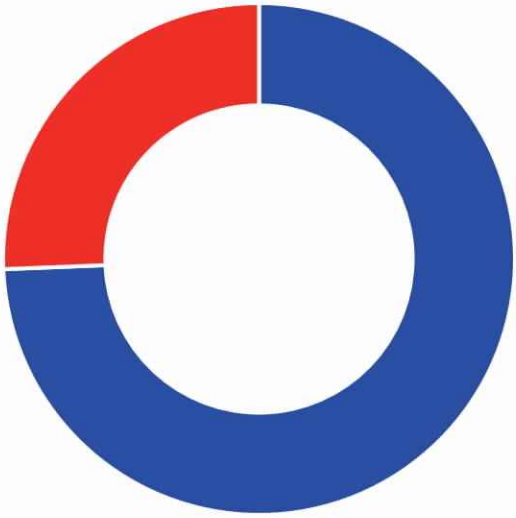
April 2024 dropped the date of birth and source columns and added an address column, so the published fields differ from one document to the next. The Institute's reading of the four lists records each schema in turn.

Ministry decedent records by data status, mid-2024

RECORDS AS OF 30 JUNE 2024, POSTED 24 JULY 2024; THE TWO PARTS SUM TO 37,900



Complete data Data not yet complete

Source: Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024, message 5651, the ministry's own count as a party to the war, not independently verified.

Which question can the ministry's past totals not answer?

The Gaza Ministry of Health publishes no breakdown of the dead into combatants and noncombatants. Its totals, including **67,075** killed as of 3 October 2025 on its own count as compiled by Crawford (2025) for Brown University's Costs of War project, therefore carry no civilian share. Crawford's paper is a university project report that has not been peer-reviewed.

The ministry's own count is not independently verified, and Crawford took it from a United Nations dashboard that relays it.

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The absence is visible in the ministry's own documents. Its named list for 30 June 2024 publishes serial number, name, identity or document number, date of birth, sex, age and source for each record (Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024). No column records whether a decedent was a combatant, a member of an armed group or a civilian. The Ministry of Health's Health Annual Report, Palestine 2025, published in Ramallah, divides the dead by age and sex. It does not divide them by status.

The split that does circulate comes from the other party to the war. Crawford (2025) puts the civilian share of Gaza deaths at about 80% in his Table 1. He derives it from a report in The Guardian of Israeli military data through May 2025, which counted 8,900 combatants dead or probably dead out of about 53,000 reported killed. Crawford flags the derivation as an assumption in his own footnote. The 8,900 is the Israeli military's own count, as a party to the war. The 53,000 denominator is the Gaza ministry's own reported total for the same period. The resulting share therefore divides one party's count by the other's.

The record on past wars has the same structure. The 2008, 2014 and 2021 pairs printed by AP and relayed by Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024) are totals only. The Lancet letter reports no comparison of civilian shares for any of those conflicts.

Closeness on totals therefore says nothing about the civilian share. A ministry total within a few percent of a later toll, as in 2008, 2014 and 2021, fixes how many died. It does not fix who they were, and the ministry's published schema contains no field from which that could be read.

Methodology and limitations

This report draws on six source types, each labelled where it is used: the ministry's own records, peer-reviewed research, Lancet correspondence, a university report, press reporting and a policy research organization. The primary records are the Gaza Ministry of Health's own publications: its named decedent lists, its daily statistical reports and its statements, each cited by date and message number. The ministry is a party to the war, and none of its figures is independently verified. The lists and reports were read directly on 10 September 2026. The ministry's own website has published no file since 21 October 2023, so its media office's Telegram channel is its only venue for the lists, and the list documents were read from

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a public mirror of the files it posted. Record counts and column sets were checked against the ministry's own descriptions of each file.

The peer-reviewed measurement is Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025), a three-list capture-recapture estimate in The Lancet, with a 95% confidence interval of 55,298 to 78,525 around its 64,260 point estimate. It covers traumatic-injury deaths only, and two of its three input lists are the ministry's own. Two Lancet correspondence letters, Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024) and Khatib, McKee and Yusuf (2024), were editorially reviewed but not peer-reviewed. Crawford (2025) is a university research project report, not peer-reviewed, that compiles other bodies' counts and measures none of its own.

The past-war pairs come from an Associated Press explainer by Isabel Debre of 26 October 2023, a news relay. Its United Nations figures are OCHA post-war tolls, named in the body as OCHA's own published totals. All percentages on the past wars were recomputed from the printed pairs. Every figure the Lancet letter prints reproduces only with the ministry's own count as the denominator, and both bases are stated where they differ. Paired counts exist for three of the four Gaza wars between 2008 and 2021, since no pair for November 2012 is printed. No peer-reviewed comparison of a pre-2023 ministry count with any other body's count was located in a search of the biomedical and preprint literature and the open web on 10 September 2026.

Conclusion

Have the Gaza Ministry of Health's past figures been reliable? On the three past wars for which paired totals are printed, the ministry's own tolls sat within 1.5% to 3.8% of later United Nations totals, always on the high side. The one Israeli government count in that relay, Israel's own figure for 2014, ran 8.0% below the ministry's. In the current war, the ministry's own 37,877 deaths to 30 June 2024 sit well under a peer-reviewed estimate of 64,260 traumatic-injury deaths. That estimate was built in large part from the ministry's own lists.

Taken across every axis measured here, the record is specific. In past wars the ministry's totals were the highest of those printed and were never far from the others. In its first 35 days of the current war its reported rate ran below the staff losses of a humanitarian agency. By mid-2024, 74% of its decedents carried complete data on its own reckoning, and the five

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exclusions it states itself all leave deaths out. The ministry's own arithmetic runs one day out of step, and its lists carry no field from which a civilian share could be read. The historical-accuracy claim rests on three news-relayed pairs and one uncited sentence, and that is what the record holds.

The record leaves a narrower question. A count can sit close to every other count and still rest on the same hospital records. A count can also fall short of a statistical estimate built from its own lists. If the closeness of past totals and the shortfall of present ones trace back to one record system, the evidence for reliability and the evidence for undercounting both measure that system. What would a count drawn from outside that system show?

Frequently Asked Questions

How many deaths has the ministry reported to date?

The Gaza Ministry of Health's daily report of 10 September 2026 (message 7607) gives 73,670 cumulative deaths and 174,682 injuries. These are its own counts as a party to the war. The same report counts 1,359 deaths and 831 bodies recovered from the rubble since the ceasefire of 11 October 2025.

How does the ministry record the date of a death?

The ministry stated on 29 July 2024 (message 5663) that the date was registered either on the family's report or on the date the body reached the hospital. It then formed a committee to audit actual dates. That committee found decedents who had been under 18 at death but were registered months later.

Where does the ministry publish its named lists?

The ministry's media office channel on Telegram is the only venue the issuing body uses for the lists. The ministry's website, moh.gov.ps, has published no file since 21 October 2023, and its cumulative statistics page is empty.

How does the ministry divide its dead by age and sex?

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The Ministry of Health's Health Annual Report, Palestine 2025 gives children 30%, women 16%, elderly 7% and men 47% of deaths from 2023 to 2025. Those shares are of a stated 71,271 deaths to the end of 2025. They are the ministry's own figures and are not independently verified.

Does the ministry's total still change for deaths that occurred earlier?

Yes. The ministry added 160 records during August 2026 (message 7600), attributing them to a martyrs' approval committee. Earlier additions of this kind were also described as records approved by a committee.

Why is the November 2012 war absent from the paired comparisons?

The Associated Press explainer of 26 October 2023 printed pairs for 2008, 2014 and 2021 and none for 2012. The Lancet letter that relays those pairs inherits the gap, so its "previous conflicts" covers three wars.

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The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Did the Hannibal Directive kill Israeli civilians on October 7? Two findings on one Be'eri house

A UN commission found at least 14 Israeli civilians likely killed by Israeli fire on October 7; the IDF's own Be'eri inquiry differs.

October 7 | Hannibal Directive | Israel Defense Forces | Kibbutz Be'eri | Commission of Inquiry



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A Human Rights Council commission of inquiry concluded on 10 June 2024 that "at least 14 Israeli civilians were likely killed as a result of Israeli Security Forces fire" on 7 October 2023, 13 of them in Kibbutz Be'eri. On 11 July 2024, the Israel Defense Forces published its own inquiry into Be'eri, a party's self-reported account. It found that no civilians inside the besieged house there "were harmed by tank shell fire," apart from two people injured by shrapnel outside it. The two documents disagree about the same house, and the IDF's published inquiry does not mention the Hannibal procedure at all.

Key Findings

- The IDF's own Be'eri inquiry, self-reported, found that "no civilians inside the building were harmed by tank shell fire, except for an isolated incident outside the building where two civilians were injured by shrapnel." It qualified the finding "to the best of their understanding" (Israel Defense Forces, 2024).
- By the IDF's own count, 101 civilians were killed in Kibbutz Be'eri and 32 hostages were taken into Gaza. The inquiry concluded that "the IDF failed in its mission to protect the residents" (Israel Defense Forces, 2024).
- Haaretz reported on 7 July 2024 that the Hannibal order "was employed at three army facilities infiltrated by Hamas." The report rests on documents and testimonies the newspaper did not reproduce, and its published opening gives no count of civilian deaths (Kubovich, Haaretz, 2024).
- The IDF's Be'eri inquiry of 11 July 2024 uses the word "directive" only for orders to join the fight and to put civilian protection first. It contains no reference to the Hannibal procedure (Israel Defense Forces, 2024).
- The IDF's own expert review examined 25 of its investigations in depth and found some "lacking; and some unsatisfactory." Among six explanatory factors, it listed "a flawed decision-making process and use of force on the night of 7 October 2023," in the Institute's translation (Israel Defense Forces, 2025).

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Did Israeli fire kill Israeli civilians on October 7?

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry concluded on 10 June 2024, in conference room paper A/HRC/56/CRP.3, that **at least 14** Israeli civilians "were likely killed as a result of Israeli Security Forces fire" on 7 October 2023. A month later, the Israel Defense Forces' own Be'eri inquiry found that no civilian inside the besieged house there had been harmed by tank shell fire.

The paper divides the 14 between two sites. One woman "was killed by helicopter fire while being taken from kibbutz Nir Oz to Gaza by militants," and "the other 13 were likely killed by tank shelling and crossfire in kibbutz Be'eri" (A/HRC/56/CRP.3, paragraph 227). The hedges are the Commission's own: "likely killed," with the cause given as tank shelling and crossfire together, not tank fire alone.

Four days later, the Commission submitted report A/HRC/56/26 to the Council's fifty-sixth session, dated 14 June 2024. It carried the headline in shorter form: Israeli forces "applied the 'Hannibal Directive', killing at least 14 Israeli civilians" (paragraph 96). The conference room paper describes itself as "information complementary to that contained in the official report." The report is not uniform on the point: its factual findings say Israeli forces "had likely applied the Hannibal Directive, resulting in the killing of up to 14 Israeli civilians" (paragraph 36).

The Israel Defense Forces published its operational inquiry into the battle for Kibbutz Be'eri on 11 July 2024. On the house where hostages were held, its team "determined that, based on the information reviewed and to the best of their understanding, no civilians inside the building were harmed by tank shell fire, except for an isolated incident outside the building where two civilians were injured by shrapnel." This is the IDF's own finding about its own forces, published by a party to the events and not independently reviewed. The inquiry adds that "further inquiries and reviews of additional findings are necessary."

The two documents overlap only in part. The IDF inquiry covers Be'eri alone, so the Commission's finding on the woman taken from Nir Oz has no counterpart in it. On Be'eri, the Commission finds 13 civilians likely killed by tank shelling and crossfire. The IDF, on its own account, finds no civilian inside the building harmed by tank shells. Each conclusion carries its own qualifier.

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Who says the Hannibal Directive was used, and since when?

The Commission wrote on 10 June 2024 that it "documented strong indications that the 'Hannibal Directive' was used in several instances on 7 October" (A/HRC/56/CRP.3, paragraph 223). Haaretz reported a month later, on **7 July 2024**, that documents and testimonies it had obtained showed the order was used at army facilities that day.

The Commission's paragraph continues that the directive was used "harming Israelis at the same time as striking Palestinian militants." Its most specific item is a video statement that, in its words, "confirms that at least one individual tank team knowingly applied the 'Hannibal Directive' that day." According to the paper, that tank team fired at two vehicles near kibbutz Nir Oz carrying militants and Israelis (paragraph 226). The same paragraph records that the crew "could not confirm whether the people they saw were alive or dead at the time."

Haaretz makes a different claim. The standfirst of the report by Yaniv Kubovich, its military correspondent, reads: "Documents and testimonies obtained by Haaretz reveal the Hannibal operational order, which directs the use of force to prevent soldiers being taken into captivity, was employed at three army facilities infiltrated by Hamas, potentially endangering civilians as well." The article opens on an unattributed quotation: "There was crazy hysteria, and decisions started being made without verified information." Its first paragraph states that "Gaza Division operations and airstrikes in the first hours of October 7 were based on limited information" (Kubovich, Haaretz, 2024).

The premise that the procedure was invoked on 7 October therefore rests on two named, dated publications. They differ on where it was used and on whom. The Commission's finding concerns Israelis struck alongside militants, and its Council report ties the directive to the 14 civilian deaths. Haaretz's published opening concerns three army facilities and the capture of soldiers. It names no civilian death and gives no count.

Has the IDF said whether it applied the Hannibal procedure?

The Israel Defense Forces' Be'eri inquiry of **11 July 2024**, the first of its 7 October inquiries, makes no mention of the Hannibal procedure. The word "directive" appears in it only for two

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orders: that all forces enter the fight, and that the protection of civilians comes first.

The inquiry defines its own scope. It "focuses on the sequence of events, combat management, and the conduct of the security forces." Maj. Gen. (res.) Mickey Edelstein and a team conducted it over "around three months." Chief of the General Staff LTG Herzi Halevi summarised it, and it was presented to Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant (Israel Defense Forces, 2024). The inquiry's account of the tank fire near the hostage house, set out in the next section, describes a pressure measure and does not use the word Hannibal.

The other two sources do not publish the procedure's text either. In footnote 75 of A/HRC/56/CRP.3, the Commission states that it "has not seen the official directive." Drawing on reports, it describes the directive as a procedure used "to prevent capture of Israeli Security Forces by enemy forces." Haaretz describes it as an order "which directs the use of force to prevent soldiers being taken into captivity" (Kubovich, Haaretz, 2024). Neither source quotes the order itself.

Both descriptions frame the procedure around the capture of soldiers, not civilians. The 14 deaths the Commission attributes to Israeli fire are civilian deaths. Among the sources cited here, the statement linking the procedure to civilian deaths is the Commission's.

The IDF's authors describe their inquiry as partial. Its closing caveat reads: "Although this is the first and only inquiry so far, and does not reflect the full picture of what occurred on that day, it clearly illustrates the magnitude of the failure." On the published record cited here, the IDF's one statement on its forces' conduct in Be'eri is an inquiry that does not address the procedure by name.

What happened at the besieged house in Be'eri?

The Israel Defense Forces' own inquiry of 11 July 2024 records that tank fire toward the area near the house followed "a joint decision made by commanders from all the security organizations." According to the inquiry, the fire was intended "to apply pressure to the terrorists and save the civilians held hostage inside." The Commission's paper of 10 June 2024 found **13** civilians there "likely killed by tank shelling and crossfire."

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The two accounts of the house are set out separately below.

The IDF's account (11 July 2024, self-reported) makes three findings. On its team's understanding, no civilian inside the house was harmed by tank shells. Two civilians outside were injured by shrapnel. And "most of the hostages were likely murdered by the terrorists, and further inquiries and reviews of additional findings are necessary."

The Commission's account (10 June 2024) makes two. Thirteen civilians in Be'eri were "likely killed by tank shelling and crossfire" (paragraph 227). In paragraph 230, it records that Brigadier General Barak Hiram gave an order to fire tank shells at the besieged house "even at the cost of civilian casualties." The Commission attributes that wording to Hiram as he was quoted in a later media interview.

Both accounts use the word "likely," but they apply it to different agents. The Commission applies it to Israeli tank shelling and crossfire; the IDF applies it to the attackers. The IDF's finding rests on "the information reviewed" by its own team. The Commission's quotation of the order rests on a media interview, not on an order document it obtained.

The record of access between the two bodies is also documented. In A/HRC/56/26 (14 June 2024), the Commission records that it sent "six requests for information and access to the Government of Israel" and that "No response was received from the Government of Israel."

How many Be'eri civilians died, by the IDF's own count?

The Israel Defense Forces' own count, published on 11 July 2024, is that **101** civilians were killed in Kibbutz Be'eri on 7 and 8 October 2023. The inquiry states its verdict in these words: "the IDF failed in its mission to protect the residents of Kibbutz Be'eri."

The same inquiry counts "30 hostages from Kibbutz Be'eri and two additional hostages" abducted into Gaza. It also records that "31 security personnel fell, including 23 IDF soldiers and members of the civilian rapid response team and eight officers of the Israel Police." All of these are the IDF's own figures, published by a party to the events. The Commission gives other Be'eri totals, and the two sets are not interchangeable.

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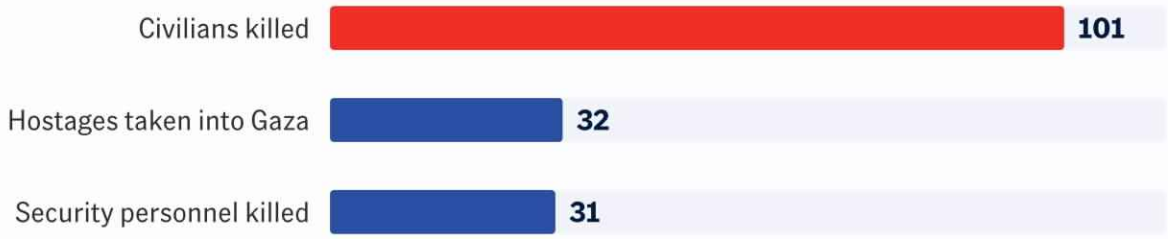
The Be'eri toll as the IDF counts it

KIBBUTZ BE'ERI, 7 AND 8 OCTOBER 2023; A PARTY'S OWN FIGURES, SELF-REPORTED



Source: Israel Defense Forces, 2024, Battle of Kibbutz Be'eri operational inquiry; the IDF's own count, not independently verified.

The inquiry places the toll inside a timeline. "For the first seven hours of combat, the kibbutz residents defended themselves," it records. Until 13:30, the fighting "was primarily conducted by the civilian rapid response teams and kibbutz residents." By 18:00, "about 700 IDF soldiers and security forces are operating in the area of the kibbutz."

The battle for Be'eri, in the IDF's own timeline



Times and force levels as reported by a party to the events.

Source: Israel Defense Forces, 2024, Battle of Kibbutz Be'eri operational inquiry; self-reported.

According to the inquiry, the first hours were "characterized by a lack of command and control, a lack of coordination, and a lack of order among the different forces and units." This "led to several incidents where security forces grouped at the entrance to the kibbutz without immediately engaging in combat." LTG Herzi Halevi, as Chief of the General Staff, wrote that forces waited outside "while the massacre continued inside. This situation is extremely grave and cannot occur." The inquiry also records that the IDF "was not prepared for the extensive

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infiltration scenario that occurred on October 7th" (Israel Defense Forces, 2024). The dispute over the hostage house concerns one location within that two-day battle.

Which Hannibal claims rest on press reporting alone?

Haaretz's 7 July 2024 report rests on "documents and testimonies obtained by Haaretz," which the published text does not reproduce. Its opening finds that the order was used at **three** army facilities, and it describes civilians only as "potentially" endangered (Kubovich, Haaretz, 2024).

The Commission handles a separate Haaretz report differently from its own findings. It records, without adopting, a Haaretz report of "77 car wrecks which had been shot by Israeli tanks, helicopters or drones" (A/HRC/56/CRP.3, paragraph 225). On helicopters, its own verification extends only to their presence. It "verified the presence of at least eight attack helicopters in the area of Otef Aza," but "was unable to confirm whether these helicopters directed firepower at any actual targets in the Nova area, vehicles or otherwise" (paragraph 224). Its helicopter conclusion is narrower: one woman killed by helicopter fire while being taken from Nir Oz (paragraph 227).

Sorted by who stands behind them, the Hannibal claims fall into three groups:

- **What a newspaper reported.** Haaretz reported on 7 July 2024 that the order was employed at three army facilities, citing sources it did not publish.
- **What the Commission relayed.** The Commission recorded the 77 car wrecks as Haaretz's figure. It also recorded Brigadier General Hiram's order to fire at the Be'eri house as wording from a media interview.
- **What the Commission concluded.** It found strong indications of use "in several instances." On the basis of a video statement, it found that one tank team knowingly applied the directive near Nir Oz. And it found at least 14 civilians likely killed by Israeli fire.

The IDF's published Be'eri inquiry does not address the Hannibal procedure. None of the three groups therefore has a corresponding IDF statement in that inquiry.

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What did the IDF's own review find about its October 7 inquiries?

On 10 November 2025, the Israel Defense Forces published the Chief of the General Staff's summary of an expert team's review. The team examined **25** IDF investigations in depth and found their quality varied: "some professional and comprehensive," "some lacking; and some unsatisfactory," in the Institute's translation from Hebrew (Israel Defense Forces, 2025).

LTG Eyal Zamir appointed the team on 22 March 2025, with Maj. Gen. (res.) Sami Turgeman at its head. According to the IDF's published summary, the team interviewed about 80 officials. It assessed investigations conducted from 7 March 2024 onward.

The team lists six explanatory factors. They include a conceptual failure and an intelligence failure "in understanding reality, in understanding the threat, and in not providing warning." The sixth is "a flawed decision-making process and use of force on the night of 7 October 2023." Most of the factors extend over several years, which the team reads as "a systemic, organisation-wide, multi-year failure." It also listed topics that had not been investigated, chief among them "the handling of the information that arrived over the years and the systemic and operational aspects of the 'Jericho Wall' plan."

Three limits bound what the review can support:

- It is the IDF reviewing its own investigations, published by a party to the events.
- It examined IDF investigations only, "without examining the space between the political and military echelons or between the IDF and parallel security bodies."
- The published page is the Chief of the General Staff's summary. The full report is not published.

None of the six factors names the Hannibal procedure. No IDF document cited here publishes a count, across all sites, of Israeli civilians killed by Israeli fire on 7 October.

Methodology and limitations

The evidence comes from five documents, each labelled by type.

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- **UN body's findings.** Two are papers of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, established by Human Rights Council resolution S-30/1. They are conference room paper A/HRC/56/CRP.3 (10 June 2024, 59 pages, English only) and report A/HRC/56/26 (14 June 2024). Each finding is attributed to the Commission as its conclusion, in its own wording.
- **Official records of a party to the events.** Two are records published by the Israel Defense Forces. The first is the Be'eri operational inquiry (11 July 2024). The second is the Chief of the General Staff's summary of the expert team review (10 November 2025), published in Hebrew and quoted here in the Institute's translation.
- **Press reporting.** One is a Haaretz report by Yaniv Kubovich (7 July 2024).

The Commission's two documents differ in wording. The conference room paper says at least 14 civilians were "likely killed." The Council report says "up to 14" in its findings (paragraph 36) and "killing at least 14" in its conclusions (paragraph 96). Each is quoted as written. The Commission states that it has not seen the directive itself.

The IDF's figures and conclusions are self-reported and have not been independently reviewed. The Be'eri inquiry describes itself as not reflecting "the full picture." The expert review's remit excluded the political echelon and other security bodies.

The IDF's Be'eri totals and the Commission's Be'eri totals come from different counting exercises and are never combined. The IDF inquiry covers Be'eri only, so the Commission's Nir Oz finding has no IDF counterpart.

The Haaretz article is paywalled. The portions quoted are its headline, standfirst and first paragraph. No figure from the body of the article is used, and the 77 car wrecks appear only as the Commission records them.

No victim is named. The besieged house is identified only by its location in the kibbutz.

Conclusion

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So did the Hannibal Directive kill Israeli civilians on 7 October? The Commission concluded on 10 June 2024 that at least 14 civilians were likely killed by Israeli fire: one by helicopter fire at Nir Oz, and 13 by tank shelling and crossfire in Be'eri. The IDF reached a different finding on 11 July 2024, self-reported and qualified "to the best of their understanding." It found that no civilian inside the Be'eri house was harmed by tank shells, and that most of the hostages there were likely murdered by the attackers.

The record around that disagreement is specific:

- Two named publications, the Commission and Haaretz, report that the procedure was used on the day, at different places and against different people.
- The IDF's Be'eri inquiry never names the procedure. By the IDF's own count, it records 101 civilians killed in the kibbutz, and it calls the defence of the kibbutz a failure.
- The IDF's own expert review examined 25 investigations, found some "unsatisfactory," and listed the use of force on the night of the attack among six factors.
- The only quotation of an order to fire at the house "even at the cost of civilian casualties" comes from a media interview, as relayed by the Commission.

Between "likely killed by tank shelling and crossfire" and "no civilians inside the building were harmed" lies a gap that neither document closes with published forensic or operational records. When a country's own dead are at issue and the order at the centre of the dispute has never been read in public, what record would let either finding become settled history?

Frequently Asked Questions

How many attackers entered Kibbutz Be'eri, by the IDF's count?

The IDF's inquiry (2024) estimates that "approximately 340 terrorists infiltrated the kibbutz, including about 100 Nukhba terrorist operatives of Hamas." It also states that "about 100 terrorists were eliminated within the kibbutz." These are the IDF's own estimates, published by a party to the events.

Did the Be'eri inquiry find that soldiers put civilians second?

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The IDF inquiry (2024) records that "in some cases, security forces fought to defend a position and evacuate and treat wounded soldiers before doing so for civilians." It also records "instances where IDF soldiers acted inappropriately in their conduct towards civilians." Neither finding carries a count in the published text.

Were Be'eri residents warned in time?

The IDF inquiry (2024) found that "the security officials did not provide sufficient warning to the residents of Kibbutz Be'eri about the infiltration of terrorists during the initial hours of the terrorist attack." This is the IDF's own finding about its own conduct.

Why does the Commission have both a conference room paper and a report?

A/HRC/56/CRP.3, dated 10 June 2024, describes itself as "information complementary to that contained in the official report (A/HRC/56/26)." The report, in turn, states that its conference room papers "present the detailed findings of the Commission."

What did the Commission conclude about the attackers' conduct on 7 October?

In A/HRC/56/26 (14 June 2024, paragraph 90), the Commission concluded that members of the military wings of Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups "deliberately killed, injured, mistreated, took hostages and committed sexual and gender-based violence against civilians." It also concluded that Palestinian civilians "who were directly participating in the hostilities" did the same. It wrote that "these actions constitute war crimes." Its finding on Israeli fire, in paragraph 96, appears in the same section of the report.

Did the IDF's expert review find the attack came without warning signs?

The IDF's published summary (2025) states that the surprise "did not emerge from a vacuum of information; quite the opposite," in the Institute's translation. It adds that, on the night of the attack, "it was possible and even required" to raise a warning. This is the IDF's own assessment of itself.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

How does AIPAC influence elections? Two committees and a tax return, filing by filing

AIPAC's super PAC reported $53.6 million in independent expenditures in the 2026 cycle to 14 October. What its filings and tax return record.

AIPAC | Campaign Finance | Super PACs | Federal Election Commission | Lobbying Disclosure



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United Democracy Project, the super PAC affiliated with AIPAC, reported **$53,603,927.44** in independent expenditures in the 2026 cycle to 14 October 2026, according to its Federal Election Commission filings. Independent expenditures are money spent about a race rather than given to a campaign. A voter meets that money as an advertisement carrying the super PAC's name, not AIPAC's, which raises a plain question: where does AIPAC's money enter an election, and what does each public record of it capture? The filings show separate channels. AIPAC's connected PAC transmitted $53,699,474.91 to federal candidates and committees in the 2024 cycle, largely as contributions earmarked by individual donors. Its own direct contributions to candidates totalled $3,037,900 on OpenSecrets' 2025 tabulation.

Key Findings

- United Democracy Project reported $53,603,927.44 in independent expenditures in the 2026 cycle to 14 October 2026. Its total for the whole 2024 cycle was $37,859,810.12 (Federal Election Commission, 2026).
- In the 2024 cycle, $20,786,780 of United Democracy Project's independent expenditures opposed Democrats and $14,067,863 supported Democrats (OpenSecrets, 2025). The four directional lines in that tabulation sum to $38,105 more than its stated total.
- United Democracy Project received $108,620,919.70 in contributions in the 2026 cycle to 14 October 2026. Of that, $12.00 was unitemized, the line for donors giving $200 or less in a cycle (Federal Election Commission, 2026).
- AIPAC PAC transmitted $53,699,474.91 to federal candidates and committees in the 2024 cycle across 55,871 transactions, largely earmarked by individual donors (Federal Election Commission, 2026). Its direct contributions to candidates totalled $3,037,900 (OpenSecrets, 2025).
- AIPAC reported $3,757,105 for 2025 on the Senate lobbying register. The amount was entered as lobbying income rather than expense, under a statute separate from campaign finance (United States Senate, Office of Public Records, 2026).

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How much has AIPAC's super PAC spent on the 2026 elections?

United Democracy Project reported **$53,603,927.44** in independent expenditures in the 2026 cycle through 14 October 2026, according to Federal Election Commission totals for committee C00799031. That is 41.6% more than the $37,859,810.12 it reported across the whole 2024 cycle, and the 2026 general election period was still open on that date.

The FEC record registers the committee as a "Super PAC (Independent Expenditure-Only)" with the designation "Unauthorized," meaning no candidate authorized it. It first filed on 3 January 2022 and reports monthly. The 2026 total therefore changes with each monthly report, and the coverage date travels with it.

The Federal Election Campaign Act, at 52 U.S.C. 30101(17), defines an independent expenditure in two parts. It expressly advocates the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate, and it is not made in concert or cooperation with that candidate or the candidate's campaign. This is the legal shape of the super PAC's spending. The money pays for advertising and other electioneering about a race. It never passes through a candidate's own account.

The series has risen in each cycle the committee has existed. The FEC records $26,118,700.49 in independent expenditures for the 2022 cycle, the committee's first. The 2024 cycle, which ran from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2024, recorded $37,859,810.12. The 2026 cycle had recorded $53,603,927.44 by 14 October 2026. Receipts follow the same direction. The FEC records $112,820,861.12 in receipts for the 2026 cycle to date, against $87,176,557.14 for the whole 2024 cycle.

United Democracy Project independent expenditures by election cycle

2026 CYCLE COVERS 1 JANUARY 2025 TO 14 OCTOBER 2026 AND IS STILL OPEN



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Source: Federal Election Commission, 2026, committee C00799031 cycle totals.

The super PAC is one of several electoral channels. The sections below take the other channels in turn, because the same organization appears on several registers under different statutes.

What does AIPAC say it does in election campaigns?

AIPAC's About page, read on 9 November 2026, states: "We support pro-Israel candidates on both sides of the aisle and oppose anti-Israel candidates on both sides, as well." The organization describes both halves of its electoral role, support and opposition, in its own published words.

The same page describes the supporting half more concretely: "We help pro-Israel candidates get their message out by supporting their campaigns." These are AIPAC's own statements of purpose and are cited as such. The page does not define "pro-Israel" or "anti-Israel," and it does not list which candidates fall under either term.

The description of AIPAC as an organization that helps elect allies and works against opponents therefore matches the wording AIPAC publishes about itself. What its own text adds is that the role is framed as bipartisan in both directions. Section 5 sets that framing beside the filed direction of the super PAC's spending.

The electoral machinery is recent. The Federal Election Commission's record for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Political Action Committee, committee C00797670, shows a first filing on 15 December 2021. It lists the committee type as "PAC - Qualified," the designation as "Lobbyist/Registrant PAC," the organization type as "Membership Organization," and the connected organization as the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. The super PAC's first filing followed on 3 January 2022. AIPAC itself was formed in 1963, according to its Form 990, so both of its federal political committees date from its sixth decade.

The About page also answers a structural question in its own words. To "Is AIPAC a corporate PAC?" it replies, "No, AIPAC is a membership organization," and adds that "AIPAC's

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decisions are made by its Board of Directors, all of whom are American citizens." The Form 990 records the governing body as 39 voting members, 38 of them independent.

Three entities therefore appear in the record. The parent organization is a section 501(c)(4) social welfare organization. The connected PAC can contribute to candidates within statutory limits. The super PAC spends independently. Each files on a different form, and the sections below follow the money through each one.

How does AIPAC's online portal route donor money to candidates?

AIPAC PAC transmitted **$53,699,474.91** to federal candidates and committees in the 2024 cycle, according to Federal Election Commission filings, largely as contributions that individual donors earmarked for a named recipient. AIPAC's 2025 Form 990 describes the mechanism as "AN ON-LINE PORTAL TO MEMBERS WHO WISH TO CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY TO MOCS AND CANDIDATES."

"MOCS" on the return means members of Congress. The portal sits inside the program AIPAC's Form 990, for the fiscal year 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025, labels "POLITICAL." That program totals $41,222,425, or 63.8% of the $64,643,140 the return reports for all program services. The return's description of the program includes direct contributions to members of Congress and candidates "THROUGH THE AIPAC PAC," contributions to super PACs, and the portal.

The FEC filings show how the conduit works. Schedule B for 2023 to 2024 lists 55,871 line-23 disbursements, the line for contributions to federal candidates, committees and other political committees. The largest are each described on the filing as "EARMARK OF [contributor name]. TRANSMITTED BY CHECK/EFT." Recipients include candidate committees and the national party committees. The 55,871 figure counts transactions, not donors and not recipients. The individual earmarkers named on the filings are private individuals and are not named here.

The precise sentence matters. The filings support the statement that the PAC transmitted $53.7 million to federal candidates and committees, largely earmarked by individual donors.

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They do not support the statement that AIPAC gave $53.7 million to candidates. In an earmarked contribution, the donor chooses the recipient and the PAC forwards the money.

The receipt side matches. The FEC records $54,887,799.21 in individual contributions to the PAC in the 2024 cycle. Of that, $54,806,260.30 was itemized and $81,538.91 unitemized. Earmarked receipts may be itemized whatever their size, so the small unitemized share does not, on its own, measure how many small donors gave. In the 2026 cycle to 14 October 2026, the PAC recorded $54,915,730.01 in individual contributions, including $657,688.33 unitemized.

The Form 990 fiscal year and the FEC two-year cycle cover different periods, so the $41.2 million program and the $53.7 million in transmittals are never added together.

Why do AIPAC's direct contribution totals differ between filings?

OpenSecrets' 2025 tabulation of Federal Election Commission data gives **$3,037,900** in direct contributions from AIPAC PAC to federal candidates in the 2024 cycle. Other printed totals for the same organization differ from this one because each record covers a different period, a different set of recipients or a different filing regime.

OpenSecrets counts 367 recipients: 347 House candidates and 20 Senate candidates. It assigns 63.02% of the money to Republicans and 36.62% to Democrats. The two shares sum to 99.64%, and the tabulation does not allocate the remainder. The recipients are candidates, including non-incumbents, so 367 is not a count of sitting members of Congress. The largest total to any single recipient was $20,000.

The size of each contribution is set by statute. Under 52 U.S.C. 30116, a multicandidate committee may give no more than $5,000 per candidate per election. Primaries and general elections count as separate elections. This cap is why the direct channel is small next to the conduit and the super PAC.

AIPAC's Form 990 prints a third number. Part IX of the return lists "CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANDIDATES" of $1,276,500 for the fiscal year 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025. That

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period overlaps the 2024 FEC cycle by three months and the 2026 cycle by nine. The two figures are not in conflict and are not summed. They are two records cut on different calendars.

Record and period	Amount	Source
AIPAC PAC direct contributions to federal candidates, 2024 cycle	**$3,037,900**	OpenSecrets, 2025
Form 990 Part IX "contributions to candidates," fiscal year to 30 September 2025	**$1,276,500**	American Israel Public Affairs Committee, 2026
AIPAC PAC line-23 transmittals to candidates and committees, including earmarks, 2024 cycle	**$53,699,474.91**	Federal Election Commission, 2026

The third row explains most of the gap between figures. The FEC line-23 total includes individual donors' earmarked money, which the PAC forwards as a conduit, and it includes party and other committees as well as candidates. OpenSecrets' $3,037,900 counts only the PAC's own direct contributions to candidates. A reader comparing a $3 million figure with a $53 million figure is comparing two different channels.

Did the super PAC's 2024 money mostly help or hurt Democrats?

OpenSecrets' 2025 tabulation of United Democracy Project's 2024-cycle independent expenditures records **$20,786,780** spent opposing Democratic candidates, the largest of its four directional lines. Spending that supported Democrats came second, and spending that supported Republicans was zero. On the filed record, the super PAC's money in that cycle concentrated on Democratic races.

The full breakdown is $20,786,780 opposing Democrats, $14,067,863 supporting Democrats, $3,043,662 opposing Republicans and $0 supporting Republicans. Spending that concerned Democratic candidates, in support or opposition, totals $34,854,643. That is about 92% of the $37,898,305 the four lines sum to.

The arithmetic carries a gap that should be visible. The four directional lines sum to $37,898,305, which is $38,105 above the $37,860,200 the same tabulation gives as the cycle

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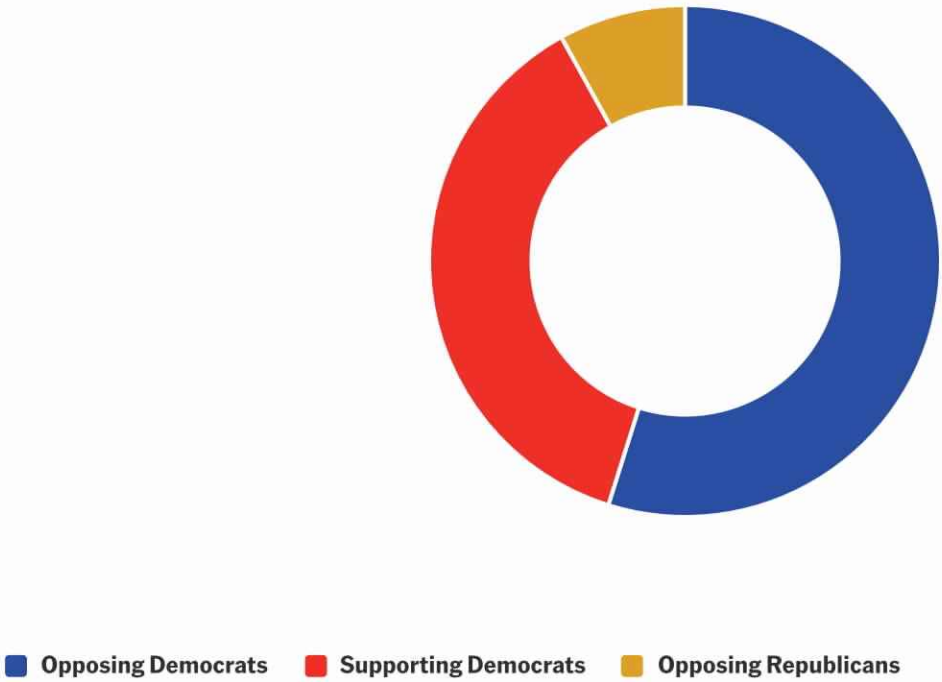
total. The FEC's own committee totals record $37,859,810.12, which is $389.88 below the OpenSecrets total. The directional split and the total therefore come from tabulations that do not fully reconcile. Each is cited as published.

United Democracy Project 2024 spending by direction

PARTS SUM TO $37,898,305, THE FOUR DIRECTIONAL LINES; SUPPORTING REPUBLICANS WAS $0



Source: OpenSecrets, 2025, tabulation of FEC independent-expenditure filings.

The concentration also shows up at the level of individual races. OpenSecrets records about $14.6 million of the super PAC's spending in a single contest, New York's 16th Congressional District in 2024: $14,593,635, of which $9,865,477 opposed one candidate and $4,728,158 supported another. Further race-level detail on the super PAC's spending against candidates is published separately.

This record bears on AIPAC's own description from Section 2. The About page says AIPAC opposes candidates "on both sides." In the 2024 tabulation, opposition spending appears on both sides: $20,786,780 against Democrats and $3,043,662 against Republicans. Support spending appears on one side only.

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The tabulation reports direction and party. It does not break the totals down by primary and general election, so the split between those two stages is not stated here. The filings record where the money was directed and how much was spent. They do not record what effect it had.

Who funds the super PAC's 2026 spending?

Of the $108,620,919.70 United Democracy Project received in contributions in the 2026 cycle to 14 October 2026, Federal Election Commission totals record **$12.00** as unitemized. Unitemized is the line for donors who give $200 or less in a cycle. Nearly all of the super PAC's money arrives in contributions large enough to be itemized by contributor.

One contributor appears on a filing of its own. AIPAC's Form 990 Schedule C states, "IN 2025, AIPAC MADE A $25 MILLION CONTRIBUTION TO UDP," paid from internal funds. The payment also appears on United Democracy Project's FEC filings as a receipt. It is one payment recorded on two registers and is counted once. Schedule C reports total political expenditures of $38,304,939: the $25,000,000 to the super PAC plus $13,304,939 spent on section 527 activities. The Form 990 fiscal year and the FEC cycle are different periods and are not combined. United Democracy Project's 2026-cycle filings also record a further $5,000,000 receipt from AIPAC dated 23 December 2025, after the return's fiscal year closed.

The 2024 cycle, which is closed, shows the same pattern in more detail. The FEC records $85,770,677.06 in contributions to United Democracy Project for that cycle, of which $819.00 was unitemized. Schedule A lists 1,361 itemized receipts. The 100 largest, each $100,000 or more, total $50,554,859.51, about 58% of the cycle's $87,176,557.14 in total receipts; five of them are bank interest rather than contributions. This is a share of receipts, meaning transactions, not a share of donors, because one donor can make several receipts.

The individuals named on those receipts are private individuals and are not named here. The parent organization's own donor list does not fill the gap. The public copy of AIPAC's Form 990 restricts the Schedule B donor list, so the return gives no donor count.

What the filings establish is structural. The super PAC is funded almost entirely through itemized contributions, its largest receipts carry most of its money, and the AIPAC parent

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organization appears among those contributors on its own sworn return. The unitemized lines measure the small-donor share of the super PAC's money. They say nothing about AIPAC's membership.

How much cash did the super PAC hold in October 2026?

United Democracy Project held **$56,566,332.96** in cash on hand on 14 October 2026, according to Federal Election Commission totals. That is nearly twice the $28,802,895.10 it held on 31 December 2024. The balance is a dated figure: it records unspent funds on that day, not a forecast of what the committee will spend.

The balance comes from a cycle that was still open. The FEC's 2026 coverage runs from 1 January 2025 to 14 October 2026 and does not include the final weeks before the November general election. Because the committee files monthly, both the balance and the expenditure total change with each report.

Earlier cycles show how a balance relates to spending. In the 2024 cycle, the FEC records $87,176,557.14 in receipts, $37,859,810.12 in independent expenditures and $14,908,342.42 in operating expenditures. The committee closed that cycle with $28,802,895.10 in hand, and that sum carried into 2026. In the 2022 cycle, the FEC records $35,943,280.96 in receipts against $26,118,700.49 in independent expenditures. In each closed cycle, receipts exceeded independent expenditures.

The 2026 figures to date follow the same order of magnitude. Receipts of $112,820,861.12 already exceed the whole 2024 cycle's receipts, and independent expenditures of $53,603,927.44 already exceed the whole 2024 cycle's independent expenditures. Both comparisons hold as of 14 October 2026, with the general election period still to be reported.

A cash balance records capacity, not intent. The filing shows how much money the committee held on a given date. It does not show where, when or whether that money will be spent. The FEC record for 14 October 2026 is therefore read as what it is: a snapshot of an open account partway through a cycle.

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Is AIPAC's lobbying money part of its election spending?

AIPAC reported **$3,757,105** for calendar year 2025 on four quarterly reports to the Senate's Lobbying Disclosure Act register. The amount was entered on line 12 as lobbying income, and line 13, for lobbying expense, was left blank. The register operates under a separate statute from campaign finance, and its figure is not election spending.

The quarterly amounts on the register are $963,135.00 for the first quarter, $880,060.00 for the second, $940,000.00 for the third and $973,910.00 for the fourth. AIPAC files as its own client: the client name on item 7 carries the "Self" checkbox. No outside lobbying firm compensation is reported for 2025, so the whole total is in-house.

The form's wording explains the line. It instructs, "INCOME OR EXPENSES - YOU MUST complete either Line 12 or Line 13." AIPAC completed line 12. The defensible sentence is that AIPAC reported $3,757,105 in lobbying income for 2025. The statement that AIPAC spent $3.76 million on lobbying is a paraphrase the filing does not contain.

The form also asks for "a good faith estimate, rounded to the nearest $10,000." The reported amounts are not rounded that way. An LD-2 report is self-declared and certified by the filer, and its figures are not audited before they post.

AIPAC lobbying amounts on the Senate LDA register

CALENDAR-YEAR TOTALS OF FOUR QUARTERLY LD-2 REPORTS, ENTERED AS INCOME

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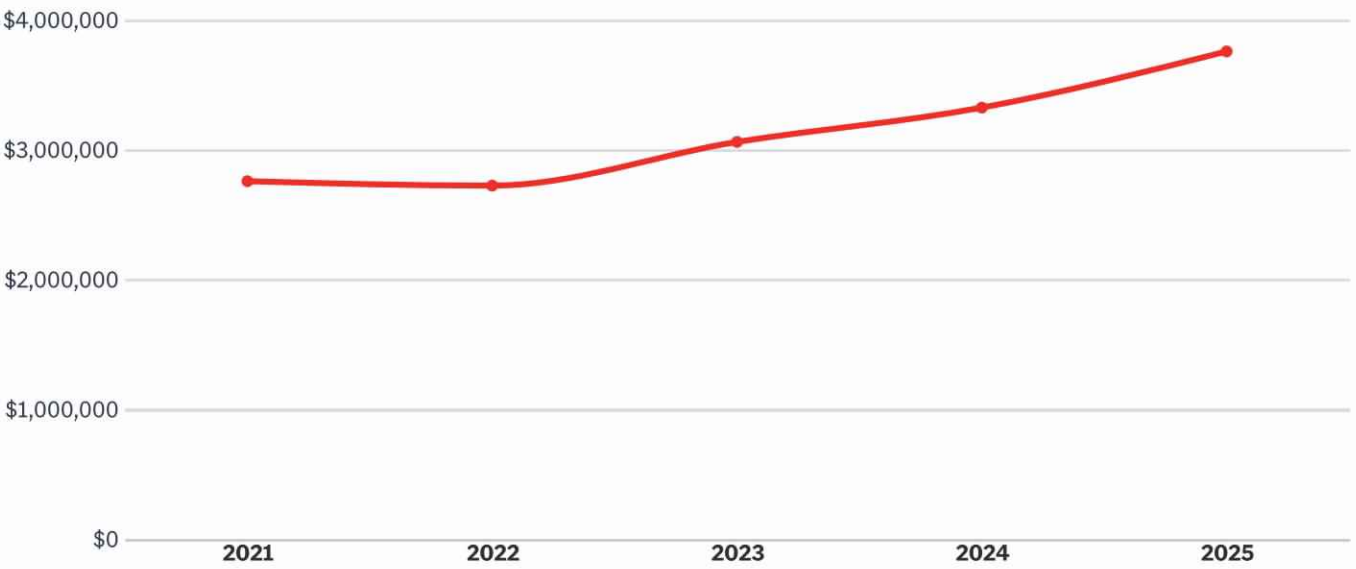

Source: United States Senate, Office of Public Records, 2026, LDA register.

The 2025 amount is 36.3% above the $2,757,247 reported for 2021. AIPAC's Form 990 prints a separate lobbying figure of $7,320,855 as a program service for its October-to-September fiscal year. That figure comes from a different form and a different calendar, and it is not reconciled with the register.

Lobbying, direct contributions and independent expenditures are three channels under three statutes, and they are not summed into a single figure. The four registers on which AIPAC appears each record a different activity.

Can the filed totals show whether AIPAC changed a race?

The Federal Election Commission records United Democracy Project's **$37,859,810.12** in 2024-cycle independent expenditures by amount and direction. No public record located for this report measures the effect of any of that spending on a vote share or an election outcome. The filings document money and its direction, and the effect is not recorded on them.

The statute explains why. Under 52 U.S.C. 30101(17), an independent expenditure must be made without coordination with the candidate. The filing therefore records a committee's

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own outlay about a race. It does not record anything about the campaign it concerned, the voters who saw the advertising, or the result.

The race-level figures have the same limit. OpenSecrets records about $14.6 million of the super PAC's spending in New York's 16th District in 2024. That number states how much was spent in one contest. The certified result of that contest sits on a different register, kept by election authorities under state law. No record cited here sets the spending beside the result with a measured effect between them. Any link between the two is a correlation in time, not a measured cause.

The other registers share the limit. The Senate's Lobbying Disclosure Act register records what AIPAC filed, $3,757,105 for 2025, and carries no measure of influence, access or legislative effect. AIPAC's About page states the purpose of its election work, to help candidates "get their message out," which is a statement of intent rather than a measured result.

One mechanism cannot be checked on any of these filings: the signaling effect of an endorsement on other donors or on potential challengers. An endorsement is not a filed transaction. Its reach does not appear on Schedule A, Schedule B, Schedule E or an LD-2 report, and none of the records in this report measures it.

Methodology and limitations

The evidence here comes from three kinds of record, each labelled by type.

Official filings. These are the Federal Election Commission's committee records and two-year-cycle totals for AIPAC PAC (C00797670) and United Democracy Project (C00799031), with their itemized Schedule A receipts and Schedule B disbursements. They also include AIPAC's Form 990 for the fiscal year 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025, filed 20 August 2026 under EIN 53-0217164, and the Senate Lobbying Disclosure Act register for registrant 2718. The FEC and Form 990 records were read on 9 November 2026, and the LDA register on 19 August 2026. The FEC's 2026 cycle figures run to 14 October 2026 and remain open.

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A campaign-finance aggregator. OpenSecrets' 2025 tabulations of FEC filings supply the direct-contribution recipient counts and the directional split of independent expenditures. Where an OpenSecrets figure and an FEC filed total differ, both are stated, and the filed amount is cited as the filing.

The organization's own statements. AIPAC's About page, read on 9 November 2026, is cited as AIPAC's own description and is not independently verified. Web copy can change without notice.

Several limits bind the figures. FEC two-year cycles, the Form 990 October-to-September fiscal year and LDA calendar years do not align, so no figure from one register is summed with another. The OpenSecrets directional lines exceed its own stated total by $38,105. Receipt counts are transactions, not donors. Unitemized lines measure contributions of $200 or less per donor per cycle and say nothing about membership. Earmarked receipts may be itemized at any size.

All figures are aggregates. Individual donors and earmarkers named on the filings are private individuals and are not named.

Conclusion

Where, then, does AIPAC's money enter an election? In large part through an advertisement that carries another committee's name. United Democracy Project reported $53,603,927.44 in independent expenditures in the 2026 cycle to 14 October 2026, after $37,859,810.12 in 2024. In 2024, its spending ran heaviest against Democrats, at $20,786,780, and included nothing in support of Republicans.

The rest of the money follows other paths. The connected PAC forwarded $53,699,474.91 in the 2024 cycle as a conduit, largely money that donors earmarked themselves. Its own capped contributions, $3,037,900, were the smallest of the channels. The super PAC's money arrives almost entirely in itemized contributions, $12.00 unitemized of $108.6 million, and AIPAC's own return records a $25 million payment to it in the fiscal year to September 2025. The $3,757,105 on the lobbying register is filed as income under another statute. The overall

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picture is one organization recorded on several registers, with each register showing part of the activity.

Each of those records is precise to the cent about amount and direction, and none of them records what the money achieved. That leaves a question the filings cannot settle. When the paperwork can show, at the level of a single district, $14.6 million spent and the side it was spent on, but cannot show whether it changed a single vote, what do voters reading the disclaimer at the end of an advertisement actually learn about who is speaking to them, and how much?

Frequently Asked Questions

Is United Democracy Project the same legal entity as AIPAC?

No. The Federal Election Commission registers United Democracy Project separately, as a "Super PAC (Independent Expenditure-Only)" at 712 H St NE in Washington, while AIPAC's connected PAC is registered at 251 H St NW. AIPAC's own Form 990 records its payment to the super PAC as a contribution, which is how a transfer between separate entities appears on a return.

Is AIPAC itself a political action committee?

AIPAC's About page answers "No, AIPAC is a membership organization." Its Form 990 identifies it as a section 501(c)(4) social welfare organization, formed in 1963 and tax-exempt since 1968, to which contributions are not tax-deductible. Its federal political activity runs through the PAC it registered with the FEC in December 2021.

How many members does AIPAC say it has?

AIPAC's About page says it has "more than 6.5 million members" but does not define the term. Its Form 990 reports that it has members but gives no count, reports no membership-dues revenue on line 1b, and lists 42 volunteers. No public filing counts or verifies the 6.5 million figure.

Why do AIPAC's tax year and the FEC's election cycle not match?

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AIPAC's Form 990 covers a fiscal year from 1 October to 30 September. FEC cycles run for two calendar years, and Lobbying Disclosure Act totals run for one calendar year. Figures from the three registers cover different months, which is why a dollar amount on one is never added to a dollar amount on another.

How often do these committees report?

Both AIPAC PAC and United Democracy Project are listed as monthly filers on their FEC records. Their open-cycle totals therefore change roughly every month, so any 2026 figure is accurate only for its coverage date, 14 October 2026 here.

Where can a reader check these filings directly?

The FEC publishes each committee's record under its ID: C00797670 for AIPAC PAC and C00799031 for United Democracy Project. AIPAC's Form 990 is public under EIN 53-0217164, and its lobbying reports sit on the Senate register under Senate ID 2718-12.

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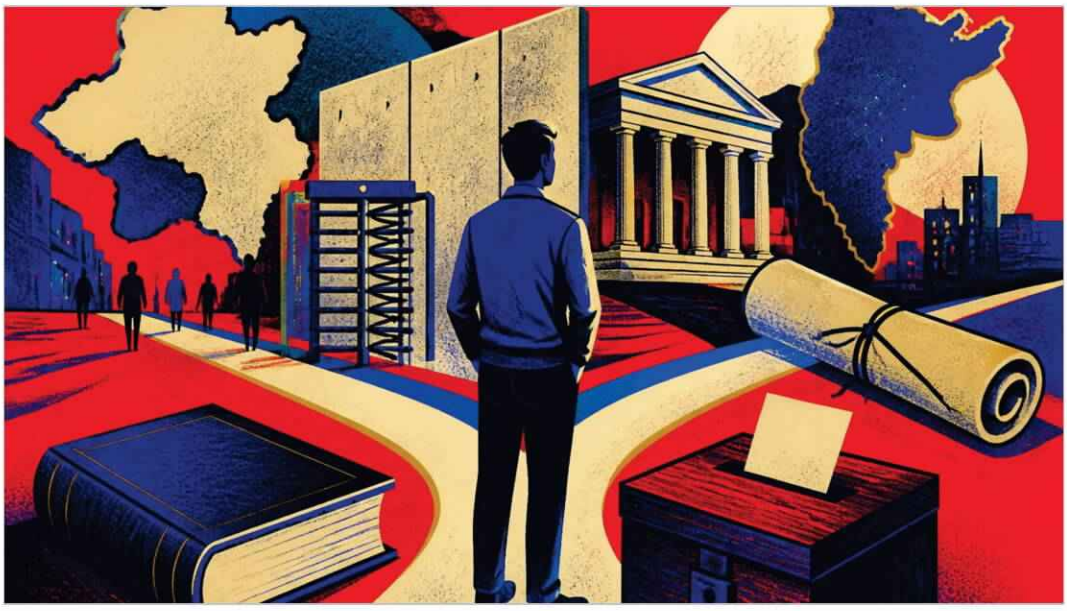
DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

How is Israel different from apartheid South Africa? Two statute books and three court records

South Africa's 1970 Act moved black citizenship to homelands. What Israel's statutes, courts and permit rules record by comparison.

Apartheid | South Africa | Israel | Citizenship Law | Nation-State Law



South Africa's Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act of 1970 "required all black persons to become citizens of a self-governing territorial authority," the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recorded in 1998. By contrast, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counted 2.130 million Arabs in its own reported 2025 resident population, a minority that Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence addressed on the basis of "full and equal citizenship." That gap is the widest between the two

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statute books: one statute assigned a population to homeland citizenship, and one founding text addressed a minority as citizens. The contrast narrows beyond Israel's own territory. COGAT's 2022 permit instrument records the West Bank as "a closed military area" under a 1967 military order. Dugard and Reynolds argued in a peer-reviewed journal in 2013 that the apartheid prohibition reaches that territory whatever its differences from South Africa, while Sammy Smooha's 1997 typology places Israel within its pre-1967 lines outside the Herrenvolk model.

Key Findings

- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (1998) records that the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act No 26 of 1970 "required all black persons to become citizens of a self-governing territorial authority." This followed the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act No 46 of 1959, which abolished "parliamentary representation for blacks."
- Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (2025) counted about 2.130 million Arabs, 21.5% of the 9.888 million in its two named population groups, in its own reported total. The count includes East Jerusalem residents, so it measures residence, not citizenship.
- The Knesset's 2018 Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People makes national self-determination "exclusive to the Jewish People." The Knesset's English text of the 1992 Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty contains zero occurrences of "equal." Israel's equality rule is judge-made; the Israeli Supreme Court applied it to state land in its Ka'adan judgment of 8 March 2000.
- COGAT's permit instrument of 8 February 2022, published by a party to the events, sets a ceiling of 74,300 home-construction permits for West Bank Palestinians working in Israel. The regime governs exit from a territory held as "a closed military area."
- Dugard and Reynolds (2013) find "strong grounds" for an apartheid system "in the occupied Palestinian territory." Smooha (1997) classifies Israel inside the Green Line as an "ethnic democracy," drawing on his own 1995 survey of 1,200 Arab citizens and setting the type apart from the Herrenvolk model.

Where does Israel's legal order differ most from apartheid South Africa?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa recorded in 1998 that the Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act No 26 of **1970** "required all black persons to become citizens of a self-governing territorial authority." Israel's founding declaration points the other way. It appealed to "the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel" to take part in the state "on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions."

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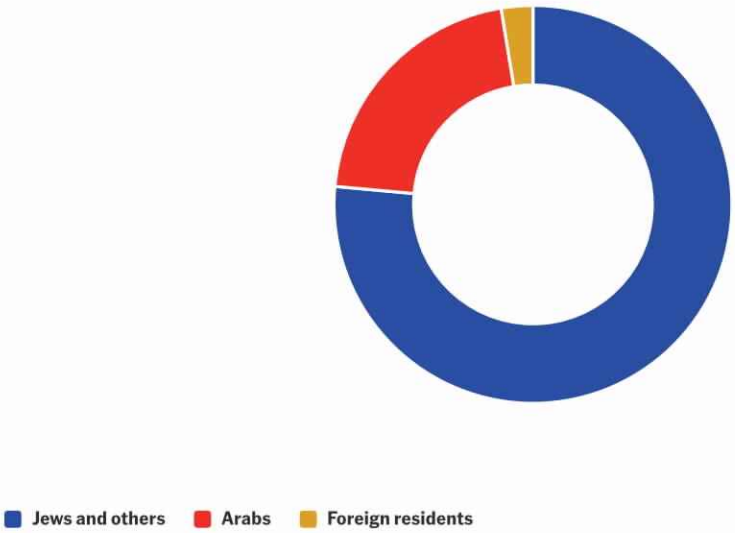
The 1970 Act completed a sequence the Commission lists statute by statute. The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act No 46 of 1959 provided for the "Abolition of parliamentary representation for blacks." For the 1970 Act, the Commission records assent on 26 March 1970 and writes "commencement date not found." It also quotes Minister Connie Mulder on where the policy led: "No black person will eventually qualify in terms of section 10 because they will all be aliens."

The Israeli text is the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, read on 14 May 1948 and signed by the 37 members of the People's Council. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, in its own count for September 2025, recorded about 2.130 million Arabs and 7.758 million Jews and others. The Bureau's published 21.5% Arab share is a share of the 9.888 million in those two groups. Roughly 260,000 foreign residents make up the rest of a 10.148 million total.

The Bureau's total includes residents of East Jerusalem and West Bank settlers, so 2.130 million is a count of residents, not of citizens. The difference this section describes is confined to Israel within its own territory. The sections on the West Bank below show where the contrast narrows.

Israel's resident population by Bureau category

MILLIONS OF RESIDENTS, SEPTEMBER 2025; INCLUDES EAST JERUSALEM RESIDENTS AND WEST BANK SETTLERS



Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2025), the Bureau's own count; foreign residents approximate (about 260,000).

Who holds that the differences don't matter legally, and since when?

John Dugard and John Reynolds argued in the peer-reviewed European Journal of International Law in **2013** that the Apartheid Convention, though drafted with southern

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Africa in mind, "was not intended to be confined to those circumstances." On their reading, the treaty prohibition does not require a regime to replicate South Africa's. The position therefore survives every difference listed in this report.

That much of the premise holds: the argument never rested on the two systems being identical. It treats apartheid as a treaty category rather than as the name of one regime, and it is scoped to territory. At page 912 the authors conclude there are "strong grounds to conclude that a system of apartheid has developed in the occupied Palestinian territory." They do not draw that conclusion about Israel within its own territory. On the group element, at page 889, they write that international law's reading of racial groups "appears sufficiently broad to understand Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Arabs as distinct groups." The article is legal argument and measures nothing.

Dugard's own author footnote records that he was Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory from 2001 to 2008, and a judge ad hoc of the International Court of Justice. He was writing on the mandate he had held.

The same journal issue carried a peer-reviewed reply by Zilbershats (pages 915 to 928). She argued that the analysis conflates sovereign territory with belligerent occupation and sets aside the armed-conflict context.

Two advocacy organizations later took the position, and their scopes differ. Human Rights Watch, in April 2021, found the intent element "across Israel and the OPT." It found all three elements together, and so the crime of apartheid, only "In the OPT, including East Jerusalem." It also stated that it did not set out "to determine whether Israel is an 'apartheid state.'" Amnesty International, on 1 February 2022, went further. It described a system operating "wherever it has exercised control over Palestinians' lives since 1948." The similarities between the two statute books are set out in a companion report.

What does each state's law use to define its groups?

The Population Registration Act No 30 of 1950 required South Africans to be registered "from birth as belonging to one of **four** distinct racial groups," the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recorded in 1998. Israel's Law of Return, as amended in 1970, defines a Jew by descent or conversion. That definition applies, in the statute's own words, "For the purposes of this Law."

The Commission's report, in Chapter 2, quotes the South African definitions directly: "A White person is one who is in appearance obviously white ... a Coloured is a person who is not a white person or a Bantu." It calls them "truly bizarre." The Act was repealed by the Population Registration Act Repeal Act No 114 of 1991, which commenced on 28 June 1991.

Section 4B of the Law of Return, in the English text published by the Knesset, provides that "Jew" means "a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism

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and who is not a member of another religion." That definition reaches the Population Registry only through section 3A(b) of the Population Registry Law, inserted by the same amendment. Section 4A extends the same rights to a non-Jewish "child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew," and their spouses. It excludes only "a person who has been a Jew and has voluntarily changed his religion."

The Rabbinical Courts Jurisdiction (Marriage and Divorce) Law of 1953 provides in section 2 that "Marriages and divorces of Jews shall be performed in Israel in accordance with Jewish religious law." The word "Jew" is defined nowhere in its eleven sections. The Law legislates nothing for Muslims, Christians or Druze.

Instrument	Criterion in the text	Source
Population Registration Act No 30, 1950	Registration from birth into **4** racial groups	Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998
Law of Return, section 4B, 1970	Jewish mother or **conversion**, no other religion	Knesset, 1970
Population Registry Law, section 3A(b), 1970	Imports the **section 4B** meaning	Knesset, 1970
Rabbinical Courts Law, 1953	"Jew" **undefined**; Jewish religious law applies	Knesset, 1953

What do the founding texts say about equal rights?

The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act No 49 of **1953** "allowed for public facilities and transport to be reserved for particular race groups," the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recorded in 1998. Israel's Declaration of Independence states the opposite principle. In the English text the Knesset publishes, it pledges "complete equality of social and political rights to all its citizens irrespective of religion, race or sex."

The Commission dates the Amenities Act's commencement to 9 October 1953 and its repeal to Act No 100 of 1990. The Group Areas Act No 41 of 1950 made it "compulsory for people to live in an area designated for their classification group."

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs publishes the same Declaration sentence with "all its inhabitants" in place of "all its citizens." Both are translations of the Hebrew original. The Declaration is a founding instrument, not an enacted rights statute.

The Knesset's English text of Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, which the Knesset labels an "unofficial English translation," contains zero occurrences of "equal," "discrimin," "race," "religion" or "nationality." That absence is a fact about the text, not a finding about treatment. Section 10 adds: "This Basic Law shall not affect the validity of any law that existed prior to the inception of the Basic Law."

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Israel's equality rule comes from the courts. In HCJ 6698/95 Ka'adan v. Israel Land Administration, decided on 8 March 2000 by a five-justice panel, President Barak wrote that the Court does "not accept the approach that the values of the State of Israel, as a Jewish state, would justify, on the level of a general purpose, discrimination by the State between its citizens, on the basis of religion or nationality." On the State's use of a third party, he wrote: "What the State cannot do directly, it cannot do indirectly." Justice Kedmi dissented only on whether the ruling reached past allocations. He expressly concurred with the President's approach to equality.

What does the 2018 Nation-State Law add to the contrast?

The Knesset's **2018** Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People states in clause 1(c): "The realization of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is exclusive to the Jewish People." This appears in an English translation the Knesset labels unofficial. The clause defines a collective national right. It does not classify individuals.

The same law provides in clause 4(a) that "Hebrew is the language of the State" and in 4(b) that "Arabic has a special status in the State." Clause 4(c) adds that nothing in the article "shall compromise the status given to the Arabic language in practice, before this basic-law came into force." Clause 7 reads: "The State views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value, and shall act to encourage and promote its establishment and consolidation." Clause 5 opens the State "to Jewish immigration, and the ingathering of the exiles." The law contains no equality clause and no individual-rights clause. That is a fact about the text.

Set beside the South African statute book, the record supports two readings at once. The difference is that the Group Areas Act No 41 of 1950 made residence compulsory by classification, while clause 7 names settlement as a national value without assigning any individual to an area. The similarity is that the state's self-definition names one group: clause 1(b) calls Israel "the nation state of the Jewish People."

The timing also runs in opposite directions. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission records that South Africa's Population Registration Act Repeal Act No 114 commenced on 28 June 1991. Israel enacted its Nation-State Law 27 years later. One state was dismantling classification by group. The other was writing a group into its constitutional self-description.

Is the West Bank a homeland in the South African sense?

South Africa declared **four** homelands "independent" between 1976 and 1981, according to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 1998 chronology. The first was Transkei, on 26 October 1976, and the last was Ciskei, on 4 December 1981. The 1970 Citizenship Act had already required every black South African to become a citizen of a homeland, so each declaration applied to people that Act had assigned to it.

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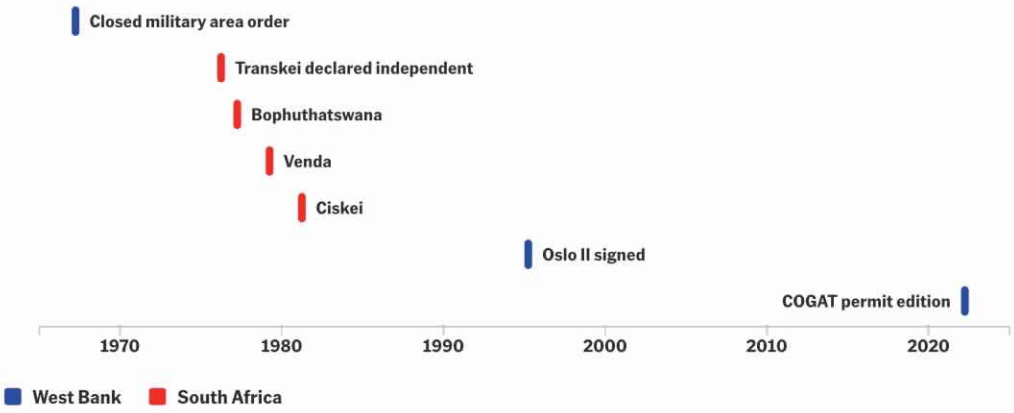
The West Bank carries a different legal status in Israel's own records. COGAT's permit instrument, a party's own published document dated 8 February 2022, opens on a 1967 order: "the area of Judea and Samaria is a closed military area and not to be entered or exited without a permit issued on behalf of the military commander." The territory is held under military command. It is not declared a state, and that instrument confers no citizenship on its residents.

The 1995 Interim Agreement between Israel and the PLO (Oslo II), signed on 28 September 1995, created Palestinian self-government in parts of the territory. Areas A and B are defined by shading on a map, and Area C is defined as what remains. Article XVII(1) withholds from the Palestinian Council "Jerusalem, settlements, specified military locations, Palestinian refugees, borders, foreign relations and Israelis." Its personal jurisdiction runs "to all persons, except for Israelis." Article XXXI(6) provides that neither party renounces "any of its existing rights, claims or positions."

The International Court of Justice, in a non-binding advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, treated the territory as occupied. It held, by 11 votes to 4, that Israel's continued presence there "is unlawful." That is the narrowest majority of the opinion's nine recorded votes.

Homeland declarations and West Bank instruments
DATED LEGAL EVENTS, BY YEAR



Source: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (1998); Israel and the PLO (1995); COGAT (2022), a party's own instrument.

Who needs a permit to move, and to go where?

South Africa's Blacks (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act No 67 of **1952** "provided for the issuing of reference books to all black persons in all provinces," the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recorded in 1998. The rule applied inside the state, in every province, to a population defined by racial classification. The Commission dates its commencement to 11 July 1952 and its repeal to the Identification Act No 72 of 1986.

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COGAT's permit instrument of 8 February 2022, published by a party to the events, governs a different crossing. Its three sections cover authorizations for West Bank residents entering Israel, the Gaza Strip, and transit between the two. It is not a document about movement inside the West Bank. It applies to residents of a territory held as "a closed military area," not to a group within Israel.

The same instrument leaves one category uncapped. Employment in industrial zones and Israeli communities of the West Bank is approved, outside the Seam Zone, "from age 18 and up, with no quota and with no restriction regarding personal status." The edition predates the suspension of Palestinian work permits after 7 October 2023. It describes the regime as it stood in early 2022.

For Israel's own citizens, Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty, in the Knesset's unofficial translation, provides in section 6 that "Every person is free to exit Israel" and that "Every Israeli citizen who is abroad is entitled to enter Israel."

The two permit systems drew their lines in different places. South Africa's reference books followed a racial classification across the whole national territory. COGAT's permits sit at the boundary between Israel and a territory under military order, and they apply by residence in that territory. In both systems, the right to move depends on a document issued by the authority that controls the crossing.

Did Israel's economy rely on Palestinian labour like South Africa's?

COGAT's permit instrument, a party's own published document dated 8 February 2022, set a standing quota of **74,300** permits for West Bank Palestinians in home construction in Israel. A quota is a ceiling on what COGAT authorised itself to issue. It is not a count of permits issued or of workers who crossed.

The document prints no total. Adding its ten standing employment rows gives 95,870, by the Institute's own arithmetic. Adding three special-area rows (Atarot 3,600, East Jerusalem health 2,680 and East Jerusalem hotels 300) raises that to 102,450. The hi-tech row of 200 sits inside what the document calls "an allotment of 500," so a simple column sum overstates it.

Permits actually held appear in a separate source. The Civil Administration's Employment Unit, in its own reported figures, stated that "As of March 1, 2020, the number of valid work permits for Palestinian employees working in Israel stood at 87,000." It put the figure for Palestinian employees working in the West Bank at 35,000, and wrote that such employment "is not limited by quota." Both the 2020 count and the 2022 quotas predate the suspension of Palestinian work permits after 7 October 2023.

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On the South African side, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission flags a separate category of workplace legislation, marked (W), within its enumeration of discriminatory statutes. The chapter lists laws and prints no count of black workers. The scale of South Africa's reliance on that labour therefore cannot be set beside the COGAT figures from this record.

Standing employment quotas for West Bank Palestinians
PERMIT CEILINGS BY SECTOR, EDITION OF 8 FEBRUARY 2022; CEILINGS, NOT PERMITS ISSUED



Source: COGAT (2022), the party's own published instrument.

Can West Bank Palestinians win against the state in Israeli courts?

Israel's Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice, ruled **5 to 0** on 22 October 1979 in HCJ 390/79, the Elon Moreh case.

It declared Order of Possession 16/79 invalid as to land owned by 17 Palestinian petitioners from Rujeib. The Court ordered the respondents to remove the settlers and structures from those plots within 30 days.

The Cardozo project's English translation prints the date as 10 October 1979. However, the Hebrew date it gives, 1 Cheshvan 5740, corresponds to 22 October 1979. The petitioners' plots totalled about 125 dunams inside an order covering about 700. A separate order for the access road, 17/79, was left standing.

The grounds were narrow. Deputy President Landau accepted that requisition of private land for a civilian settlement "is potentially justified under Article 52 of the Hague Regulations." He found that in this case "the process was inverted: the initiative came from the political echelons," so the military consideration was "subordinate to the primary, political decision." The Court expressly left Article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention undecided. The judgment annulled one requisition on its facts and did not rule settlement unlawful.

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The court record also contains a loss. In HCJ 8091/14, decided on 31 December 2014 by Justices Rubinstein, Hayut and Sohlberg, the Court denied a petition against punitive house demolitions under Regulation 119. Yet it wrote that proportionality "does not allow us to continue to assume forever" that demolition achieves deterrence "unless all of the data that properly confirms that hypothesis is presented." It quoted the security establishment's own Shani Committee finding that the measure is "eroded." At paragraph 23 it held that disproportionate use amounting to collective punishment "is precluded."

These judgments are not a measure of how often West Bank Palestinians win. They show that a domestic forum was open to them and that, in 1979, it ruled against the state on a land requisition.

Which scholars place Israel outside South Africa's regime type?

Sammy Smooha classified Israel within its pre-1967 lines as an "ethnic democracy" in the peer-reviewed journal Israel Studies in 1997. He drew on his own 1995 survey of **1,200** Arab citizens. He set the type apart from the Herrenvolk model because citizenship extends to all and the minority is not excluded from its benefits.

His definition, verbatim: ethnic democracy "combines the extension of civil and political rights to individuals and some collective rights to minorities, with institutionalization of majority control over the state." He describes it as a system in which "two contradictory principles operate," one making for equal rights and one "privileging the ethnic majority." Other cases he names include Northern Ireland from 1921 to 1972 and Poland from 1918 to 1935.

The survey was conducted in September and October 1995, inside the Green Line and excluding East Jerusalem. Among Arab respondents, 35.3% rejected Israel's right to exist as a Jewish-Zionist state, and 6.8% denied its right to exist at all. These are 1995 figures and are dated as such.

The scope of this model is the point. Smooha's typology covers Israel within the Green Line. Dugard and Reynolds (2013) address the occupied territory. The two works describe different territories, and each leaves the other's territory largely untouched.

The concept was contested before 1997. Smooha's own footnote 22 cites Oren Yiftachel's 1993 critique in Ethnic and Racial Studies. Yiftachel later offered a competing model, "ethnocracy," in a 2006 book from the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Arab citizens' views in Smooha's 1995 survey
SHARE OF RESPONDENTS; ARAB CITIZENS INSIDE THE GREEN LINE, EXCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM; ITEMS NOT EXCLUSIVE

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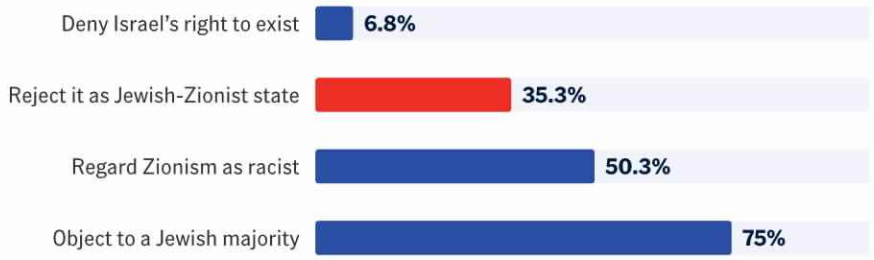

Source: Smooha (1997), 1995 survey, n = 1,200 Arab citizens.

Methodology and limitations

This report sets two statute books side by side and adds three court records and the published instruments that apply them. The South African side rests on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 1998 enumeration of discriminatory legislation (Volume One, Chapter 13). The descriptions in that enumeration are the Commission's own summaries, drawn from named secondary literature, and not the statutes speaking.

The Israeli side rests on enacted texts in the English versions the Knesset publishes. Two Basic Laws are labelled unofficial translations. The Law of Return and Rabbinical Courts pages are marked neither official nor unofficial. The 1950 and 1953 texts are quoted as enacted, not as consolidated law.

The court records come in two translations. Judgments come from the Cardozo Israeli Supreme Court Project's English texts, and the Hebrew governs. Dates were checked against the Hebrew calendar dates the texts themselves print.

Several figures are a party's own published numbers. The population figures are Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics' own count for September 2025, with its 21.5% stated against the 9.888 million base the Bureau uses. The permit figures are COGAT's own instrument of 8 February 2022, and the 87,000 is the Civil Administration's own 2020 count. Quotas are ceilings, and every sum of them is the Institute's own addition.

The scholarship falls into two kinds. Dugard and Reynolds (2013) and Zilbershats (2013) are refereed legal argument and measure nothing. Smooha (1997) is a typology with a 1995 survey of 1,200 Arab citizens. Yiftachel (2006) is interpretive scholarship.

Advocacy and advisory positions are named with their dates but carry no evidentiary weight here. These are the Human Rights Watch (2021) and Amnesty International (2022) reports and the International Court of Justice's 2024 advisory opinion.

The record has gaps. It holds no South African labour-force series, no count of court challenges in either state, and no figure for checkpoints or obstacles inside the West Bank.

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Conclusion

So how is Israel different from apartheid South Africa? Within Israel's own territory, the difference is at the root of the statute book. South Africa registered people from birth into four racial groups in 1950, abolished black parliamentary representation in 1959, and in 1970 made every black citizen a citizen of a homeland. Israel's founding text addressed its Arab minority as citizens. The Bureau's own count records 2.130 million Arab residents.

The record does not stop there, and the full portrait is sharper than either side of the argument usually allows. Israel's equality rule is not written into its Basic Law, which uses the word "equal" zero times. It is judge-made, and the Supreme Court applied it to state land in Ka'adan in 2000. The 2018 Nation-State Law makes self-determination "exclusive to the Jewish People," 27 years after South Africa repealed its Population Registration Act.

The West Bank tells a different story. COGAT's own 2022 instrument records it as a closed military area under a 1967 order and capped home-construction work in Israel at 74,300 permits. Palestinians there could win in Israel's courts, 5 to 0 at Elon Moreh in 1979. They could also lose, as on house demolitions in 2014. Smooha's typology and Dugard and Reynolds' argument describe different territories.

Every difference in this record grows widest at Israel's own borders and narrows on the far side of them. When two states are compared, which side of those borders does the comparison belong on, or does it need both?

Frequently Asked Questions

When did South Africa stop using its population register?

The Population Registration Act Repeal Act No 114 of 1991 commenced on 28 June 1991, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission records. The register compiled under the 1986 Identification Act stayed in effect until the 1983 Constitution was repealed. Repeal of the classification law therefore did not immediately end the register built on it.

Did South Africa's 1991 land reform end the homelands?

The Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act No 108 of 1991 repealed "A total of 189 sections and acts" supporting racial discrimination in land, the Commission records, quoting the Race Relations Survey. Its promulgation "did not affect the legal status of the non-independent homelands." The 1993 Constitution repealed both the 1959 Self-Government Act and the 1970 Citizenship Act.

How many South African laws did the Commission list as discriminatory?

By the Institute's count of the list, 120 of the 150 dated entries in Part I of the Commission's 1998 chapter name an Act of the South African Parliament. That count is a floor: at least three

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further Acts appear inside chronology entries without a headed entry of their own. The Commission itself prints no total (a side-by-side reading of the 120).

Does the Oslo II agreement say how much of the West Bank is Area C?

The 1995 Interim Agreement contains no area percentage. Its only use of "per cent" concerns appointments to the Palestinian Executive Authority. Areas A and B are defined by red lines and shading on map No. 1, and Area C as the areas outside them, so any share circulating today comes from whichever body later measured the map.

Did the Truth and Reconciliation Commission call apartheid a crime?

The Commission, a statutory body of the South African state, affirmed in 1998, in an appendix to Chapter 4 of its report, its "judgement that apartheid, as a system of enforced racial discrimination and separation, was a crime against humanity." It added that this "should not be understood as a call for international criminal prosecution." It is a commission's stated judgement, not a court's finding.

Did the Ka'adan family win the right to live in Katzir?

The Supreme Court on 8 March 2000 ordered the State to "consider the petitioners' request" to buy land in Katzir "on the basis of the principle of equality." It left open whether the State "can enable the petitioners, within the framework of the law," to build there. The ruling declared the allocation discriminatory; it did not order admission.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

What separates “Israel Defense Forces” from “Israeli occupation forces”? A statute, a treaty and a 1979 ruling

One name comes from a 1976 Israeli statute, the other from a 1949 treaty term. What the treaty, Israel’s courts and Israel’s own orders record.

Israel Defense Forces | Occupation Law | Fourth Geneva Convention | West Bank | Terminology



Israel’s Basic Law: The Military, adopted by the Knesset in 1976, states that the Israel Defense Forces “are the army of the State.” The phrase “Israeli occupation forces” does not name a second army. Its key word comes from the Fourth Geneva

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Convention of 1949, which applies to "all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party."

So are these two names for one army, or two claims about what that army is doing and where? The record agrees on the institution and divides on the status. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated in 1997 that the Convention does not apply de jure to the West Bank and Gaza. In 1979, the leading opinion in a unanimous ruling of Israel's own Supreme Court held that the Hague Regulations bind the "military administration in Judea and Samaria."

Key Findings

- **Treaty term.** The Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 2, applies the treaty to "all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party." Israel signed it on 8 December 1949 and ratified it on 6 July 1951, according to the ICRC's compilation of the depositary record (Geneva Convention (IV), 1949).
- **ICRC position.** The International Committee of the Red Cross states as "The ICRC's longstanding position" that "since 1967, Israel occupies the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024).
- **Israel's stated position.** Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, stated on 14 July 1997 that "the Convention is only applicable to territory of a High Contracting Party." In the same release, Israel undertook to act de facto in accordance with the Convention's humanitarian provisions (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997).
- **Israel's Supreme Court.** On 22 October 1979, Israel's Supreme Court ruled 5 to 0 in HCJ 390/79 against one possession order. Deputy President Landau's leading opinion held that the Hague Regulations "bind the military administration in Judea and Samaria" (Israeli Supreme Court, 1979).
- **The permit regime.** COGAT's 8 February 2022 edition of its permit rules, a party's own published instrument, states that the area is "a closed military area." It may not be entered or exited "without a permit issued on behalf of the military commander" (COGAT, 2022).

Do the two names refer to two different armies?

No. The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which Israel ratified on 6 July 1951, attaches the word "occupation" to territory rather than to any armed force. Article 2 applies the treaty to "all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party." One phrase names an institution, and the other asserts a legal status for the places where that institution serves.

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Israel's Basic Law: The Military, adopted by the Knesset in 1976, gives the institution its name and its standing: the Israel Defense Forces "are the army of the State" (Knesset, 1976). That is a statute naming one body. The same name appears in the Israeli orders, rulings and ministry papers quoted in the sections below.

The second phrase borrows its key word from treaty law. Article 2 of the Convention continues that the treaty applies to such an occupation "even if the said occupation meets with no armed resistance" (Geneva Convention (IV), 1949). Nothing in the article refers to the name, branch or makeup of any armed force. The parties bound are the High Contracting Parties, which are states. The Convention's later articles use the capitalized term "the Occupying Power," for example in Article 49: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) uses the treaty grammar in its own 2024 statement: "since 1967, Israel occupies the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024). The subject of that sentence is a state, and the object is a territory. The army appears only as the means by which the state holds the territory.

The familiar summary is therefore right in its checkable form. "Israel Defense Forces" is the name set by Israeli statute. "Occupation forces" is not a name given to the army in any of the Israeli instruments set out below. The real difference lies one step further in. The first phrase identifies a body. The second classifies the territory that body controls, and that classification is disputed by Israel's government and was addressed by Israel's own Supreme Court in 1979.

Who describes Israel's forces as an occupying power, and since when?

The International Committee of the Red Cross calls it "The ICRC's longstanding position" that Israel has occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza "since 1967." It adds that "as an Occupying Power, Israel is bound by the law of belligerent occupation" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024). The ICRC is a humanitarian organization stating its own legal reading, not a court.

The ICRC also addresses the dispute over sovereignty directly: "The disputed status of a territory does not prevent the applicability of the law of occupation," and "controversy in respect of Palestine's statehood has no bearing on this legal determination." In its section on settlements, the ICRC "recognizes Israel's right to take measures for the security of its population," provided those measures "respect the relevant rules of IHL and IHRL."

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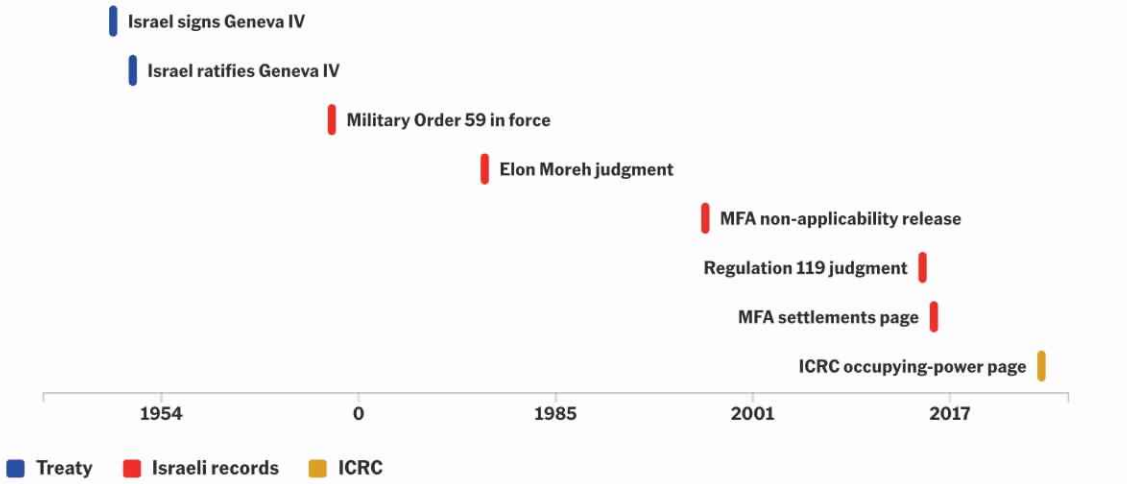
The International Court of Justice addressed related questions in an advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, requested by General Assembly resolution 77/247. The opinion's operative paragraph has nine separately voted subparagraphs carrying four different majorities. The Court found, by **11 votes to 4**, that Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory "is unlawful." It recorded the same margin on the obligation to end that presence. These are the narrowest margins in the opinion. The obligation "to cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to evacuate all settlers" passed by 14 votes to 1. The opinion is advisory: it arose on a General Assembly request, not a case between parties, and it binds no state.

The domestic record dates the issue at least to 1979. In 1979, Justice Witkon of Israel's Supreme Court wrote that "It is a mistake to think ... that the Geneva Convention does not apply to Judea and Samaria. It does apply," although he held it was not enforceable in an Israeli court (Israeli Supreme Court, 1979).

Dated records on the occupation question

TREATY, ISRAELI STATE RECORDS AND THE ICRC, 1949 TO 2024



Source: Geneva Convention (IV), 1949, with ICRC participation record; Commander of IDF Forces in the West Bank Area, 1967; Israeli Supreme Court, 1979 and 2014; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997 and 2015; International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024.

Where does the occupation term stop applying?

The ICRC (2024) applies the occupation status to three areas Israel has held since 1967: the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. The name "Israel Defense Forces" covers the institution wherever its units serve. The status term therefore has a territorial edge that the statutory name does not.

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Gaza is where that edge has been tested. The ICRC states that it "considers Gaza to remain occupied territory on the basis that Israel still exercises effective control over the Strip." The ICRC lists that control as covering the Strip's airspace, sea and land borders, "at the exception of the border with Egypt" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024).

The International Court of Justice took a graduated view in its July 2024 opinion. It wrote that "By 2005, Israel had completed the withdrawal of its army and the removal of the settlements in the Gaza Strip," but that "Israel's obligations have remained commensurate with the degree of its effective control over the Gaza Strip." The Court treated the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza as "from a legal standpoint ... a single territorial unit."

The Court also drew the line from the other side. It described a duty, in dealings with Israel, to distinguish "between the territory of the State of Israel and the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967." In these documents, the status term attaches only to territory beyond that line, never to the army as an institution.

The documents are dated, and Gaza changed after they were written. The ICRC page is dated 26 July 2024. The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took effect, in the IDF's own words, "On Friday, October 10th, 2025, at 12:00 PM" (Israel Defense Forces, 2026). That is a party's own account of the start time. The IDF's compilation of incidents after that date describes troops on one side of a "yellow line" inside the Strip. Neither the ICRC page nor the 2024 opinion addresses positions held under the ceasefire.

Does Israel's government accept that its forces occupy the West Bank?

No. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated on 14 July 1997 that "the Convention is only applicable to territory of a High Contracting Party." It reasoned that because "Neither the West Bank nor Gaza were previously under the control of a legitimate sovereign," the result was "the nonapplicability of the Convention." This is a party's own stated legal position.

The same 1997 release adds a commitment alongside the denial: "Nevertheless, Israel has undertaken to act de facto in accordance with the humanitarian provisions of the Convention" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997). Israel's position is therefore not that no rules apply. It is that the Convention does not apply as a matter of law, while its humanitarian provisions are observed as policy.

The Ministry's 30 November 2015 page frames the question differently. It sets the applicability issue aside: "Quite apart from the question of whether the Fourth Geneva Convention applies de jure to territory such as the West Bank over which there was no previous legitimate sovereign." It then argues that Israeli settlement does not match the

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transfers Article 49(6) contemplates. On the territory's status, it states that "the West Bank is best regarded as territory over which there are competing claims which should be resolved in peace process negotiations," and that "Israel recognizes that the Palestinians also entertain claims to this area" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). The 2015 page does not restate the 1997 non-applicability position outright.

Both Israel's reading and the ICRC's turn on the same words in Article 2: "the territory of a High Contracting Party." The Ministry reads that phrase as excluding land with no prior legitimate sovereign. The ICRC states that "The disputed status of a territory does not prevent the applicability of the law of occupation" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024).

Israel's position is an interpretation of the text, not a formal reservation to it. The ICRC's record of Israel's participation lists **one** reservation, made on signature and maintained on ratification. It concerns the emblem: Israel "will use the Red Shield of David as the emblem and distinctive sign" (Geneva Convention (IV), 1949). The record contains no reservation to Article 2, 47 or 49.

What did Israel's own Supreme Court call the army's role there?

Israel's Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice, ruled unanimously, **5 to 0**, on 22 October 1979 in HCJ 390/79, known as the Elon Moreh case. Deputy President Landau held that the Hague Regulations, "as customary international law, they do indeed bind the military administration in Judea and Samaria." The Court's term for the army's role was "military administration."

The case arose from the Elon Moreh case's Order of Possession 16/79. Signed on 5 June 1979, it covered about 700 dunams near Nablus. Seventeen Palestinian petitioners held about 125 dunams within it. The Court declared the order invalid as to the petitioners' lands only. It ordered the civilian settlers and their structures removed from those lands and gave the respondents 30 days to comply (Israeli Supreme Court, 1979).

The ruling did not hold that settlement is unlawful. Landau accepted that taking private land for a civilian settlement "is potentially justified under Article 52 of the Hague Regulations" where military needs actually drove the decision. He distinguished, rather than overruled, the 1978 Beit El case, which had upheld such a requisition. Elon Moreh turned on the facts: the initiative "came from the political echelons," and the military view was "subordinate to the primary, political decision."

The judgment also set out what a military administration may not do: it "cannot create within its territory 'facts on the ground' for the purposes of its military needs that were in

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advance intended to exist past the end of the military rule in that area." The Court used the vocabulary of temporary military rule over the area.

On the Fourth Geneva Convention, Landau declined to rule. He wrote that, "as part of treaty-based international law, it is not binding law in an Israeli Court." Justice Witkon wrote that the Convention "does apply" to Judea and Samaria, "though, as noted above, it is not 'justiciable' in this Court."

There is no official English text of the judgment. The quotations here come from the Cardozo Israeli Supreme Court Project's unofficial translation, made from a Hebrew version prepared by Nevo Press, and the Hebrew governs. That translation prints the decision date as 10 October 1979. The Hebrew date in the same document, 1 Cheshvan 5740, corresponds to 22 October 1979.

What powers does the military commander hold in the territory?

COGAT, the Israeli Ministry of Defense unit that administers Palestinian movement permits, opens its 8 February 2022 edition with a statement of the legal basis. Under a 1967 order, "the area of Judea and Samaria is a closed military area and not to be entered or exited without a permit issued on behalf of the military commander" (COGAT, 2022). This is a party's own published instrument.

The 68-page document sets out the permit regime in quota tables. The largest standing employment quota is **74,300** permits for home construction in Israel, for applicants aged 22 and married. Each quota is a ceiling, not a count of permits issued or people who crossed, and the document prints no overall total. The edition predates the suspension of Palestinian work permits after 7 October 2023, so it describes the rules as of February 2022 only.

Selected permit quotas under COGAT's 2022 rules

CEILINGS SET BY THE INSTRUMENT, NOT PERMITS ISSUED; EDITION OF 8 FEBRUARY 2022

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Source: COGAT, 2022, a party's own published instrument. Quotas are ceilings, not counts.

A second power appears in Israel's own court record. In HCJ 8091/14, decided on 31 December 2014, Justice Rubinstein, with Justices Hayut and Sohlberg concurring, reproduced Regulation 119 of the Defence (Emergency) Regulations "in its current language": "A Military Commander may by order direct the forfeiture to the Government of Israel of any house, structure, or land" connected to specified offenses. The Commander may then "destroy the house or the structure" (Israeli Supreme Court, 2014). The regulations date from 1945. The Court's current-language text differs from the Mandate original on who receives forfeited property and who may reverse the forfeiture. The quotation comes from the Cardozo project's English translation of the Hebrew judgment.

The Court denied the petition and set limits at the same time. At paragraph 23, it held that disproportionate use "which amounts to collective punishment that is prohibited under international law, is precluded." At paragraph 27, it held that continued deference depends on the State presenting data that confirms the deterrence rationale. The only usage figure in the judgment is the State's own account: since 2005, the commander had used the power "only several times." That is a party's own count, and it counts orders and buildings, not people.

Which name do Israel's own documents use for the same forces?

Military Order 59 was signed on 31 July 1967 and took effect retroactively from 7 July 1967. Its signatory was the GOC Central Command, acting as Commander of IDF Forces in the West Bank Area. That title is a working English rendering, because the order was published only in Hebrew and Arabic. From July 1967, Israel's own instruments joined the institution's name to the territory it held.

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The order created a Custodian of Government Property. It defined that property by ownership on a fixed "determining date," 7 June 1967. Article 2 provides that the Custodian "may take possession of Government Property" (working rendering of the Hebrew). The order names itself for the West Bank Area (in Hebrew, אזור הגדה המערבית), not for Judea and Samaria (Commander of IDF Forces in the West Bank Area, 1967). The issuing authority's index lists nine later amendments, so the 1967 booklet is not the text in force today.

Later Israeli documents keep the institutional name and switch the territorial one. COGAT's 2022 opening clause cites a 1967 order by its "(West Bank Area)" title and, in the same sentence, calls the area "Judea and Samaria." The 1979 judgment speaks of the "military administration in Judea and Samaria." For Gaza, the IDF's 19 February 2026 compilation, in its entry for 20 October 2025, describes "IDF troops operating in the Shejaiya area." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' 8 December 2023 FAQ names the IDF's "Civilian Harm Mitigation Unit." The last two are a party's own published wording.

Israeli document	Date	Wording for the forces or their role
Military Order 59	**31 July 1967**	Commander of IDF Forces in the West Bank Area (working rendering)
Supreme Court, HCJ 390/79	**22 October 1979**	"military administration in Judea and Samaria"
COGAT permit rules	**8 February 2022**	"permit issued on behalf of the military commander"
Ministry of Foreign Affairs FAQ	**8 December 2023**	"Civilian Harm Mitigation Unit" of the IDF
IDF ceasefire compilation	**19 February 2026**	"IDF troops operating in the Shejaiya area"

Source: Commander of IDF Forces in the West Bank Area, 1967; Israeli Supreme Court, 1979; COGAT, 2022; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023; Israel Defense Forces, 2026. Each is a party's own published text.

Israel's records thus refer to a "military commander," a "military administration" and "IDF troops" in the same places other bodies call occupied. What differs between the two vocabularies is the territorial name and the legal status, not the identity of the force.

Do bodies that find an occupation use it as a name?

The UN Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel published report A/81/430 as an advance unedited version on 14 October 2026. It writes of killing and harm "by members of the security forces of the State of Israel and of the State of Palestine." Although its mandate is named for the occupied territory, the Commission identifies the forces by the state they serve.

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The Commission's other 2026 papers follow the same pattern. Conference room paper A/HRC/62/CRP.2, dated 18 June 2026, names "the Israeli authorities and the Israeli security forces" at paragraph 347 as the subjects of the genocide conclusion the Commission states about Gaza. The Commission's reports also make findings against Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups. A/81/430 is unedited, so its wording may change in the final version.

The ICRC uses the treaty's capitalized term and applies it to the state: "as an Occupying Power, Israel is bound by the law of belligerent occupation" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2024). In the Convention, "the Occupying Power" is a role a High Contracting Party holds. It is not the name of an army.

The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research uses status words to describe places. Its Poll 97 was fielded face to face from 5 to 8 August 2026 with **1,270** respondents: 830 in the West Bank and 440 in the Gaza Strip, with a 3.5% margin of error. The Center reports that Gaza interviews took place "in areas west, south, and north of what has become known as the 'Yellow Line,' areas where there is no Israeli military presence." Interviews "with residents of areas under Israeli military occupation, such as Rafah and parts of northern Gaza and Khan Younis, were conducted in shelters" (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026).

In each of these passages, the status word describes a territory or a state's role, and the forces are named by the state they belong to. "Occupation" works as a description of where and on what legal basis the forces operate. None of these bodies uses it in place of the institution's name.

Does the choice of name change the forces' legal duties?

No. Article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) provides that protected persons in occupied territory "shall not be deprived, in any case or in any manner whatsoever," of the Convention's benefits by "any change introduced ... into the institutions or government" of the territory, "nor by any annexation." The duties attach to the territory's status, and no instrument quoted here ties them to what the forces are called.

The Convention's other articles are written the same way. Article 33 provides that "Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited." Article 49 prohibits "Individual or mass forcible transfers" of protected persons "regardless of their motive" (Geneva Convention (IV), 1949). Each rule binds the Occupying Power as a state. None turns on a force's title.

The International Court of Justice addressed duration in its July 2024 opinion: "The fact that an occupation is prolonged does not in itself change its legal status under international

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humanitarian law," and "the passage of time does not release the occupying Power from the obligations that it bears."

Israel's government states its commitments on a different legal basis. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote on 2 November 2023 that Israel "abides by all applicable rules of customary international law, including those embodied in conventions to which it is not a party (such as the 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions)." It added that "IDF legal advisers are not subject to the IDF chain of command on professional matters, but report directly to the Military Advocate General" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). These are a party's own statements of its legal position, not findings that it has complied.

The duties under each reading therefore overlap. In 1997, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs undertook to apply the Convention's humanitarian provisions de facto. In 1979, the leading opinion in Israel's Supreme Court held the Hague Regulations binding on the military administration. The ICRC applies the full Convention as law. The disagreement concerns which rules bind and on what basis. Neither name changes the answer.

Methodology and limitations

The evidence was assembled from five source types, each labeled where it is used. The primary records are the Fourth Geneva Convention as printed by the ICRC, with Israel's participation record from the ICRC's compilation of the depositary record; Israel's Basic Law: The Military (1976); and Military Order 59 (1967) from the Military Advocate General's own collection. Two domestic court judgments were used: HCJ 390/79 (1979) and HCJ 8091/14 (2014), both from the Cardozo Israeli Supreme Court Project's unofficial English translations, with the Hebrew as the governing text.

Several sources are a party's own published statements, instruments or wording. These are COGAT's permit rules (2022), the IDF's ceasefire compilation (2026), and four Ministry of Foreign Affairs documents (1997, 2015, and two from 2023). They record what Israel's government and military state, not independently verified facts. The ICRC's 2024 page records the ICRC's own legal position. The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research's Poll 97 is cited only for the wording of its published methodology, with its sample and dates.

The International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 19 July 2024 and the UN Commission of Inquiry's papers are cited in the text as the holders of the positions attributed to them. Their recorded votes and wording are reported, and their conclusions are not used as evidence for the answer. Report A/81/430 is an advance unedited version.

Known limitations of the record:

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- The Elon Moreh translation misprints its own decision date, so the corresponding Gregorian date of 22 October 1979 is cited.
- Military Order 59 has no official English text, and its nine amendments mean the 1967 text is not the text in force.
- The ICRC page predates the October 2025 ceasefire.
- No body named here publishes a count of how often either phrase appears in print or broadcast, so no comparison of usage frequency is available.

Conclusion

So are "Israel Defense Forces" and "Israeli occupation forces" two names for one army, or two claims about it? They refer to one army. One phrase names it, by a 1976 statute. The other classifies the territory it holds, using the vocabulary of a 1949 treaty that Israel ratified in 1951.

The record is more specific than the shorthand. The ICRC applies the occupation status to three areas held since 1967. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, denied the Convention's de jure application in 1997 while undertaking to observe its humanitarian provisions. Israel's own Supreme Court, in the leading opinion of a 5 to 0 ruling in 1979, called the army's role a "military administration" bound by the Hague Regulations. Israel's own instruments, from the 1967 Commander of IDF Forces in the West Bank Area to COGAT's 2022 "military commander," attach the army to the territory in the same records where the dispute over status plays out. The UN Commission of Inquiry names the forces by their state, and the treaty names the state by its role.

When the army's own orders and its own Supreme Court already describe a military administration, what does a speaker add by choosing one phrase over the other? If the duties attach to the territory whatever name the forces carry, is the choice of words a claim about the law, or a statement about which side of a dispute over that law the speaker stands on?

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the International Court of Justice's 2024 opinion binding on Israel?

No. The opinion of 19 July 2024 is advisory. It was given on a General Assembly request under Article 65 of the Court's Statute, not in a contentious case between parties, so it binds no state. Its central findings were adopted by 11 votes to 4.

Why do Israeli documents say "Judea and Samaria" while Military Order 59 says "West Bank Area"?

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Military Order 59, signed on 31 July 1967, names itself for the West Bank Area because the area had not yet been renamed. COGAT's 2022 rules cite a 1967 order by its "(West Bank Area)" title and call the area "Judea and Samaria" in the same sentence. Both are a party's own wording.

Who runs the permit system in the West Bank?

COGAT, the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories, is a unit of Israel's Ministry of Defense. It publishes the permit rules, and its 2022 edition states that permits are "issued on behalf of the military commander." The quotas in that edition are a party's own ceilings, not counts of permits issued.

Did Israel's Supreme Court decide whether settlements violate Article 49(6)?

No. In 1979, Deputy President Landau expressly declined to decide the question under Article 49(6). He held that treaty law "is not binding law in an Israeli Court." Justice Witkon wrote that the question "has yet to be resolved in international case law."

What does Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibit?

Article 33 provides that "No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed." It prohibits "Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism," as well as pillage and reprisals against protected persons. In 2014, Israel's Supreme Court held that disproportionate use of Regulation 119 amounting to collective punishment "is precluded."

Does the ICRC still consider Gaza occupied after the 2025 ceasefire?

The ICRC page that states its Gaza position is dated 26 July 2024 and speaks as of that date. It holds that Gaza remained occupied because of Israel's effective control over the Strip's borders. The ceasefire took effect on 10 October 2025, according to the IDF's own account, and the 2024 page does not address the period after it.

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The term attaches to named parcels of territory, not to a state. What the instruments, Israel's own court record and each population register show.

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The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Is denying Israel's right to exist antisemitic? The definitions' own words and a poll that asked it two ways

IHRA's 2016 text and the 2021 Jerusalem Declaration both name a form of existence-denial; a 1995 survey split the two claims about fivefold.

Antisemitism IHRA Definition Jerusalem Declaration Anti-Zionism Self-Determination



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The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) adopted its non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism on 26 May 2016. One of its illustrative examples is "Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor," which the text says could count as antisemitic, "taking into account the overall context." Its rival, the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism of 2021, names a differently framed form of existence-denial at guideline 10. The same Declaration classes support for one state granting "full equality to all inhabitants" as, "on the face of it," not antisemitic. The phrase "right to exist" also bundles two claims, and a 1995 survey of 1,200 Arab citizens of Israel measured them separately: 6.8% denied Israel's right to exist, while 35.3% rejected its right to exist as a Jewish-Zionist state (Smooha, 1997).

Key Findings

- The IHRA working definition was adopted by its Plenary on 26 May 2016 as "non-legally binding." It lists denying "the Jewish people their right to self-determination" among examples that "could, taking into account the overall context," be antisemitic (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016).
- The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism was "Initially signed by 210 scholars" in 2021. Among its examples that "on the face of it" are antisemitic, guideline 10 lists "Denying the right of Jews in the State of Israel to exist and flourish, collectively and individually, as Jews, in accordance with the principle of equality" (Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, 2021).
- Israel's 2018 Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People states at clause 1(c) that national self-determination in the State "is exclusive to the Jewish People" (Knesset, 2018, unofficial English translation).
- In a 1995 survey of 1,200 Arab citizens of Israel, 6.8% denied Israel's right to exist and 35.3% rejected its right to exist as a Jewish-Zionist state, about five times as many (Smooha, 1997).

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- In three preregistered studies, a model running through conspiracy beliefs implicating Israel and Zionists accounted for over 55% of the variance in anti-Israel attitudes (Harber, Bulska, Malloy and Vila, 2026, abstract-sourced, correlational).

Do the main definitions call denying Israel's existence antisemitic?

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance met in Plenary in Bucharest on 26 May 2016. Its text gives as an illustrative example "Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor." The list carries its own hedge: examples "could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to" those it names.

IHRA's own layout separates two things. The decision reads "Adopt the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:". Inside its quotation marks sits a two-sentence core: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." The examples then follow on a separate line: "To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:". Both copies IHRA publishes, the web page and its own PDF, set the text out in that order. The two-sentence core does not mention Israel. The text is read beside its rivals in the IHRA definition and anti-Zionism.

The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism was launched on 25 March 2021 and was "Initially signed by 210 scholars." It names a form of existence-denial too. Section B of the Declaration is headed "examples that, on the face of it, are antisemitic." Its guideline 10 reads: "Denying the right of Jews in the State of Israel to exist and flourish, collectively and individually, as Jews, in accordance with the principle of equality." Its preamble presents the text "as an alternative to the IHRA Definition" (Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, 2021).

The two texts frame existence-denial differently:

- **IHRA** ties it to the Jewish people's self-determination and to the State.

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- **The Declaration** ties it to Jews living in Israel, existing and flourishing as Jews, under the principle of equality.

Their standing also differs. IHRA's text was adopted by an intergovernmental Plenary. The Declaration is a statement by its signatories, and no state, parliament or intergovernmental body has adopted it.

Neither text rules on a particular sentence. The Declaration's preamble directs that guidelines 6 to 15 "should be taken together," each read "always with a view to context." IHRA's list carries "taking into account the overall context." Applying either text to a given statement is an act performed by whoever applies it, and it is attributable to that person or body, not to the text.

Who made the right to exist a test, and since when?

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's own adoption roll named **48** UN member states as of 16 November 2026. The earliest was the United Kingdom on 12 December 2016, and the latest the Dominican Republic on 24 August 2026. The text carrying the self-determination example has therefore been taken up, in some form, by national governments for almost ten years, and its use sits inside state institutions.

IHRA is an intergovernmental organization of 35 Member Countries. Its own FAQ describes how the text came about: "The experts in the IHRA's Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial built international consensus around a non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism, which was then adopted by the Plenary, the IHRA's decision-making body made up of representatives from all IHRA Member Countries" (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016).

The 48 is a list of names and dates, not a record of one uniform act. IHRA publishes no total and no percentage. Its own footnote reads: "Different countries and organizations will use different terminology, including adopt, endorse, embrace, recognize, support, and so on." A state appears on the roll with a date, and the roll itself does not set out which legal or administrative step that date marks.

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A second count is published by a party to the events. Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism compiled it with the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Israel. It reported that 1,216 entities had ratified the IHRA working definition by the end of 2023, 97 of them new that year (Ministry for Diaspora Affairs, 2024).

That figure is the ministry's own reported total and is not independently verified. It also counts a different universe on its own definitions: entities of every kind, not UN member states. For that reason the 1,216 and the 48 are never summed and never compared.

The dates are fixed by the instruments themselves:

Instrument	When its existence-related wording dates from	Source
IHRA self-determination example	The Plenary decision of **26 May 2016**	International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016
Jerusalem Declaration, guideline 10	Launch on **25 March 2021**	Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, 2021
Each government's use of the IHRA text	That state's own entry on the roll, from **12 December 2016**	International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016

Which state does Israeli law say is meant to exist?

The Knesset's 2018 Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People states at clause 1(c): "The realization of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is exclusive to the Jewish People." The Knesset labels its English translation unofficial. Israel's own enacted text therefore locates in this State the self-determination that IHRA's example speaks of.

Clause 1(b) calls Israel "the nation state of the Jewish People in which it realizes its natural, cultural, religious and historical right to self-determination" (Knesset, 2018). The law contains no equality clause and no individual-rights clause. That is a fact about the text, not a finding about how the State treats anyone. The law's provisions and its court record are read in the Nation-State Law and claims of Jewish supremacy.

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An earlier Basic Law carries the same identity. Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty was adopted in 1992. Its purpose clause, numbered 1a in the Knesset's English text, reads: "The purpose of this Basic Law is to protect human dignity and liberty, in order to embed the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, in a basic law" (Knesset, 1992). The Knesset also describes this translation as unofficial and directs readers to the Hebrew for the operative law.

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counts the population of that state. Its own preliminary estimate for the eve of Independence Day 2026, up to date for 22 April 2026, was **10.244 million** people (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026):

- **Jews and Others:** 7.790 million (76%)
- **Arabs:** 2.157 million (21.1%)
- **Foreigners:** 296,000 (2.9%), with foreigner data relating to the end of 2025

The Bureau's definitions are its own. "Others" covers non-Arab Christians, other religions and those not classified by religion. "Arabs" covers "Moslems, Arab Christians and Druze." The estimates rest on the 2022 census.

Israel's population by Bureau category

SHARE OF 10.244 MILLION, PRELIMINARY, APRIL 2026; FOREIGNERS AS OF END OF 2025

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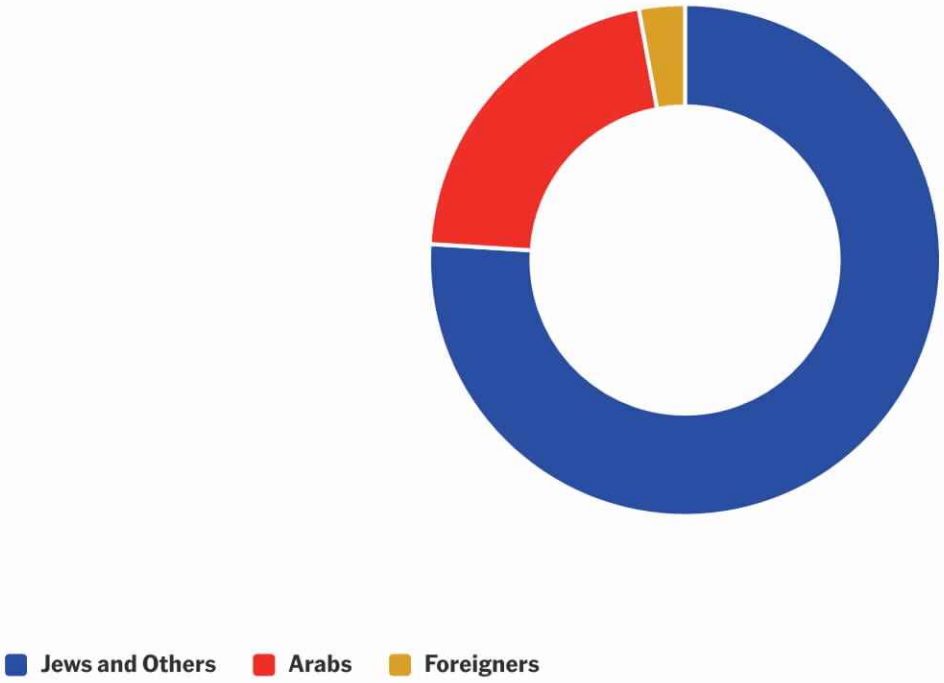

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026, the Bureau's own preliminary estimate.

In the state's own law, then, the phrase "Israel's right to exist" refers to a nation-state of the Jewish people whose population is about one-fifth Arab. Whether a denial of that state touches the definitions depends on which feature of it a speaker denies.

Is rejecting Israel the same as rejecting its Jewish character?

In Sammy Smooha's September to October 1995 survey of 1,200 Arab citizens of Israel, published in Israel Studies in 1997, **6.8%** denied Israel's right to exist. A separate question asked about the state's Jewish character, and about five times as many answered against it. Within one population, the two claims carried by the phrase "right to exist" drew sharply different answers.

All of the figures come from the 1995 fieldwork (Smooha, 1997, peer-reviewed):

- 6.8% denied Israel's right to exist.
- 35.3% rejected its right to exist as a Jewish-Zionist state.
- 75.0% objected to Israel keeping a Jewish majority.

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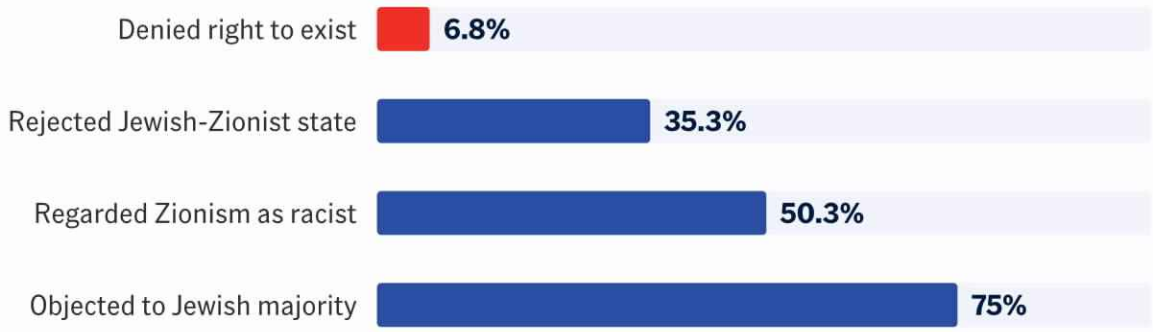
- 50.3% regarded Zionism as racist.

The interviews were face to face with respondents aged 18 or older living inside the pre-1967 borders, excluding East Jerusalem. This was the fifth wave of a series Smooha ran among Arab citizens in 1976, 1980, 1985, 1988 and 1995.

Arab citizens' views of Israel's existence and character

SHARE AGREEING WITH EACH ITEM, FACE-TO-FACE SURVEY OF 1,200 ARAB CITIZENS, SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 1995



Source: Smooha, 1997, Israel Studies, peer-reviewed; 1995 fieldwork, n = 1,200.

Each item is a separate question, so the four shares overlap and do not sum to a whole. The survey sits inside an article that proposes "ethnic democracy" as a type of state. Smooha defines that type as "a system that combines the extension of civil and political rights to individuals and some collective rights to minorities, with institutionalization of majority control over the state" (Smooha, 1997).

The 1995 figures describe one minority population, three decades ago. None of the four items asked about Jews as a people, so the survey measures attitudes toward the state and its character, not antisemitism. What it records is structural. Respondents separated the existence of the state from its Jewish-Zionist character, and the gap between 6.8% and 35.3% falls on the same line that the IHRA and Jerusalem Declaration texts draw in different places.

Does calling for one equal state deny Israel's right to exist?

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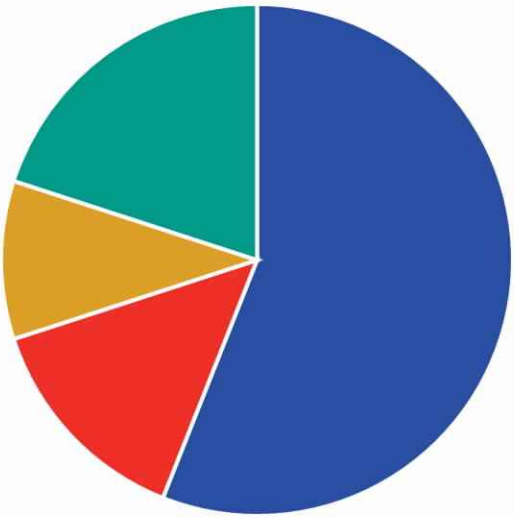
The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (2021) lists at guideline 12, among examples that "on the face of it" are not antisemitic, support for "arrangements that accord full equality to all inhabitants 'between the river and the sea', whether in two states, a binational state, unitary democratic state, federal state, or in whatever form." Section C, which contains it, adds "(whether or not one approves of the view or action)."

Guideline 12 does not stand alone. The Declaration's preamble directs that guidelines 6 to 15 "should be taken together," which places it beside guideline 10 and its protection for the right of Jews in Israel "to exist and flourish, collectively and individually, as Jews." On the Declaration's own terms, a one-state proposal falls on the non-antisemitic side of the line only on the face of it, and context can move it.

The Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) measured how widely a single state is preferred. Its Poll No. 97 was fielded face to face between 5 and 8 August 2026 with 1,270 respondents in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with a margin of error of 3.5%. In a three-way forced choice, **10%** preferred "a single state with equal rights for both sides" (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026).

Preferred arrangement, three-way forced choice
WEST BANK AND GAZA, N = 1,270, 5 TO 8 AUGUST 2026, MARGIN OF ERROR 3.5%



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Source: Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026, Poll No. 97.

A different item in the same poll asked about abandoning the two-state solution "in favor of a single state for Palestinians and Israelis." It drew 33% support, against 27% ten months earlier. The 10% and the 33% answer different questions and are not one trend.

Three limits travel with these figures. The sampling frame names only the West Bank and Gaza, so East Jerusalem is outside it. In Gaza, interviews were confined to areas "where there is no Israeli military presence," with shelter interviews for areas under Israeli military occupation, so the Gaza subsample is not a free probability sample. The figures measure opinion only, and none of the items cited here asked about Jews or about Israel's right to exist.

Does singling out Israel's existence change the answer?

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's 2016 framing paragraph has two limbs. Manifestations "might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic." The IHRA text thus makes comparison with other countries part of how a statement about Israel is read.

The example that follows the self-determination example in IHRA's list carries the test into explicit language: "Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation." In that sentence "it" refers to the State of Israel, named in the example before it. Both sit under the same hedge, "taking into account the overall context" (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016).

The Nexus Document, in its June 2024 revision, writes a narrower test. It is published by the Nexus Project, which states that it "is fiscally sponsored by the New Israel Fund," and its Task Force is affiliated with the Center for the Study of Hate at Bard College. Item 9 of its "What is Antisemitic?" list reads: "It is antisemitic to treat Israel differently solely because it is a Jewish state, using standards different than those applied to other countries." Item 5 of its "What is Not Antisemitic?" list reads: "Paying disproportionate attention to Israel and

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treating Israel differently than other countries is not prima facie proof of antisemitism" (Nexus Task Force, 2021, updated June 2024).

The Jerusalem Declaration addresses the same ground at guideline 15: "Criticism that some may see as excessive or contentious, or as reflecting a 'double standard', is not, in and of itself, antisemitic" (Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, 2021).

Text	What it says about treating Israel differently	Source
IHRA working definition	Double standards requiring behavior "not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation" may be an example, **in context**	International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016
Nexus Document, "What is Antisemitic?" item 9	Antisemitic when Israel is treated differently "**solely** because it is a Jewish state"	Nexus Task Force, 2021, updated June 2024
Jerusalem Declaration, guideline 15	A "double standard" is "**not, in and of itself**, antisemitic"	Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, 2021

The three texts place the threshold at different points. IHRA ties it to a double standard read in context, Nexus to a motive ("solely because it is a Jewish state"), and the Declaration declines to treat a double standard as sufficient on its own.

What does Israel's government count as a threat to its existence?

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a 30 December 2009 statement of its own positions, wrote that "the influx of millions of Palestinians into the State of Israel would threaten the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, obliterating its basic identity as the homeland of the Jewish people." This is a party's own stated position, and it defines existence demographically.

The same document calls the demand to return "nothing more than a euphemism for the demographic destruction of the Jewish state." Its Principle 2 states that "Israel cannot allow itself to be demographically engulfed by a flood of refugees, undermining the basic identity of Israel as the world's only Jewish state." On law, the Ministry's position is that "No such right exists under international law" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009).

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The Ministry gave its own 2009 round figures for the population it was describing: "approximately 7 million (of whom about one-fifth are Arab-Israelis)." Those are the Ministry's 2009 numbers. The current figure comes from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics: 10.244 million on the eve of Independence Day 2026, of whom 2.157 million, or 21.1%, are Arabs, a preliminary estimate (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026). The FAQ computes no projected Jewish share under any scenario of return. It asserts the consequence.

The Ministry's text and the definitions converge on one point. All three treat the existence at stake as more than a state's territorial survival:

- **The Ministry (2009)** defines the threat as the end of a Jewish majority and of Israel's "basic identity" as a Jewish state.
- **The IHRA example (2016)** concerns the Jewish people's self-determination.
- **The Basic Law (2018)** makes that self-determination "exclusive to the Jewish People."

The Smooha survey item that drew 75.0% opposition among Arab citizens in 1995 asked about the same feature, Israel keeping a Jewish majority. On the Israeli government's own account, then, a position on the Jewish majority is a position on the state's existence as that government defines it.

Has the antisemitism charge ever been aimed at Zionism itself?

On 23 August 1917, E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, circulated War Cabinet paper G.T. 1868, titled "The Anti-Semitism of the Present Government." The paper, held by The National Archives at CAB 24/24/71, argued that a proposed British policy supporting Zionism in Palestine was "anti-Semitic in result." The antisemitism charge was here pointed at the state project, by a minister writing "as the one Jewish Minister in the Government."

His purpose clause, quoted whole from the archive's published page, reads: "I have chosen the above title for this memorandum, not in any hostile sense, not by any means as quarrelling with an anti-Semitic view which may be held by my colleagues, not with a desire to deny that anti-Semitism can be held by rational men, not even with a view to suggesting that the Government is deliberately anti-Semitic ; but I wish to place on record my view that the

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policy of His Majesty's Government is anti-Semitic in result and will prove a rallying ground for Anti-Semites in every country in the world" (Montagu, 1917).

The paper answered a draft: Lord Rothschild's letter of 18 July 1917 and a reply then still unissued. The Balfour Declaration was sent on 2 November 1917, ten weeks later. On page 2, read from a relayed scan of the same print, Montagu sets out "four principles," the first being "I assert that there is not a Jewish nation."

Eighteen months later, a group of American Jews made a related argument. Their Statement to the Peace Conference, drafted by Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, Professor Morris Jastrow and Max Senior, was presented to President Woodrow Wilson by Representative Julius Kahn of California on 4 March 1919. The document states no signatory count. Two wire reports printed in March 1919, in the Douglas Daily International and the Wisconsin Weekly Blade, put it at 300.

Objection 4, as reproduced from the drafting committee's file in American Jewish Archives in 1962, protests "the re-establishment in Palestine of a distinctively Jewish State as utterly opposed to the principles of democracy." The document closes: "We do not wish to see Palestine, either now or at any time in the future, organized as a Jewish State" (Berkowitz, Jastrow, Senior and the signers, 1919).

Each text is evidence of what its authors argued on its date, not of what other Jews then believed, and both measure nothing. Together they show the question running in both directions on the record: in 1917 and 1919, Jewish opponents of a Jewish state argued that the state project itself would endanger Jews.

Do the surveys separate rejecting Israel from disliking Jews?

Harber, Bulska, Malloy and Vila reported in 2026, across three preregistered studies of 373, 243 and 493 participants, that a model running through conspiracy beliefs implicating Israel and Zionists accounted for **over 55%** of the variance in anti-Israel attitudes. Those conspiracy beliefs mediated the association between antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes (peer-reviewed; figures from the abstract).

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The same abstract records where the link did not run. Conspiracy beliefs about Jews unrelated to Israel did not mediate the association, and a general conspiratorial mindset did not explain the results. Democrats, compared with Republicans, expressed less antisemitism but stronger anti-Israel attitudes and greater endorsement of anti-Israel and anti-Zionist conspiracy beliefs (Harber, Bulska, Malloy and Vila, 2026). The authors measured associations, so the finding is correlational: the two attitude sets moved together through conspiracy beliefs about Israel and Zionists, not through conspiracy beliefs about Jews unrelated to Israel.

Hersh and Royden (2022) ran several experiments inside an original survey of about 3,500 US adults, with an oversample of young adults, published in Political Research Quarterly. On the published summary, overt antisemitic attitudes were rare on the political left and more common on the right, with the highest concentration among young adults on the far right.

Study	Sample and status	What it measured
Harber, Bulska, Malloy and Vila, 2026	Three studies, N = **373, 243 and 493**; peer-reviewed, abstract-sourced	Antisemitism, anti-Israel attitudes and conspiracy beliefs
Hersh and Royden, 2022	About **3,500** US adults; peer-reviewed, summary-sourced	Antisemitic attitudes across the ideological spectrum
Smooha, 1997	**1,200** Arab citizens of Israel, 1995; peer-reviewed	Views of Israel's existence and Jewish character

Neither the Harber abstract nor the Hersh and Royden summary describes an item on denial of Israel's right to exist as such. Their measures concern anti-Israel attitudes broadly. The only item in this report that isolates existence-denial is Smooha's 1995 question, put to a different population and paired with no antisemitism scale. No source read for this report gives a measured rate connecting denial of Israel's right to exist, specifically, with antisemitic belief.

Methodology and limitations

The evidence falls into four source types, each labelled where it appears.

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Definitional instruments. The IHRA working definition (2016) was read complete in IHRA's own web page and its own PDF, which agree word for word. The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (2021) was read in the signatories' web text and PDF; the two differ in six minor places, and quotations here follow the PDF. The Nexus Document is the June 2024 revision. The February 2021 original was not retrievable, and nothing here is attributed to it. Its two lists are numbered separately, so items are cited by list name. Each instrument is cited for its own wording only. None of them was applied here to any statement or speaker.

Official and primary records. The Knesset's English texts of the 2018 and 1992 Basic Laws are labelled unofficial by the Knesset, and the Hebrew governs. The Central Bureau of Statistics figures are preliminary, rest on the 2022 census, and from 2023 include foreigners, so the series is not continuous with earlier years. The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs FAQ (2009) and the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs count (2024) are a party's own statements and are labelled as such. Montagu's page 1 was read from The National Archives' own image; pages 2 and 3 from a relayed scan of the same print. No scan of the printed 1919 Statement was located, so it was read in two reproductions, a 1919 Denver newspaper printing and a 1962 American Jewish Archives article, and quotations follow the latter.

Surveys and measured research. Smooha's figures come from 1995 fieldwork, n = 1,200, inside the pre-1967 borders excluding East Jerusalem. PSR Poll No. 97 had n = 1,270, a margin of error of 3.5% for the whole sample, wider bounds for regional subsamples, and fieldwork constraints in Gaza. Hersh and Royden (2022) is summary-sourced and Harber and colleagues (2026) abstract-sourced, so no full-text detail is implied. All survey findings are associations.

What is contested. The boundary between criticism of Israel and antisemitism is itself the subject of the competing definitions. Whether IHRA's examples were adopted with its definition is disputed, and the layout of IHRA's own text is recorded here without resolving it.

Conclusion

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So does denying Israel's right to exist count as antisemitic? Both of the main texts name a form of that denial on their antisemitic side. IHRA's 2016 example concerns the Jewish people's self-determination, and the Jerusalem Declaration's 2021 guideline 10 concerns Jews in Israel existing and flourishing as Jews, while its guideline 12 places a single equal state on the other side, on the face of it. Both texts make context the deciding term.

The phrase carries more than one claim, and the record separates them. Israel's Basic Law makes self-determination in the State "exclusive to the Jewish People." Its Foreign Ministry, in its own 2009 statement, defined the threat to its existence as demographic. Arab citizens surveyed in 1995 drew a fivefold line between the state, which 6.8% rejected, and its Jewish-Zionist character, which 35.3% rejected. In 1917 and 1919, Jewish opponents of a Jewish state argued that the project itself would harm Jews. The measured research ties anti-Israel attitudes to antisemitism through conspiracy beliefs about Israel and Zionists, and none of the surveys cited here isolates existence-denial against an antisemitism scale.

The instruments supply the words, and the record shows how far apart the claims inside the phrase can sit. When someone says Israel has no right to exist, which existence are they denying: a state, a Jewish majority, or the Jewish people's self-determination? And how far does the conspiracy thinking that Harber and colleagues found linking anti-Israel and antisemitic attitudes travel inside that sentence?

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the IHRA working definition legally binding?

No. IHRA's 2016 decision adopts a "non-legally binding working definition," and the qualifier also appears in the filename of IHRA's own PDF. One of its closing paragraphs states that antisemitic acts "are criminal when they are so defined by law," which leaves criminality to national legislation.

Did the IHRA Plenary adopt the eleven examples?

The text IHRA publishes puts the two-sentence definition inside the adoption sentence and introduces the examples afterwards on a separate line, "the following examples may serve as

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illustrations." Whether the examples were adopted with the definition is disputed. The layout of IHRA's own two copies is the record on which that dispute turns.

How many scholars signed the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism?

The Declaration's website states that it was "Initially signed by 210 scholars" on its 2021 launch and "has now more than 400 signatories." No state, parliament or intergovernmental body has adopted it, so its standing rests on its signatories.

Which version of the Nexus Document is current?

The Nexus Project publishes only the revision of June 2024, and the document's own trailer dates the original to February 2021 and its White Paper to late 2020. Its own two copies give that White Paper date differently, December 2020 in the PDF and November 2020 on the web page.

What share of Palestinians support a two-state solution?

PSR's Poll No. 97 of August 2026 found 44% support and 50% opposition on a bare question with no details given. On a three-way forced choice in the same poll, 56% chose two states on the 1967 borders. The two figures come from different question forms, so the gap between them reflects wording, not a change in opinion.

Does Israel's Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty include an equality clause?

No. The Knesset's English text contains no occurrence of "equal," "discrimin," "religion," "race" or "nationality." Its section 1 says rights are upheld "in the spirit of the principles included in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel," which does not enact an equality right.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

How has Israeli support for a two-state solution changed? Four pollsters' series and one Knesset vote

Israeli Jewish support for the two-state concept fell from 42% in 2020 to 34% in December 2022; later Gallup and Pew readings run lower still.

Two-State Solution | Israeli Public Opinion | Survey Research | Knesset | Palestinian Statehood



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Support among Israeli Jews for the general concept of a two-state solution fell from 42% in September 2020 to **34%** in December 2022, on the joint Palestinian-Israeli Pulse poll fielded by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) and Tel Aviv University. That was the lowest reading since the series began in June 2016. Is a Palestinian state alongside Israel still what most Israelis say they want? In that wave the answer among Israeli Jews was no, with 53% opposed, while the all-Israeli figure stood at 39%, held up by a steady 60% among Israeli Arabs. Later readings run lower: a Pulse wave fielded in July 2024 and published by Tel Aviv University's Peace Index put Israeli Jewish support at 21%, and Gallup, on a different wording, recorded 26% of Israelis backing an independent Palestinian state in mid-2026.

Key Findings

- Support among Israeli Jews for "the general concept of the two-state solution before testing the details of the plan" fell from 42% in September 2020 to 34% in December 2022 (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and Tel Aviv University, 2023).
- In the same December 2022 wave, 53% of Israeli Jews opposed the concept, and the authors reported that among Israeli Jews "support for one unequal state under Israeli rule is higher than the two-state solution" (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and Tel Aviv University, 2023).
- Israeli Arabs recorded 60% support in December 2022, against 59% in 2020, lifting the all-Israeli figure to 39%, down from 44% (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and Tel Aviv University, 2023). Arabs were 20.9% of Israel's population in 2025 on a preliminary official estimate (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025).
- The Knesset voted 68 to 9 in July 2024 for a non-binding declaration opposing "a Palestinian state west of the Jordan," Israel's legislature stating its own position as a party to the conflict (CNN, 2024).
- Inside one survey of 1,270 Palestinians in August 2026, a bare two-state item drew 44% and a 1967-borders option chosen from three drew 56%, a 12-point gap produced by wording (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026).

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How far did Israeli Jewish support fall between 2020 and 2022?

Support among Israeli Jews fell **8 points**, from 42% in September 2020 to 34% in December 2022, on the Palestinian-Israeli Pulse run by PSR in Ramallah with Tel Aviv University (PSR and Tel Aviv University, 2023). The item asked about "the general concept of the two-state solution before testing the details of the plan," so it measures reaction to the idea, not to a negotiated package.

The authors set the two waves side by side in one passage: "only 33% of Palestinians and 34% of Israeli Jews support the general concept of the two-state solution before testing the details of the plan," and "Two years ago, 43% of the Palestinians and 42% of Israeli Jews supported this solution." Fieldwork closed on 13 December 2022 and the summary is dated 24 January 2023, so the measurement belongs to December 2022 even though PSR's series index files the wave under 2023.

The Israeli sample was 900 adults interviewed online in Hebrew and Arabic between 6 and 13 December 2022. It was built by quota as 500 Jews inside Israel, 200 West Bank settlers and 200 Israeli Arabs, then reweighted to each group's proportionate size and to religious and secular divisions. The whole-sample margin of error is 3.34%. Because the sample was assembled rather than drawn, the Israeli Jewish subsample carries a wider bound than 3.34%, and the summary publishes none for it.

The same series holds a longer baseline. The first Pulse summary, from June 2016 fieldwork run by PSR with the Israel Democracy Institute, reported 53% support among Israeli Jews, 87% among Arab Israelis and 58.5% overall, from a phone sample of 1,184 Israelis (Israel Democracy Institute and PSR, 2016). Against that opening wave, the December 2022 Jewish reading sits 19 points lower, of which 8 points came between the 2020 and 2022 waves; the Israeli mode moved from phone to online in between.

Support for the two-state concept, by population

PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI PULSE, SEPTEMBER 2020 AND DECEMBER 2022 WAVES. ISRAELI SAMPLE N=900, MARGIN OF ERROR 3.34% (WHOLE SAMPLE); PALESTINIAN SAMPLE N=1,270, MARGIN OF ERROR 3%

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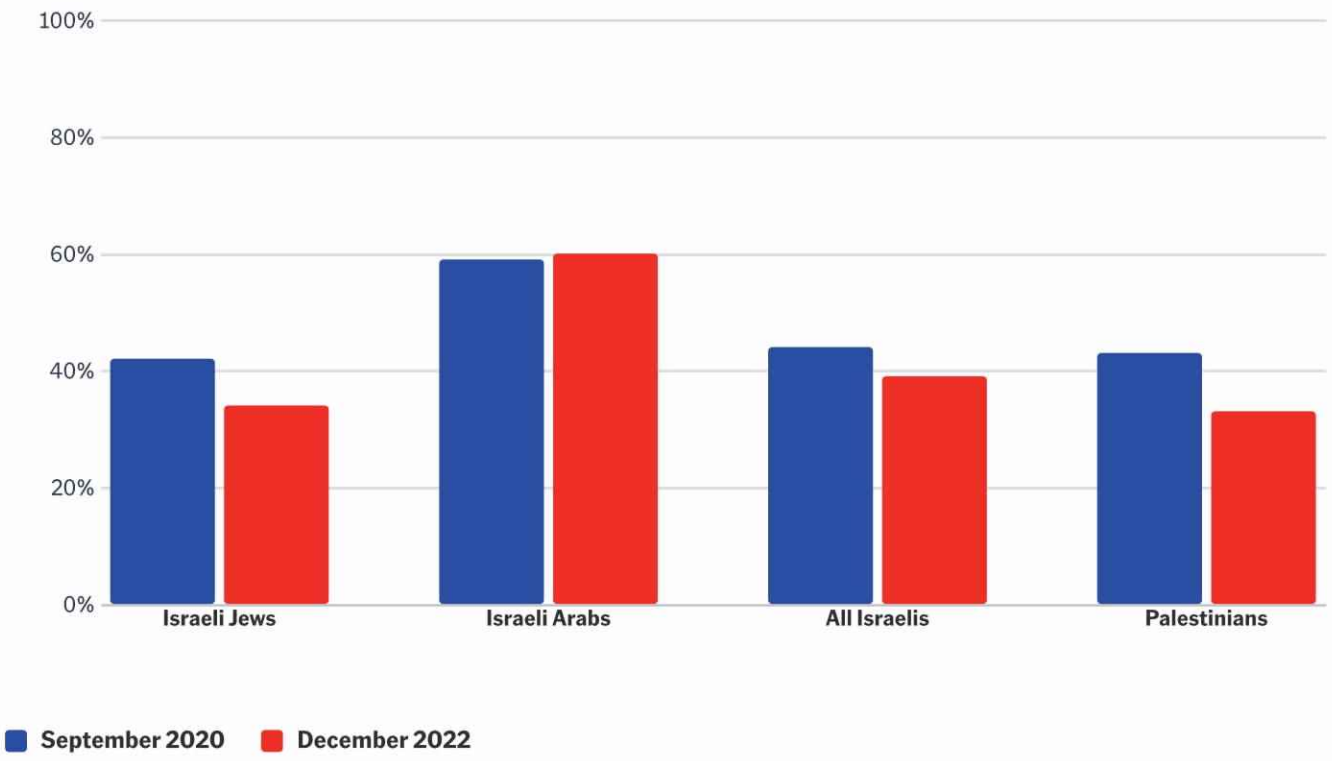

Source: Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and Tel Aviv University, 2023.

Who says Israeli support has collapsed, and since when?

The Pulse's four authors, Khalil Shikaki of PSR, Nimrod Rosler and Alon Yakter of Tel Aviv University and Dahlia Scheindlin, wrote in January 2023 that support "drops significantly" and that December 2022 marked "the lowest level of support for this concept among Palestinians, Israeli Jews, and all Israelis, since the beginning of the Pulse, in **June 2016**" (PSR and Tel Aviv University, 2023).

The decline is the survey team's own reading of its own instrument, stated in its headline. The base rate behind "lowest" is the series itself: the waves fielded since June 2016, a window of six and a half years. The Pulse holds no reading from before 2016, so its floor is a floor for that window, not for the decades before it.

Series that start earlier measure different things. Gallup asks Israelis whether they support creating an independent Palestinian state and recorded 61% in 2012 (Gallup, 2026). The Pew Research Center asks whether a way can be found for Israel and an independent Palestinian state to coexist peacefully and recorded 50% in 2013 (Pew Research Center, 2025). Neither is

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the Pulse question, so neither supplies a pre-2016 starting point for the Pulse line, though each runs lower in its later readings than in its first.

On why the fall steepened, the authors offered a conditional reading worded as a possibility: "The reason for the current greater drop might be explained by the significant rise in armed clashes between Palestinians and Israelis in 2022 and the electoral success of extreme right-wing forces in Israel." The sentence is a hypothesis in the source. The summary carries no measured attribution for either development, and both coincided with the December 2022 wave rather than being tested against it.

Why does the all-Israeli figure sit above the Jewish figure?

Israeli Arabs recorded **60%** support for the two-state concept in December 2022, against 59% in 2020, on the PSR and Tel Aviv University Pulse, the only population in the poll whose reading did not fall (PSR and Tel Aviv University, 2023). Blended with the falling Jewish reading, it produced an all-Israeli figure of 39%.

The authors put it as "bringing the current total Israeli average to 39% compared to 44% in 2020." Four denominators sit in that passage and they are not interchangeable: 34% is Israeli Jews, 60% is Israeli Arabs, 39% is all Israelis, and 33% is Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. The publisher's own shorthand, "a third on each side," covers the first and last and excludes Israeli Arabs.

The weighting comes from population. Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics put the country's population on the eve of Independence Day 2025 at 10.094 million, of whom 2.114 million, or 20.9%, were Arabs and 7.732 million, or 76.6%, were Jews and Others, a preliminary estimate based on the 2022 census (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025). Weighting a 60% reading by roughly one fifth and a 34% reading by roughly four fifths yields about 39%, matching the published all-Israeli figure. That is illustrative arithmetic on 2025 population shares; the summary reports reweighting but does not print the weights.

The Arab reading has its own history. The 2016 wave recorded 87% support among Arab Israelis (Israel Democracy Institute and PSR, 2016), so the Arab figure fell 27 points across the series while holding flat between its last two waves. It also rests on 200 interviews: the

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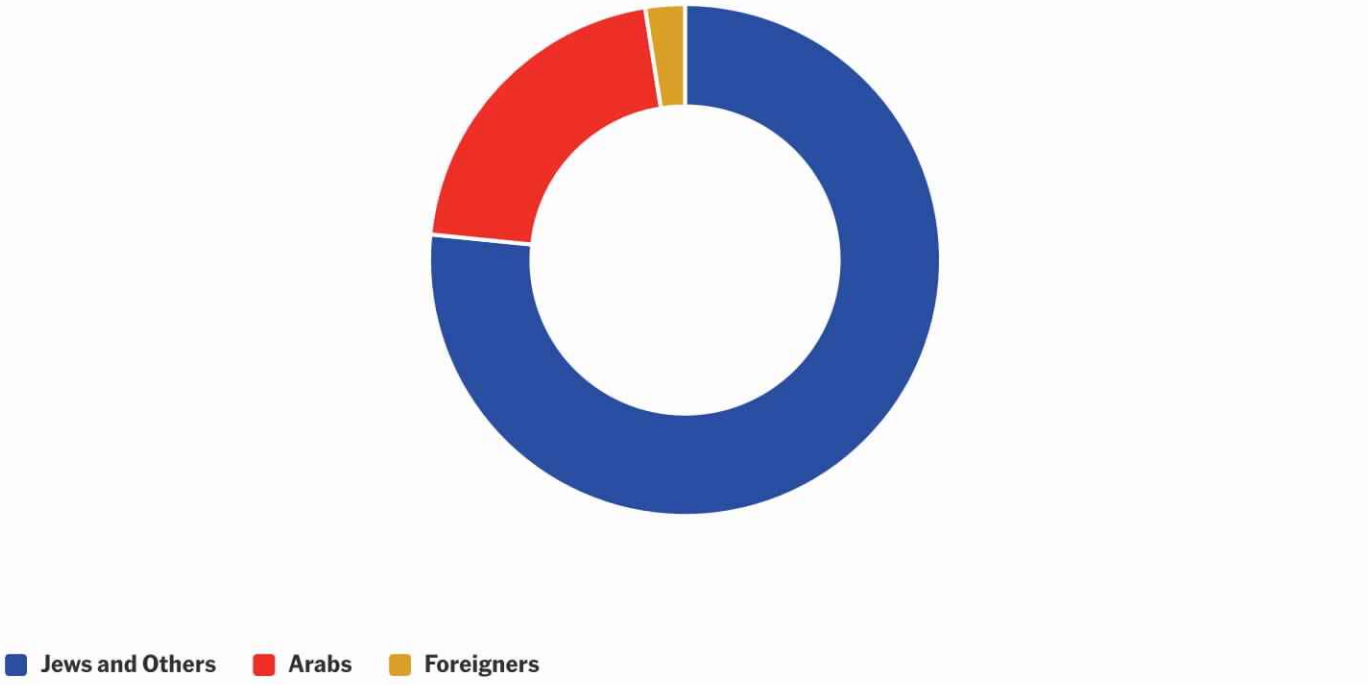
3.34% margin belongs to the whole Israeli sample of 900, and a one-point move from 59% to 60% is far smaller than the bound a subsample of 200 carries.

Israel's population by group, 2025

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE, EVE OF INDEPENDENCE DAY 2025; TOTAL 10.094 MILLION. FOREIGNER SHARE IS FOR MID-2024



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025 (official record).

What did Israeli Jews prefer as two-state support fell?

A majority of Israeli Jews, **53%**, opposed the general concept of the two-state solution in the December 2022 Pulse, against 34% who supported it, so opposition was the leading answer in that population (PSR and Tel Aviv University, 2023).

The authors wrote that "66% of Palestinians and 53% of Israeli Jews are opposed."

Among Israeli Jews the two shares sum to 87%, leaving 13% who gave neither answer. Among Palestinians the split was wider and the residual smaller: 66% opposed and 33% supported.

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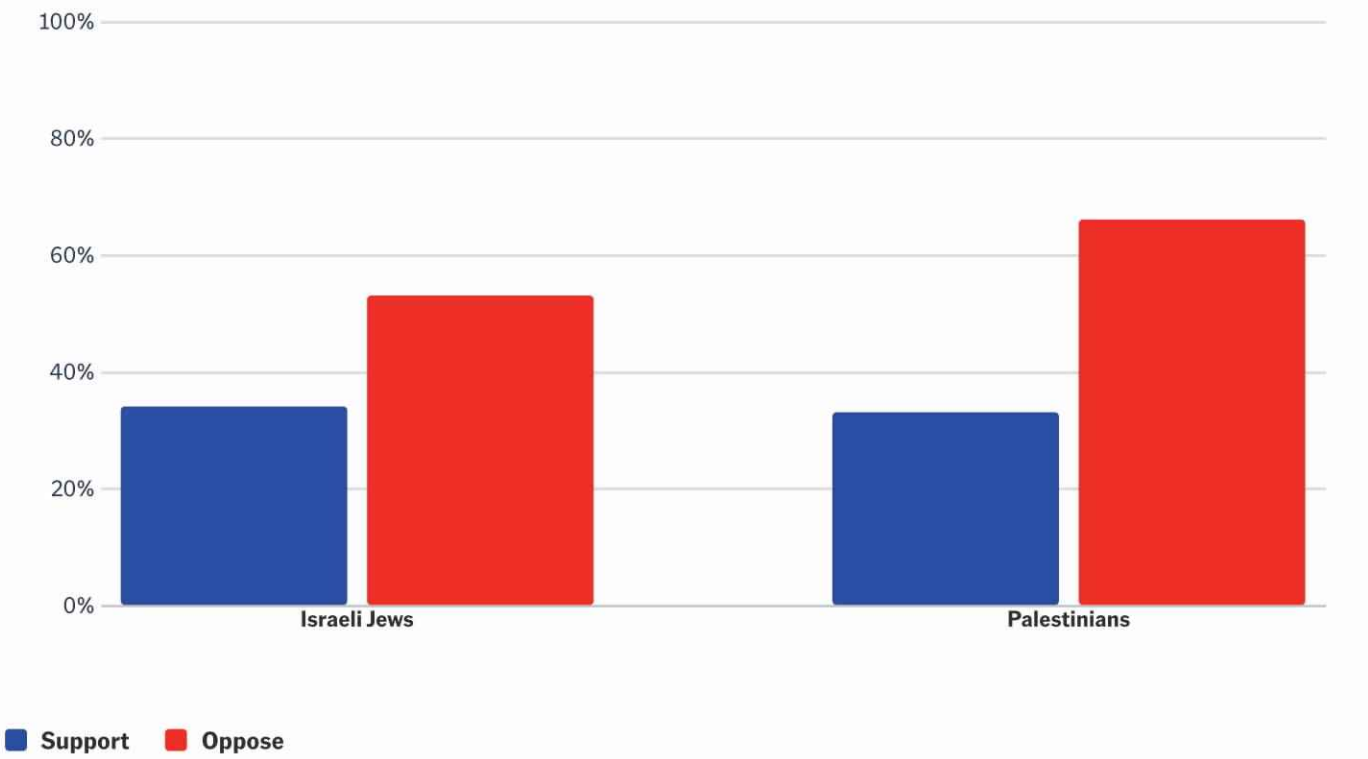
Opposition to two states did not translate into broad backing for a single replacement. The authors reported that "fewer people among Palestinians and Israelis as a whole support two possible alternatives to a two-state solution: one state with equal rights and one state without rights." The next sentence records one exception: "Among Israeli Jews, however, support for one unequal state under Israeli rule is higher than the two-state solution." The summary ranks the options in words and attaches no percentage to the unequal-state option in that passage, so its size among Israeli Jews in December 2022 is documented only as above 34%.

The comparison across the two publics carries a mode caveat. Palestinians were interviewed face to face in 127 randomly selected locations between 1 and 4 December 2022; Israelis were interviewed online between 6 and 13 December. Mode effects on an attitude question of this kind are a known source of difference, and the summary offers no adjustment for them.

Support and opposition to the two-state concept

DECEMBER 2022 PULSE WAVE; SHARES DO NOT SUM TO 100 BECAUSE OF NON-RESPONSE



Source: Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research and Tel Aviv University, 2023.

How has Israel's stated position on a Palestinian state shifted?

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The Knesset voted **68 to 9** on the night of 17 to 18 July 2024 for a non-binding declaration stating that it "firmly opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state west of the Jordan (river)," as CNN reported (CNN, 2024). The declaration is Israel's own legislature stating its position as a party to the conflict, and it is not a statute.

CNN quoted the declaration's stated reason: "The establishment of a Palestinian state in the heart of the Land of Israel would pose an existential danger to the State of Israel and its citizens, perpetuate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and destabilize the region." The tally is carried from CNN's report of the session. The vote sits alongside the incentives Israeli leaders face on two states in the enacted record.

Fifteen years earlier, the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs named a Palestinian homeland in its own principles. Its question-and-answer document of 30 December 2009 set out a second principle: "While Palestinian refugees should be free to settle in the Palestinian homeland, Israel cannot allow itself to be demographically engulfed by a flood of refugees, undermining the basic identity of Israel as the world's only Jewish state" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009). The text is the party's own stated position, and it pairs the homeland reference with a refusal of refugee return to Israel.

On 30 November 2015, a Ministry page on settlements described the West Bank as "territory over which there are competing claims which should be resolved in peace process negotiations," adding that "Israel recognizes that the Palestinians also entertain claims to this area" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). That page, also the party's own position, places the territory's future in negotiation.

In sequence, the three texts move from a homeland named as a destination for refugees in 2009, to competing claims left to negotiation in 2015, to a recorded parliamentary vote against a Palestinian state west of the Jordan in 2024. The public readings in the sections above fell over an overlapping period. The two trajectories coincided in time; none of these sources measures whether either shaped the other.

Israel's stated positions on Palestinian statehood

EACH ENTRY IS A PARTY'S OWN STATED POSITION, DATED TO ITS PUBLICATION OR VOTE

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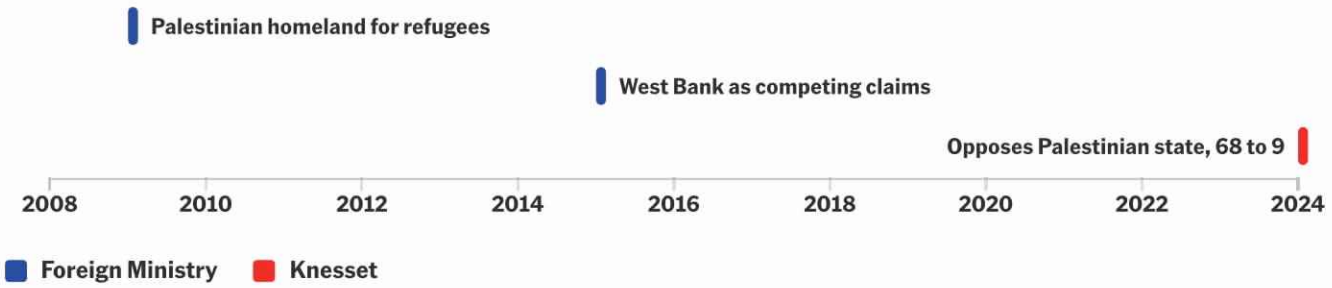

Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009 and 2015; CNN, 2024. Party statements, not findings.

Does the question's wording change the two-state number?

Question form alone moved support by **12 points** inside a single PSR survey (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026).

In that survey of 1,270 Palestinians, fielded 5 to 8 August 2026 with a 3.5% margin of error, 44% backed a bare two-state item and 56% chose a 1967-borders version from a three-option menu (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026).

The two items differ only in what they offer. The first was put "without providing any additional details about it," and 44% supported it against 50% opposed. The second offered "the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders" beside a confederation (14%) and a single state with equal rights (10%), with 20% not answering. The same respondents produced both numbers in the same week. The poll is one input to the separate record on Palestinian positions on two states.

Four Israeli series diverge for the same reason. Gallup asks Israelis whether they support creating an independent Palestinian state and recorded 61% in 2012, 25% in 2023, 27% in both 2024 and 2025 and 26% in 2026 (Gallup, 2026). The Pew Research Center asks whether Israel and an independent Palestinian state can coexist peacefully and recorded 50% in 2013, 35% in spring 2023 and 21% in 2025 (Pew Research Center, 2023; Pew Research Center, 2025). The Israel Democracy Institute asked Jewish Israelis in 2021 which outcomes were acceptable: 34% chose the two-state solution and 41.5% chose continuation of the status quo (Israel Democracy Institute, 2021). The Pulse asks about "the general concept" before any details.

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Each series runs downward on its own terms, and each answers a different question: support for a state, belief that coexistence is possible, acceptability of an outcome, or reaction to a concept. A number from one cannot be placed on another's line. The same discipline binds within PSR's own work. Poll No 97 samples the West Bank and Gaza only, while the Pulse frame adds East Jerusalem, so the two are separate populations as well as separate wordings.

Two wordings, one survey

PALESTINIAN RESPONDENTS, FIELDWORK 5 TO 8 AUGUST 2026, N=1,270, MARGIN OF ERROR 3.5%



Source: Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026.

Has the same joint poll been fielded since October 2023?

PSR's index of the Palestinian-Israeli Pulse lists **five** waves, for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020 and 2023, and the last is the December 2022 fieldwork published in January 2023 (PSR and Tel Aviv University, 2023). As at November 2026, that index lists no wave fielded after the war began in October 2023, though Tel Aviv University's site carries one.

Tel Aviv University's Peace Index, the Israeli partner's site, publishes a page headed "The Palestinian-Israeli Pulse, September 2024." Its summary, dated 12 September 2024, describes a joint PSR and Tel Aviv University poll conducted in July 2024, with 900 Israelis interviewed online between 18 and 29 July (margin of error 3.34%). It reports 21% support among Israeli Jews, 72% among Israeli Arabs and 31% among all Israelis (Tel Aviv University Peace Index, 2024). Beside the December 2022 wave, that is 13 points lower among Israeli Jews and 8 points lower among all Israelis, while the Arab reading is 12 points higher. The two partners' records of the series differ: the July 2024 wave appears on the Tel Aviv University site and not in PSR's index.

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The Palestinian side has a later reading from a different instrument. PSR's Poll No 97 recorded 44% Palestinian support for a bare two-state item in August 2026, against 45% ten months earlier (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026). That poll excludes East Jerusalem, uses different wording and is a separate publication, so it continues neither the Pulse's Palestinian line nor any Israeli one.

Fieldwork conditions also bound the later Palestinian figures. PSR interviewed in Gaza "in areas west, south, and north of what has become known as the 'Yellow Line,' areas where there is no Israeli military presence," and in shelters for residents of areas under Israeli military occupation, so its Gaza subsample is not a free probability sample of the Strip.

The July 2024 wave is therefore the one reading that puts the Pulse question to both publics on both sides of October 2023, and it sits in Tel Aviv University's record rather than PSR's index. Pew's 2025 reading and Gallup's 2024 to 2026 readings also span the war, each on its own wording.

Methodology and limitations

The evidence comes from four source types. The spine is the Palestinian-Israeli Pulse, a joint survey design by PSR and Tel Aviv University, the one instrument here that puts the same two-state question to Israelis and Palestinians in one design. Its December 2022 wave interviewed 1,270 Palestinian adults face to face in 127 randomly selected locations in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza between 1 and 4 December 2022 (margin of error 3%), and 900 Israeli adults online between 6 and 13 December 2022 (margin of error 3.34%). The Israeli sample was quota-built, then reweighted to population proportions, so the settler and Israeli Arab subsamples of 200 each carry bounds well beyond the whole-sample 3.34%, and the summary publishes none. The two publics were surveyed by different modes in windows five days apart, and the summary offers no adjustment for mode effects. The summary's feasibility and prospects paragraphs appear twice on the published page, and every figure here was read once, from the paragraph itself.

The second source type is PSR's quarterly Palestinian series, Poll No 97: 1,270 respondents interviewed face to face, 830 in the West Bank across 83 localities and 440 in Gaza across 44, between 5 and 8 August 2026, margin of error 3.5% for the whole sample and wider,

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unpublished bounds for each region. A subheading on the poll's page reads "5-8 September 2025," while the methodology paragraph and the 12 August 2026 publication date give August 2026; the August 2026 dates are used here. Its frame excludes East Jerusalem, so it is never spliced into the Pulse line.

The third type is other survey organisations, each cited for its own wording: Gallup's support item, the Pew Research Center's coexistence item and the Israel Democracy Institute's acceptability item, plus the July 2024 Pulse wave as published by Tel Aviv University's Peace Index. Those figures are carried as their publishers report them, and each publisher's sample and margin appear in its own release. Of the series cited, Gallup's begins earliest, in 2011; readings attributed to the 1980s and 2000s enter only where a named instrument with a published sample stands behind them, and none of the sources read here supplies one.

The fourth type is official and party records: the Central Bureau of Statistics' preliminary 2025 population estimate, based on the 2022 census; the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs texts of 2009 and 2015, which are a party's own stated positions; and the Knesset's July 2024 vote, carried from CNN's report because the Knesset's own record was not read. All survey figures measure stated opinion at a fieldwork date; links between opinion and events are described as coincidence in time, as the Pulse authors framed their own explanation.

Conclusion

So is a Palestinian state alongside Israel still what most Israelis say they want? On the one instrument that asked both publics the same question, it was not by December 2022: 34% of Israeli Jews supported the concept and 53% opposed it, the lowest Jewish reading since the series began in June 2016, on the PSR and Tel Aviv University Pulse.

The portrait is consistent across every axis the record measures. The Jewish reading fell 8 points in two years; the all-Israeli figure of 39% sat higher only because Israeli Arabs, about a fifth of the population on the Central Bureau of Statistics' 2025 estimate, held at 60%. Among Israeli Jews the unequal single state outdrew two states. The Knesset, Israel's own legislature stating its position as a party to the conflict, voted 68 to 9 against a Palestinian state west of the Jordan in July 2024. Gallup's and Pew's series, on their own wordings, run downward too,

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and the 12-point wording gap inside PSR's August 2026 poll shows how much any single number depends on what was asked.

The one wave since October 2023 that put the same question to both publics, in July 2024, sits in only one partner's published record. When the answer moves this much with the instrument, the wording and the population asked, which number about two states is a society actually arguing over?

Frequently Asked Questions

How were West Bank settlers represented in the Israeli sample?

The December 2022 Pulse interviewed 200 West Bank settlers within its 900 Israeli respondents, then reweighted them to their proportionate share of the population (PSR and Tel Aviv University, 2023). The settler subsample carries a margin of error wider than the whole-sample 3.34%, and the summary publishes none for it.

Why does Gallup's figure differ from the Pulse figure?

Gallup asks Israelis whether they support creating an independent Palestinian state and recorded 25% in 2023 (Gallup, 2026), while the Pulse asks about "the general concept of the two-state solution" and recorded 34% among Israeli Jews in December 2022. Different wordings, populations and dates produce the gap, so the two cannot be read as one trend.

How did support differ across Israel's political camps?

The Israel Democracy Institute reported in November 2023 that support for advancing a two-state solution in exchange for American assistance stood at 75% among left-wing Jewish Israelis, 45% in the center and 21% on the right (Israel Democracy Institute, 2023). The item was conditional on US assistance, so it measures a different question from the Pulse's general-concept item.

What has Israel's Foreign Ministry said about refugee return in a settlement?

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote on 30 December 2009 that "Under present conditions, the influx of a large number of descendents of refugees into Israel is not a viable

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option" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009). That is the party's own stated position, published in the same document that named a Palestinian homeland as a destination for refugees.

Does Israel's Foreign Ministry say the Oslo agreements bar settlement building?

The Ministry's 30 November 2015 page states that the bilateral agreements "contain no prohibition on the building or expansion of settlements" and calls the contrary reading of Interim Agreement Article 31(7) "unfounded" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). That is Israel's own legal position as a party to the dispute.

Do Palestinians still consider two states practical?

PSR's August 2026 poll found 58% of Palestinians saying the two-state solution is no longer practical because of settlement expansion, against 36% who said it remains practical (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026). Ten months earlier the shares were 56% and 41%.

How do Palestinians rate the chances of a state within five years?

In August 2026, 64% of Palestinians said the chances of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel within five years were low or nonexistent, and 32% said medium or high (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 2026). The two shares sum to 96%, leaving a 4% residual of non-response.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

How many Gaza casualty records lack an identity number? Four ministry lists, read column by column

The Gaza health ministry's own split put 9,715 records outside its complete-data list on 30 June 2024, and its lists relabel the identity column.

Gaza Ministry of Health | Casualty Data | Identity Numbers | Gaza War | Mortality Estimates



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The Ministry of Health in Gaza recorded **9,715** deaths whose data was "not yet complete" as of 30 June 2024, a category the ministry defines only as records whose data it has not yet finished. That figure is its own count as a party to the war and is not independently verified. The ministry operates under the Hamas-led authority governing the Strip, so its figures are the casualty data most often described as Hamas's. A larger figure, 11,371 incomplete records in early April 2024, reached the public through third-party readings of a ministry report the ministry's channel serves as no retrievable file. The ministry's own lists also rename their identity column, from "identity number" to "document number," between rounds.

Key Findings

- **9,715** deaths had data "not yet complete" and 28,185 had complete data as of 30 June 2024, on the Ministry of Health, Gaza's own split, published 24 July 2024 (Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024 to 2026; a party's own count, not independently verified).
- The ministry's list of 21,323 records to 29 March 2024 heads its identity column الهوية (identity number). Its lists to 30 April, 30 June and 31 August 2024 head the same position الوثيقة.ر (document number) (Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024 to 2026; a party's own published lists).
- On 7 January 2024 the ministry stated that the unidentified who reached hospitals, and the unidentified bodies Israel handed over, are not counted. The statement is its own scope statement and has never been withdrawn (Ministry of Health, Gaza, 2024 to 2026).
- 9,692 unidentified decedents made up 26% of the ministry's 37,877 cumulative total on 30 June 2024. A peer-reviewed capture-recapture study excluded them from its hospital list (Jamaluddine and colleagues, 2025).
- 1,462 of 12,521 UNRWA employees in Gaza (12%) were identified as faction members by matching ID numbers against captured material, on Israel's own intelligence claim as a party to the conflict (Israeli government, Israel Defense Intelligence analysis, 2025).

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How many records lack an identity number, on the ministry's count?

The Ministry of Health in Gaza stated on 24 July 2024 that **9,715** of its recorded deaths had data that was not yet complete as of 30 June 2024. That is its own count as a party to the war and is not independently verified. It covers any record the ministry has not finished, not the identity number alone.

The same post, message 5651 on the ministry's media office channel, gives 28,185 deaths with complete data and defines both terms. The general count is everyone who reached the hospitals. The complete-data count is everyone whose data the ministry has finished. The post does not list which fields a record must carry to count as finished. The 28,185 is also the length of the name-by-name list the ministry posted that day, covering deaths to 30 June 2024.

The two figures sum to 37,900. That matches the cumulative total in the ministry's daily report of 1 July 2024, while its report of 30 June gives 37,877. On the ministry's own arithmetic, 9,715 of 37,900 records, or 25.6%, sat outside the complete-data list at mid-2024. Subtracting 28,185 from the 30 June total of 37,877 instead gives 9,692, the figure the Lancet study used.

None of the ministry's four 2024 list documents, daily statistical reports or completeness statements publishes a count for the identity-number field on its own. The nearest the issuing body comes is the 9,715: records lacking any required field, of which a missing identity number is one possibility among several.

The ministry's completeness split at mid-2024

DEATHS IN THE CUMULATIVE TOTAL, BY DATA STATUS; THE TWO PARTS SUM TO 37,900, THE MINISTRY'S 1 JULY 2024 TOTAL

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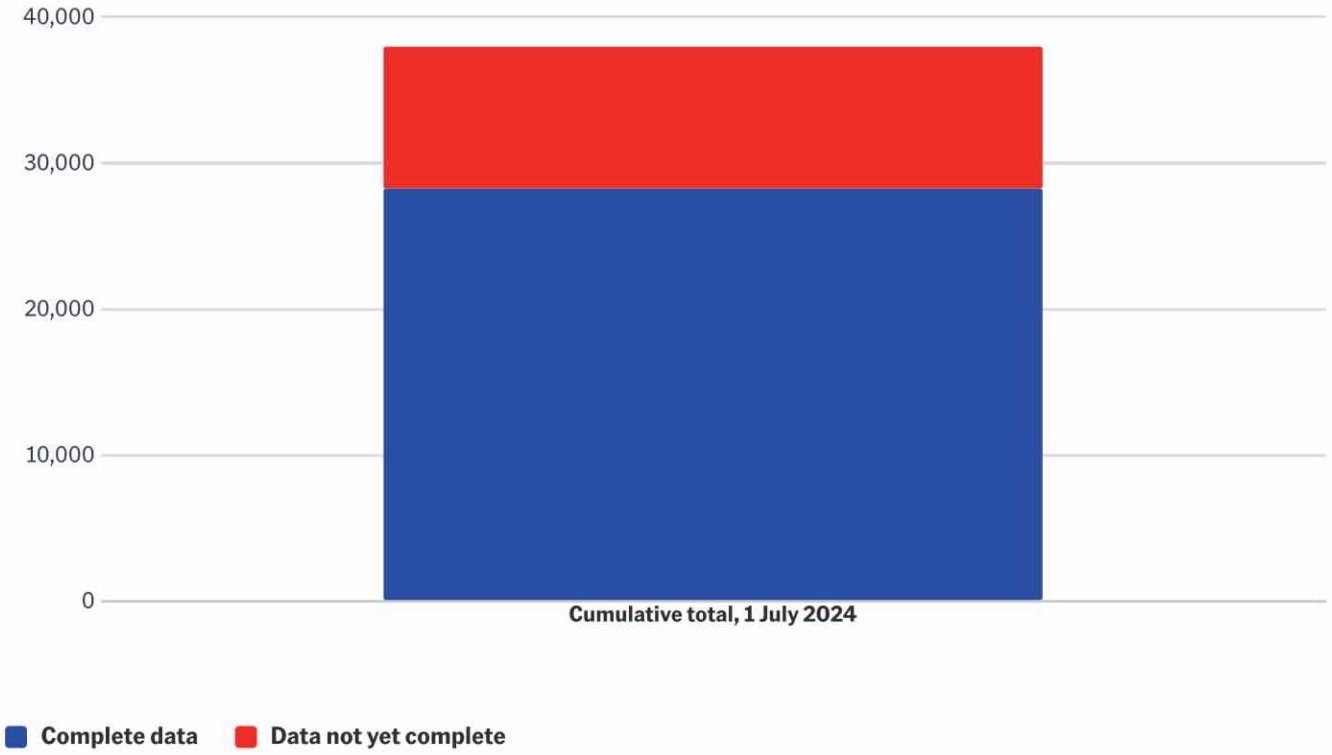

Source: Ministry of Health, Gaza (2024 to 2026), message 5651 of 24 July 2024; a party's own count, not independently verified.

Who reported 11,371 incomplete records, and when?

The Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a Washington research institute focused on national security, reported on 9 April 2024 that the ministry had classed **11,371** records as incomplete in a report dated 6 April 2024. In that reading, "incomplete" meant a record missing any of identity number, name, date of birth or date of death.

A companion figure, 12,263 incomplete records in an earlier ministry report, circulated with it. Headlines framed the pair as an admission. JNS ran "Hamas admits one-third of its data on Gazan deaths is 'incomplete'," and The Jewish Chronicle ran "Hamas says the Gaza casualty data is 'incomplete'." The pair reaches the public through third-party readings of the ministry's daily emergency report (طوارئ يومي). The ministry posts that PDF only to its Telegram channel, which serves message text but no file.

Neither figure appears in any ministry document searched on 10 September 2026. The search covered the ministry's channel text for both strings, its daily reports either side of 6 April

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2024, and its four list documents. If the pair is the ministry's, it is a party's own count and is not independently verified.

What the ministry itself published that week is a different kind of figure. Its daily reports gave cumulative totals of 33,091 on 5 April and 33,137 on 6 April 2024. On 3 April it posted a named list of 21,323 records covering deaths to 29 March. The total counts everyone who reached a hospital, while the list counts only records the ministry has finished. Subtracting one from the other therefore produces no measure of unidentified deaths.

The direction of the April figure holds on the ministry's own later record. The 11,371 is 34.4% of the 5 April total of 33,091, about a third. The ministry's own split of 30 June 2024 places 9,715 of 37,900 records, about a quarter, outside its complete-data list. Both describe several thousand deaths short of full data, and neither isolates the identity field.

Is the list's identity column a national ID or a document number?

The ministry's list of **21,323** records to 29 March 2024 heads its identity column الهوية (identity number). Its lists to 30 April, 30 June and 31 August 2024 head the same position ر.الوثيقة (document number). All four are a party's own published lists and are not independently verified.

The schema changes in other ways too. The March list carries seven columns: serial, name, identity number, date of birth, sex, age and source. The 30 April list of 24,682 records carries six. It drops both date of birth and the source column and adds an address. The June and August lists restore date of birth and source and carry no address. The question of whether a record "lacks an identity number" is therefore a question about a particular document and a particular heading. Across the ministry's four published lists, the heading itself does not stay fixed.

List, deaths to	Records	Identity column heading	Source
29 March 2024	**21,323**	الهوية (identity number)	Ministry of Health, Gaza, message 5261
30 April 2024	**24,682**	ر.الوثيقة (document number)	Ministry of Health, Gaza, message 5404

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List, deaths to	Records	Identity column heading	Source
30 June 2024	**28,185**	ر.الوثيقة (document number)	Ministry of Health, Gaza, message 5651
31 August 2024	**34,344**	ر.الوثيقة (document number)	Ministry of Health, Gaza

Source: Ministry of Health, Gaza (2024 to 2026); a party's own published lists, not independently verified.

The circulating April definition of "incomplete" includes a fourth field, date of death, that none of the four lists displays. The string تاريخ الاستشهاد (date of martyrdom) appears in no column header of any of them. On 29 July 2024 (message 5663) the ministry stated how it recorded the date. It was registered either on the family's report or on the date the body reached the hospital. A committee was then formed to audit the actual date, and it found that a number of decedents had been under 18 at death while being registered months later.

Are bodies with no identification inside the ministry's total?

The Ministry of Health in Gaza stated on 7 January 2024 that **five** categories of dead were not counted. Two of them are the unidentified who reached hospitals and the unidentified bodies Israel handed over. The statement, message 4739, is a party's own scope statement, is not independently verified, and has never been withdrawn.

The other three exclusions are:

- the missing and the bodies trapped under rubble;
- those buried by their families without passing through a hospital;
- the victims in Gaza and North Gaza after the ministry's information system stopped in November 2023.

The ministry states these limits itself, so they stand as the issuing body's own description of what its figure leaves out.

The 24 July 2024 post (message 5651) defines the general count differently: everyone who reached the hospitals. Read side by side, the two statements pull apart. In January, an

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unidentified body that reached a hospital is outside the total. In July, reaching a hospital is the condition for being inside it. Neither statement says which rule governed the 9,715 records the July post calls "not yet complete."

The 29 March 2024 list adds a third layer through its closing footnote, which sets the coverage cut-offs for deaths registered in the ministry's own records. Gaza's records run to 10 November 2023. The south runs to 29 March 2024, except Nasser hospital, which runs to 14 February 2024. The footnote does not say how a death recorded at a facility after its cut-off enters the list; the only other provenance label the list carries is notification by relatives.

The next section shows that a peer-reviewed capture-recapture analysis of the ministry's data found thousands of decedents it describes as unidentified sitting inside the cumulative total. On the ministry's own January terms, unidentified decedents would sit outside it. The record carries both positions, each in the ministry's own words or in a reading of its own update.

How did the peer-reviewed estimate handle unidentified records?

Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025), a peer-reviewed capture-recapture study in The Lancet, counted **9,692** unidentified decedents in the ministry's 30 June 2024 update. That is 26% of the ministry's cumulative total of 37,877, itself a party's own count, not independently verified. The authors excluded these decedents from the hospital list their analysis used.

The study also removed 930 people reported missing from the ministry's online survey list. Its 9,692 equals 37,877 minus 28,185, the 30 June total less the identified list. The ministry's own 9,715 rests on the 1 July total of 37,900, a one-day difference of 23 records.

The analysis is not an independent count of the dead. Its two ministry inputs were 22,368 hospital morgue records and 5,817 records from the rolling online survey. Those are exactly the two provenance labels on the ministry's 30 June list: سجلات وزارة الصحة (Ministry of Health records) and تبليغ ذوي الشهداء (notification by relatives). Together they sum to the list's 28,185. A third list, social media obituaries, completed the capture-recapture estimate.

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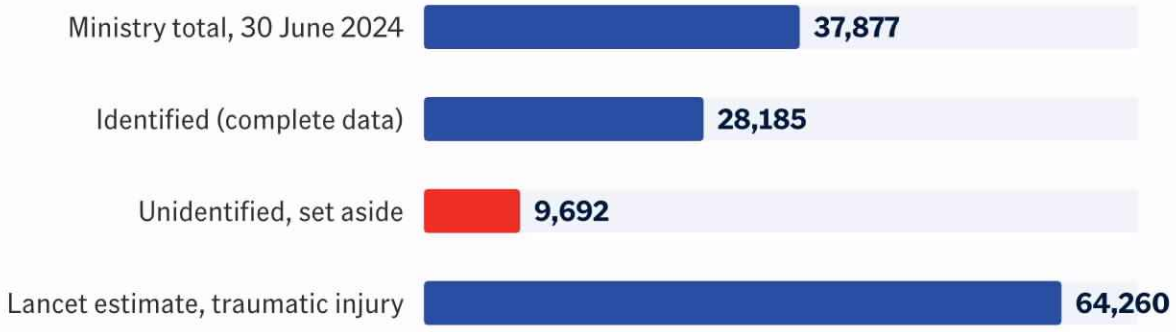
That estimate is 64,260 deaths from traumatic injury between 7 October 2023 and 30 June 2024, with a 95% confidence interval of 55,298 to 78,525. The authors put the ministry's under-reporting at 41%. That figure is a share of the 64,260 estimate, a gap of 26,383 deaths, and not a multiplier on the ministry's total. The estimate covers traumatic injury only. The study also reports an annualised crude death rate of 39.3 per 1,000 people over the window (95% CI 35.7 to 49.4).

How the Lancet study treated unidentified records

MINISTRY FIGURES AT 30 JUNE 2024 AND THE STUDY'S ESTIMATE OF TRAUMATIC-INJURY DEATHS, 7 OCTOBER 2023 TO 30 JUNE 2024



Source: Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025), peer-reviewed; estimate 95% CI 55,298 to 78,525. Ministry figures are a party's own count, not independently verified.

How many incomplete records were later completed and added?

The Ministry of Health in Gaza added **280** records to its cumulative total on 30 August 2025 (message 6900). It described them as records completed and approved by its judicial committee following the notifications and missing-persons file. That is its own administrative addition, not a count of new deaths, and it is not independently verified.

The 30 August addition was not the first. On 23 March 2025 (message 6377) the ministry added 233 records under the same description. During August 2026 (message 7600) it added 160, attributed there to a لجنة اعتماد الشهداء (martyrs' approval committee). The three announced

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additions total 673 records. In each case the records entered the total by approval, not as new deaths.

Records added to the total by committee approval

ADDITIONS THE MINISTRY ANNOUNCED AS COMPLETED OR APPROVED RECORDS, NOT NEW DEATHS



Source: Ministry of Health, Gaza (2024 to 2026), messages 6377, 6900 and 7600; a party's own count, not independently verified.

The complete-data list grew faster through 2024 than these approvals alone account for. It held 21,323 records to 29 March, 28,185 to 30 June and 34,344 to 31 August 2024, on the ministry's own lists. The Health Annual Report, Palestine 2024, published by the Ministry of Health in Ramallah, gives 43,587 deaths with complete data at 11 December 2024. Its Gaza section rests on the Gaza ministry's own reports, so it is a second voice for the same party's count, not an independent check.

An "incomplete" count is therefore a snapshot of a moving record. The April 2024 figure of 11,371, the June 2024 figure of 9,715 and any later figure describe different stages of the same backlog. Some records leave it by completion and some enter the total only once a committee approves them.

Did the earliest outside check address incomplete records?

Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024) published a correspondence letter in The Lancet that was editorially reviewed rather than peer-reviewed. It set **11,078** Gazan deaths reported by the ministry against reported UNRWA staff deaths over 35 days, 7 October to 10 November 2023. It compared totals, and it examined no identity field.

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The letter counted 101 UNRWA staff deaths over the same window. It reported "the MoH mortality rates are lower than the rates reported for UNRWA staff (5·3 deaths per 1000 vs 7·8 deaths per 1000, as of Nov 10, 2023)." The two rates have different denominators: the first is over Gaza's residents and the second over UNRWA's Gaza staff. The letter's inference is that the staff rate exceeding the population rate is inconsistent with inflation of the population figure. The ministry figures it used are a party's own count, not independently verified.

The letter's window closes on 10 November 2023. That is the same date the ministry's 29 March 2024 list gives as its cut-off for deaths registered in Gaza's own records, and the month its information system stopped in Gaza and North Gaza. The letter appeared nearly four months before the ministry posted that list on 3 April 2024. Its material carried cumulative totals and no name-by-name fields, so the question of missing identity numbers could not arise in it.

Its own caveats travel with it. The authors wrote that "mortality might have been under-reported by the Gaza MoH due to decreased capacity." They also wrote that "difficulties obtaining accurate mortality figures should not be interpreted as intentionally misreported data." The letter's title, "No evidence of inflated mortality reporting," states an absence of evidence. It does not state a verification.

The letter also asserts a pre-2023 discrepancy range between ministry and United Nations counts. In the published text, that sentence carries no reference marker.

Do widely relayed tolls carry the ministry's completeness split?

Crawford (2025), a Costs of War report from Brown University that is not peer-reviewed, compiles **67,075** killed in Gaza as of 3 October 2025. That figure is the Gaza Ministry of Health's own count, relayed through a United Nations dashboard and not independently verified. It carries no split between complete and incomplete records.

The relay chain runs from the ministry, to the UN "Palestinian Casualties" dashboard, to the paper, and the paper names the dashboard in its own footnote. At each step the total survives and the completeness split does not. Crawford also reports 169,430 injured. He combines the

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two figures into 236,505 casualties, “more than 10%” of a pre-war population of about 2.2 million. That share is of killed and injured together, not of deaths.

The ministry’s own publications carry the split that the relay drops. The Health Annual Report, Palestine 2024 prints 43,587 deaths with complete data at 11 December 2024 beside a total of 45,553 to the end of the year. That total equals the ministry’s daily report of 1 January 2025; its 30 December report gives 45,541. The two printed figures are fixed at different dates, so the report does not support reading their difference as a count of incomplete records.

On the question of completeness, Crawford relays others rather than measuring it. His text reads: “Recent analysis by public health experts suggests that the number of fatalities reported by the Gaza Ministry of Health, which faces many obstacles to making a full account of the deaths, may be a significant undercount of the violent deaths.” His paper makes that attribution itself. Its own contribution is the comparative framing across conflicts and the direct-versus-indirect distinction, not a new casualty count.

A reader who meets 67,075 in a relayed toll is therefore meeting the ministry’s general count, everyone who reached a hospital, without the complete-data figure the ministry publishes beside it in its own reports.

What does Israel’s military publish about the people it counted?

The IDF Spokesperson stated on 29 February 2024, day 146 of the war, that the IDF had eliminated **over 13,000** people it describes as terrorists in Gaza since the war began. That is the IDF’s own self-published floor, produced by a party to the conflict, and it is not independently verified.

The wording sets a minimum rather than an exact total: the briefing says “over 13,000.” The classification of those counted as terrorists is the IDF’s own characterisation. Combatant and civilian counts in this conflict remain contested between the parties. The same briefing gives about 3,400 people the IDF describes as terrorists apprehended with the ISA in Judea and Samaria. That figure is an approximation covering the West Bank only, and the briefing counts 1,500 of those apprehended as people it describes as Hamas terrorists.

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The briefing publishes no list of names or identity numbers behind the 13,000. The ministry's published lists carry names and identity or document numbers, but no combatant-noncombatant breakdown; Crawford (2025) records that the ministry publishes none at all. One party publishes identity fields without a classification. The other publishes a classification without identity fields.

The two counts therefore cannot be set against each other record by record on anything either party has published. The ministry's lists cannot show how many of its records the IDF counts among the 13,000. The IDF's briefing cannot show how many of its 13,000 appear among the ministry's 9,715 incomplete records or its 28,185 complete ones.

How does Israel's own analysis use Gaza identity numbers?

The Government of Israel's Defense Intelligence analysis, dated 23 April 2025, states that **1,462** of 12,521 UNRWA employees in Gaza (12%) were identified as members of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad or other factions. That is Israel's own intelligence claim as a party to the conflict. It rests on matching ID numbers against captured material.

The method is set out in the document. Israel Defense Intelligence cross-referenced UNRWA Gaza staff lists for 2023 to 2024, the most recent dated September 2024, against captured documents and other intelligence. Membership is Israel's own definition: holding a function, rank and organizational ID in the group. The captured material is not available for independent check. The document states that "the numbers in this document may change."

Of the 1,462, the document places 1,157 (79%) in "education and teaching." It separately counts 80 of 546 principals and deputy principals (15%) as members of designated organizations, again Israel's own count. Its Annex 1 gives 75 matched military-wing examples, not the full 1,462. The figures are dated to the analysis "as it stands in early 2025."

The Gaza identity number is therefore the working key in Israel's own published method. It is the same field the ministry's 29 March 2024 list carries under الهوية and its later lists under الوثيقة.ر. The document applies its matching to UNRWA staff lists and contains no matching of the ministry's casualty lists. As published, the identity number is a tool one party uses on staff records, and a field whose completeness the other party reports only in aggregate.

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Methodology and limitations

The evidence draws on four source types, each labelled where it is used.

Official records of the two parties. These are:

- the Gaza Ministry of Health's four name-by-name lists of 2024;
- its daily statistical reports;
- its dated statements on scope, exclusions and additions;
- the Ramallah ministry's Health Annual Report, Palestine 2024;
- the IDF Spokesperson's briefing of 29 February 2024;
- the Israeli government's Defense Intelligence analysis of 23 April 2025.

The ministry's lists and daily reports were read on 10 September 2026, and the Israeli government document on 9 November 2026. Every figure from these sources is a party's own count and is labelled as such.

Peer-reviewed research. Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025) is the peer-reviewed estimate cited here. It is a three-list capture-recapture analysis of deaths from traumatic injury, and its confidence interval is carried wherever its estimate appears.

Correspondence and a university report. Huynh, Chin and Spiegel (2024) is editorially reviewed correspondence. Crawford (2025) is a university report that compiles other bodies' counts. Neither is peer-reviewed research, and each is labelled at first use.

Press and think-tank relays. The Foundation for Defense of Democracies, JNS and The Jewish Chronicle carried the April 2024 figures. Their readings are cited to them, not to the ministry.

The ministry's own website, moh.gov.ps, has published no file since 21 October 2023, and its Telegram channel serves message text but no files. The four list PDFs were therefore read from a public mirror of the ministry's posted files. The March file was checked against the record count, column set and file size the ministry itself states; its SHA-256 is 0952bdf2b755a1ac4678dcd40c41cf5aee1c521efec9e3c6b75266d2d7021c54.

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The daily emergency report behind the 11,371 and 12,263 figures could not be retrieved as a file. Two-digit birth years on some list rows were read against the age column. No ministry document publishes a field-level breakdown of incomplete records.

Conclusion

How many identity numbers are missing from the casualty data attributed to Hamas? On the Gaza Ministry of Health's own count, which is not independently verified, 9,715 deaths were short of complete data at 30 June 2024. A missing identity number is one of the gaps that can make a record short, and no published figure separates it from the others.

The record is specific about everything around that gap:

- The ministry's identity column changes its own name between lists.
- The date of death that the April 2024 definition counts appears in no column at all.
- The ministry's January 2024 statement keeps the unidentified out of its total, while the peer-reviewed capture-recapture estimate found 9,692 unidentified decedents inside it and set them aside.
- Incomplete records do not stay incomplete: the ministry's committees approve batches of a few hundred into the total after the fact.
- Relayed tolls such as the 67,075 compiled by Costs of War, the ministry's count passed through a UN dashboard, arrive without the split.
- The IDF's own floor of over 13,000 arrives without names.
- The one party document that treats the Gaza ID number as a working key, Israel's own intelligence analysis, uses it on staff lists rather than casualty lists.

Both parties to the war hold registers keyed to the same nine-digit field. Neither has published how its own count reads when matched against that field. If one column decides whether a death is complete, excluded, or counted in someone else's tally, what would a public count of that column change about how the toll is read? And who, beyond the two parties that hold the underlying registers, would be in a position to check it?

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Frequently Asked Questions

Where does the Gaza health ministry publish its casualty lists?

The Ministry of Health in Gaza publishes its lists and daily reports through its media office Telegram channel, on its own account a party's publication venue. Its website, moh.gov.ps, held 2,536 PDFs when paged in full on 10 September 2026, the newest dated 21 October 2023 and none of them a casualty list. National annual reports appear on the Ramallah ministry's site, site.moh.ps.

What share of a list comes from family reports rather than hospital records?

On the ministry's list to 29 March 2024, 2,478 of 21,323 records (11.6%) are labelled as notified by relatives. On its list to 30 June 2024, 5,817 of 28,185 (20.6%) carry that label. Both are the ministry's own provenance labels, not independently verified.

Why can the birth dates on the lists mislead?

Date formats differ by source inside a single document. In the ministry's 31 August 2024 list, the oldest decedents carry birth dates of 01-01-27, 01-01-24 and 01-01-22 against ages of 97, 100 and 101. Read without the age column, those dates parse as 2027, 2024 and 2022.

Does the ministry publish separate lists for children and women?

Yes. Alongside the combined list, the ministry posted separate lists for children, women, the elderly and the orphans of martyrs in its 30 April 2024 round (messages 5406 to 5412). The practice continued through its 15 July 2025 round, and these are the ministry's own lists.

How many children are recorded in the ministry's figures?

The ministry's Director General stated on 23 March 2025 that 15,613 of 50,021 recorded deaths were children. Of those children, 872 had not completed their first year. The figures are the ministry's own count as a party to the war and are not independently verified.

Does the Lancet estimate include deaths from hunger or disease?

No. Jamaluddine and colleagues (2025) estimated deaths from traumatic injury only. Their estimate excludes deaths from healthcare disruption, food insecurity, water and sanitation

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failure, and disease.

How large is the ministry's cumulative total now?

The ministry's daily report of 10 September 2026 gave 73,670 cumulative deaths and 174,682 injuries. Of the deaths, 1,359 occurred since the ceasefire of 11 October, and 831 bodies were recovered from rubble. These are the ministry's own reported totals and are not independently verified.

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RELATED RESEARCH

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The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

What is the historical basis for the Palestinian claim to indigeneity? The 1931 census, the PLO's own texts and two genome studies

Palestine's 1931 census counted 1,035,821 people, 759,712 of them Moslems. The founding texts, genome studies and treaty tests behind the claim.

Palestinian Indigeneity | Census of Palestine 1931 | Population Genetics | Absentee Property Law | Settler Colonialism

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The historical basis for the Palestinian claim to indigeneity starts with the Mandate government's own count. The Census of Palestine taken on 18 November 1931 enumerated 1,035,821 people, of whom 759,712 were recorded as Moslems and 91,398 as Christians (Government of Palestine, 1932). The Palestine National Council set the claim down in its 1968 Charter and in its Declaration of Independence of 15 November 1988. A 2020 ancient-DNA study in Cell found Arabic-speaking and Jewish populations alike "compatible with having more than 50% Middle Eastern-related ancestry" (Agranat-Tamir and colleagues, 2020). The tension in the record is that the same land, the same genomes and the same Mandate archive also ground a Jewish claim, which Israel's 1948 Declaration states in its first sentence.

Key Findings

- The Government of Palestine's census of 18 November 1931 enumerated 1,035,821 people by religion, including 759,712 Moslems, 91,398 Christians and 174,610 Jews. It has no "Arab" or "Palestinian" column (Government of Palestine, 1932).

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- The same census recorded 969,268 settled residents and 66,553 nomadic residents, so on the Institute's arithmetic about 94% of the 1,035,821 people enumerated were settled (Government of Palestine, 1932).
- Article 7 of the Palestine National Council's 1968 Charter calls the Palestinian "historical connection with Palestine" one of the "indisputable facts." The Council's 15 November 1988 Declaration says the Palestinian Arab people was "brought forth" in the land. Both texts are the party's own statements (Palestine National Council, 1968; Palestine National Council, 1988).
- A 2020 study built on 73 newly sequenced ancient individuals found both Arabic-speaking and Jewish populations "compatible with having more than 50% Middle Eastern-related ancestry." Its authors state that this does not establish direct descent from Bronze Age Levantines (Agranat-Tamir and colleagues, 2020).
- Israel's absentee definition ran from 29 November 1947. Under it, "tens of thousands of Arab Israeli citizens" were classified as absentees although they were present (Forman and Kedar, 2004). Hillel Cohen put the internal refugees at "some 25,000," about "one sixth" of the Arab population (Cohen, 2002).

What historical record does the Palestinian indigeneity claim rest on?

The Government of Palestine's census, taken "at midnight on the 18th of November 1931" under Superintendent of Census E. Mills, enumerated **1,035,821** people. It printed results for every village, town, sub-district and district (Government of Palestine, 1932). That count is the Mandate administration's official baseline of who lived in the country 17 years before 1948.

The census classified people by religion. It recorded 759,712 Moslems, 174,610 Jews, 91,398 Christians, 9,148 Druses, 350 Bahais, 182 Samaritans and 421 people of no religion, and those seven totals sum exactly to 1,035,821. Mills described the tables as preliminary results and wrote that "Discussion of the statistics is reserved for the General Census Report," which was published in 1933.

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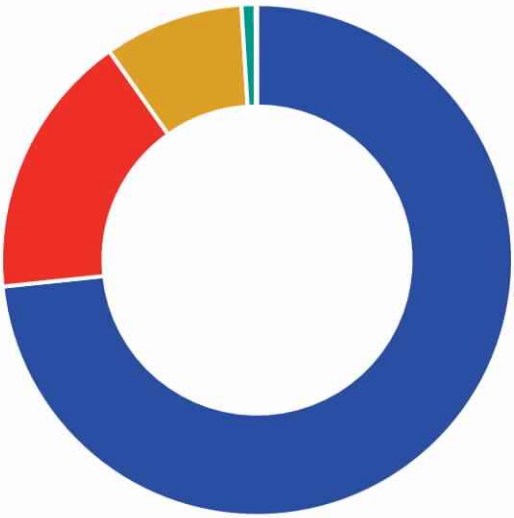
The census has no “Arab” or “Palestinian” column. Reading Moslems and Christians together as the Arab population is the Institute’s derivation, not a census figure. On that reading the Arab population was 851,110 people, about 82% of the 1,035,821 enumerated. Adding the Druses gives 860,258, about 83% of the same total. The 174,610 Jews were about 17% of that total.

The census measures something narrower than the claim built on it: residence on one night in 1931, by religion. It records nothing about how long a family had lived in a village or where its ancestors came from. The Beduin were enumerated by a separate count that did not run at the same time as the main census (Government of Palestine, 1932). The longer record of residence is set out in the Institute’s report on continuous Palestinian presence.

Palestine’s 1931 population by religion

ENUMERATED 18 NOVEMBER 1931, PRELIMINARY TABLES, TOTAL 1,035,821



Moslems **Jews** **Christians** **Druses** **Bahais, Samaritans, no religion**

Source: Government of Palestine, 1932, Census of Palestine 1931, official record. The last slice sums three printed totals (350, 182 and 421).

Who makes the Palestinian indigeneity claim, and since when?

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The Palestine National Council put the claim in its own words in July 1968. Article 7 of its revised Charter calls the Palestinian community's "material, spiritual, and historical connection with Palestine" one of the "indisputable facts" (Palestine National Council, 1968). The claim is formally stated and dated by the claimant itself.

The Charter grounds Palestinian identity in the land and in descent. Article 1 calls Palestine "the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people." Article 4 says Palestinian identity "is transmitted from parents to children." Article 5 sets the membership test by residence: Palestinians are "those Arab nationals who, until 1947, normally resided in Palestine regardless of whether they were evicted from it or have stayed there." Article 6 extends the status to Jews who "normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion," a date the Charter does not fix. The anchor the Charter names is residence before 1947, not a date in antiquity.

Article 20 is the counterpart to Article 7. It holds that "Claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history," and that Jews "are citizens of the states to which they belong" (Palestine National Council, 1968). The Charter therefore asserts one historical connection to the land and denies the other in the same document.

The Council restated the claim at its nineteenth extraordinary session in Algiers, declaring independence on 15 November 1988. In the United Nations translation the Declaration opens: "On the same terrain as God's apostolic missions to mankind and in the land of Palestine was the Palestinian Arab people brought forth." It describes "an organic, indissoluble and unbroken relationship among people, land and history" (Palestine National Council, 1988).

The 1988 text also answers a slogan directly. It calls "the falsehood that Palestine was 'a land without a people'" a "falsification of history." It cites Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations of 1919 and the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 as recognising the Palestinian Arab people as "a free and independent people." It rests the proclaimed state on "the natural, historical and legal right of the Palestinian Arab people to its homeland, Palestine."

The two instruments differ in where they place the origin. The 1968 Charter defines membership by residence before 1947 and by parentage. The 1988 Declaration places the

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people's origin in the land itself. Both are the Palestine National Council's own statements and are cited here as what the Council declared, not as findings.

Does the indigeneity test require descent or presence on the land?

José R. Martínez Cobo, Special Rapporteur of the UN Sub-Commission, proposed in 1986 that indigenous peoples are those having "a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories" (Martínez Cobo, 1986, paragraph 379). His next paragraph lists ancestral land, common ancestry, culture and language as alternatives. Continuity may consist of "one or more" of them, so neither descent nor land is required on its own.

Paragraph 380 lists occupation of ancestral lands "or at least of part of them," "Common ancestry with the original occupants of these lands," culture, language and residence as possible forms of continuity. Paragraph 381 adds an individual test: "self-identification as indigenous (group consciousness)" and acceptance by the group. Paragraph 382 reserves to communities "the sovereign right and power to decide who belongs to them, without external interference." Paragraph 378 offers the text "for the purposes of international action," and no General Assembly instrument adopted it. It remains a rapporteur's working definition.

The International Labour Organization's Convention No. 169, adopted on 27 June 1989, is a binding text for the states that ratify it. Article 1(1)(b) covers peoples "regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries." Those peoples must also "retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions." Article 1(2) makes "Self-identification as indigenous or tribal" a "fundamental criterion." Article 1(3) states that the term peoples "shall not be construed as having any implications as regards the rights which may attach to the term under international law" (International Labour Organization, 1989).

Neither text names any people. Read together, they name four criteria: descent, presence on ancestral land, retained institutions and self-identification. Neither says what evidence

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shows descent, and neither mentions genetics. The ILO text also fixes a reference moment, "the time of conquest or colonisation," so the date from which continuity runs is part of the test itself.

Criterion	Martínez Cobo, 1986	ILO No. 169, 1989
Descent	One of several **alternative** factors (para. 380)	**Core** test, descent from earlier inhabitants (art. 1(1)(b))
Land	Occupation of ancestral lands, **alternative** factor	Implied through the country or region
Self-identification	**Required** with group acceptance (para. 381)	**Fundamental** criterion (art. 1(2))
Reference point	**Pre-invasion**, pre-colonial societies	**Conquest**, colonisation or present boundaries

Source: Martínez Cobo, 1986, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7/Add.4, official record; International Labour Organization, 1989, Convention No. 169, treaty text.

What does ancient DNA show about Bronze Age Levantine ancestry?

Agranat-Tamir, Waldman, Martin and 32 co-authors reported in Cell in May 2020 that "both Arabic-speaking and Jewish populations are compatible with having more than **50%** Middle Eastern-related ancestry" (Agranat-Tamir and colleagues, 2020). The figure applies to both groups in the same sentence. It measures a combined proxy for Bronze Age Levantine and Chalcolithic Zagros sources, not a share of "Canaanite" ancestry.

The peer-reviewed study reported genome-wide data for 73 newly sequenced ancient individuals from five sites. Combined with published data, the ancient sample covered 93 individuals from nine sites across present-day Israel, Jordan and Lebanon. The authors modelled 14 present-day Jewish and Levantine populations against these ancient sources. They found the ancient individuals, with exceptions, "closer to each other than to other contemporary and neighboring populations." They read this as the category of "Canaanites" correlating with shared ancestry.

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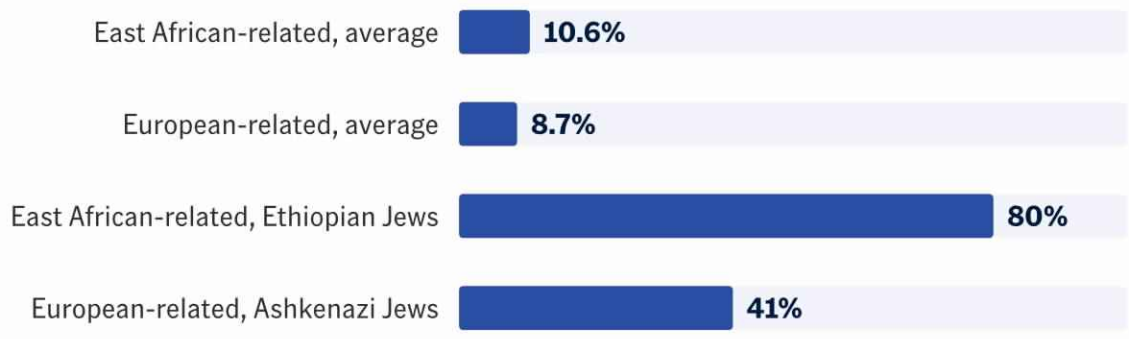
The authors set their own limit on the 50% finding: "This does not mean that any these present-day groups bear direct ancestry from people who lived in the Middle to Late Bronze Age Levant or in Chalcolithic Zagros; rather, it indicates that they have ancestries from populations whose ancient proxy can be related to the Middle East." They add that genetic-cultural associations "cannot by itself prove that group identities in the past were related to genetics." They also note that present-day groups carry ancestry "that cannot be modeled by the available ancient DNA data."

The study also measured ancestry added after the Bronze Age. Averaged across the modelled groups, an East African-related component made up about 10.6% of ancestry, excluding Ethiopian Jews, whose share was about 80%. A European-related component made up about 8.7%, excluding Ashkenazi Jews, whose share was about 41%. Each average is a share of the ancestry of the modelled present-day groups other than the named exception.

Neither definition names genetic ancestry as a test, and the study applies neither. It records that present-day Arabic-speaking populations carry a majority of ancestry modelled from Middle Eastern-related ancient sources. It records the same for present-day Jewish populations. It measures ancestry components, not identity, and it supports neither group's claim to the exclusion of the other.

Ancestry added after the Bronze Age

SHARE OF ANCESTRY, AVERAGED ACROSS MODELLED PRESENT-DAY GROUPS, WITH THE TWO EXCLUDED GROUPS SHOWN SEPARATELY



Source: Agranat-Tamir and colleagues, 2020, Cell, peer-reviewed. Values are approximate, as the authors report them.

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Did Arabization replace the earlier population or absorb it?

Haber, Gauguier, Youhanna and 11 co-authors analysed more than **500,000** genome-wide markers and concluded in PLoS Genetics in 2013 that "recent genetic stratifications in the Levant are driven by the religious affiliations of the populations within the region" (Haber and colleagues, 2013). The study measures how present-day Levantines divide, not how many earlier inhabitants were displaced.

The 1,341 new samples in the peer-reviewed study were all Lebanese, compared with published data for 48 populations worldwide. The Jewish and Palestinian data were previously published samples that the authors reused, so 1,341 is not a count of either group. The population tree split the Levant into two branches. One, leading to Europeans and Central Asians, includes "Lebanese, Armenians, Cypriots, Druze and Jews, as well as Turks, Iranians and Caucasian populations." The other holds "Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians, as well as North Africans, Ethiopians, Saudis, and Bedouins." In a separate analysis, multidimensional scaling, Sephardi Jews "cluster tightly with the Levantine groups."

The paper reports an Arabian Peninsula and East African ancestral component at about 25% of ancestry in Syrians, Jordanians and Palestinians, against 4% to 20% in other Levantine groups. The authors note that the same component appears in Lebanese Christians, Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews, Cypriots and Armenians, which "might suggest that its spread to the Levant could also represent an earlier event." The paper dates the divergence of the Levantine and Arabian components to about 23,700 to 15,500 years ago, in the last glacial period; that is a component divergence, not an arrival date. The authors state that these estimates assume effective population sizes did not change significantly. They also say their component maps "should be used as a guide rather than a precise representation."

Read beside the 2020 Cell study, the genetic record reaches this far. On the 2020 models, later additions sit alongside, not in place of, a Middle Eastern-related majority of ancestry in Arabic-speaking groups, with the authors' caution that this is not direct Bronze Age descent. On the 2013 analysis, recent divisions follow religion, and the component associated with Arabia is larger in Palestinians than in other Levantine groups but is not confined to them. Neither paper converts its components into a count of people who arrived or were replaced.

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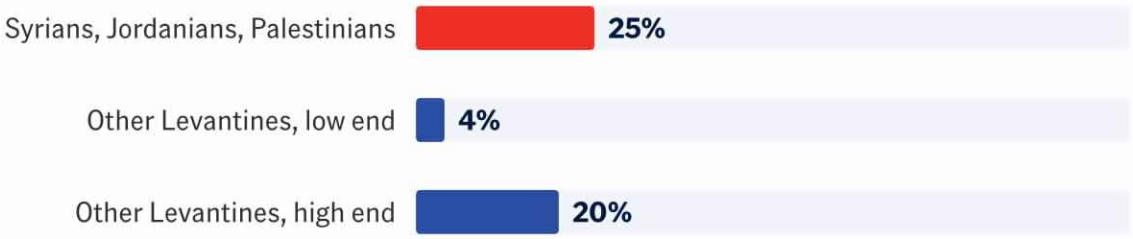
Arabian and East African ancestral component

SHARE OF ANCESTRY IN PRESENT-DAY LEVANTINE GROUPS, APPROXIMATE



Source: Haber and colleagues, 2013, PLoS Genetics, peer-reviewed.

How much of Palestine's 1931 population was settled, not nomadic?

The Government of Palestine's 1931 census recorded **969,268** settled residents, about 94% of the 1,035,821 people it enumerated. The rest lived as nomads (Government of Palestine, 1932). The census attaches the settled population to named villages, towns and districts, which is the village-level form of rootedness the claim invokes.

The census counted 66,553 people as nomadic, all of them Moslems, through a separate count of the Beduin that was not taken at the same time as the main census. Subtracting them from the 759,712 Moslems gives about 693,159 settled Moslems. That figure is the Institute's derivation, not a printed census figure. The religion columns, not any nationality column, carry the count.

The records of the first Jewish colonies show the same villages from the other side. Yuval Ben-Bassat's 2009 peer-reviewed study draws on the logbooks, letters, contracts and maps held in the local archives of five of the six Judean colonies southeast of Jaffa, covering 1882 to 1903. He records that "Massive clashes with neighboring Arab villagers were not common, but they did occur from time to time" at Gederah, Rehovot and Qastina, and that "The immediate causes were generally disputes over property boundaries and grazing" (Ben-Bassat, 2009). Rehovot brought a trial against the village of Zarnuqa after "a severe clash between them sparked by a dispute over grazing rights."

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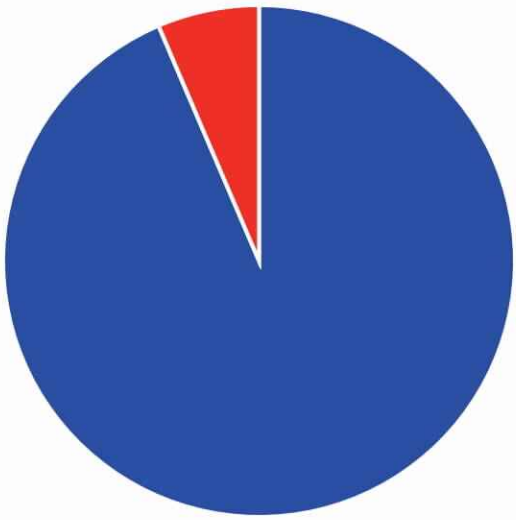
Ben-Bassat also records who sold the land: “about a dozen absentee landlords,” “in many cases Christians from nearby Jaffa.” The colonies’ economic ties with the Arab population “predominantly revolved around the employment of low-wage day workers.” In 1903 Gederah, followed by Rehovot and Rishon le-Zion, decided to stop leasing land to Arabs. The colonists cited theft and damage to property “claimed to have been committed by the Arab rural population.” Ben-Bassat reports that rationale as the colonists’ claim and does not establish it.

The study covers one region and carries no rate or count of incidents. The colony-level record is examined further in the Institute’s report on early Zionist and Palestinian contact.

Settled and nomadic population, 1931

TOTAL ENUMERATED 1,035,821; NOMADS COUNTED SEPARATELY



Settled **Nomadic**

Source: Government of Palestine, 1932, Census of Palestine 1931, official record.

Why do Arabs who never left Israel count as absentees?

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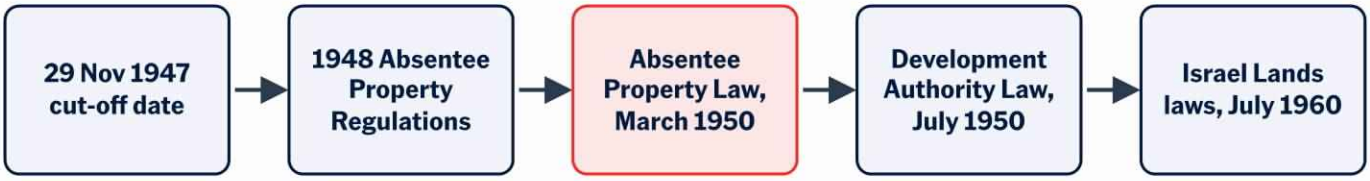
Israel's absentee definition reached back to 29 November 1947, the date of the UN partition resolution. Geremy Forman and Alexandre Kedar wrote in a 2004 peer-reviewed legal history that it made "tens of thousands of Arab Israeli citizens" absentees, "assuming the paradoxical legal identity of 'present absentee'" (Forman and Kedar, 2004). Under this definition, residence on the land and title to it could be separated even for people who stayed.

The definition, placed by the authors in the 1948 Absentee Property Regulations and carried into the statute that replaced them, covered anyone who after that date had been a citizen of an Arab state at war with Israel, or had been in such a state or in a part of Palestine outside the regulations' jurisdiction, or was "a citizen of Palestine who abandoned his or her normal place of residence." A villager who moved to the next valley during the fighting met the third limb. The authors write that "practically no Jewish Israelis" were classified as absentees.

"The Knesset enacted the Absentee Property Law in March 1950 and the Development Authority (Transfer of Property) Law in July 1950," Forman and Kedar record. The first law let the Custodian of Absentee Property sell only to the Development Authority. The second let the Development Authority sell to the state and the Jewish National Fund. In July 1960 the Knesset folded state, Development Authority and Jewish National Fund holdings into a single category, "Israel Lands." The authors give no single total for the land that passed through this chain, writing that "There is no one agreed-upon figure."

Hillel Cohen, in a signed 2002 article in the Palestine-Israel Journal, a joint policy quarterly that is not peer-reviewed, sizes one group within the category. He writes that "some 25,000 internal refugees remained, mainly in Galilee, constituting about one sixth of the total Arab population" (Cohen, 2002). The estimate excludes Negev Bedouin moved by the army, so it is a floor. The legal category of present absentee was wider than the internal refugees. The Institute's report on the absentee property law follows the property side.

How absentee land reached the state, 1947 to 1960



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Tens of thousands of Arab citizens were classed as present absentees.

Source: Forman and Kedar, 2004, peer-reviewed legal history.

Does the same record ground a Jewish claim to rootedness?

Israel's Declaration of Establishment, signed on 14 May 1948 by **37** members of the People's Council, opens with the sentence "ERETZ-ISRAEL [(Hebrew) - The Land of Israel] was the birthplace of the Jewish people," in the Avalon Project's English text (Provisional Government of Israel, 1948). The record that grounds the Palestinian claim also grounds a parallel Jewish one, stated by a party to the events in its founding text.

The Declaration supports that sentence with its own historical chain: the First Zionist Congress of 1897, the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, the League of Nations Mandate and the General Assembly resolution of 29 November 1947. These recitals are what the founding text asserts, not independent findings. Set beside Article 20 of the 1968 Palestinian Charter, which calls Jewish historical ties to Palestine "incompatible with the facts of history," the two founding texts make opposed claims to the same land.

The Mandatory power's own inquiry described two communities, not one. The Palestine Royal Commission, a British government-commissioned review that signed its report on 22 June 1937 and presented it to Parliament in July, wrote that "An irrepressible conflict has arisen between two national communities within the narrow bounds of one small country" (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937, Chapter XX, paragraph 5). Its central conclusion was that "we cannot" "both concede the Arab claim to self-government and secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home." The Commission's accompanying "About 1,000,000 Arabs" and "some 400,000 Jews" are rounded characterisations, not a count.

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics records continuity of a later kind. It reports that about 80% of Jews in Israel are Sabras, born in Israel, and that about 45% of the world's Jews lived in Israel at the end of 2023 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025). These are Israel's own official statistics. The release attaches no separate period to the Sabra share. The 2020 Cell study's finding of more than 50% Middle Eastern-related ancestry applies to Jewish and Arabic-speaking populations in the same sentence.

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Source (type)	Date	What it records
Palestine Royal Commission (British commissioned review)	1937	**Two** "national communities" in "one small country"
Provisional Government of Israel (founding text, party's own)	1948	Land of Israel the "birthplace" of the Jewish people, **37** signatories
Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel's own official statistic)	2025	About **80%** of Jews in Israel are Sabras

Source: Palestine Royal Commission, 1937; Provisional Government of Israel, 1948; Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025.

Where do scholars dispute indigeneity as the claim's frame?

Patrick Wolfe set out the settler-colonial frame in the Journal of Genocide Research in December 2006. He argued that "Settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal" and that "invasion is a structure not an event" (Wolfe, 2006). The essay builds its comparison mainly on the United States and Australia.

Wolfe applies the frame to Zionism. He writes that "Settler colonialism destroys to replace" and quotes Theodor Herzl: "If I wish to substitute a new building for an old one, I must demolish before I construct." He also records a difference from his main Australian case: "Ideologically, however, there is a major difference between the Australian and Israeli cases." The Australian justification was better use of the land, "not that we had been on the land primordially and were merely returning home." His peer-reviewed essay is a theoretical argument and counts nothing.

Lorenzo Veracini's 2006 book from Pluto Press extends the comparison. Its publisher describes it as arguing that "the conflict is best understood in terms of colonialism, as like many other societies, Israel is a settler society." The publisher adds that the book compares Israel with South Africa, French Algeria and Australia. It sets itself against the views that the dispute "is unique and defies comparative approaches" and that it is "mainly based in nationality and religion."

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Two named works stand on the other side. S. Ilan Troen published "De-Judaizing the Homeland: Academic Politics in Rewriting the History of Palestine" in Israel Affairs in October 2007 (Troen, 2007). It appeared in a themed issue titled "Postcolonial Theory and the Arab-Israel Conflict." In Peace and Conflict Studies in May 2018, Ukashi argues for reconsidering Zionism as an Indigenous emancipation movement, against imperial and settler-colonial characterisations (Ukashi, 2018).

The four works span 2006 to 2018. Two set out a settler-colonial reading of Israel; Ukashi argues against that characterisation, and Troen is cited by title alone.

Author, year, venue	Position as published	Type
Wolfe, **2006**, Journal of Genocide Research	Settler colonialism as "a structure not an event"	Peer-reviewed theory
Veracini, **2006**, Pluto Press	Israel as a settler society (publisher's description)	Scholarly book
Troen, **2007**, Israel Affairs	"De-Judaizing the Homeland" in academic histories	Peer-reviewed article
Ukashi, **2018**, Peace and Conflict Studies	Zionism as Indigenous emancipation	Peer-reviewed essay

Source: Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2006; Troen, 2007; Ukashi, 2018.

Methodology and limitations

The report draws on six kinds of source, each labelled by type.

Official and primary records. These are the Government of Palestine's 1931 census, Israel's 1948 Declaration, the Palestine Royal Commission's 1937 report and the Central Bureau of Statistics' 2025 Independence Day release.

- The census was read from a scan of the printed preliminary volume through its text layer. Figures were taken only where male and female counts reproduced the printed totals.
- The Royal Commission report is quoted by chapter and paragraph, in fragments where the printed text uses dashes.

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- The Declaration's opening sentence follows the Avalon Project text. The Knesset and Foreign Ministry English texts differ on one word of the equality clause.
- The Central Bureau of Statistics figures are preliminary, rest on the 2022 census and are Israel's own official statistics.

Party instruments. The Palestine National Council's 1968 Charter is quoted in the Avalon Project English text, and its 1988 Declaration in the United Nations translation. Both are the claimant's own statements. The Charter is quoted in its 1968 wording. The Council returned to the Charter at sessions in 1996 and 1998, and these quotations describe the 1968 text only.

Definitional texts. Martínez Cobo's 1986 study is a rapporteur's working definition, read from a scanned print whose text layer garbles the close of paragraph 381. Quotation stops before that point. ILO Convention No. 169 is quoted from the ILO's printed text.

Peer-reviewed measurement.

- Agranat-Tamir and colleagues (2020) sequenced 73 new ancient genomes, analysed 93 ancient individuals in all and modelled 14 present-day groups. Their work is quoted from the accepted author manuscript, whose wording may differ from the final Cell text.
- Haber and colleagues (2013) studied 1,341 new Lebanese samples against 48 published populations. Their ancestry run used 10 components where cross-validation favoured 8.

Archival and legal history.

- Ben-Bassat (2009) covers six Judean colonies only and gives no rate or count.
- Forman and Kedar (2004) stop in 1960 and give no single total for land that left Arab hands.
- Cohen (2002) is a signed article, not peer-reviewed. His 25,000 is a floor drawn from official estimates of the early 1950s.

Interpretive scholarship. Wolfe (2006) is quoted only from excerpts of the publisher's full text. Veracini (2006) is represented through its publisher's description, not the book's text. Troen (2007) is cited for its title, venue and date. The publisher page for that article carries

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no abstract. Ukashi (2018) is a peer-reviewed interpretive essay, described here by its stated scope only.

Derivations. The Arab share of the 1931 population (Moslems plus Christians, about 82%), the settled share (about 94%) and the count of settled Moslems (about 693,159) are the Institute's arithmetic on printed census totals. None is a census figure.

Conclusion

So what is the historical basis for the Palestinian claim to indigeneity? On the record, it is the Mandate government's 1931 count, in which Moslems and Christians made up about 82% of the 1,035,821 people enumerated. It is also the Palestine National Council's own texts of 1968 and 1988, which state the claim in dated words. The two standard definitions ask for continuity, and they accept land, ancestry, culture or self-identification as its evidence.

The record holds dated material on each of those axes. About 94% of the people counted in 1931 were settled, attached to named villages, towns and districts, and the Judean colony records of 1882 to 1903 show neighbouring Arab villages in disputes over boundaries and grazing and as a source of day labour. The 2020 ancient-DNA study puts Middle Eastern-related ancestry above 50% in present-day Arabic-speaking populations, and its authors decline to call that direct Bronze Age descent. The 2013 genome study finds recent divisions following religion and converts none of its components into a count of arrivals or replacement. Israel's absentee statutes record that residence and title came apart after 1947, including for tens of thousands of Arab citizens who never left the state.

The record that sustains the claim does not belong to one side. The 2020 ancestry finding is written for Jewish and Arabic-speaking populations in the same sentence. Israel's 1948 founding text, a party's own statement, calls the land the "birthplace of the Jewish people." In 1937 the Mandatory power's own commission described "two national communities" in "one small country." The ILO definition measures continuity from "the time of conquest or colonisation." When both peoples can point to Levantine ancestry and long attachment to the same ground, who chooses which conquest starts that clock? And what does choosing it decide about the other people on the land?

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Frequently Asked Questions

What did the Peel Commission propose for the two communities?

The Palestine Royal Commission recommended in 1937 that the Mandate end and that "two sovereign independent States" be established, one Arab and one Jewish (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937, Chapter XXII, paragraph 6). It added that "Sooner or later there should be a transfer of land and, as far as possible, an exchange of population." That exchange was to be made by agreement first, scaled to available land, and "in the last resort" compulsory for the Plains. The plan was never enacted.

What did Israel's 1948 Declaration promise its Arab inhabitants?

The Knesset's English text pledges "complete equality of social and political rights to all its citizens irrespective of religion, race or sex" (Provisional Government of Israel, 1948). The Declaration appeals to "the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel" to participate "on the basis of full and equal citizenship." The Foreign Ministry's English text reads "inhabitants" where the Knesset's reads "citizens."

How much of the land was Jewish-owned in 1948?

Forman and Kedar (2004) record that 1.5 million of Mandate Palestine's 26.3 million dunams were Jewish-owned by 1948. Inside Israel's borders of that year, about 2.8 million of 20.6 million dunams, about 13.5%, was under formal state or Jewish ownership. The same authors give no single agreed total for the land that later passed from Arab hands.

What did the 1953 Land Acquisition Law take?

In its first year the 1953 Land Acquisition Law expropriated some 1.2 million dunams, according to Forman and Kedar (2004). Of the 311,000 dunams taken from private ownership, 304,700 belonged to Arab owners. The private and Custodian figures are parts of the 1.2 million, not additions to it.

How many Arabs live in Israel today?

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics reports 2.114 million Arabs, 20.9% of a population of 10.094 million, on the eve of Independence Day 2025 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025).

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The figures are preliminary and are Israel's own official statistics. The bureau counts Moslems, Arab Christians and Druze as Arabs.

Does the 1988 Declaration accept the 1947 partition resolution?

The Palestine National Council's 1988 Declaration refers to "the historical injustice done to the Palestinian Arab people in its displacement and in being deprived of the right to self-determination following the adoption" of resolution 181. It says the resolution "nevertheless continues to attach conditions to international legitimacy" that guarantee Palestinian sovereignty (Palestine National Council, 1988). Resolutions 242 and 338 appear in the session's separate Political Communiqué, not in the Declaration.

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RELATED RESEARCH

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

What would the right of return do to Israel's Jewish majority? The Bureau's counts, one million at a time

Israel's 2026 official count puts Jews and Others at 76%. Parity with Arabs would take about 5.63 million additions. Each million mapped.

Right of Return | Demography | Palestinian Refugees | Israel Population | Official Statistics



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Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics counted 7.790 million Jews and Others and 2.157 million Arabs in its preliminary estimate for 22 April 2026, so a return would have to add about **5.63 million** people to the Arab count before the two groups reached parity. On the Institute's own arithmetic from those counts, the first million added moves the Jews-and-Others share from 76% to about 69.3%, and a second million moves it to about 63.6%. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, wrote in 2009 that the demand to return was "nothing more than a euphemism for the demographic destruction of the Jewish state." The measured effect also depends on a denominator that shifts by about 2 points with the treatment of foreign residents, and on a Palestinian population base that a contested think-tank recalculation puts more than a million below the Palestinian bureau's own count.

Key Findings

- **5.63 million:** the addition to the Arab count at which Arabs and Jews and Others would reach parity, on the Institute's arithmetic from the Central Bureau of Statistics' preliminary counts of 7.790 million and 2.157 million (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026).
- **"Demographic destruction":** Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stating its own position as a party to the dispute, used this phrase on 30 December 2009 to describe the demand to return, on a base it gave as "approximately 7 million" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009).
- **78.5% against 76.4%:** the Bureau's published Jews-and-Others share in September 2025 is a share of 9.888 million people in two named groups, while the same 7.758 million is 76.4% of the 10.148 million total that includes foreign residents (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025).
- **135,000:** Israel's total population growth between the 2024 and 2025 Independence Days, so an inflow of 1 million equals about 7.4 years of that growth (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025, Independence Day).
- **1.34 million:** the gap between the 3.83 million Arabs that the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, a party to the events, reported for the West Bank and Gaza in mid-2004 and the

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2.49 million recalculated in a think-tank report that is not peer-reviewed and that the demographer Sergio DellaPergola contested (Zimmerman, Seid, Wise, 2006).

How much does each million returnees shift Israel's Jewish share?

Each added million lowers the Jews-and-Others share of Israel's population from 76% to about **69.3%** at the first step, on the Institute's own arithmetic from the Central Bureau of Statistics' preliminary count of 10.244 million residents for 22 April 2026. The Bureau publishes no projection of any return, so every scenario figure below is a static calculation on its counts.

The Bureau's release for Israel's 78th Independence Day divides the 10.244 million into 7.790 million Jews and Others (76%), 2.157 million Arabs (21.1%) and 296,000 foreigners (2.9%), with the foreigner data relating to the end of 2025. The calculation adds returnees to the Arab count, grows the total by the same amount, and keeps foreigners in the denominator, because the Bureau counts them in its total. It assumes no births, deaths or emigration in any group, so it describes a snapshot, not a forecast.

Adding 2 million moves the Jews-and-Others share to about 63.6%, with Arabs at about 34.0% and foreigners at about 2.4% of a 12.244 million total. Each further million removes a smaller slice, because the denominator grows with it: the first million lowers the share by about 6.8 points, the second by about 5.7.

The two groups reach parity only at an addition of about 5.63 million, the difference between the Bureau's 7.790 million and 2.157 million. At that point each holds about 49.1% of a 15.877 million total, with foreigners at about 1.9%. An addition of 5.9 million, the number of Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA as of 2023 on the agency's own definitions, leaves Jews and Others at about 48.3% and Arabs at about 49.9% of 16.144 million. A registration count is not a count of people who would relocate.

Jews-and-Others share of Israel's population under fixed additions
ADDITIONS PLACED IN THE ARAB COUNT; FOREIGNERS KEPT IN THE TOTAL; INSTITUTE ARITHMETIC ON PRELIMINARY COUNTS TO 22 APRIL 2026

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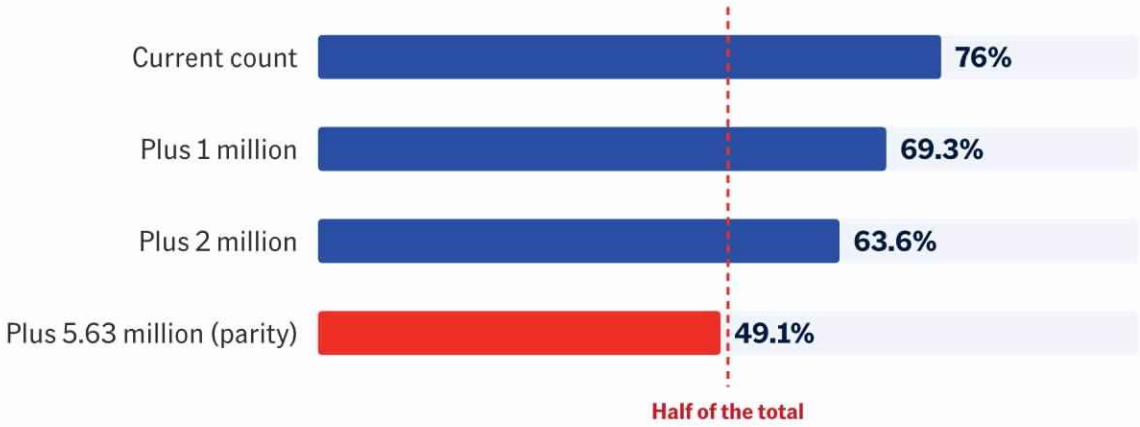

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026, Israel's Independence Day 2026 (preliminary).

How has Israel's government described the demographic stakes, and when?

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote on **30 December 2009**, stating its own position as a party to the dispute, that "the influx of millions of Palestinians into the State of Israel would threaten the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, obliterating its basic identity as the homeland of the Jewish people and a refuge for persecuted Jews worldwide."

The same question-and-answer document goes further. "Consequently, the demand to 'return' to Israel is nothing more than a euphemism for the demographic destruction of the Jewish state," the Ministry wrote. The second of its five principles states that "Israel cannot allow itself to be demographically engulfed by a flood of refugees, undermining the basic identity of Israel as the world's only Jewish state." It added that "under present conditions, the influx of a large number of descendents of refugees into Israel is not a viable option," in the document's own spelling.

Set against the Bureau's 2026 counts, the direction of the Ministry's claim holds: any addition to the Arab count above about 5.63 million would place Arabs ahead of Jews and Others, as the previous section shows. The Ministry's phrase "millions" sits in that range.

The base beneath the claim has moved since 2009. The Ministry gave Israel's population as "approximately 7 million (of whom about one-fifth are Arab-Israelis)"; the Central Bureau of Statistics counted 10.244 million in April 2026, with Arabs at 21.1%. On the Ministry's own round figures, the four-fifths who were not Arab-Israelis, about 5.6 million, exceeded the

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Arab count by about 4.2 million, so the parity threshold then stood near 4.2 million additions. On the 2026 counts it stands near 5.63 million, about 1.4 million higher, on the Institute's arithmetic.

The Ministry's document computes no share. It gives no projected Jewish percentage under any return, names no number of returnees, and asserts the consequence rather than calculating it. Its wording forms part of a wider record of the government's demographic language, and in this document it remains Israel's own stated position, not a measured finding.

Which denominator does Israel's published Jewish majority rest on?

The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics published a Jews-and-Others share of **78.5%** on the eve of Rosh Hashana in September 2025, and on the Bureau's own counts that share is calculated on the two named groups only, Jews and Others and Arabs, not on the full total, which also includes foreign residents.

The release labels the share as one "of the total Israeli population," but its counts do not support that reading. It gives a total of about 10.148 million, including about 260,000 foreigners, with about 7.758 million Jews and Others and 2.130 million Arabs. As shares of the 9.888 million in those two groups they are 78.5% and 21.5%. As shares of the 10.148 million total they are 76.4% and 21.0%, with foreign residents making up the rest. The Bureau's April 2026 release uses the second convention: 76% Jews and Others and 21.1% Arabs, against a total that includes 296,000 foreigners.

The foreign category is recent. From 2023 the Bureau's estimates include foreigners staying in Israel, among them tourists without valid residence permits who entered from 2008 with no record of exiting, so the series is not continuous with earlier years. The Bureau's 2024 Independence Day release, still based on the 2008 census, excluded foreign workers, whom it estimated at 222,500 at the end of 2022.

The choice carries into any return scenario. Adding 1 million to the Arab count with foreigners left out of the base gives Jews and Others about 71.2% of 10.947 million; with

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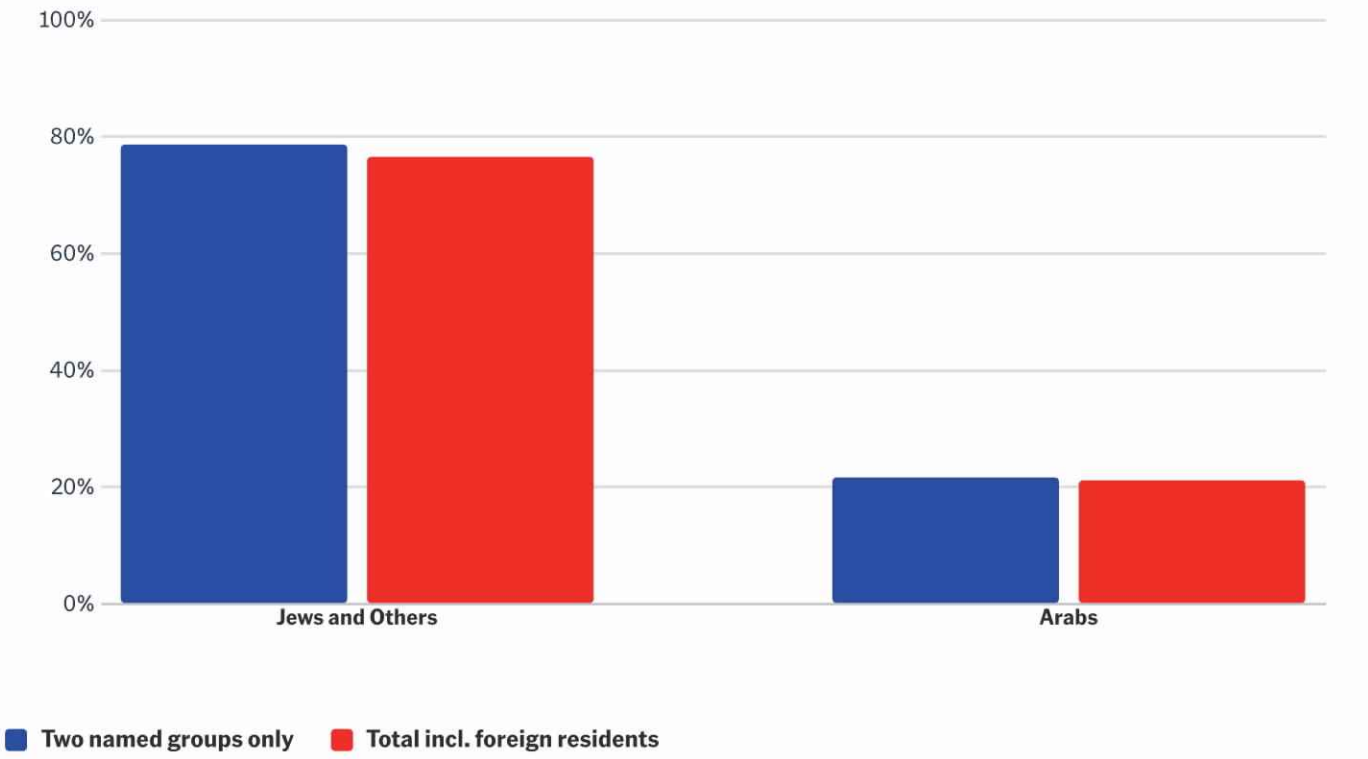
foreigners kept in, the same addition gives about 69.3% of 11.244 million, on the Institute's arithmetic from the 2026 counts. The starting share and every share after it move by about 2 points with the base.

Territory moves the base too. The Bureau counts East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers inside Israel's total, a scope distinct from the international convention, so the 2.157 million Arabs and the 7.790 million Jews and Others both include populations outside the pre-1967 lines.

The same September 2025 counts as shares of two bases

TWO NAMED GROUPS ONLY (9.888 MILLION) AGAINST THE FULL TOTAL WITH FOREIGN RESIDENTS (10.148 MILLION)



Source: Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025, Population on the Eve of Rosh Hashana 5786.

How large was Israel's Arab population when the refugees left?

Hillel Cohen wrote in 2002, in a signed article in the Palestine-Israel Journal that is not peer-reviewed, that official estimates of the early 1950s recorded "some **25,000** internal refugees" who remained, "mainly in Galilee, constituting about one sixth of the total Arab population."

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Cohen's sources for the figure are a Ministry of Labor document of 29 June 1952 and a Jewish National Fund census for 1949 to 1950. He states that the count "is only for urban and rural refugees and does not include Bedouin in the Negev, forced to leave their places of residence for areas determined by the IDF," so 25,000 is a floor. Taken at Cohen's "about one sixth," the implied Arab population of the time is roughly 150,000, an approximation on the Institute's arithmetic, since the share is rounded and its numerator is a floor.

The refugees who stayed entered a distinct legal category. Under the 1950 Absentees' Property Law, Cohen writes, internal refugees who had fled to places not yet conquered were defined as absentees though present and citizens, which "granted them (along with additional population groups) the title of 'present absentees'." That category is wider than the internal refugees alone, so the one-sixth share describes internal refugees, not all present absentees.

Cohen also records how thin the remaining population was in the villages left behind. Citing a September 1949 Ministry of Agriculture report for the western Galilee, he writes that in most abandoned villages 5% to 10% of the original residents remained before their total evacuation.

The Central Bureau of Statistics puts Israel's total population at 806,000 at the establishment of the state in 1948, and counts 2.157 million Arabs in its preliminary April 2026 estimate. The two Arab figures are not like for like: today's count includes East Jerusalem residents, who sat outside Israel's jurisdiction in the early 1950s, and the Bureau's releases cited here do not decompose the change into natural increase and other sources. Any return scenario sets its additions against a present-day Arab base that has itself grown from a post-1948 floor of this size.

How does a returnee inflow compare with Israel's yearly growth?

Israel's population grew by **135,000** people, or 1.4%, between the 2024 and 2025 Independence Days, on the Central Bureau of Statistics' preliminary 2025 estimate, so an inflow of 1 million equals about 7.4 years of total national growth at that pace, on the Institute's own arithmetic.

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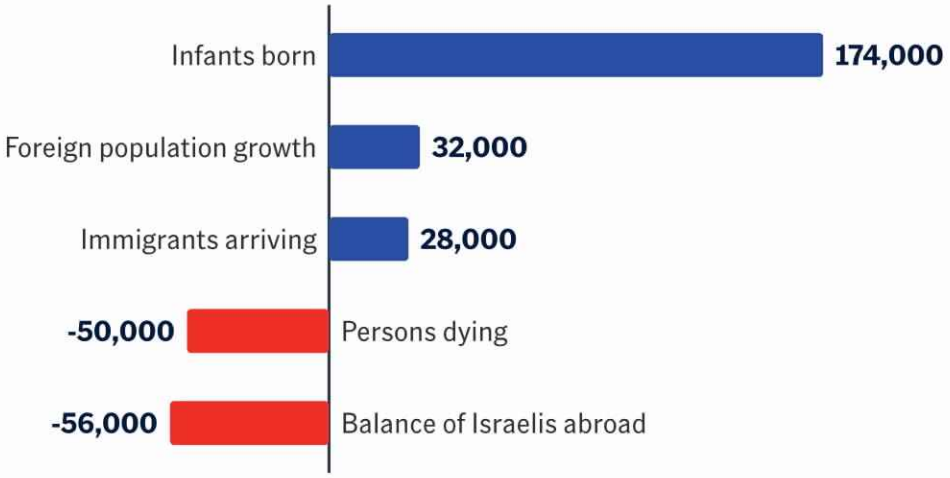
The Bureau's 2025 release lists the components. About 174,000 infants were born, about 28,000 immigrants arrived and about 50,000 persons died, against a negative balance of 56,000 Israelis staying abroad. The foreign population grew by about 32,000 over the same period, and family reunification is additional, so the listed components do not exhaust the total.

Natural increase, births minus deaths, came to about 124,000 that year. Immigration was the smaller channel by a wide margin. At the 2024 to 2025 pace of about 28,000 immigrants a year, an inflow of 1 million equals about 36 years of immigration, on the Institute's arithmetic.

The speed of an inflow changes its yearly weight more than its final weight. Spread over 10 years, 1 million arrivals would run at 100,000 a year, about 3.6 times the 2024 to 2025 immigration figure and close to the year's total growth of 135,000. Spread over 30 years, it would run at about 33,000 a year, near the 2024 to 2025 immigration level. Neither spreading changes the static shares in the first section, which depend only on the size of the addition and the base it is added to, under the no-births, no-deaths assumption stated there.

Components of Israel's population change, 2024 to 2025

INDEPENDENCE DAY 2024 TO INDEPENDENCE DAY 2025, PRELIMINARY; FAMILY REUNIFICATION NOT LISTED SEPARATELY



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025, Israel's Independence Day 2025 (preliminary).

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How large is Israel projected to grow without any return?

The Central Bureau of Statistics' medium-variant national projection, reported in its 2024 Independence Day release, puts Israel's population at **15.2 million** in 2048, so a fixed inflow of 1 million would equal about 6.6% of that projected total, on the Institute's own arithmetic.

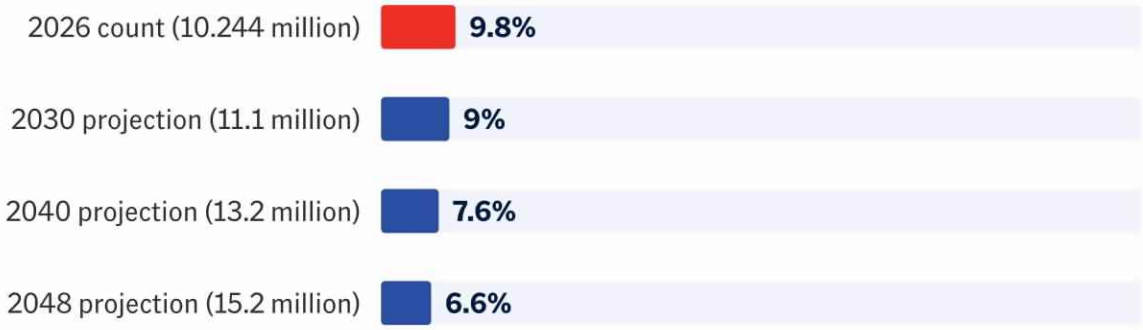
The same release gives 11.1 million for 2030 and 13.2 million for 2040, drawn from the Bureau's national population projection for 2015 to 2065. These are projections, not observations. Against them, 1 million equals about 9.0% of the 2030 figure and about 7.6% of the 2040 figure, while it equals about 9.8% of the 10.244 million counted in April 2026.

The bases are not fully comparable. The 2024 release rested on the 2008 census and excluded foreign workers; the 2026 count rests on the 2022 census and includes 296,000 foreigners. The gap between a 2026 count and a 2030 projection therefore mixes population change with a change of method.

The 2024 release publishes totals only. It carries no projected breakdown into Jews and Others, Arabs and foreigners for 2030, 2040 or 2048, so no projected Jews-and-Others share for those years appears in the Bureau's record cited here, and none is supplied in its place. What the projection does establish is scale: a fixed number of returnees forms a smaller share of the population the later it is set against, because the base itself grows by about 5 million between 2026 and 2048 on the Bureau's medium variant.

A fixed 1 million inflow as a share of each population base

2026 IS A PRELIMINARY COUNT; 2030, 2040 AND 2048 ARE MEDIUM-VARIANT PROJECTIONS; INSTITUTE ARITHMETIC



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Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026 (preliminary count) and 2024 (medium-variant projection).

Has Israel absorbed an inflow of this size before?

The Central Bureau of Statistics counted about **1.68 million** immigrants arriving in Israel since 1990, 47.8% of the more than 3.5 million who have arrived since the state's establishment in 1948, in its preliminary 2026 release, an inflow of the same order as a return of 1 to 2 million.

The Bureau adds about 158,000 immigrating citizens since 1970, persons born to an Israeli citizen abroad who entered Israel intending to settle. Over the full period, it records a population of 806,000 at establishment and a present population more than 12.5 times that size.

Pace matters as much as total. The 1.68 million arrived across about 36 years, an average of roughly 47,000 a year on the Institute's arithmetic, against the 100,000 a year that a 1 million inflow spread over 10 years would require.

The Bureau's Holocaust Day release of 2025 shows what those earlier inflows look like within a generation. Of the 7.1 million Jews living in Israel at the beginning of 2024, 5.7 million were born in Israel and 1.4 million abroad, including 1.0 million born in Europe or America and 275,000 born in Africa. On the eve of the state's establishment in 1948, the same release counts 650,000 Jews living in Israel, 6% of a world Jewish population of 11.5 million.

These are the Bureau's counts of immigrants, not of Jews alone: its Others category consists mainly of immigrants under the Law of Return or family reunification who are not registered as Jews. They show that Israel's population has taken in arrivals of the order discussed in return scenarios, and that the children of those arrivals now appear in the native-born count.

Jews in Israel by place of birth, beginning of 2024
MILLIONS; TOTAL 7.1 MILLION

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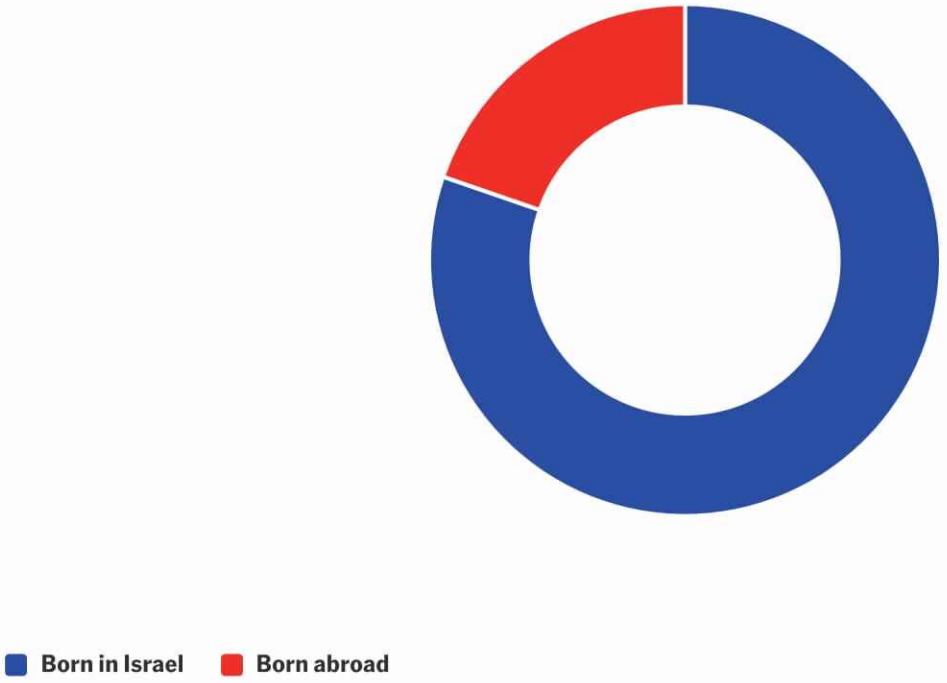

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025, On the Occasion of Holocaust Day, 2025.

Why do counts of the Palestinian population differ by a million?

Zimmerman, Seid and Wise (2006), in a Begin-Sadat Center think-tank report that is not peer-reviewed, calculated 2.49 million Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza in mid-2004, a gap of **1.34 million** against the 3.83 million that the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, a party to the events, reported.

The authors itemise the gap. Their largest entries are 325,000 residents living abroad, a 310,000 error in immigration against emigration, 238,000 in birth forecasts they found unmet, and 210,000 East Jerusalem Arabs they describe as double-counted in Israel's own survey. The report carries a policy thesis, that Israel's "demographic time bomb" is overstated, and was written by a business consultant, a historian and a physicist rather than demographers. Its central claim was contested by the demographer Sergio DellaPergola, whose critical review the authors acknowledge, and the Palestinian bureau rejected the overcount and revised its own model after the study.

The Palestinian bureau's own current figures are projections, by its own account. It projected Gaza at 2,226,544 for mid-2023 from its 1 December 2017 census, which counted 1,899,291

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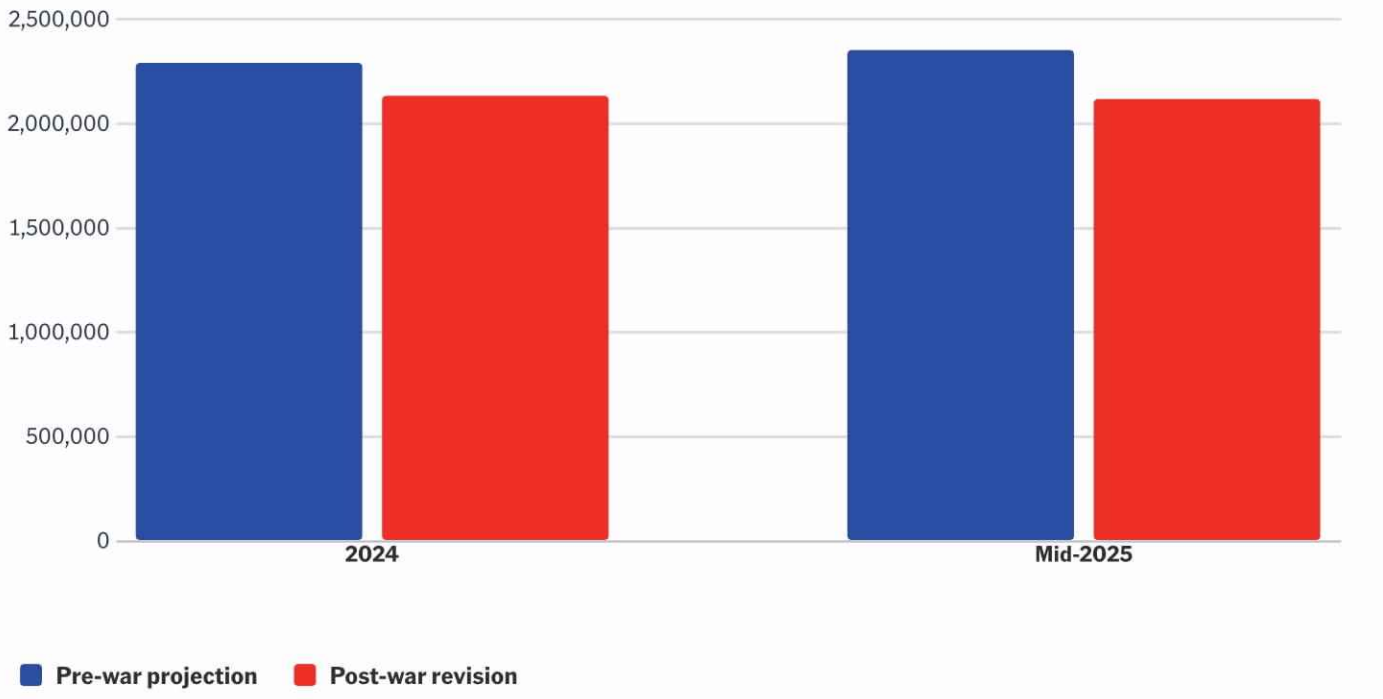
residents. After October 2023 it revised Gaza to 2,129,724 for 2024 and 2,114,301 for mid-2025, against its own pre-war table rows of 2,287,558 and 2,349,301. The bureau describes the first revision as "a decrease of 6%"; against its own table row it computes to 6.9%, and the second to 10.0%. The bureau attributes the change to deaths, missing persons, out-migration and reduced births together, so neither revision is a casualty count. Every figure here is the bureau's own count, published by a party to the events and not independently verified.

The pool from which any return is drawn therefore sits on projected, revised and contested bases, examined further in the dispute over Israeli and Palestinian population counts. Neither the think-tank report nor the bureau's releases cited here publish the refugee share of these totals.

Gaza population: pre-war projection against post-war revision

THE BUREAU'S OWN FIGURES, A PARTY TO THE EVENTS; NOT CASUALTY COUNTS



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2023, population tables and footnote (its own projections).

Methodology and limitations

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The evidence comes from three source types. Official records: five population releases of Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (2024, three in 2025, and 2026), the population and labour releases of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2023), and the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs' question-and-answer statement of 30 December 2009, read on ReliefWeb's repost because the Ministry's original address is retired. Each bureau is the official statistical office of a party to the conflict, and the Ministry's text is a party's stated position, quoted as such. Scholarly and think-tank work: Cohen (2002), a signed article in a joint Israeli-Palestinian policy quarterly, not peer-reviewed; and Zimmerman, Seid and Wise (2006), a think-tank report, not peer-reviewed, whose central estimate is contested.

The scenario shares are the Institute's own arithmetic on the Bureau's published counts. Returnees are added to the Arab count; foreigners stay in the denominator; no births, deaths, emigration, age structure, legal status or settlement location is assumed. The calculations are static and are not projections. None of the releases cited publishes a scenario that adds returnees, and the 2024 projection carries totals without group composition. The 5.9 million figure is UNRWA's own registration count on its own definitions, used only as an arithmetic step.

The Bureau's Independence Day estimates are preliminary and rest on the 2022 census; from 2023 they include foreigners, breaking continuity with earlier years, and they include East Jerusalem residents and West Bank settlers. The 2024 projections rest on the 2008 census and exclude foreign workers. The Palestinian bureau's figures from 2018 onward are projected from its 2017 census, and its post-war revisions are not casualty counts. Cohen's 25,000 excludes displaced Negev Bedouin and is a floor.

Conclusion

So what would a right of return do to Israel's population? On the Central Bureau of Statistics' 2026 counts, it would lower the Jews-and-Others share by several points per million, and it would remove that group's majority only above an addition of about 5.63 million.

The record draws a consistent portrait. One million returnees take the Jews-and-Others share from 76% to about 69.3%, two million to about 63.6%. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Israel's own stated position as a party, called the demand to return a euphemism for

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"demographic destruction" in 2009, on a 7 million base that has since become 10.244 million and raised the parity threshold by about 1.4 million. The starting share itself moves by about 2 points with the treatment of foreign residents. A million arrivals equal about 7.4 years of national growth, are a smaller share of the projected 2048 population than of today's, and match in scale the 1.68 million immigrants Israel has recorded since 1990. Beneath it all, the Palestinian population from which any return would be drawn differs by 1.34 million between a contested recalculation and the Palestinian bureau's own count.

A majority, in this record, is a ratio set by choices: which year's base, whether foreign residents count, whose census, which projection, and how fast people arrive. When a number of returnees is named in any future negotiation, against which of those denominators will a society measure whether its identity has changed, and who will decide which denominator is the real one?

Frequently Asked Questions

What does "Jews and Others" mean in Israel's population statistics?

The Central Bureau of Statistics, in its 2026 Independence Day release, defines Others as non-Arab Christians, members of other religions, and those registered as not classified by religion. Arabs covers Moslems, Arab Christians and Druze. The combined Jews-and-Others category is therefore wider than the Jewish population alone.

What share of the world's Jews lives in Israel?

The Central Bureau of Statistics counted 7.1 million Jews in Israel at the beginning of 2024, 45% of a world Jewish population of 15.7 million, with 6.3 million (40%) in the United States. Figures outside Israel use a "core" definition drawn from the American Jewish Year Book 2023, not from Bureau collection.

What legal position does Israel's Foreign Ministry take on return?

The Ministry wrote in December 2009 that "no such right exists under international law, not has one been created by the relevant UN resolutions or the agreements between Israel and its

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Arab neighbors," in the document's own wording. This is Israel's own stated position as a party to the dispute.

How young is Israel's population?

The Central Bureau of Statistics' 2025 release puts about 27% of the population at ages 0 to 14 and about 13% at 65 or over at the end of 2023. Its 2024 release gave about 28% and about 12% for the end of 2022.

How young is Gaza's population?

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, a party to the events, projects children under 18 at 47% of Gaza's population in mid-2023, or 1,046,400 people, and children under 15 at 40%. The two figures use different age cut-offs, and both are projections from the 2017 census.

Who counts as an "immigrating citizen" in Israel's figures?

The Central Bureau of Statistics defines an immigrating citizen as a person born to an Israeli citizen abroad who enters Israel intending to settle. The Bureau reports these arrivals separately from immigrants.

How much did Israel grow in the year to April 2026?

The Central Bureau of Statistics recorded growth of 146,000 (1.4%) over the 11.75 months to 22 April 2026, of which 110,000 was Israeli population and about 36,000 foreign. About 177,000 infants were born, about 48,000 persons died and about 21,000 immigrants arrived, against a negative balance of 45,000 Israelis abroad.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Are all Israeli settlements considered illegal? The 14 to 0 Council vote and Israel's own record

Resolution 2334 passed 14 to 0 in 2016 for territory occupied since 1967. Israel's ministry, courts and a 2012 commission draw other lines.

Israeli Settlements | International Law | Security Council Resolution 2334 | Fourth Geneva Convention | Oslo II



The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2334 on 23 December 2016 by 14 votes to none, with the United States abstaining. The resolution reaffirms that Israeli settlements "in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem" have "no legal validity." Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, rejects the illegality position in its own published statements of 1997 and 2015, both earlier than the resolution. Israel's own records draw narrower lines: its Supreme Court voided one settlement requisition in part, by 5 to 0, in 1979 while

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accepting that such requisitions are "potentially justified," and the Council's 2016 text names East Jerusalem but not the Golan Heights.

Key Findings

- The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2334 on 23 December 2016 by **14 votes to 0, with 1 abstention** (the United States). The resolution reaffirms that settlements "in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem" have "no legal validity" (United Nations Security Council, 2016).
- Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs states Israel's own position, as a party to the dispute, in two texts (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, 1997). Its 1997 release says the Fourth Geneva Convention does not apply to the West Bank and Gaza. Its 2015 page says voluntary settlement "simply does not match" the transfers article 49(6) contemplates.
- Israel's Supreme Court ruled 5 to 0 on 22 October 1979 in HCJ 390/79, the Elon Moreh case (Israeli Supreme Court, 1979). It invalidated one possession order as to the petitioners' plots, about 125 of roughly 700 dunams, and held that requisition for a civilian settlement is "potentially justified" under the Hague Regulations.
- The 1995 Interim Agreement lists "settlements" among the issues for permanent status negotiations in Article XXXI(5). Article XXXI(6) preserves each party's "existing rights, claims or positions" (Israel and the PLO, 1995).
- The PLO Negotiations Affairs Department's standing position, a party's own statement last modified in 2019, says the PLO has been willing to discuss "minor, equitable, and mutually-agreed territorial exchanges" (PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, undated, last modified 2019).

Which settlements did the Security Council declare without legal validity?

The UN Security Council voted **14 to 0** on 23 December 2016 to adopt Resolution 2334. Its first operative paragraph covers settlements "in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem." In that territory, the Council reaffirmed, the establishment of settlements by Israel "has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law" (United Nations Security Council, 2016a).

The full paragraph adds that settlements are "a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace." Operative paragraph 2 "reiterates its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard." The resolution's dateline records adoption "at its 7853rd meeting, on 23 December 2016."

The text sets its scope by geography, not by category. Paragraph 1 does not sort settlements by size, founding date or status under Israeli law. The single criterion it applies is location in territory occupied since 1967.

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Operative paragraph 5 turns that line into an instruction to states. It calls on all of them "to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967." The Council thus asks governments to treat the 1967 line as the boundary of the finding in their own "relevant dealings."

On its own wording, the declaration reaches every Israeli settlement inside the territory it names. It reaches nothing on the Israeli side of the "4 June 1967 lines" that paragraph 3 refers to. The question's word "all" therefore turns on a map before it turns on a legal argument. Read through Resolution 2334, a settlement's status follows from where it sits.

That territorial test also explains why the answer differs by place. East Jerusalem is named twice in the operative text, the Gaza Strip has had no settlements since 2005, and the Golan Heights does not appear by name. The sections below take each in turn.

Who holds that settlements breach international law, and since when?

Resolution 2334's preamble invokes a treaty signed on **12 August 1949**, the Fourth Geneva Convention. The preamble reaffirms "the obligation of Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities" under that Convention (United Nations Security Council, 2016a). The same preamble recalls "the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice." The position behind the question therefore has a dated lineage.

The treaty clause at issue is article 49, whose sixth paragraph reads: "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies" (Fourth Geneva Convention, article 49, 1949). Resolution 2334 does not quote article 49. It names the Convention as the instrument whose obligations bind Israel as "the occupying Power."

The International Court of Justice returned to the subject in an advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, requested by General Assembly resolution 77/247 of 30 December 2022. The Court held, by 14 votes to 1, that Israel is under an obligation "to cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to evacuate all settlers." Vice-President Sebutinde voted against.

The opinion's nine operative subparagraphs carried four different majorities. They ran from unanimity on jurisdiction to 11 votes to 4 on the two narrowest, which concern the continued presence itself. The opinion is advisory. It arose on a General Assembly request rather than a case between parties, and it binds no state. The 2024 opinion is separate from the 2004 opinion recalled in Resolution 2334. A subparagraph-by-subparagraph reading of the votes is in the Institute's report on the ruling.

On this record, the direction of the premise holds for the two UN organs whose dated, voted texts on settlements are read here. The chain runs:

- 12 August 1949: the Fourth Geneva Convention, named in the preamble to Resolution 2334.

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- 9 July 2004: the Court's first advisory opinion, recalled in the same preamble.
- 23 December 2016: Resolution 2334, adopted 14 to 0 with 1 abstention.
- 19 July 2024: the Court's second advisory opinion, 14 to 1 on settlement activity.

Each link is a separate record with its own margin. None of the four is a vote of every state.

Did every Security Council member vote for Resolution 2334?

No. The Council's provisional verbatim record, S/PV.7853, shows **14** of 15 members voting in favour of Resolution 2334 on 23 December 2016, none against, and the United States abstaining.

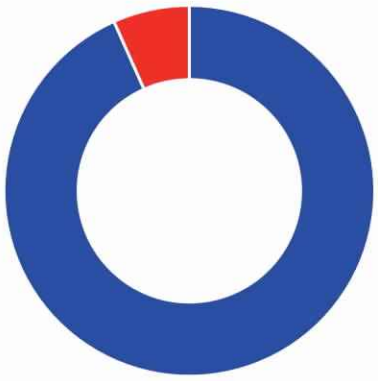
The President announced: "There were 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention" (United Nations Security Council, 2016b).

The record states that "a vote was taken by show of hands." The 14 members in favour were Angola, China, Egypt, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and Venezuela. The single recorded non-yes on the Council's settlements text came from a permanent member.

That abstention did not block adoption. Directly after announcing the tally, the President said the draft "has been adopted as resolution 2334 (2016)". An abstention by a permanent member is recorded as an abstention, not a veto.

The text voted on was document S/2016/1100, "submitted by Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela." Malaysia, New Zealand and Venezuela spoke before the vote. Fourteen statements followed it, ending with the President speaking for Spain. Israel, invited at the opening of the meeting under rule 37, spoke next, followed by the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine. S/PV.7853 is marked "Provisional," and the final text printed in the Official Records may carry corrections.

How the Council voted on Resolution 2334
15 MEMBERS, 23 DECEMBER 2016; 0 VOTES AGAINST



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Source: United Nations Security Council, 2016, S/PV.7853 (provisional verbatim record).

The vote records the positions of 15 states on one day. It is the Council's act, not a census of every government's view.

Five permanent and ten elected members sat that day. None voted against a text declaring settlements in territory occupied since 1967 to have "no legal validity." The one member that withheld a yes did so by abstaining.

Does the Council's 2016 text name the Golan Heights?

Resolution 2334, adopted on **23 December 2016**, does not name the Golan Heights anywhere in its text. Its first two operative paragraphs define their scope as "the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem," and paragraph 3 refers to "the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem" (United Nations Security Council, 2016a).

The wording varies across the paragraphs. Paragraphs 1 and 2 qualify the territory as "Palestinian." Paragraph 5 uses an unqualified plural, asking states to distinguish between Israel and "the territories occupied since 1967." The text does not list which territories that plural covers.

The text is precise on Jerusalem. East Jerusalem appears by name in paragraphs 1 and 2, and Jerusalem appears again in paragraph 3's refusal to recognise changes to the 1967 lines. The Council named that place expressly. It gave no equivalent naming to the Golan Heights.

The other instruments in this record share the same geography. The 1995 Interim Agreement states in Article XXXI(8) that the two sides "view the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a single territorial unit" (Israel and the PLO, 1995). The Israeli Foreign Ministry's 1997 and 2015 positions address the West Bank and Gaza (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997; 2015). The 1979 Elon Moreh judgment concerns land outside Nablus (Israeli Supreme Court, 1979).

None of these documents addresses settlement in the Golan Heights. For the Golan, the record set out here holds no Council text and no court ruling on settlements. A statement that Golan settlements are illegal under international law therefore cannot be traced to Resolution 2334. Any such statement has to rest on some other named document.

The practical consequence for the question is narrow but real. Resolution 2334's express finding covers "the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem." Whether the Golan falls under the same finding depends on documents beyond this resolution.

What happened to the settlements Israel once held in Gaza?

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the dispute, describes its measures under the **2005** Disengagement Plan, dismantling all settlements in the Gaza Strip and some in the

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northern West Bank, as "unilateral Israeli gestures of good will rather than the fulfilment of a legal obligation" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). That is Israel's own stated characterisation of the removal of settlements from the Gaza Strip, and it treats the removal as voluntary.

The settlements' earlier existence is on the treaty record. The 1995 Interim Agreement, Annex III, Schedule 11, gives the Palestinian Council operation and management of Gaza's water systems, with one carve-out. Under that carve-out, "the existing water systems supplying water to the Settlements and the Military Installation Area, and the water systems and resources inside them shall continue to be operated and managed by Mekoroth Water Co." (Israel and the PLO, 1995). In 1995, settlements in Gaza were a category the parties planned around.

Their end is recorded in the International Court of Justice's 2024 advisory opinion: "By 2005, Israel had completed the withdrawal of its army and the removal of the settlements in the Gaza Strip." The Court added that the withdrawal "has not entirely released it of its obligations under the law of occupation," which "have remained commensurate with the degree of its effective control over the Gaza Strip."

For the question's word "all," this removes one category from the present tense. The Interim Agreement already defines West Bank settlements by area. Article XII(5) provides that "the Settlements" means, "in the West Bank the settlements in Area C." After 2005, the settlements at issue under Resolution 2334 sit in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

The two parties' readings of 2005 differ in kind, not only in degree. Israel's Foreign Ministry calls the withdrawal a gesture rather than an obligation. The Court's opinion places Gaza within the territory it treats as "a single territorial unit," the same phrase the parties themselves used in Article XXXI(8) of the 1995 agreement.

On what grounds does Israel's government reject the illegality finding?

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated in a press release of **14 July 1997** that "Israel's position is that the Convention is only applicable to territory of a High Contracting Party." Because neither the West Bank nor Gaza "were previously under the control of a legitimate sovereign," the release concluded, "hence the nonapplicability of the Convention" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997). This is a party's own stated legal position.

The release reads the Convention's second article. Article 2 provides that the Convention "shall also apply to all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a High Contracting Party" (Fourth Geneva Convention, article 2, 1949). The same 1997 release adds: "Nevertheless, Israel has undertaken to act de facto in accordance with the humanitarian provisions of the Convention."

The Ministry's 2015 page is framed differently. It argues "quite apart from the question of whether the Fourth Geneva Convention applies de jure." It then says that Jews "voluntarily establishing homes and communities in their ancient homeland" does not "match the kind of

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forced population transfers contemplated by Article 49(6)" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). That page does not restate non-applicability. It contests the scope of article 49(6) instead.

The 2015 page also says settlements "do not constitute a 'grave breach' of the Fourth Geneva Convention or 'war crimes'." It states that this characterisation entered only in "the 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, to which leading States including Israel are not party." The clause it refers to is article 85(4)(a) of Additional Protocol I. That clause lists as a grave breach "the transfer by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies" (Additional Protocol I, article 85, 1977).

Issue	The Ministry's stated position	Source
Convention's applicability	Applies only to a High Contracting Party's territory	Israel MFA, **1997**
Article 49(6)	Voluntary settlement is not forced transfer	Israel MFA, **2015**
Grave breach	Introduced in 1977 protocols Israel has not joined	Israel MFA, **2015**
Status of the West Bank	"Territory over which there are competing claims"	Israel MFA, **2015**

On the land itself, the 2015 page calls the West Bank "best regarded as territory over which there are competing claims which should be resolved in peace process negotiations." It adds that "Israel recognizes that the Palestinians also entertain claims to this area."

What did Israel's 2012 Levy Commission conclude about legality?

The Commission to Examine the Status of Building in Judea and Samaria concluded in a report signed on **21 June 2012** that "the establishment of settlements cannot in and of itself be considered to be illegal" (Levy and colleagues, 2012). Israel's Prime Minister and Minister of Justice appointed the commission, so its conclusion is a party's own legal position on a contested question, not a finding of an international body.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Justice Yaakov Neeman appointed the commission on 13 February 2012. Its three members were a retired Supreme Court justice, Edmond E. Levy, as chairman; a District Court judge, Tehiya Shapira; and a retired ambassador, Alan Baker. The report was publicly released on 9 July 2012.

The basic conclusion appears at §65. There the commission states that "the classical laws of 'occupation' as set out in the relevant international conventions cannot be considered applicable to the unique and sui generis historic and legal circumstances of Israel's presence in Judea and Samaria spanning over decades." Its finding on settlements follows from that premise.

The recommendations go further. The commission proposed fixing each settlement's municipal jurisdiction "taking into due consideration future natural growth." It also advised that, pending completion, "the state is advised to refrain from carrying out demolition orders, since it brought about the present situation through its own actions."

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The report frames these as proposals, not decisions. Its closing paragraph reads: "Should the government decide to adopt our recommendations, it will be necessary to implement those principles in detail."

The text has its own provenance problem. The Conclusions and Recommendations section is identified as the original Israeli Government translation. The only full English text is a reprint translated by Regavim, a self-described legal advocacy organization that made submissions to the commission and is named in the report as advancing the non-occupation position. The Hebrew governs. The quotations above, other than the closing paragraph, come from the Conclusions section.

Does Israel's own law treat every settlement as lawful?

Israel's Supreme Court, sitting as the High Court of Justice, ruled **5 to 0** on 22 October 1979 in HCJ 390/79, the Elon Moreh case.

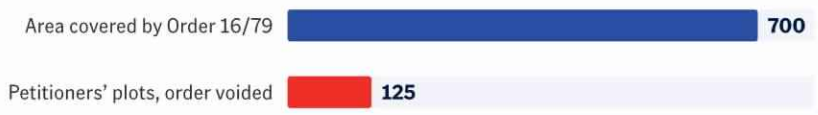
The Court declared Order of Possession 16/79 invalid as to the petitioners' land and ordered the civilian settlers vacated from it within 30 days (Israeli Supreme Court, 1979). The ruling turned on the facts of one requisition, not on settlement as such.

Deputy President Landau accepted the principle and rejected its application. He wrote that "possession of privately owned land for the purposes of a civilian settlement is potentially justified under Article 52 of the Hague Regulations." That article permits requisitions "for the needs of the army of occupation" (Hague Regulations, article 52, 1907). He then confined "military needs": they "cannot be construed to include, by any reasonable interpretation, national security needs in their broad sense."

The facts failed that test. Landau found that "the process was inverted: the initiative came from the political echelons, which then reached out to the Chief of the General Staff for his professional opinion." He concluded that "the military consideration was subordinate to the primary, political decision to build the settlement." The judgment distinguishes, on its facts, an earlier 1978 case, Beit El, in which a requisition had been upheld. It left article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention undecided.

Land under the Elon Moreh possession order

ORDER OF POSSESSION 16/79, APPROXIMATE DUNAMS; THE 1979 RULING VOIDED IT ONLY FOR THE PETITIONERS' PLOTS



Source: Israeli Supreme Court, 1979, HCJ 390/79 (unofficial English translation).

A second distinction runs through the 2012 Levy Commission, the government-appointed body that gave its own legal position (Levy and colleagues, 2012). It addressed settlements

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established without a formal government decision. Their founding, it wrote, had occurred with the "knowledge, encouragement and tacit agreement of the most senior political level," and "such conduct is to be seen as implied agreement."

The same commission's §65 also recorded that "the picture that has been displayed before us regarding Israeli settlement activity in Judea and Samaria does not befit the behavior of a state that prides itself on, and is committed to the rule of law."

Israeli law, on this record, draws two lines: private land requisitioned without genuine military need, and building without a government decision. Neither line is the 1967 line that Resolution 2334 uses.

Could negotiated land swaps keep some settlements in place?

Resolution 2334's third operative paragraph states that the Security Council "will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations" (United Nations Security Council, 2016a). The Council's own **2016** text thus leaves agreed changes to the line open by its own terms.

The Palestinian negotiating position, as the PLO publishes it, makes room for exactly such changes. The PLO Negotiations Affairs Department's standing page on borders was first published in 2015 and last modified on 27 March 2019. It states that "Israel has no valid claim to any part of the West Bank or Gaza Strip." It also says that "in the interest of peace, we have been willing to discuss minor, equitable, and mutually-agreed territorial exchanges and border modifications should we decide that it is in our interest to do so" (PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, undated, last modified 2019). This is a party's own position.

The same page defines the line that any exchange would modify: "The 1967 border, which is defined as the 1949 Armistice Line along with all legal modification thereto up to June 4th 1967." That wording matches the Council's reference to the 4 June 1967 lines.

The bilateral instrument both parties signed puts settlements on the negotiating table explicitly. Article XXXI(5) of the 1995 Interim Agreement provides that permanent status negotiations "shall cover remaining issues, including: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders." Article XXXI(6) adds that "neither Party shall be deemed, by virtue of having entered into this Agreement, to have renounced or waived any of its existing rights, claims or positions" (Israel and the PLO, 1995). The non-waiver binds both sides equally. The jurisdiction schedule of that agreement is read clause by clause in a separate Institute report.

Israel's Foreign Ministry, also stating its own position, describes the West Bank as territory whose "competing claims ... should be resolved in peace process negotiations" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). The three texts start from different premises. Each one leaves open a negotiated outcome on land where settlements stand.

Methodology and limitations

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This report draws on four kinds of record.

- **Official or primary records.** These are Security Council resolution 2334 and the provisional verbatim record of the 7853rd meeting, S/PV.7853, which is marked provisional and may differ from the final Official Records text. They also include the 1995 Interim Agreement, in the English text published by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to the agreement, and three treaty texts: the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Additional Protocol I of 1977 and the Hague Regulations of 1907.
- **A domestic court record.** The record is HCJ 390/79, read in the unofficial English translation published by the Cardozo Israeli Supreme Court Project from a Hebrew version prepared by Nevo Press. A separate English text, printed in International Legal Materials in 1980, was supplied by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Neither text is the Court's own English. The Cardozo translation prints the judgment date as 10 October 1979. The Hebrew date it gives, 1 Cheshvan 5740, corresponds to 22 October 1979, and that is the date used here. The land quantities are approximate figures for one site.
- **Party positions.** These are Israel's Foreign Ministry pages of 1997 and 2015, which are framed differently and are reported separately, and the PLO Negotiations Affairs Department page. That page is undated on its face. Its metadata gives first publication in 2015 and last modification in 2019, and no figure from it is used.
- **A government-appointed commission.** The 2012 Levy report is quoted from its Conclusions section and closing paragraph; the Conclusions are identified as the Israeli Government translation. The full English text is a translation by Regavim, an advocacy organization that appeared before the commission, and the Hebrew governs.

The International Court of Justice's 2024 advisory opinion was read from the Court's own text. It is reported by subparagraph and margin only, because its nine operative subparagraphs carry four different majorities. Its conclusions are reported as the Court's and appear in no finding as the report's own.

The applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the scope of article 49(6) and the legal status of the West Bank are the contested points on which the sources part. The Interim Agreement's 18-month redeployment schedule and its May 1996 negotiating date are what the text provided, not a record of what took place.

Conclusion

So are all Israeli settlements considered illegal by the international community? On the Security Council's voted record, settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, have "no legal validity," a text adopted with 14 members in favour and the United States abstaining. The International Court of Justice's advisory opinion reached its own position on settlement activity by 14 votes to 1. Israel's government, a party to the dispute, rejects the illegality position in its own 1997 and 2015 statements, both earlier than the resolution.

The portrait the records draw has several edges. The Council's finding follows the 1967 line and names East Jerusalem twice, while the Golan Heights never appears in its text. The Gaza

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settlements are gone, removed by 2005 in what Israel's own Foreign Ministry calls a gesture rather than an obligation. Israel's Supreme Court voided one requisition 5 to 0, as to the petitioners' plots, while holding requisition itself "potentially justified." A commission the Israeli government appointed concluded that settlements cannot "in and of itself be considered to be illegal," and then recorded that the state's conduct "does not befit" a state committed to the rule of law.

Every one of these texts keeps a door open somewhere. The Council refuses changes to the 1967 lines "other than those agreed by the parties." The PLO's own published position allows "mutually-agreed territorial exchanges," and the 1995 agreement lists settlements for negotiation. A settlement that sits beyond the 1967 line today could, under each text's own terms, sit inside an agreed border tomorrow. Is "all" a statement about where a settlement stands now, or about whether a border has yet been drawn around it?

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the 1995 Interim Agreement prohibit building settlements?

Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stating its own position in 2015, says the bilateral agreements "contain no prohibition on the building or expansion of settlements." It calls a reading of Article XXXI(7) as a ban "unfounded." The clause itself provides that "neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip," and it binds both parties on its face (Israel and the PLO, 1995).

What is Area C, and why does it matter for settlements?

Article XI(3) of the 1995 Interim Agreement defines Area C residually, as "areas of the West Bank outside Areas A and B." Article XII(5) defines "the Settlements" in the West Bank as "the settlements in Area C" (Israel and the PLO, 1995). The agreement prints no percentage of West Bank land for Area C, so any such share comes from a later measuring body.

Did Israel's Supreme Court say the Geneva Convention applies to the West Bank?

In the 1979 Elon Moreh judgment, Justice Witkon wrote that the Convention "does apply, though, as noted above, it is not 'justiciable' in this Court" (Israeli Supreme Court, 1979). Deputy President Landau declined to rule on article 49(6) because treaty law "is not binding law in an Israeli Court." Witkon added that "my refraining from determination must not be interpreted as support for either of the parties."

How often must the UN report on Resolution 2334?

Operative paragraph 12 requests the Secretary-General "to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of the provisions of the present resolution" (United Nations Security Council, 2016a). The reporting duty attaches to the whole resolution, including its settlement paragraphs.

Which judges dissented in the Court's 2024 opinion?

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Vice-President Sebutinde voted against eight of the nine subparagraphs of the International Court of Justice's 19 July 2024 opinion and appended a dissenting opinion. Judges Tomka, Abraham and Aurescu voted against the two subparagraphs on the continued presence, each carried 11 votes to 4. Judges Abraham and Aurescu also voted against the three subparagraphs on the duties of states and international organizations.

When were the parties supposed to settle the settlements question?

Article XXXI(5) of the 1995 Interim Agreement provided that permanent status negotiations would begin "not later than May 4, 1996" and would cover settlements (Israel and the PLO, 1995). Annex I scheduled three further redeployments to finish within 18 months of the Palestinian Council's inauguration. Those dates are what the text set, not a record of what followed.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Was sexual violence committed during the October 7 attacks? Two UN reports and the standards behind them

A UN mission found reasonable grounds to believe rape occurred in at least 3 locations on October 7, and a UN commission named 6. What each could verify.

October 7 | Sexual Violence | United Nations | Commission of Inquiry | Standards of Proof



Yes: in March 2024 the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) reported “reasonable grounds

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to believe" that conflict-related sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, occurred during the October 7 attacks in **at least 3 locations**. In June 2024 a UN Commission of Inquiry concluded, on its own corroboration standard, that sexual violence was committed at 6 named sites. Neither body met a survivor, neither found forensic evidence of rape, and no body has published a count of victims.

Key Findings

- The SRSG-SVC mission of 29 January to 14 February 2024 found "reasonable grounds to believe" that rape and gang rape occurred in at least 3 locations: the Nova festival, Road 232 and kibbutz Re'im (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2024).
- The Commission of Inquiry concluded on 10 June 2024 "on reasonable grounds" that sexual violence was committed at 6 sites, and was "unable to determine the exact identity of the perpetrators" (Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, 2024).
- The same SRSG-SVC mission found that in kibbutz Be'eri "at least two allegations of sexual violence widely repeated in the media, were unfounded" (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2024).
- The mission's 1 finding at the higher "clear and convincing" standard concerns hostages taken to Gaza, some of whom were subjected to "rape and sexualized torture" (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2024).
- Israel Police's Lahav 433 unit, in The Guardian's paraphrase of January 2024, "says it is unable to put a number on how many women and girls suffered gender-based violence", by the police's own account as a party to the events (Israel Police, as reported by The Guardian, 2024).

What did UN investigators find about sexual violence on October 7?

The SRSG-SVC, on a mission led by Special Representative Pramila Patten, found "reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred during the 7 October attacks in multiple locations across Gaza periphery, including rape and gang rape, in **at least three locations**" (Office of the SRSG-SVC, 2024, paragraph 12). The standard is stated inside the finding.

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The mission ran from 29 January to 14 February 2024 with "a technical team composed of nine experts drawn from the United Nations". The report closes with the line "New York, 4 March 2024". The visit was carried out "at the invitation of the Government of Israel", and the team "received the full cooperation of the Government of Israel."

Each of the 3 locations carries its own wording. At the Nova music festival, the team found reasonable grounds to believe "that multiple incidents of sexual violence took place with victims being subjected to rape and/or gang rape and then killed or killed while being raped". On Road 232, it cited "credible information based on witness accounts" describing "the rape of two women by armed elements". In kibbutz Re'im, the team "verified an incident of the rape of a woman outside of a bomb shelter", at a site it gathered information on but did not visit.

The mission's conclusions, in paragraph 84, restate the finding as "reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence occurred at several locations across the Gaza periphery, including in the form of rape and gang rape." That threshold is not a criminal finding. Paragraph 25 states: "The mission was not intended to be, and is not a substitute for, an investigation by relevant United Nations entities mandated for that purpose, nor is it a replacement for criminal investigations and proceedings subject to due process of law."

The same document records findings in the other direction: allegations it found unfounded, sites where reports could not be verified, forensic material without tangible indications of rape, and no meeting with any survivor. Paragraph 12 and those negative findings were published in the same 23 pages, and the sections below carry both.

Who says the sexual violence was systematic, and since when?

Israel Police made the earliest dated statement in this record on 14 November 2023, when Mirit Ben Mayor, head of police communications, told journalists: "we say that there was rape, that there was sexual harassment. There is no room for doubt about these events" (Israel Police, as quoted by The Times of Israel, 2023). That is the police's own account, given by a party to the events.

On occurrence, the UN record that followed runs the same way. The SRSG-SVC's finding of reasonable grounds to believe that rape and gang rape occurred in at least 3 locations matches the core of the November 2023 statement. Ben Mayor said then that the case was "not a traditional rape investigation", that much of it would rest on "circumstantial evidence", and

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that "it's enough to indict someone by that". Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai said the investigation had yielded "evidence indicating rape [and] amputation of organs."

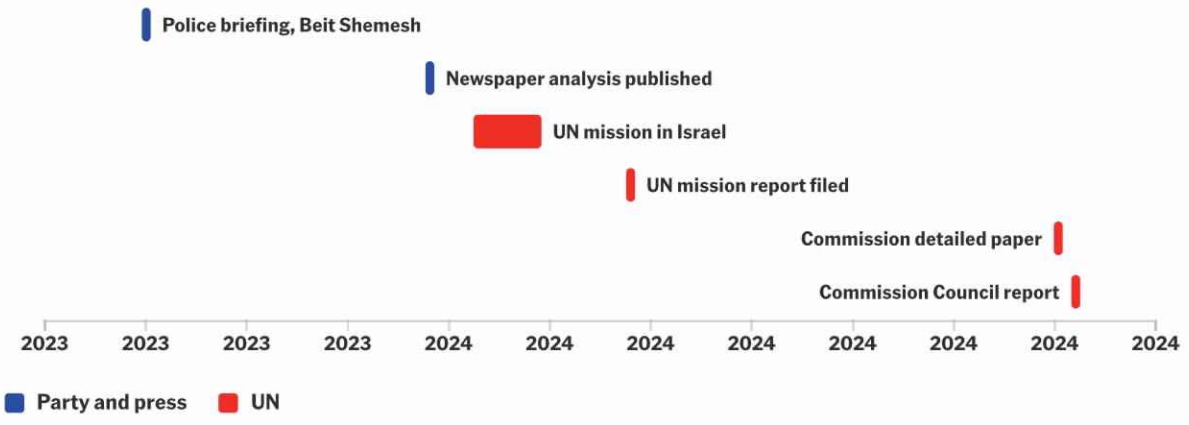
The word "systematic" arrived next. The Guardian's report of 18 January 2024 ran under the headline "Evidence points to systematic use of rape and sexual violence by Hamas in 7 October attacks", and the newspaper's own analysis counted "at least six sexual assaults for which multiple corroborating pieces of evidence exist" (Israel Police, as reported by The Guardian, 2024). That count is The Guardian's, as press reporting, not a police figure.

The Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel (ARCCI), an umbrella body uniting 9 rape crisis centres whose stated activities include "promoting policy and legislation", published "Silent Cry" in February 2024. Its summary calls the assaults "systematic, premeditated and deliberate", and its abstract calls sexual abuse "a clear operational strategy" (Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, 2024). ARCCI compiled information from official sources, press reports, interviews with first responders, professionals' accounts and confidential information, and states no standard of proof.

The UN mission made no finding on pattern or scale. Paragraph 86 records that the team "was unable to establish the prevalence of sexual violence", and that magnitude, scope and attribution "would require a fully-fledged investigation." The occurrence finding and the "systematic" characterisation rest on different documents, issued by different bodies using different methods.

When each statement and finding was issued

DATED STATEMENTS, MISSIONS AND UN DOCUMENTS, NOVEMBER 2023 TO JUNE 2024



Source: Israel Police, as quoted by The Times of Israel, 2023; Israel Police, as reported by The Guardian, 2024; Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2024; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, 2024.

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Which six locations did the UN Commission of Inquiry name?

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel concluded in a detailed paper dated 10 June 2024 "on reasonable grounds that perpetrators committed sexual violence on 7 October in southern Israel" at **6 named sites** (paragraph 291).

The paper, conference room paper A/HRC/56/CRP.3, names them in this order: the Nova festival, road 232, the Nahal Oz military outpost and kibbutzim Re'im, Nir Oz and Kfar Aza.

In paragraph 134 the Commission states that it "identified a pattern of sexual violence that has been corroborated by the digital evidence it collected and preserved." Its Council report, A/HRC/56/26 of 14 June 2024, finds in paragraph 90 that members of the military wings of Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups, and Palestinian civilians directly participating, "committed sexual and gender-based violence against civilians", and that "These actions constitute war crimes and violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and international human rights law." The same report reaches separate conclusions on Israel's conduct in Gaza, in paragraph 97.

The two UN lists overlap on 3 sites and diverge on the rest. The Commission names Nahal Oz and Kfar Aza, where the SRSG-SVC reported that allegations "could not be verified", and Nir Oz, which is not among the SRSG-SVC's named sites. The documents were produced four months apart, by bodies with different access and different standards of proof.

Location	SRSG-SVC, March 2024	Commission, June 2024	Source
Nova festival	Reasonable grounds to believe	Reasonable grounds	SRSG-SVC para 13; CRP.3 para 291
Road 232	Credible witness accounts	Reasonable grounds	SRSG-SVC para 13; CRP.3 para 291
Kibbutz Re'im	Verified incident	Reasonable grounds	SRSG-SVC para 13; CRP.3 para 291
Nahal Oz outpost	Could not be verified	Reasonable grounds	SRSG-SVC mission report; CRP.3 para 291
Kibbutz Kfar Aza	Could not be verified	Reasonable grounds	SRSG-SVC mission report; CRP.3 para 291
Kibbutz Nir Oz	Not among named sites	Reasonable grounds	CRP.3 para 291
Kibbutz Be'eri	Unable to establish	Not in para 291 list	SRSG-SVC mission report; CRP.3 para 291

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Source: Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2024; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, 2024 (A/HRC/56/CRP.3).

What standard of proof stands behind each finding?

The SRSG-SVC adopted "reasonable grounds to believe" in paragraph 26 of its 2024 report, consistent with the practice of Security Council and Human Rights Council investigative bodies, and in paragraph 27 set out a ladder of **3 rungs**: "reasonable grounds to believe", then "clear and convincing" information, then "beyond a reasonable doubt", the criminal standard that neither UN inquiry applied.

The Commission used different wording and a different test. In A/HRC/56/CRP.3 it found the standard of "reasonable grounds to conclude" met "when information has been corroborated by one or several witnesses interviewed by the Commission, and supported by digital evidence that demonstrates similar patterns and descriptions to those identified by witnesses." It adds: "Information that does not meet this level of corroboration has been excluded from the Commission's findings." Its stated indicators include "the victim being partially or fully undressed, absence of underwear and exposure of the genitals, in combination with the restraining of feet, wrists and hands."

ARCCI's February 2024 report states no standard of proof. It describes itself as "a preliminary examination of all the public and classified information, interviews, and testimonies that can be revealed at this time", and it excluded social media and "unverified sources".

The 3 documents therefore reach their conclusions by different routes. The SRSG-SVC's 7 October findings sit on its lowest rung, and its hostage finding one rung higher. The Commission's six-site conclusion requires a witness it interviewed plus digital corroboration. Neither is a verdict: the SRSG-SVC states that it is no substitute for "criminal investigations and proceedings subject to due process of law."

The UN mission's ladder of evidentiary standards

AS SET OUT IN PARAGRAPHS 26 AND 27; THE TOP RUNG IS THE CRIMINAL STANDARD

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Neither UN standard is a criminal finding.

Source: Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2024, mission report, paragraphs 26 and 27.

Which widely repeated allegations did investigators find unfounded?

The SRSG-SVC found in its 2024 report that in kibbutz Be'eri "at least **two** allegations of sexual violence widely repeated in the media, were unfounded", and that the team "was unable to establish whether sexual violence occurred in kibbutz Be'eri." The finding sits in the same document as its finding of rape and gang rape at 3 other locations.

The mission's negative findings extend to two more sites. In Kfar Aza, reports including at least one rape "could not be verified", though circumstantial evidence "may be indicative of some forms of sexual violence". At the Nahal Oz military base, the team reviewed reports of rape and genital mutilation, "neither of which could be verified." On claims that pamphlets with sexual instructions had been found on the bodies of militants, "the mission team was not able to substantiate any of them."

The Commission reported the same kind of sorting in A/HRC/56/CRP.3, paragraph 138. It "found some specific allegations to be false, inaccurate or contradictory with other evidence or statements and discounted these from its assessment." It reviewed "testimonies obtained by journalists and the Israeli police concerning rape but has not been able to independently verify such allegations", and "was also unable to verify reports of sexualized torture and genital mutilation." Of documents said to contain instructions to commit sexual violence, it "was unable to obtain copies of these documents and was unable to verify their authenticity."

Neither document names which allegations it set aside, and neither reproduces them. Their published effect is narrower: the findings that remain are the ones that met each body's threshold. The Commission still named Nahal Oz and Kfar Aza among its 6 sites after discounting some allegations, on its own corroboration test. The SRSG-SVC did not reach a finding at either site.

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The two documents, read together, record both the allegations that met each body's threshold and those that did not. Be'eri is the one location where the SRSG-SVC stated that specific circulating allegations were unfounded.

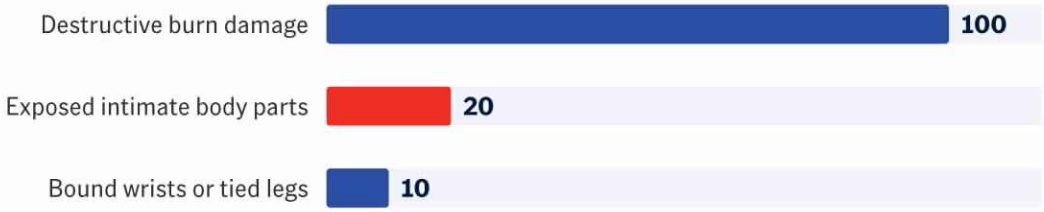
What did the forensic and video evidence show?

The SRSG-SVC's medicolegal assessment of "over **5,000** photos and around 50 hours of footage of the attacks" found "no tangible indications of rape", adding that rape "cannot be ruled out based solely on the medicolegal assessment" (Office of the SRSG-SVC, 2024). In open sources, "no digital evidence specifically depicting acts of sexual violence was found."

The material did show features that the Commission later listed among its indicators. The SRSG-SVC counted "a minimum of twenty corpses with partially or fully exposed intimate body parts", "at least ten distinct corpses" with "bound wrists and/or tied legs", and "at least 100 bodies" with "destructive burn damage". These are minimum counts, and a body may appear in more than one.

Minimum counts of bodies with each feature

PHOTOS AND FOOTAGE REVIEWED BY THE UN MISSION; FEATURES ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE



Source: Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2024, mission report.

The Commission "notes the absence of forensic evidence of sexual crimes committed on 7 October" in A/HRC/56/CRP.3. Its own preserved footage included "four victims found undressed from the waist down, as well as four cases where the bodies of victims were displayed partially undressed while being mistreated."

Israel Police gave its own account of why no forensic record exists, as a party to the events. In November 2023 the police confirmed a Times of Israel finding that physical evidence of sexual assault was broadly not collected, and spokesperson Dean Elsdunne said: "In the first 48 hours, there was still an active combat zone" and "We did gather photographic evidence"

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(Israel Police, as quoted by The Times of Israel, 2023). In January 2024 The Guardian reported that morgues "did not have the time or capacity to test for sexual assault using rape kits", attributing the statement to police spokesperson Mirit Ben Mayor (Israel Police, as reported by The Guardian, 2024).

Did any investigator speak with a survivor?

None did: the SRSG-SVC recorded in paragraph 8 of its 2024 report that the team "did not meet with any survivor/victim of sexual violence from 7 October despite concerted efforts encouraging them to come forward".

The mission interviewed **34 people**, 17 men and 17 women, and held 33 meetings with Israeli national institutions (paragraphs 33 and 37).

The Commission recorded the same gap. In A/HRC/56/CRP.3 it states: "The Commission has not met any survivors of sexual violence committed on 7 October, despite its attempts to do so." It met "more than 70 victims and witnesses, more than two thirds of whom were women", and conducted remote interviews.

The police account, from a party to the events, gives one stated reason. In November 2023 Ben Mayor "was not aware of October 7 rape survivors having made formal complaints to the police", and Commissioner Kobi Shabtai said: "Many of the victims who survived the massacres are not ready to speak" (Israel Police, as quoted by The Times of Israel, 2023).

ARCCI, which received first-hand accounts, left them out. Its February 2024 report states that such accounts "were not be included" [sic], while "an effort was made to reflect issues that were reported in first-hand accounts in the analysis" (Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, 2024).

People interviewed and survivors met, by UN inquiry
THE COMMISSION'S FIGURE IS A FLOOR ("MORE THAN 70")

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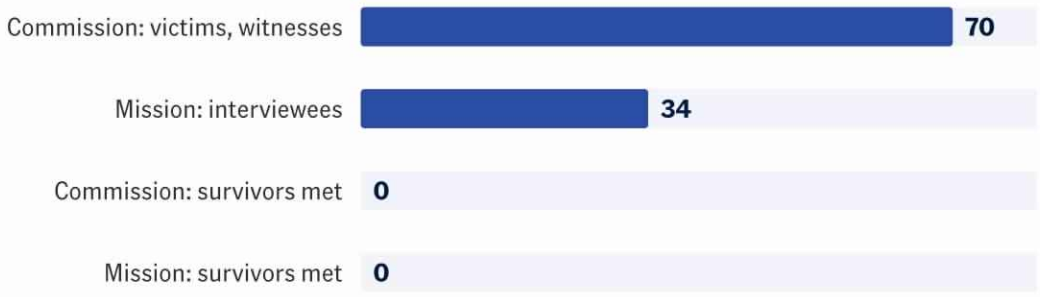

Source: Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, 2024; Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, 2024 (A/HRC/56/CRP.3).

Every finding in both UN documents therefore rests on witnesses, first responders, institutional information and recorded imagery rather than on the account of a person who survived the assault. That is a fact about the sources of each finding, stated in each document by its authors.

Has any body published a count of victims?

No body has published one: Israel Police's Lahav 433 unit, in The Guardian's paraphrase of **January 2024**, "says it is unable to put a number on how many women and girls suffered gender-based violence", by the police's own account as a party to the events (Israel Police, as reported by The Guardian, 2024).

The same sentence, in the newspaper's paraphrase, describes the unit as "poring over 50,000 pieces of visual evidence and 1,500 witness testimonies." As written, the 1,500 testimonies cover the whole 7 October investigation, not sexual violence alone, and they are not a count of victims. Two months earlier the police "would not disclose the number of witness testimonies or active sexual assault cases being investigated" (Israel Police, as quoted by The Times of Israel, 2023).

The SRSG-SVC reached the same limit from the other side. Its paragraph 86 records that the team "was unable to establish the prevalence of sexual violence." The Commission's findings name sites, not totals.

ARCCI reports no count of victims for 7 October. Its line that "around 90% of wartime rapes are gang rapes" is footnoted to a 2005 literature estimate by Vlachova and Biason, a figure

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about wartime rape in general, not a finding about the attack (Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, 2024).

In November 2023, The Times of Israel reported David Katz, head of cyber crime at Lahav 433, as saying that the police "still expect months more work before completing their investigation and shifting toward indictments." None of the six documents cited here records an indictment for a sexual offence committed on 7 October. The available record holds investigative materials, reported in the police's own figures, and no published total of people subjected to sexual violence.

What did investigators find about hostages taken to Gaza?

The SRSG-SVC found in paragraph 17 of its 2024 report "clear and convincing information" that some hostages "have been subjected to various forms of conflict-related sexual violence including rape and sexualized torture and sexualized cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment", the higher of the **2** standards the mission applied, one rung above its 7 October location findings.

The same paragraph adds "reasonable grounds to believe that such violence may be ongoing." That clause is dated by the mission itself, which ran from 29 January to 14 February 2024, with its report filed in early March 2024. It describes the situation of hostages still held at that time.

The mission's own ladder places "clear and convincing" above "reasonable grounds to believe" and below "beyond a reasonable doubt" (paragraph 27). The hostage finding is therefore the firmest statement in the document, and it is still not a criminal finding. The paragraph 25 caveat, that the mission is no substitute for an investigation or for "criminal investigations and proceedings subject to due process of law", applies to it as to every other finding.

The mission's stated scope included findings on sexual violence "in the context of abduction and hostage-taking", alongside the attacks themselves. Its finding on hostages names no individual, no number of hostages affected and no location in Gaza.

ARCCI's February 2024 report also lists "the captivity" among the settings it describes, alongside "the Nova Festival, kibbutzim and villages in the south, IDF bases" (Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, 2024). It attaches no standard of proof to that description. Of

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the 3 documents, the SRSG-SVC's paragraph 17 is the only one in this record that states a standard for a finding on captivity.

Was the sexual violence ordered, and by whom?

The Commission of Inquiry stated in report A/HRC/56/26, dated **14 June 2024**, that it "did not find credible evidence, however, that militants had received orders to commit sexual violence and was thus unable to reach a conclusion on the issue" (paragraph 95). Its finding concerns orders, not occurrence, which it found separately.

On perpetrators, the Commission's detailed paper, A/HRC/56/CRP.3, states in paragraph 291 that it is "unable to determine the exact identity of the perpetrators and whether Hamas military wing, other Palestinian armed groups or civilians from Gaza were responsible for these crimes."

The SRSG-SVC made no attribution at all. Because the mission was not investigative, "it did not gather information and/or draw conclusions on attribution of alleged violations to specific armed groups" (paragraph 78). The same paragraph records that Hamas and other armed groups claimed responsibility for the attacks, and that "Hamas has however denied claims of harm against civilians, including the commission of rape", a statement by a party to the events.

ARCCI's February 2024 report states the opposite characterisation: that sexual abuse "was not an isolated incident or sporadic oppurtunistic cases but rather a clear operational strategy" [sic] (Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, 2024). It cites no orders and states no standard.

The two UN bodies worked under different access. The SRSG-SVC records "the full cooperation of the Government of Israel." The Commission records "active attempts by Israeli authorities to obstruct the Commission's access to information related to sexual violence", including "instructing medical professionals not to cooperate with the Commission", and states that a request for information sent to Israel in March 2024 drew no response. The SRSG-SVC, for its part, did not consider "accounts collected by Israeli intelligence bodies, including those related to interrogations of alleged perpetrators, despite some being offered" (paragraph 31). Neither UN document, by its own account, reached the evidence that would settle orders or perpetrators.

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Methodology and limitations

The evidence comes from 6 documents, read in full text: the SRSG-SVC mission report (23 pages; mission 29 January to 14 February 2024; dated 4 March 2024); the Commission of Inquiry's conference room paper A/HRC/56/CRP.3 (10 June 2024, 59 pages) and Council report A/HRC/56/26 (14 June 2024); ARCCI's "Silent Cry" (February 2024); and two press reports quoting or paraphrasing Israel Police officials, in The Times of Israel (14 November 2023) and The Guardian (18 January 2024).

Each is labelled by type. The two UN documents are findings of UN bodies, each with a stated standard: "reasonable grounds to believe" and "clear and convincing" for the SRSG-SVC, "reasonable grounds to conclude" for the Commission. A conference room paper is a Commission paper complementary to the numbered Council report, not a Council report itself. ARCCI is a monitoring and advocacy organisation; its report discloses support from the Women's Amutot Initiative of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, Schusterman Family Philanthropies – Israel, The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and UJA Federation of New York. Two versions of "Silent Cry" exist, and quotations here come from the February 2024 text. Israel Police statements are a party's own account, relayed by newspapers; The Guardian's count of six corroborated assaults is the newspaper's analysis.

Figures are carried as each body states them, with their stated floors ("at least", "more than", "a minimum of"). The context counts of people killed and taken hostage on 7 October appear in these documents as figures relayed from other bodies and are not reproduced. No document in this record publishes a count of victims or records an indictment for sexual offences committed on 7 October. Both UN bodies state that they met no survivor and found no forensic evidence of rape; the Commission states that its access was obstructed, and the SRSG-SVC that its mission was not an investigation. No victim is named.

Conclusion

So was sexual violence committed during the October 7 attacks? On the record of 2 UN inquiries, yes: the SRSG-SVC found reasonable grounds to believe that rape and gang rape occurred in at least 3 locations, and the Commission of Inquiry concluded, on its own corroboration test, that sexual violence was committed at 6 sites.

The record is firm on occurrence and thin on everything around it. The same mission found at least two widely repeated Be'eri allegations unfounded, saw no tangible indications of rape in over 5,000 photos, and met no survivor; the Commission met none either. Its firmest

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finding, at the "clear and convincing" standard, concerns hostages in Gaza. No order was established, no perpetrator group identified, and Lahav 433, by the police's own account as a party to the events, could not put a number on the women and girls harmed.

The first claims came weeks before the first UN findings, and the word "systematic" came before any body found a pattern on a stated standard. When occurrence is established and scale is not, which version enters public memory: the finding with its thresholds and exclusions attached, or the claim that arrived first? And for crimes documented without survivors' testimony or forensic traces, what would a count of victims even require, and who is left to produce it?

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did the UN mission visit sites in the West Bank?

The SRSG-SVC visited Ramallah to hear allegations of sexual violence by Israeli security forces and settlers. Its report states that the purpose of that visit "was not to gather and verify information", so that section records allegations heard rather than findings.

Why did the UN mission set aside Israeli intelligence material?

Paragraph 31 of the SRSG-SVC report states that the mission did not consider "accounts collected by Israeli intelligence bodies, including those related to interrogations of alleged perpetrators, despite some being offered." The report gives this exclusion alongside its other stated limits.

How many requests did the Commission send to Israel?

A/HRC/56/26 records that the Commission sent "six requests for information and access to the Government of Israel" and that "No response was received from the Government of Israel." The report covers conduct between 7 October and 31 December 2023.

Which sites did the UN mission visit in person?

The SRSG-SVC visited the Nahal Oz military base, kibbutz Be'eri, the Nova festival site and Road 232. For Kfar Aza and Re'im it gathered information on sites "which the mission team did not visit", including Re'im, where it verified a rape.

How many attackers were in Israeli custody when police began building cases?

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In November 2023 David Katz of Lahav 433 said there were "a few hundred" October 7 attackers in Israeli custody, by the police's own account as a party to the events (Israel Police, as quoted by The Times of Israel, 2023). No count of people charged with sexual offences appears in that briefing.

Who wrote ARCCI's "Silent Cry" report?

Research and writing are credited to Dr. Carmit Klar-Chalamish (Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, 2024). The 39-page February 2024 report was later reissued in an updated English file created on 26 March 2024, whose wording differs in places.

How did the Commission define corroboration?

A/HRC/56/CRP.3 required information "corroborated by one or several witnesses interviewed by the Commission, and supported by digital evidence that demonstrates similar patterns and descriptions to those identified by witnesses." Material below that bar was excluded from its findings.

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What Was the Background to the October 7 Attacks? Reading the Official Chronology, the Party's Own Statement and the Assessments Issued

The official chronology, Hamas's own stated rationale and the published assessments of what preceded the 7 October 2023 attack.

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What has a UN commission of inquiry concluded about Gaza? Five of its papers, paragraph by paragraph

A UN commission concluded in 2025 that Israel committed four of five genocide acts in Gaza. What its five papers say, about all parties, by paragraph.

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How Have the October 7 Atrocities Been Justified? Reading the Catalogued Frames, the Party's Own Text and the Treaty Clauses

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Three catalogued denial categories, Hamas's own January 2024 text, the treaty clauses that answer them, and the monitoring counts that coincided.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

What were the consequences of the UN's Zionism-racism resolution? Two recorded votes and the texts that followed

Resolution 3379 stood 16 years, adopted by 72 votes in 1975 and revoked by 111 in 1991. The record traces its wording through Durban and later definitions.

United Nations | Zionism | Resolution 3379 | Durban Conference | Antisemitism Definitions



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On 10 November 1975, General Assembly resolution 3379 determined "that zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination." The determination stood on the Assembly's record for **16 years**, until resolution 46/86 revoked it on 16 December 1991 by 111 votes to 25, with 13 abstentions. Its wording outlived the revocation. On 3 September 2001, an NGO Forum text at the Durban conference called for "the reinstitution of UN resolution 3379." On the same day, US Secretary of State Colin L. Powell withdrew the American delegation, citing draft language he called "a throwback to the days of 'Zionism equals racism.'" The intergovernmental Declaration adopted five days later uses the word "Zionism" zero times. In 2016, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance listed, among its illustrative examples of antisemitism, claiming "that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor."

Key Findings

- The General Assembly adopted resolution 3379 on 10 November 1975 by 72 votes to 35, with 32 abstentions. It revoked the resolution on 16 December 1991 by 111 votes to 25, with 13 abstentions, so the determination stood for 16 years (United Nations General Assembly, 1975, 1991).
- On 3 September 2001, US Secretary of State Colin L. Powell withdrew the US delegation from the World Conference against Racism. He cited declarations containing language "some of which is a throwback to the days of 'Zionism equals racism.'" The withdrawal came five days before the conference adopted its final texts (US Department of State, 2001).
- The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted on 8 September 2001, uses the word "Zionism" zero times across 153 pages. Its Declaration, paragraph 63, recognises "the right to security for all States in the region, including Israel" in the same sentence as Palestinian self-determination (World Conference against Racism, 2001).
- The NGO Forum Programme of Action, issued on 3 September 2001, called "for the reinstitution of UN resolution 3379." The Conference never adopted that text, and no issuing body publishes it (WCAR NGO Forum, 2001).

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- The 2016 IHRA working definition includes, among context-dependent illustrations, claiming "that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor" (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2016). The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (2021) sets out 15 guidelines, and its guideline 13 places comparisons of Israel with apartheid outside antisemitism "in and of itself."

What followed the 1975 Zionism resolution, on the record?

The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 3379 (XXX) on 10 November 1975 and revoked it with resolution 46/86 on 16 December 1991. The Assembly's determination "that zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination" therefore stood on its record for **16 years**. Both dates come from the resolutions themselves and from the Assembly's verbatim records.

Resolution 3379 was adopted at the Assembly's 2400th plenary meeting. Its operative text is one sentence: "Determines that zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination." That sentence requests no report, creates no body and names no measure for any state to take. The record of what followed is therefore a record of later votes and texts, not of implementation. Resolution 46/86 was adopted at the 74th plenary meeting of the 46th session, on draft A/46/L.47, and is read in full below.

The 1975 language reappeared in the record ten years after the revocation. In the first week of September 2001, at the World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, it surfaced in two documents:

- a statement by the US Department of State withdrawing the American delegation;
- a Programme of Action issued by the conference's NGO Forum, calling for resolution 3379 to be reinstated.

The Declaration the Conference itself adopted on 8 September 2001 does not contain the word "Zionism." These three texts differ in date, author and standing, and the sections that follow read each one separately.

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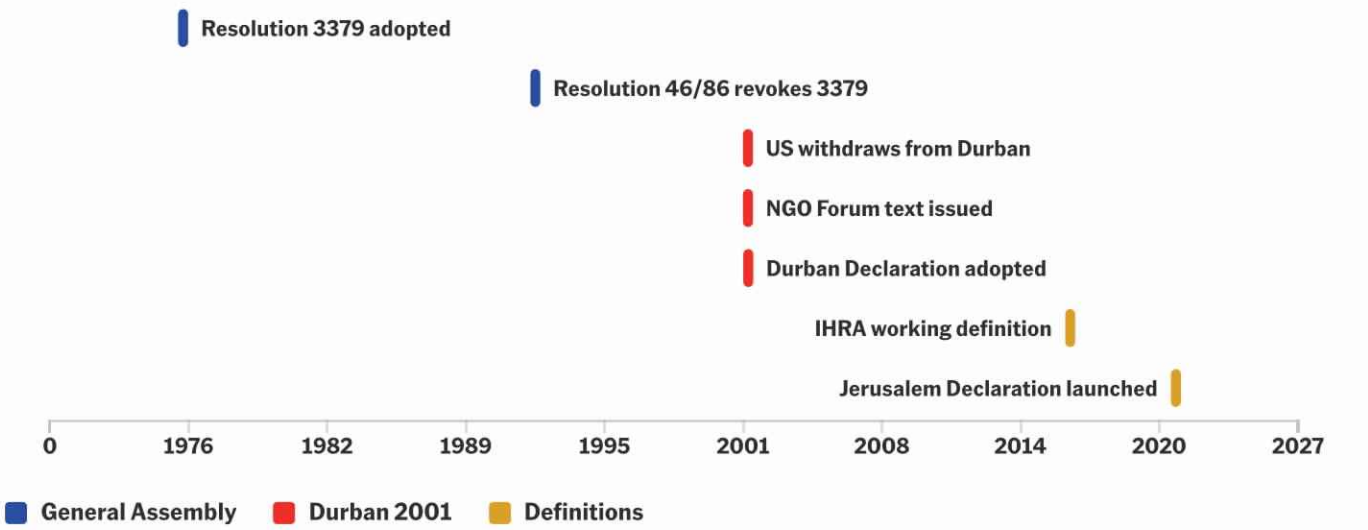
Later standards on antisemitism belong to the same record. Three texts set out where criticism of Israel and Zionism ends and antisemitism begins, and they draw that line differently:

- the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's 2016 working definition;
- the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism of 2021;
- the Nexus Document, revised in 2024.

The timeline below sets the dated texts in order. A separate report reads the 1975 vote beside survey measurements.

The dated record around resolution 3379

ADOPTION, REVOCATION AND LATER TEXTS, 1975 TO 2021



Source: United Nations General Assembly, resolution 3379 (XXX) and resolution 46/86 (1975, 1991); US Department of State (2001); WCAR NGO Forum (2001); World Conference against Racism (2001); International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (2016); Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (2021).

Who says its effects outlived the 1991 repeal?

The US Department of State said so on 3 September 2001. That day, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell withdrew the American delegation from the World Conference against Racism. He described declarations containing language "some of which is a throwback to the days of

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'Zionism equals racism.'" The statement came **ten years** after the General Assembly revoked resolution 3379.

The decisive passage of Powell's statement, released the same day, reads: "I know that you do not combat racism by conferences that produce declarations containing hateful language, some of which is a throwback to the days of 'Zionism equals racism;' or supports the idea that we have made too much of the Holocaust; or suggests that apartheid exists in Israel; or that singles out only one country in the world," Israel, "for censure and abuse." Earlier, the statement says the decision was taken "with regret, because of the importance of the international fight against racism and the contribution that the Conference could have made to it."

The dates limit what the statement can describe. Powell withdrew on 3 September 2001. The Declaration and Programme of Action were adopted on 8 September 2001, five days later, and were negotiated to their final form after the American and Israeli delegations had left. His reference to "declarations containing hateful language" therefore concerns draft and forum texts current on 3 September. The instrument finally adopted contains no reference to Zionism, as the section on the adopted text sets out. The statement is the US government's own account of its own decision. It is evidence of the stated American reason, not of what any particular document contained.

The Conference recorded both withdrawals in press release RD/D/27 of 3 September 2001, headed "United States, Israel Announce Withdrawal from Conference." The release states that the Conference President, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, and its Secretary-General, Mary Robinson, "expressed regret over the withdrawal." The release's web address contains the segment "2009/10," which comes from a later site migration; the document itself is dated 2001.

No Israeli government statement of reasons from 2001 resolves today. The Israeli Foreign Ministry's archived page on the Conference now redirects to the ministry's current landing page, as checked on 19 August 2026. Israel's departure is therefore documented by the Conference's own release rather than by an Israeli record.

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How wide was the 1975 majority for the resolution?

The General Assembly's verbatim record A/PV.2400 shows resolution 3379 carried by 72 votes. On the Institute's own arithmetic, that is **51.8%** of the 139 states that recorded a position in favour, against or abstaining. The Assembly published the tally; the share is derived from it.

The same record gives 35 votes against and 32 abstentions. The determination was carried by a recorded Assembly majority, and no implementing provision was attached to it.

The resolution set out its grounds in its preamble. It recalls resolution 1904 (XVIII) and resolution 3151 G (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973; the latter condemned "the unholy alliance between South African racism and zionism." It then takes note of three 1975 texts from other forums:

- the Declaration of Mexico, adopted at the World Conference of the International Women's Year;
- resolution 77 (XII) of the Organization of African Unity, adopted in Kampala between 28 July and 1 August 1975, which states that "the racist regime in occupied Palestine and the racist regimes in Zimbabwe and South Africa have a common imperialist origin";
- the Lima Political Declaration of the Non-Aligned foreign ministers, adopted between 25 and 30 August 1975.

The preamble draws on four grounds in all: the Assembly's own earlier resolutions, and the three outside texts.

The recorded vote is the measure of the weight the determination carried inside the Assembly. The arguments made for and against it are set out in a separate report on the arguments that Zionism is racist.

Recorded positions on resolution 3379

GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 10 NOVEMBER 1975, 139 STATES RECORDING A POSITION

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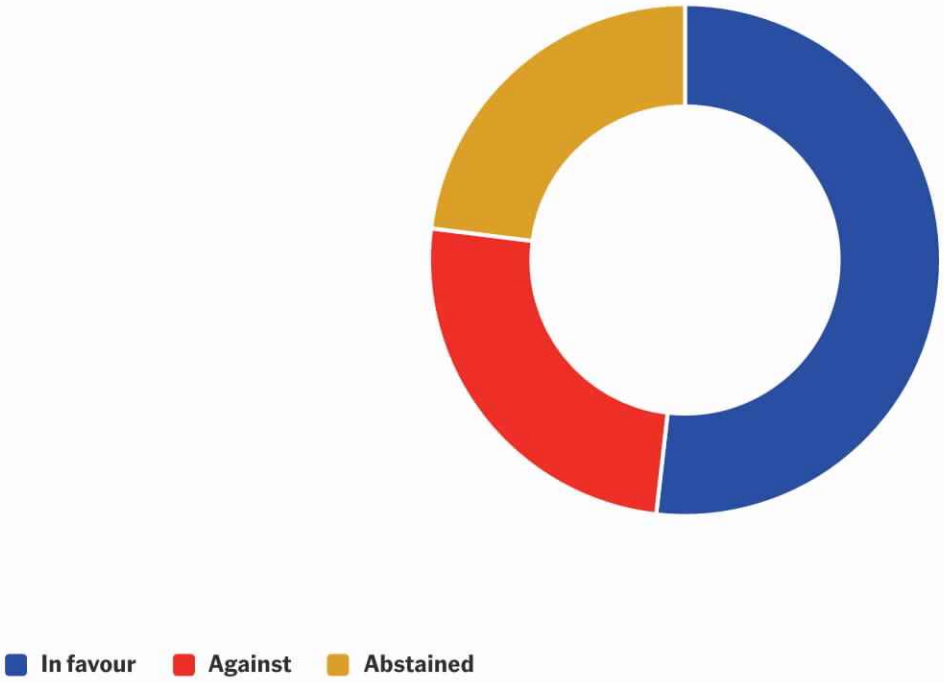

Source: United Nations General Assembly, recorded vote on resolution 3379 (XXX), verbatim record A/PV.2400.

What did resolution 46/86 revoke in December 1991?

On 16 December 1991, the General Assembly revoked the 1975 determination by **111 votes**.

The instrument was resolution 46/86, adopted at the 74th plenary meeting and recorded in verbatim record A/46/PV.74.

Its operative text, in its entirety, reads: “Decides to revoke the determination contained in its resolution 3379 (XXX) of 10 November 1975.” The sentence withdraws the 1975 determination and adds no statement of its own about Zionism.

The same record gives 25 votes against and 13 abstentions on draft A/46/L.47. That makes 149 states recording a position, and on the Institute’s own arithmetic the 111 in favour are 74.5% of them. The New York Times reported on 17 December 1991 that 17 other countries “did not take part in the voting,” among them Egypt, Kuwait and China. That absence count is the newspaper’s, not the Assembly’s.

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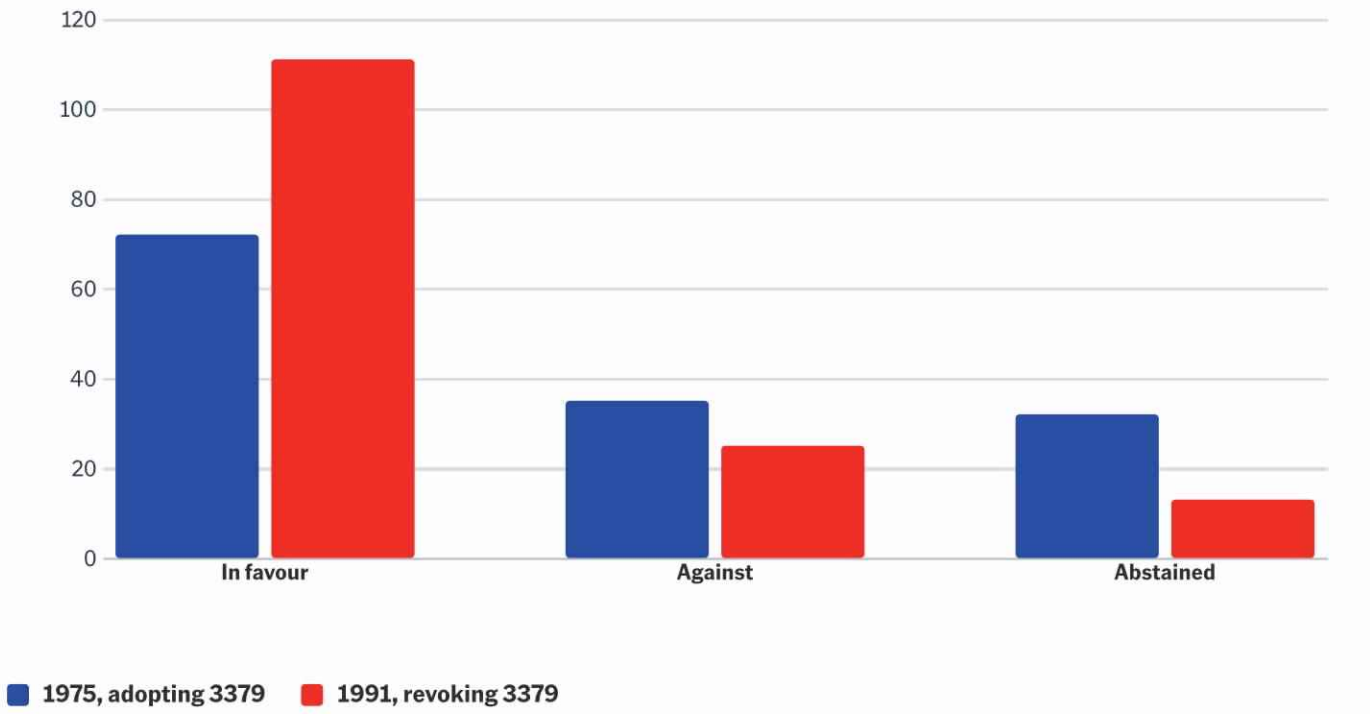
The circulating description of the repeal holds that it restored a position that Zionism was not to be treated as racism. The text itself is narrower. It revokes a determination and makes none in its place, so the Assembly's record after December 1991 carries no determination on the question either way.

The 1975 and 1991 tallies record two different motions: one adopting a determination, one revoking it. They were taken 16 years apart, in Assemblies of different size, with 139 states recording a position in 1975 and 149 in 1991. They are not a single vote that shifted, and the two tallies alone do not show which states changed position between them. The chart below sets the recorded counts side by side on that understanding.

The two recorded votes on the determination

ADOPTION OF 3379 IN 1975 AND ITS REVOCATION BY 46/86 IN 1991; TWO SEPARATE MOTIONS



Source: United Nations General Assembly, recorded votes on resolution 3379 (XXX) and resolution 46/86, verbatim records A/PV.2400 and A/46/PV.74.

Did the adopted Durban text of 2001 revive the equation?

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The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was adopted by the World Conference against Racism on 8 September 2001. It uses the word "Zionism" **zero times** across the 153 pages of the official United Nations edition, counting the Declaration, the Programme of Action and the index. That count was verified by full-text search on 19 August 2026.

The Declaration addresses the Middle East in paragraphs 63 to 65. Declaration, paragraph 63, reads in full: "We are concerned about the plight of the Palestinian people under foreign occupation. We recognize the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State and we recognize the right to security for all States in the region, including Israel, and call upon all States to support the peace process and bring it to an early conclusion;"

Israel is named once in those operative paragraphs: as the holder of a right to security, in the same sentence that recognises Palestinian self-determination and statehood. The other two paragraphs read as follows:

- **Declaration, paragraph 64:** calls for "a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region in which all peoples shall co-exist and enjoy equality, justice and internationally recognized human rights, and security."
- **Declaration, paragraph 65:** recognises "the right of refugees to return voluntarily to their homes and properties in dignity and safety."

Antisemitism appears in Declaration, paragraph 61, in the instrument's printed spelling: "We recognize with deep concern the increase in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in various parts of the world, as well as the emergence of racial and violent movements based on racism and discriminatory ideas against Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities;"

The Programme of Action has its own paragraphs 63, 64 and 65, which cover business codes of conduct against trafficking, trafficking in women and children, and internal displacement. A citation of "paragraph 63" that does not name the Declaration therefore points to trafficking provisions. The Conference report, A/CONF.189/12, lists in its chapter VII the reservations and statements states entered on both texts.

On whether the 2001 conference restated the 1975 determination, the adopted intergovernmental text is direct. Its Middle East paragraphs speak of occupation, self-

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determination, security, peace and return, and none of them uses the resolution's term.

Who called for reinstating resolution 3379 in 2001?

The NGO Forum of the World Conference against Racism called for it in a Programme of Action issued on **3 September 2001**. That text calls "for the reinstitution of UN resolution 3379 determining the practices of Zionism as racist practices." The Conference never adopted the text, and it is not a United Nations document.

The Forum met in Durban from 28 August to 1 September 2001, as the header of its Declaration records. Declaration paragraph 162 reads: "We declare Israel as a racist, apartheid state in which Israels [sic] brand of apartheid as a crime against humanity has been characterized by separation and segregation, dispossession, restricted land access, denationalization, 'bantustanization' and inhumane acts." The Programme of Action calls on the international community "to impose a policy of complete and total isolation of Israel as an apartheid state as in the case of South Africa."

The Programme of Action's passages are cited here by their text, because its paragraph numbering differs by one between the two copies that carry it. The reinstitution call is the second sentence of a paragraph that opens "Call upon the United Nations to ensure the implementation of the various UN resolutions on the Occupied Palestinian Territories." The Declaration's paragraph numbers are stable across copies.

No issuing body publishes the document. The Forum had no continuing secretariat, the Conference did not adopt the text, and the Conference's Secretary-General declined to commend it to governments. The copies read sit on third-party hosts:

- hurights.or.jp, carrying the Declaration only;
- i-p-o.org, carrying the Declaration and the Programme of Action;
- hrvoices.org, carrying a 72-page PDF.

The quoted passages were confirmed by direct string search of the downloaded copies on 19 August 2026: the Declaration passage in all three, the Programme of Action passages in the two that carry it.

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The document is an artifact of advocacy discourse. It records what NGO participants wrote and circulated at Durban in 2001, and it establishes no fact about Israel or Zionism. It bears the same date as Powell's withdrawal statement and precedes the adopted Declaration by five days. On the decisive word, the two Durban texts differ completely: the Forum's call names Zionism, and the Declaration that governments adopted on 8 September does not use the word.

Does the racism claim appear in today's antisemitism definitions?

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance adopted its working definition through its Plenary in Bucharest on 26 May **2016**. Among its illustrations, it lists: "Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor." Its closest wording to the 1975 determination therefore sits in an illustrative example, not in the definition itself.

The example list carries two hedges. Contemporary examples of antisemitism "could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:" the examples that follow. Quoted without these hedges, an example reads as a rule. The text presents each one as a context-dependent and non-exhaustive illustration.

IHRA's own layout separates the definition from the examples.

- **The decision:** "Adopt the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:".
- **The definition, inside the decision's quotation marks:** "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."
- **The examples, on a separate line:** "To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:".

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Whether the Plenary adopted the examples together with the definition is the most disputed question about the instrument. Both of IHRA's own copies set the texts out in the order above.

The framing paragraph on Israel has two limbs: "Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic." IHRA is an intergovernmental organization of 35 Member Countries. It states that experts in its Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial "built international consensus" around the text before the Plenary adopted it.

The "racist endeavor" example shares its vocabulary with the 1975 determination, but it is a definitional text. It is not a finding about resolution 3379 or about any particular statement, and applying it to a case is the act of whoever applies it. A separate report compares the IHRA text and its two rivals clause by clause.

Where do the rival definitions draw the line differently?

The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism, launched on 25 March 2021, sets out **15 guidelines** in three sections. One section is headed "Israel and Palestine: examples that, on the face of it, are not antisemitic." The Declaration's preamble proposes the text "as an alternative to the IHRA Definition." It is a declaration by scholarly signatories, not an adopted instrument. Its publisher states it was "Initially signed by 210 scholars" and that it "has now more than 400 signatories."

No state, parliament or intergovernmental organization adopted it.

Guideline 13 addresses the comparison most often attached to the 1975 determination. In the PDF copy, it reads in part: "Evidence-based criticism of Israel as a state… Thus, even if contentious, it is not antisemitic, in and of itself, to compare Israel with other historical cases, including settler-colonialism or apartheid." The Israel-side limit sits in the section headed "examples that, on the face of it, are antisemitic." Guideline 10 there lists: "Denying the right of Jews in the State of Israel to exist and flourish, collectively and individually, as Jews, in

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accordance with the principle of equality." The preamble directs that guidelines 6 to 15 "should be taken together."

The Nexus Document is published by the Nexus Project. The Project states on the same page that it "is fiscally sponsored by the New Israel Fund," and its Task Force is affiliated with the Center for the Study of Hate at Bard College. Its text is the June 2024 revision of a document first published in February 2021. Under "What is Not Antisemitic?", item 1 reads: "As a general rule, criticism of Zionism and Israel, opposition to Israel's policies, or nonviolent political action directed at the State of Israel and/or its policies should not, as such, be deemed antisemitic." Under "What is Antisemitic?", item 9 reads: "It is antisemitic to treat Israel differently solely because it is a Jewish state, using standards different than those applied to other countries." Both are quoted from the publisher's PDF.

Standard	Status as published	Nearest wording on Israel and racism
IHRA, **2016**	Adopted by an intergovernmental plenary, "non-legally binding"	Calling Israel's existence "a racist endeavor" is an illustrative example
Jerusalem Declaration, **2021**	Scholars' declaration, **15** guidelines	Apartheid comparison not antisemitic "in and of itself"
Nexus Document, **2024** revision	Academic project document	Criticism of Zionism not "as such" antisemitic

Source: International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (2016); Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (2021); Nexus Task Force (2021, updated June 2024).

Methodology and limitations

The report draws on four source types.

- **Primary and official records:** the texts of General Assembly resolutions 3379 (XXX) and 46/86, with their recorded votes from verbatim records A/PV.2400 and A/46/PV.74, read directly on 29 September 2026; the US Department of State's statement of 3 September 2001; and the official United Nations edition of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

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- **Definitional instruments:** the IHRA working definition, the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism and the Nexus Document. Each was read on 14 September 2026 in two copies from its own publisher and is quoted for its own words only.
- **Primary artifact of advocacy discourse:** the NGO Forum Declaration and Programme of Action. It was read in three third-party copies on 19 August 2026 and confirmed by string search.
- **Contemporaneous news reporting:** The New York Times report of 17 December 1991, used only for its count of absent states.

The vote shares of 51.8% (72 of 139) and 74.5% (111 of 149) are the Institute's own arithmetic on the recorded tallies. The Assembly publishes the tallies, not the shares. The zero count of "Zionism" in the adopted Durban text comes from a full-text search of all 153 pages, run on 19 August 2026.

Several limits apply to the record:

- The Nexus Document's February 2021 original could not be retrieved, so every Nexus quotation is from the June 2024 revision.
- The Jerusalem Declaration's own PDF and web copies differ in six places of punctuation and wording. Quotations here follow the PDF.
- No Israeli government statement on the 2001 withdrawal resolves online.
- No peer-reviewed study or official statistical series in this record estimates a measured effect of resolution 3379 on antisemitic incidents or attitudes in any country.

Conclusion

What, then, did the 1975 determination lead to? On the record, it produced two recorded votes and a trail of later texts. A single operative sentence, carried by 72 votes, stood for 16 years. It was then withdrawn by 111 votes in a one-sentence revocation that put no determination in its place.

The record after 1991 is split in a way the phrase "Zionism is racism" hides. Ten years after the revocation, the American withdrawal statement cited language that was "a throwback" to

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the equation. On the same day, an NGO text that no body publishes called for the resolution's return. The instrument governments actually adopted at Durban five days later uses the word "Zionism" zero times, and its Declaration names Israel once, as the holder of a right to security. The vocabulary moved out of the Assembly's record and into the forum text, a government's stated reasons and, by 2016, an illustrative example in an antisemitism definition. In 2021, that example met a rival text classing the apartheid comparison as not antisemitic on its face.

The determination left the General Assembly's record in 1991. Its words still sit in the standards institutions use to decide what counts as antisemitism. When a revoked sentence survives as the boundary marker in competing definitions, which record of the 1975 vote is the public actually inheriting: the one the Assembly wrote, or the one the definitions now argue over?

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did Yemen seek a two-thirds majority for the 1991 repeal?

Before the vote on resolution 46/86, Yemen moved that the decision require a two-thirds majority. The General Assembly rejected that motion in a recorded vote, with 96 states against and 13 abstaining, according to verbatim record A/46/PV.74, whose list of states in favour names 34. The repeal then passed by a simple recorded vote.

Did the 2001 Durban Declaration mention the Holocaust?

Yes. Declaration, paragraph 58, adopted on 8 September 2001, reads in full: "We recall that the Holocaust must never be forgotten." Powell's statement of 3 September objected to draft language that "supports the idea that we have made too much of the Holocaust," which refers to texts current before the adoption.

How many countries have adopted the IHRA definition?

IHRA's adoption roll named 48 UN member states when read on 16 November 2026. The earliest is the United Kingdom, on 12 December 2016, and the latest is the Dominican

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Republic, on 24 August 2026. IHRA publishes no total, and its own footnote states that countries "adopt, endorse, embrace, recognize, support" the text in different terms.

Does the IHRA definition say anything about boycotts?

No. A string search of the full text on 14 September 2026 found zero occurrences of "boycott," "divest," "sanction" or "BDS." An argument applying it to a boycott reasons from the self-determination and double-standards examples, not from any boycott wording.

How do the definitions treat claims of double standards toward Israel?

IHRA's 2016 examples include "Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation," where "it" refers to the State of Israel in the preceding example. The Jerusalem Declaration's guideline 15 states that criticism seen as reflecting "a 'double standard', is not, in and of itself, antisemitic." The Nexus Document's "What is Not Antisemitic?" item 5 states that treating Israel differently "is not prima facie proof of antisemitism."

Did the 2016 IHRA text define antisemitism by reference to Israel?

The two-sentence core definition adopted by the Plenary does not mention Israel. Israel appears in the framing paragraph and the illustrative examples that follow the adoption sentence. The framing paragraph adds that "criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic."

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RELATED RESEARCH

DATA REPORT SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

What Are the Arguments That Zionism Is Racist? Reading the 1975 Resolution, Israel's Statutes and the Named Scholarship

The case that Zionism is racist rests on a revoked 1975 UN vote, two Israeli statutes and rival scholarship. What each text says.

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What is the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and where does anti-Zionism fit? The 2016 text beside its two rivals

IHRA's 2016 definition is two sentences, with 11 examples on a separate line. How it and two rival texts treat Israel, Zionism and criticism.

DATA REPORT UPDATED NOVEMBER 10, 2026

How does Zionism relate to white supremacy? A 1975 UN vote and what surveys measured

A 1975 UN vote classed Zionism as racism and was revoked in 1991. Israel's statutes, birth counts, typologies and surveys, read against the claim.

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The Hanover Institute for Public Policy studies the inputs fueling antisemitism in the United States and publishes what the evidence shows. Its work is content analysis, computational social science, and other data-driven research, and its reports take no policy positions.

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DATA REPORT BY THE HANOVER INSTITUTE NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Is Zionism national liberation or settler colonialism? The founding texts, the 1931 census and the scholars who disagree

The founding texts, the 1931 census, Israel's own population counts and the named scholars on Zionism as national liberation or settler colonialism.

Zionism | Settler Colonialism | National Liberation | Founding Documents | Israeli-Palestinian Conflict



Zionism's founding texts describe a national movement. The Declaration signed by 37 members of the People's Council on 14 May 1948 grounds the state in a land it calls "the birthplace of the Jewish people" (Provisional Government of Israel, 1948). A named line of scholarship, from Gershon Shafir's 1989 Cambridge

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University Press study to Tariq Dana's 2024 article in Middle East Critique, reads the same movement through settlement, land and labour. The two readings apply different tests. One asks what the movement sought for Jews. The other asks what it meant for the 1,035,821 people the Government of Palestine enumerated in 1931, 16.9% of whom were recorded as Jews.

Key Findings

- **37** members of the People's Council signed the Declaration of 14 May 1948. It opens by calling the land "the birthplace of the Jewish people" and traces its claim through the 1897 Congress, the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the 29 November 1947 resolution (Provisional Government of Israel, 1948).
- The settler-colonial reading has named academic holders across **36** years. It runs from Shafir's 1989 land-and-labour study of 1882 to 1914 (Shafir, 1989) to Locker-Biletzki's 2025 symposium paper on 1920 to 1956 (Locker-Biletzki, 2025). Dowty's 2022 essay argues against it (Dowty, 2022).
- The census of 18 November 1931 recorded **174,610** Jews, 16.9% of the 1,035,821 people it enumerated, and 759,712 Moslems (Government of Palestine, 1932).
- Israel's own statistics office counts Israel's share of world Jewry at **6%** in 1948 and 45% at the beginning of 2024. Of the 7.1 million Jews in Israel in 2024, 5.7 million were born there (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025).
- The Palestine National Council's Declaration of **15 November 1988** rests on "the natural, historical and legal right of the Palestinian Arab people to its homeland" (Palestine National Council, 1988). Two founding declarations thus claim a national right in the same land.

Is Zionism national liberation or settler colonialism, on the record?

The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel was read on 14 May 1948 and signed by **37** members of the People's Council. It opens by calling the land "the birthplace of the Jewish people" (Provisional Government of Israel, 1948). That is the national-liberation reading in the founding instrument's own words. The settler-colonial reading applies a different test: what the movement meant for the population already living in the land.

The Declaration's recitals set out its own historical chain. They cite the First Zionist Congress of 1897, convened by Theodor Herzl. They cite the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, the League of Nations Mandate, and the United Nations General Assembly resolution of 29

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November 1947, a recognition the text calls "irrevocable." The recitals are the founding text's account of its own history and are cited here as what it asserts.

The same text addresses the population already present. In the English text published by the Knesset, the state "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its citizens irrespective of religion, race or sex." It appeals "to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship." The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs publishes the equality sentence with "inhabitants" in place of "citizens." Both are translations of the Hebrew original.

Named scholars answer the classification question in opposite directions. An essay for the Stroum Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Washington, published on 10 November 2022 under the title "Is Israel a settler colonial state?", argues against the characterisation (Dowty, 2022). It is signed faculty commentary, not peer-reviewed research. Tariq Dana's 2024 article in Middle East Critique, a peer-reviewed journal, argues for it and classes Israeli settler colonialism as exceptional within that field (Dana, 2024).

The two framings therefore measure two different things. One reads the movement's stated purpose: self-rule for a dispersed people in a land its founding text names as its origin. The other reads its effects: land, labour, population and jurisdiction in a territory that already had a majority. Each test has its own dated evidence, and each holder of each reading can be named.

Who calls Zionism settler colonialism, and since when?

Gershon Shafir's Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914, was published by Cambridge University Press in **1989**. It locates the conflict's origins in a struggle over land and labour at the frontier of Zionist settlement (Shafir, 1989). The reading has named holders in university presses and refereed journals across the 36 years to 2025. It is an established scholarly position.

The University of California Press, which reissued the book in 1996, describes it as challenging "the heroic myths about the foundation of the State of Israel by investigating the struggle to control land and labor during the early Zionist enterprise." MERIP's 1990 review sets the argument out in more detail. The conflict began in "their struggle over the land and labor markets on the frontier of Zionist settlement in Palestine during the last years of Ottoman rule." That struggle was made possible by a land market created by "the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world capitalist market." The review summarises the book as reading the First Aliyah (1882 to 1903) as a settlement colony that became a plantation economy employing Palestinian Arab labour, and the Second Aliyah (1903 to 1914) through

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the "conquest of labor." The book is interpretive historical sociology and supplies no rate or count.

Tariq Dana of the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies makes the argument in eight pages of theory (Dana, 2024). He classes Israeli settler colonialism as exceptional for three reasons: its Zionist ideological roots, the absence of a conventional metropole, and its reliance on Western alliance. The article contains no figures. Middle East Critique states in its aims that it publishes analyses "drawing on heterodox theoretical perspectives."

Locker-Biletzki's 2025 paper in the Review of Radical Political Economics extends the reading to 1920 to 1956 and frames that period as settler colonialism and empire-building (Locker-Biletzki, 2025). The publisher types it as a meeting report within a themed symposium. It was refereed, but it is a conference paper, not a research article. The journal is published for the Union for Radical Political Economics, which states an explicit political economy commitment.

The framing was established enough by 2018 to be answered by name in the journal literature. Ukashi's article in Peace and Conflict Studies, a peer-reviewed journal, argues for reconsidering Zionism as an Indigenous emancipation movement. It argues against both the imperial and the settler-colonial characterisations, and the author states his conclusion in his introduction (Ukashi, 2018).

Who framed Zionism as national self-emancipation, and when?

Leon Pinsker's pamphlet Auto-Emancipation was published anonymously in German in **1882**, after the pogroms in the Russian Empire. It concluded that "The international Jewish question must have a national solution" (Pinsker, 1882).

It is the first dated text in a chain that runs through Herzl's 1896 treatise and the 1897 Basel Program to the 1948 Declaration.

Pinsker's remedy, in the 1916 English translation by D. S. Blondheim, was "the creation of a Jewish nationality, of a people living upon its own soil." His diagnosis was his own polemical framing. He called hatred of Jews "Judeophobia," described it as a hereditary "psychic aberration," and concluded that "The Jews are not a living nation; they are everywhere aliens; therefore they are despised." He asked for a land "sufficiently extensive to allow the settlement of several millions."

Theodor Herzl's The Jewish State (1896), quoted here from the 1946 American Zionist Emergency Council translation, set the same problem in national terms. He wrote: "It is a national question, which can only be solved by making it a political world-question to be discussed and settled by the civilized nations of the world in council." He also wrote "We are

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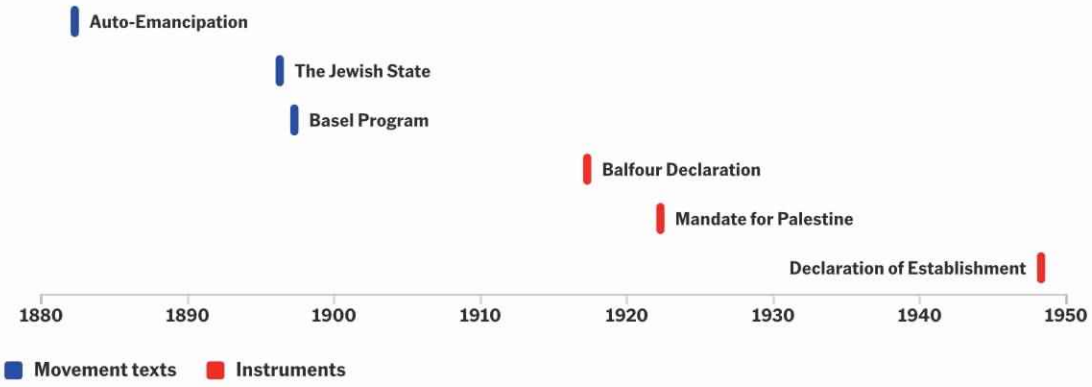
one people" and added that "our enemies have made us one without our consent, as repeatedly happens in history" (Herzl, 1896).

The First Zionist Congress adopted the Basel Program unanimously at Basel in August 1897. In the Jewish Encyclopedia's contemporary translation, the program reads: "Zionism aims at establishing for the Jewish people a publicly and legally assured home in Palestine" (First Zionist Congress, 1897). The first of its four means is "the promotion of the settlement of Jewish agriculturists, artisans, and tradesmen in Palestine." The program's text does not mention antisemitism. That rationale comes from Pinsker and Herzl.

The liberation chain, then, is dated and quotable. Its own program names settlement as its first instrument.

The dated texts of the national-liberation chain
YEAR OF PUBLICATION, ADOPTION OR SIGNATURE, 1882 TO 1948



Source: Pinsker (1882); Herzl (1896); First Zionist Congress (1897); His Majesty's Government (1917), with the Mandate text of 1922; Provisional Government of Israel (1948).

Why do both framings cite the 1922 Mandate?

The Mandate for Palestine was approved by the Council of the League of Nations in **1922**. Its preamble recognises "the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine," which is the clause the national-liberation reading cites (His Majesty's Government, 1917). The same instrument makes Britain, a European imperial power, responsible for securing "the establishment of the Jewish national home," which is the sponsorship the settler-colonial reading cites.

The Mandate restated, in different words, the 67-word sentence of the 2 November 1917 letter of Arthur James Balfour inside a League instrument. The letter's safeguard for "existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine" is limited to their "civil and religious rights." The Mandate's Article 2 adds duties toward the population. Britain is to secure the national home

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"and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion." Article 4 recognises "An appropriate Jewish agency" as a public body advising the Administration.

The leader of the movement's Revisionist current tied the Mandate directly to outside protection. In 1923, Ze'ev Jabotinsky wrote of his policy: "That is our Arab policy; not what it should be, but what it actually is, whether we admit it or not. What need, otherwise, of the Balfour Declaration? Or of the Mandate?" (Jabotinsky, 1923).

The Mandatory power later reviewed its own instrument. The Palestine Royal Commission, chaired by Earl Peel, signed its report on 22 June 1937, and the report was presented to Parliament in July 1937. Its central conclusion was that Britain's obligations to the two communities "have proved irreconcilable." In Chapter XX, paragraph 17, it wrote that "we cannot" in Palestine as it then was "both concede the Arab claim to self-government and secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home" (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937). This is a British government-commissioned finding about Britain's own obligations. Its recommendation was partition, which was never enacted.

The Mandate therefore supplies evidence for both readings in a single text. Its preamble speaks the language of restoration, its operative articles assign the work to an imperial administration, and its Mandatory reported 15 years later that the two purposes could not both be met.

Who lived in the land when Britain counted it in 1931?

The Government of Palestine's census, taken at midnight on 18 November 1931, recorded **174,610** Jews among 1,035,821 people enumerated, a share of 16.9% (Government of Palestine, 1932). That is the mandatory power's own count of the inhabited land on which the settler-colonial criterion turns.

The census classifies by religion, not by nationality, and has no "Arab" or "Palestinian" column. It recorded 759,712 Moslems, 91,398 Christians, 9,148 Druses, 350 Bahais, 182 Samaritans and 421 people of no religion. Reading Moslems plus most Christians and Druses as Arab is a reasonable derivation, but no such total appears in the census. The count separates 969,268 settled from 66,553 nomadic people, and the nomadic count is wholly Moslem. The figures come from the preliminary tables, which were compiled by E. Mills, Superintendent of Census. The general report followed in 1933.

Population of Palestine by religion, census of 1931
ENUMERATED POPULATION, 18 NOVEMBER 1931, TOTAL 1,035,821

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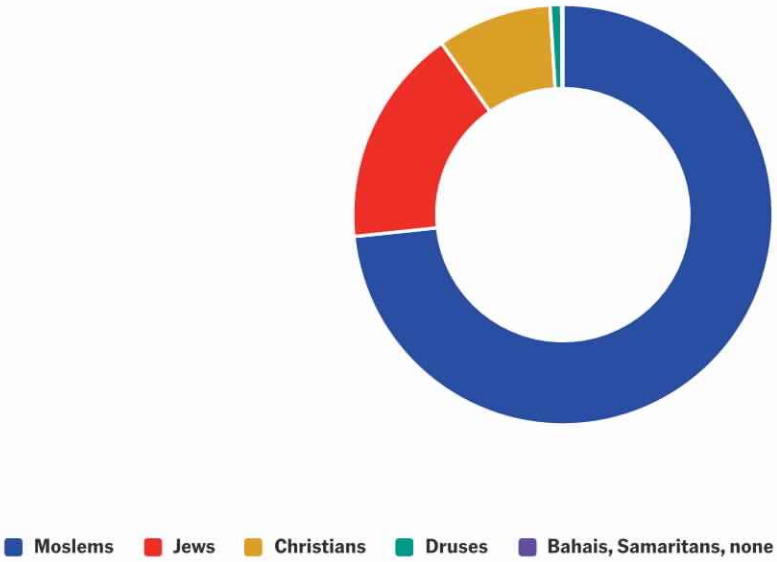

Source: Government of Palestine (1932), Census of Palestine 1931, preliminary tables, Summary for Palestine.

The Royal Commission described the same land six years later. In Chapter XX, paragraph 5, it wrote: "An irrepressible conflict has arisen between two national communities within the narrow bounds of one small country. About 1,000,000 Arabs are in strife, open or latent, with some 400,000 Jews" (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937). The figures are the Commission's own rounded characterisation in an argumentative passage, not an enumeration.

Each reading takes something different from these counts. For the settler-colonial reading, a Jewish minority of 16.9% within an enumerated majority of other religions is the baseline condition. For the liberation reading, the same Mandate that ordered the count had recognised the Jewish people's "historical connection" to the land. The census records the population and is silent on the classification.

How did Israel's share of world Jewry rise from 6% to 45%?

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, the state's own statistics office, counts 650,000 Jews in the land in 1948, **6%** of a world Jewish population of 11.5 million.

It counts 7.1 million, or 45% of 15.7 million, at the beginning of 2024 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2025). The rise came through both immigration and birth, and each reading stresses a different one.

On the eve of the Second World War in 1939, the Bureau counts 449,000 Jews in the land, 3% of 16.6 million. Of the 7.1 million Jews in Israel at the beginning of 2024, 5.7 million were born in Israel and 1.4 million abroad. For every country except Israel, the Bureau uses a "core"

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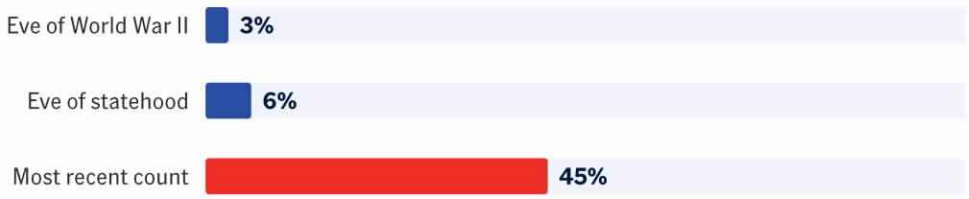
Jewish population definition drawn from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's American Jewish Year Book 2023.

Share of world Jewry living in the land of Israel

1939, 1948 AND BEGINNING OF 2024; ISRAEL'S OWN OFFICIAL STATISTICS



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2025), On the Occasion of Holocaust Day, 2025; Israel's own official statistics.

The Bureau's 2026 Independence Day release, also Israel's own official statistics, records over 3.5 million immigrants since 1948, about 1.68 million of them since 1990 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2026). It counts a population of 806,000 at independence and a preliminary 10.244 million in April 2026. Of the April 2026 total, 7.790 million (76%) are Jews and Others and 2.157 million (21.1%) are Arabs.

Israeli law classes this immigration as return. Section 1 of the Law of Return, passed on 5 July 1950, reads in full: "Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an oleh" (Knesset, 1950, amended 1970). The translator's note in the English text published by the Knesset defines oleh as "a Jew immigrating, into Israel." Section 4 extends the status to the native-born: every Jew "born in this country" is "deemed to be a person who has come to this country as an oleh under this Law."

The same counts serve both readings. A settler-colonial reading stresses the 3.5 million immigrants. A liberation reading stresses ingathering, in the statute's own vocabulary of return.

Do historians agree what 1948 means for the settler-colonial reading?

Benny Morris's The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited (Cambridge University Press, second edition 2004) gives roughly **700,000** as his own archival estimate of Palestinians who became refugees in the 1948 war (Morris, 2004). That 1948 displacement is documented on both sides of the scholarly divide. The historians differ on its cause, and the cause is where the settler-colonial argument for the pre-1967 state turns.

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Morris draws on Israeli military and state archives. He attributes the exodus to causes that varied by locality and phase: military attack and fear of attack, expulsions in certain sectors, and flight. He rejects both a single master plan of expulsion and the claim that departures were voluntary.

Ilan Pappé's The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine (Oneworld, 2006) argues that the 1948 displacement was planned (Pappé, 2006). The book's title is the named home of the ethnic-cleansing characterisation, and the author states a moral position. The two works are the poles of a named scholarly dispute over contingency and design, and neither has settled it.

An earlier official document sits behind both accounts. In 1937 the Royal Commission recommended in Chapter XXII, paragraph 36, that "Sooner or later there should be a transfer of land and, as far as possible, an exchange of population" (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937). Paragraph 42 makes agreement the first step, scaled to new land being found for resettlement. Paragraph 43 adds that for the Plains, and for Jewish colonies left in the proposed Arab State, "in the last resort the exchange would be compulsory." The recommendation was conditioned on agreement and on land, and it was never carried out.

For the classification question, the dispute narrows the ground rather than closing it. A reading of 1948 as design supports a settler-colonial classification of the founding itself. A reading of 1948 as the product of war accepts the displacement and contests the intent. Morris and Pappé both document the event and divide on which of those readings it supports.

Does the framing change for territory taken in 1967?

Israel and the PLO signed the Interim Agreement on **28 September 1995**. Its Article XII(5) defines "the Settlements" as, in the West Bank, "the settlements in Area C" (Israel and the PLO, 1995). The post-1967 record adds something the earlier period lacks: signed instruments that name settlements as a legal category. The scholarly settler-colonial readings cited here, however, locate the question before 1967.

The Agreement, in the English text published by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to it, defines Area C residually. Area C is the "areas of the West Bank outside Areas A and B," to be "gradually transferred to Palestinian jurisdiction." Article XVII(1) removes from the Palestinian Council's jurisdiction "Jerusalem, settlements, specified military locations, Palestinian refugees, borders, foreign relations and Israelis." Article XVII(4)(a) states that "Israel, through its military government, has the authority over areas that are not under the territorial jurisdiction of the Council." Article XXXI(6) preserves for both parties "any of its existing rights, claims or positions." The 18-month redeployment schedule and the 4 May 1996 deadline for opening permanent status talks are what the 1995 text set out.

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The restricting authority's own instrument, a party's own published policy, opens on the 1967 legal frame. COGAT's permit document, current to 8 February 2022, states that "Under the Order Concerning Closed Areas (West Bank Area) (Amendment) (No. 34), 1967, the area of Judea and Samaria is a closed military area and not to be entered or exited without a permit issued on behalf of the military commander" (COGAT, 2022). Its quotas are ceilings, not counts. One example is 74,300 for home construction. The edition predates 7 October 2023 and any change to the permit regime since.

The scholarship sits earlier than these instruments. Shafir's study covers 1882 to 1914, and Locker-Biletzki's paper covers 1920 to 1956. Dana locates part of the exceptionalism he argues for in Zionist ideological roots, which predate 1967. For these authors the settler-colonial question begins before 1967, and the 1995 and 2022 instruments document a later and legally separate category.

Do Palestinian bodies claim national liberation for themselves?

The Palestine National Council issued its Declaration of Independence at Algiers on **15 November 1988**. It proclaimed a state "By virtue of the natural, historical and legal right of the Palestinian Arab people to its homeland, Palestine" (Palestine National Council, 1988). This is a party's own founding statement. It claims national self-determination in the same land as the 1948 Declaration.

In the United Nations translation, the text grounds Palestinian identity in the land in terms that parallel Israel's founding instrument. "There it grew and developed, and there it created its unique human and national mode of existence in an organic, indissoluble and unbroken relationship among people, land and history." It calls the description of Palestine as "a land without a people" a "falsification of history." It cites Article 22 of the 1919 Covenant of the League of Nations and the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. It names resolution 181 of 1947 as both a "historical injustice" and a source of conditions guaranteeing "the right to sovereignty and national independence."

The same claim appears in current statements. As reported by WAFA, the Palestinian news agency, the PLO Executive Committee on 1 August 2026 called for "the Palestinian people's right to self-determination through the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state on the June 4, 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital" (PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian Presidency, 2026). That is the agency's account of a meeting, not the Committee's issued text.

Declaration	Ground stated	Source
Israel, **14 May 1948**	The land as "the birthplace of the Jewish people"	Provisional Government of Israel (1948)

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Declaration	Ground stated	Source
Palestine National Council, **15 November 1988**	"the natural, historical and legal right of the Palestinian Arab people to its homeland"	Palestine National Council (1988)
PLO Executive Committee, **1 August 2026**	"the Palestinian people's right to self-determination"	PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian Presidency (2026), as reported by WAFA

Each row is a party's own statement and is evidence of the position held, not of the facts it asserts. The vocabulary of national liberation does not belong to one side of the record. Both founding declarations use it, each about the same territory.

Can a movement be both, according to the scholars who disagree?

Ze'ev Jabotinsky published "The Iron Wall" in the Berlin weekly Rassvet on 4 November **1923**. He was a Revisionist founder, and in that essay he wrote: "Colonisation can have only one aim, and Palestine Arabs cannot accept this aim" (Jabotinsky, 1923). Dowty's 2022 essay and Dana's 2024 article reach opposite classifications.

The quotations here come from the English typescript published by the Jabotinsky Institute. The essay's central sentence reads: "Zionist colonisation must either stop, or else proceed regardless of the native population." Settlement could therefore continue only "behind an iron wall, which the native population cannot breach." The same essay also states: "I consider it utterly impossible to eject the Arabs from Palestine." It invokes the Helsingfors Programme, "the programme of national rights for all nationalities living in the same State." It pledges that "we shall never try to eject anyone." Both commitments are conditioned in the same text. The first applies "provided the Jews become the majority." The second applies to an agreement that would follow only once force had made resistance hopeless. A second essay, "The Ethics of the Iron Wall," followed on 11 November 1923. The text records what one current's leader wrote, not Zionism as a whole.

The scholars disagree on classification, not on whether the vocabulary exists. The web address of Dowty's essay preserves an earlier title, "why Israel isn't a settler colonial state." The displayed title now asks the question (Dowty, 2022). Dana counts the absence of a conventional metropole as a feature that makes Israeli settler colonialism exceptional within the category (Dana, 2024). Ukashi argues against the imperial and settler-colonial characterisations altogether and reads Zionism as Indigenous emancipation (Ukashi, 2018). These are three named positions in a live dispute, each with its own criterion.

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The movement's own texts carry both vocabularies at once. The Basel Program of 1897 names a national "home" and lists settlement as its first means. Jabotinsky's 1923 essay uses the word colonisation, invokes a programme of national rights for all nationalities in one state and pledges equal rights. Whether a movement can be both is, on this record, a question about which criterion the reader applies to texts that already contain both.

Methodology and limitations

The evidence comes from four source types, each labelled where it is used.

- **Primary instruments:** the 1948 Declaration (Knesset English text), the 1917 letter and the 1922 Mandate (Avalon Project transcriptions), the 1950 Law of Return and its 1970 amendment (Laws of the State of Israel scans hosted by the Knesset), the 1995 Interim Agreement (text published by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the 1937 Royal Commission report, COGAT's 2022 permit document, the 1988 Palestine National Council Declaration (United Nations translation) and two 2026 Palestinian statements as reported by WAFA.
- **Founding movement texts, read in named English translations:** Pinsker (Blondheim, 1916), Herzl (American Zionist Emergency Council, 1946), the Basel Program (Jewish Encyclopedia) and Jabotinsky (Jabotinsky Institute typescript).
- **Official statistics:** the 1931 preliminary census tables, and two releases from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics. Both Bureau releases are Israel's own official statistics. The 2026 figures are preliminary and based on the 2022 census.
- **Scholarship:** Shafir, Morris and Pappé are scholarly books. Dana, Ukashi and Locker-Biletzki are journal works of argument; Locker-Biletzki's is a refereed symposium paper. Dowty's is a university centre essay.

Several limits apply to how these sources were used.

- Shafir's argument is given in the words of its publisher and of MERIP's 1990 review, not quoted from the book.
- None of the scholarly works is cited for a measured rate. Morris's roughly 700,000 is his own archival estimate.
- Party statements are labelled as such: the 1988 Palestine National Council Declaration, the 2026 PLO Executive Committee statement reported by WAFA, and COGAT's 2022 permit instrument.
- The census classifies by religion, so any Arab total built from it is a derivation.
- The Royal Commission's population figures are its own rounded characterisation, not an enumeration.

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Conclusion

Is Zionism national liberation or settler colonialism? The dated record answers each test on its own terms. Measured by its stated purpose, the movement is a national self-emancipation, in the words of Pinsker's 1882 pamphlet, Herzl's 1896 treatise and the Declaration signed by 37 members of the People's Council in 1948. Measured by its effects on the land, the settler-colonial reading has named scholarly holders from 1989 to 2025 and documents to stand on.

The record is assertive in several directions at once. The program that founded the movement named settlement as its first means, and the Revisionist leader in 1923 called the project colonisation while pledging equal rights. The land it entered was 16.9% Jewish by the mandatory power's 1931 count. Israel's share of world Jewry rose from 6% to 45%, on Israel's own official statistics. Two named historians document the 1948 displacement and divide over its design. And a second people's founding declaration claims the same national right in the same land.

Each reading, then, is anchored in documents that also appear in the other's evidence. If the founding documents of one people's return and those of another's dispossession are partly the same documents, which half of its own record does a society that insists on a single word for the movement mean that word to leave out?

Frequently Asked Questions

Did Herzl insist on Palestine as the territory?

No. In the 1946 English text of The Jewish State, Herzl set out the choice as "Palestine or Argentine?" and did not fix the territory (Herzl, 1896). Pinsker had also warned in 1882 against choosing a land by "preconceived sympathies" (Pinsker, 1882). Palestine became the movement's stated aim with the Basel Program of 1897.

Did the Balfour Declaration promise a Jewish state?

Its text says "a national home," not "a state" and not "the national home" (His Majesty's Government, 1917). It is a letter from a British government, not a treaty. Its legal force came through the 1922 Mandate, which restated it in different words.

Who counts as a Jew under the Law of Return?

Section 4B, inserted in 1970, defines a Jew "for the purposes of this Law" as "a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion" (Knesset, 1950, amended 1970). Section 4A, added by the same amendment, extends the Law's rights to a Jew's spouse, child and grandchild, and to the

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spouses of the child and grandchild. A person who has been a Jew and voluntarily changed religion is excluded.

Was the Peel Commission's partition plan carried out?

No. The Royal Commission's 1937 partition plan was a recommendation (Palestine Royal Commission, 1937). The Woodhead Commission of 1938 found it impracticable, and the 1939 White Paper abandoned it.

What did the Palestinian Presidency say about two states in 2026?

As reported by WAFA on 8 September 2026, the Presidency affirmed a State of Palestine "along the June 4, 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in security and peace alongside the State of Israel" (PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian Presidency, 2026). The Presidency and the PLO Executive Committee are separate bodies with overlapping memberships.

Does the Oslo II agreement state what share of the West Bank is Area C?

No. The 1995 Agreement defines Areas A and B by red lines and shading on a map and defines Area C as whatever remains (Israel and the PLO, 1995). No area percentage appears anywhere in the main text. Any share of the West Bank attributed to Area C comes from a later measurement by another body.

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