

# The Creation of Israel

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## Background:

The modern conflict between Israelis and Palestinians goes very far back in history. However, the current debate on who should control Palestine began when the United Nations created the nation of Israel in response to the atrocities of the Holocaust. Israel was to serve as a place where Jewish people from all over the world could live, free from the dangers of Anti-Semitism. The chief problem faced by the new country was that the land given to the Israelis was already home to hundreds of thousands Arabs. Both groups desire to control the area. Below are two documents which show the sentiments of both the Arab Palestinians and the Jewish Israelis.

## The Israeli Declaration of Independence - 1948

Why might Jews begin migrating to Israel after WW2?

The Land of Israel] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books (Torah).

... paragraphs omitted...

What role did Israelis play in the UN?

Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to **Eretz-Israel**, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest **toil** in their national homeland.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be **reckoned** among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

What did Jews have to do so that Israel would be recognized as a country?

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a **resolution** calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is **irrevocable**.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

...paragraphs omitted...

What does this declaration say about Arab Palestinians? Neighboring countries?

**WE APPEAL** - in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months - 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 and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

**WE EXTEND** our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness.... The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

## The Palestinian National Charter – 1968

Based on the Charter's tone, how do Palestinians feel about their Jewish neighbors?

Who is Palestinian?

What reasons does the Charter give for the legality of the Jewish state?

What does the charter say about fighters?

Article 1: Palestine is the homeland of the Arab Palestinian people; it is an **indivisible** part of the Arab homeland, and the Palestinian people are an integral part of the Arab nation.

Article 2: Palestine, with the boundaries it had during the **British Mandate**, is an indivisible territorial unit.

Article 3: The Palestinian Arab people possess the legal right to their homeland and have the right to determine their destiny after achieving the liberation of their country in accordance with their wishes and entirely of their own accord and will.

Article 4: The Palestinian identity is a genuine, essential, and inherent characteristic; it is transmitted from parents to children. The **Zionist** occupation and the dispersal of the Palestinian Arab people, through the disasters which befell them, do not make them lose their Palestinian identity and their membership in the Palestinian community, nor do they negate them.

Article 19: The partition of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of the state of Israel are entirely illegal, regardless of the passage of time, because they were contrary to the will of the Palestinian people and to their natural right in their homeland, and inconsistent with the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations; particularly the right to self-determination.

Article 30: Fighters and carriers of arms in the war of liberation are the nucleus of the popular army which will be the protective force for the gains of the Palestinian Arab people.

Key Terms:

**Eretz-Israel:** Hebrew term meaning- The Land of Israel

**toil:** hard work

**reckoned:** recognized

**resolution:** a formal decision by a governing group (i.e. Congress)

**irrevocable:** something that cannot be undone

**indivisible:** undividable

**British Mandate:** A territory controlled by the British after World War 1.

**Zionist:** A person who believes Jews should have their own country.

### Review Questions – Answer on a separate sheet of paper

1. Compare the two documents in message, how are they alike, how are they different (Consider tone, theme, message, etc.)?
2. Based on the two documents, which group of people has the more valid claim to the land, in your opinion? Why?
3. Based on Article 19, how do Palestinians feel about having to share their home with the Jews?
4. Why might the Jews have offered to give the Palestinians full citizenship?