

Tunnels in the Desert

Smoke signals from the Gaza Strip

The historical Messiah Wars described in the preceding briefing papers came to a head in our time when a perfect storm in Gaza that no one seemed to anticipate rose up on October 7, 2023. It was typified by the tunnels hidden from view beneath the coastal Mediterranean enclave from which the latest war in the Middle East erupted. Little did people realize that the holocaust that struck Israeli border towns like lightning would ignite a conflagration that soon engulfed the whole Middle East and divided nations around the world.

The entire Gaza strip is about the size of Philadelphia. The labyrinth of tunnels dug by Hamas stretched well over 300 miles throughout the 25-mile long, 6-mile wide stretch of shoreline.¹ As soon as tunnels were destroyed, others were built and more were discovered as the war continued. When a temporary ceasefire fell apart in March 2025, Israeli forces found still more tunnels. The war had not slowed Hamas's obsession at all. At least 6,000 entry points to the underground maze have been found, a staggering engineering achievement worthy of an urban planning award—if only the tunnels weren't burrowed by men devoted to death and destruction.

What diabolical spirit could possibly have driven Hamas to spend over a billion humanitarian aid dollars, plus untold illicit drug trafficking revenues, to build a vast underground war machine while two million people languished above ground in abject poverty? Before the 2023 war in Gaza, 80% of the people lived below poverty level and nearly half were unemployed, apart from those who labored beneath ground in secret, nurturing a deep ancient root of bitterness.

The whole world soon learned that Hamas's original subterranean megaplex sported major thoroughfares, an advanced communications network, hotel worthy accommodations, air conditioning, bathrooms and showers. More to the point, the sprawl famously housed an entire military-industrial complex with weapons making and storage sites, prisons for captives, and command centers deliberately located beneath hospitals, schools, residential apartments, mosques and UN facilities. Many entry points served as camouflaged rocket launching sites and popup sniper lairs. Over 180 tunnels crossed into Egypt, some large enough for 18-wheel smuggling trucks to traverse.

As things turned out, Israel's state of the art border security sensors totally missed the Hamas infiltrators on October 7th. Israel had so succumbed to the mirage of Palestinian peace-making rhetoric, undergirded by the UN mantra of a workable 2-state solution, that Israel's leaders passively believed their high tech defenses were sufficient. Bad conclusion. Most of the invaders simply cut the fence above ground and walked through, while a few flew over it in ultralight aircraft, adding insult to Israel's traumatic injury. Little more than a year later, the world would learn that Hezbollah in Lebanon had also built similar tunnels near Israel's northern border dedicated to the same kind of sneak attack. Later still, war tunnels were identified in Iran, and some have been found in Judea and Samaria, aka Israel's "West Bank."

¹ By comparison, the U.S. city of Philadelphia has only 78 miles of tunnels. Washington, D.C. has 128 miles of subways.

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

The vast terror lairs lacing Israel's borders and interior were manifestations of another form of tunneling devoted to infiltrating human hearts and minds. When the 2023 war began, no one in Israel or the West realized Hamas's war strategy included a "Media Wing" replete with some 1,500 operators and 1,000 combat cameramen, some equipped with GoPro's, often disguised as civilian journalists embedded with fighters. Realtime video feeds were collected in a central underground editing center for rapid editing and dispersal to global media networks.²

Hamas's impressive psychological warfare machine also staged dramatic videos portraying the suffering of Gazan civilians, supplemented by inflated death toll estimates. Even when Israel debunked obvious fake news, Hamas's psychological media blitzes had a lasting impact on public opinion, especially students, and government leaders around the world. Woeful stories of Palestinian victimhood and starvation, complete with fake video evidence, became the stuff of table talk on college campuses and executive boardrooms. People everywhere began lining up in support of either the Palestinian war for "self-determination" or Israel's right to defend itself from annihilation by an openly genocidal enemy. Even once reputable media conglomerates such as the Associated Press, BBC and mainstream American networks embraced the Palestinian cause as if questioning Hamas's "facts" were taboo. Any thinking person had to wonder what could account for such widespread delusion?

The Attackers in their Own Words

Shortly after Hamas's attack on October 7, a Hamas leader said: **"We will repeat the October 7 attack, time and again, until Israel is annihilated. We are victims—everything we do is justified."** And: **"Therefore, nobody should blame us for the things we do...everything we do is justified."**³

A month after the gruesome October massacre, a Hamas spokesman was quoted in the *New York Times* boasting:

"I hope that the state of war with Israel will become permanent on all the borders.... Hamas's goal is not to run Gaza and to bring it water and electricity and such. We are called a nation of martyrs, and we are proud to sacrifice martyrs. This battle did not seek to improve the situation in Gaza. This battle is to completely overthrow the situation." *The New York Times*, 9-9-2023

Hamas's PR machine successfully obscured these blatant statements of intent through their well-honed narrative that Palestinians deserved a modern state of their own, just like any other indigenous people in the world. Except, that is, Jews, who Hamas denies have a right to a state of their own on land clearly traceable to very ancient forebears, a denial even more audacious than Hamas's maze of deadly tunnels.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah's Arabic-language manifesto, written in 1985 well before Hamas's attack, still speaks for itself: **"Our struggle will end only when this entity [Israel] is obliterated."** Likewise, the Houthis in Yemen, who directly joined Hamas's attacks on Israel, also openly publicized their own slogan well before the attacks. **"Death to America, Death to Israel, Curse on the Jews, Victory to Islam,"** was first chanted at a school in Yemen in 2002. What happened

² <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/fighting-the-eighth-front-israels-information-war/>

³ First quote is from the [Middle East Research Institute](#). Second quote is from the [Times of Israel](#), 11-9-2023.

in 2023 was far from impulsive, nor definable simply by a universal right to Palestinian self-determination.

Shrinking Mandates for an Israeli State

The outbreak of violence in Gaza has deep roots that go back well before modern Israel was founded. Three main precedents were established in the 20th century, creating a legal basis for establishing new nation states in the lands formerly ruled by the Ottoman Empire.

THE BALFOUR DECLARATION: The year prior to the end of World War I, the British expressed support for land to be set aside for Jewish settlement in what closely resembles the modern state of Israel. A region known as “Transjordan” was also set aside for Arab settlement. This view was summarized in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. (See the first map on page 7 of this brief.) The Balfour Declaration left a lot of details unsettled, including the definition of Transjordan, itself. These vagaries are too complex to detail here, but suffice it to say that the parties to the Declaration understood that settling the future boundaries involved both Jews and Arabs, and remained to be specified.⁴

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS: After World War I ended—the “war to end all wars”—the first worldwide intergovernmental organization designed to sustain world peace was formed known as the League of Nations. Four years later the League developed a formal Mandate for England to govern territory ceded by the defeat of the Ottoman empire. The League’s mandate further obscured the boundaries proposed by England’s Balfour Declaration by creating a large territory loosely designated for Jewish and Arab settlement. (See second map on page 7 of this Brief.)

During this time, modern Jewish settlement of Israel was already underway, inspired largely by Theodor Herzl as described in Messiah Brief 9, *Unholy Alliance*. [LINK] As a result, the UN Mandate triggered open conflict between Arabs and Jews living in what was then still known as Palestine. The British had established Mohammed Amin al-Husseini as the Mufti of Jerusalem the year before the League of Nations Mandate, but he worked quickly to subvert *any* division of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states.⁵ This ultimately led to the Mufti’s expulsion when the Nazis rose to power.

UN RESOLUTION 181: At the end of WWII, the newly created United Nations approved Resolution 181 in 1947, calling for the partition of Transjordan into two territories. The Resolution excluded Jews from claiming any territory east of the Jordan River. It also reduced Jewish land claims west of the Jordan River by setting apart portions of that land for Palestinian Arab settlement. (See map, page 8 of this Brief.) These set aside portions would become the “West Bank” of modern political parlance.

The UN vote allowing for Jewish settlement was driven partly by sympathy for Jews in the wake of the Nazi Holocaust, bolstered by sentiments supporting Israel’s historical Biblical claims

⁴ See [Douglas J. Feith](https://www.hudson.org/node/44363) - <https://www.hudson.org/node/44363>. Top British officials at the time of signing the Balfour Declaration understood that the word “Palestine” included Transjordan. I.e., Jewish Zionists believed Israel would possess at least a part of the land east of the Jordan river in Transjordan. (See map at end of this brief.) Article 25 was then added to the Balfour Declaration with Churchill’s consent to clarify that the Mandate’s Jewish-home clauses were not meant to be applicable east of the Jordan. This was done out of practical considerations about the cost of administering Transjordan if Jews were allowed to settle there, which was sure to incite Arab resistance. This left many practical political realities unresolved.

⁵ Details about Mufti al-Husseini can be found in Messiah Brief #9, *Unholy Alliance*.

to the Holy Land. However, the UN plan didn't legally create either a Jewish or an Arab "Palestinian" state, again leaving the matter undetermined. Furthermore, Resolution 181 reduced the amount of land designated for Jewish settlement so much it left doubts about the ability of Israel to successfully defend itself in the event of Arab incursions.

Before there would be further haggling about either extending Jewish settlements into the West Bank, or forming an independent Palestinian state on any part of the West Bank, war broke out when Israel declared Independence in 1948.

Arab Nations Attack the New State of Israel

On May 14, 1948, Israel formally declared its Independence. That same day, the U.S. officially recognized Israel because President Harry Truman realized the historical significance of Israel's restoration. Truman explained: **"I had faith in Israel before it was established, I knew it was based on the love of freedom, which has been the guiding star of the Jewish people since the days of Moses."**

Despite Truman's decision, the U.S. State Department argued recognition would lead to increased Soviet influence in the Middle East and limit American access to Arabian oil. Thus began a bipolar U.S. foreign policy torn between supporting Israel's right to exist and supporting Arab interests, which would eventually include the dream of Palestinian Arab statehood. This dichotomy would persist to our time.

The day after Israel declared independence, five Arab nations declared war and attacked the new nation. The Secretary of the Arab League announced: **"This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades."** Where did this idea come from? Messiah Briefs 14 and 15 address this question.[[Add links](#)]

Israel miraculously defeated its attackers within nine months, but the victory was far from complete. By then Jordan occupied Jerusalem and the area known as the West Bank (called "Judea and Samaria" by many Jews). In November 1948, King Abdullah of Jordan was crowned "King of Jerusalem" by a local Coptic Bishop. When the war ended, Abdullah sovereignly annexed the West Bank areas that remained under Jordanian control, making it part of his Hashemite Kingdom. **Jordan's belligerent annexation was sanctioned only by the UK and Iraq, but no other nations. Internationally speaking, it was an illegal occupation—well before Israel captured it back in the Six-Day War of 1967, after which Israel was widely accused of an "illegal occupation" of its own.**

For its part, British forces even helped train Jordan's Arab Legion before the 1948 war and supplied weapons to Jordan, Iraq and Egypt against Israel. England's support for Arabs stemmed in part from its early history of enlisting Arab tribes to help to defeat Germany in World War I, as well as the British Empire's desire to secure access to Arabian oil.

The Refugee Problem

The Arab attack on Israel precipitated a major refugee problem. An estimated 700,000 Arab Palestinians fled Israel, some to avoid the ravages of war and others because the Arab League

Jewish Population in Arab/Muslim Nations, 1948 - 2018						
	1948	2018		1948	2018	
Morocco	265,000	2,150		Yemen	63,000	<50
Algeria	140,000	<50		Libya	38,000	0
Iraq	135,000	<10		Syria	30,000	100
Tunisia	105,000	1,050		Lebanon/Aden	5,000	<100
Egypt	75,000	100		Afghanistan	5,000	0

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries#iraq>

assured them they could return safely after the Jews were defeated.⁶ When Israel surprised the world by winning the war, the refugees suddenly became homeless because Israel didn't welcome them back. Not only had the invaders repeated Holocaust-like threats at the outset of the war, some had collaborated directly with Hitler. Importantly, international law does not force acceptance of refugees back to a country that has been invaded by an act of war, as was the case in Israel in 1948.

Meanwhile, some 800,000 Jews living in the Arab nations surrounding Israel prior to the Arab attack became refugees from those nations. (See table above.) Some left voluntarily to embrace the formation of the new nation of Israel, others were forced out by Arab pressure. Israel welcomed the influx of Jewish refugees with open arms, without UN assistance, to help build their new nation.

Changing the World's Tune toward Israel

The UN would eventually take up the Palestinian Arab's cause by dedicating a single UN agency to their support. Descendants of the original Arab refugees ballooned over time to an estimated 5.9 million people in 2024, according to the UNRWA, the *only* UN agency ever devoted to refugees from a single country or ethnic group. What influenced the UN attitude toward Israel and Palestinian refugees? Consider this series of Arab pronouncements:

SEPTEMBER 1948: During the Arab war against Israel the Secretary of the Arab Higher Committee said: **"The fact that there are these refugees is the direct consequence of the action of the Arab States in opposing partition and the Jewish State. The Arab States agreed upon this... unanimously...."** (Beirut *Daily Telegraph*, September 6, 1948)

1957: UN RELIEF & WORKS AGENCY: **"The Arab States do not want to solve the refugee problem. They want to keep it as an open sore as an affront to the UN, and as a weapon against Israel."**

⁶ Arab refugees from Israel's war were small by comparison to other post-WWII expulsions. Some 14 million Muslims and Hindus were relocated in Pakistan and India, and 2 million Poles and Ukrainians were relocated in Eastern Europe. Wars broke out in all of these regions in the new millennium, but none of these refugee resettlement efforts led to the UN establishing dedicated refugee camps except for Palestinian Arabs.

1957: ARAB REFUGEE CONFERENCE IN SYRIA: “Any discussion aimed at a solution of the Palestine problem which will not be based on ensuring the refugees’ right to annihilate Israel will be regarded as a desecration of Arab people and an act of treason.”

1960: THE SAME ARAB SPOKESMAN FROM 1957 did a total about face before the UN Special Political Committee: “It has been those [“Zionist”] acts of terror, accompanied by wholesale depredations, which caused the exodus of the Palestinian Arabs. (UN A/SPC/SR 209, 1960, p 9)

Do you see how these official voices changed their tune in the decade following Israel’s 1948 Declaration of Independence?

Un-United Nations Against Israel

Fast forward to November 29, 2005: An annual gathering of UN officials in New York began with a call for a minute of silence in memory of “all those who have given their lives to the cause of the Palestinian people.” The day is called the “International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People,” aka *Al-Nakba* (“The Catastrophe” in Arabic). It commemorates the “dispossession” of the Palestinians following the establishment of the Jewish state on May 14th, 1948.

Now celebrated by many nations around the world, here is the UN’s current view:

“From the Nakba — a catastrophe marked by the destruction of Palestinian communities and the displacement of a majority of Palestinians from their homes in 1948—to this day, the Palestinian people have experienced constant dispossession, displacement, and the denial of their human rights.”⁷

The Arab plan to utterly destroy the nation of Israel at its modern birth is now enshrined on the basis of a myth of Jewish oppression that can easily be disproven.⁸ Instead of uniting nations, the UN has become a primary conduit for dividing nation against nation over the issue of Israel. This is a direct result of the fact that the largest voting bloc in the UN consists of 57 Islamic nations worldwide that are also part of the Organization of Islam Cooperation (OIC), the second largest global intergovernmental entity apart from the UN. The OIC was established in 1969 to promote Islamic solidarity and preserve Muslim interests globally. This voting bloc works directly with the Muslim Brotherhood, the seminal Islamic jihadi force that has long been involved in promoting violence against Israel despite appearances that it is a peaceful political lobbying group.

Hamas identifies itself totally with the Muslim Brother. The 1988 Hamas charter says: **“The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the wings of the Muslim Brotherhood...the largest Islamic movement in modern times”** (Charter, Chapter 1, Article 2). I cover this topic more in depth in Brief 14.

To understand why this has all happened, it’s necessary to step back and examine the religious tenets and core values that underpin the Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as follows in the next section of messiahnow.com.

⁷ <https://www.un.org/en/exhibits/exhibit/portraits-of-palestinians>, retrieve summer 2024.

⁸ For extensive proof that the view that Jews intentionally oppress Arab Palestinians is a myth, see: *The Israel Test*, by George Gilder, 2nd American Edition, 2024, especially chapters 7, 8 and 11.

British Balfour Declaration 1917

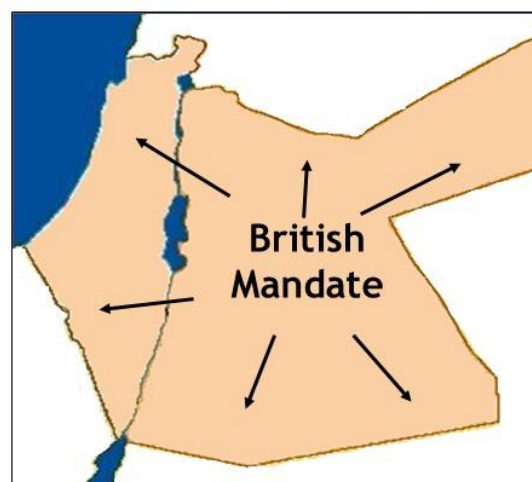
- Arthur Balfour was British foreign secretary in 1917.
- The British government formally expressed support for a Jewish state in Palestine.
- Transjordan east of the Jordan river was set aside for Arab settlement.
- The text read, in part:



“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities....”

League of Nations Mandate, 1922

- The League of Nations formally mandated England in 1922 to govern territory conceded by the Ottoman Empire after WWI.
- The large area was designated for settling both Jews and Arabs.
- The British commitment to Jewish settlement stemmed from the earlier Balfour Agreement.



UN 1947 Partition Plan for Palestine

UN Resolution 181 formed the basis for Jewish Settlement in Palestine.

- Partition was necessary due to violence between Jews and Arabs.
- Green areas west of Jordan were designated for Arab settlement.
- Blue areas were designated for Jewish settlement.



Legal status as “states” was not defined but not prohibited.

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