



Conflict in Gaza: Words Matter

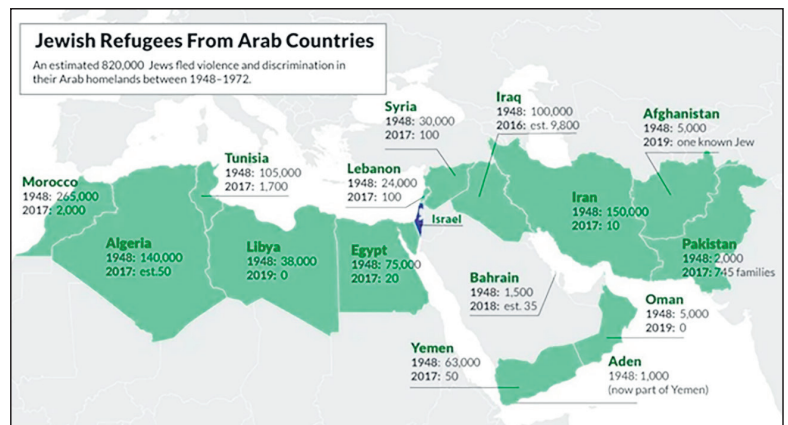
The brutal atrocities on October 7th awakened many to the depravity of Hamas, the ruthless terrorist organization controlling Gaza. More than 1,400 Israelis were savagely murdered, babies were burned and decapitated, women were raped, and 242 Israelis and others were taken hostage, including Holocaust survivors. This was the most brutal attack on Jews since the Holocaust. Many are unfamiliar with the problems in Gaza, and this is intended to provide simple answers to a very complex issue.

- **What does “Free Palestine” mean? “Free Palestine” is one of the most common slogans of anti-Semitic organizations.** It calls for the removal of Jews from the State of Israel and the total eradication of Israel without qualification, so that it can be replaced by a Palestinian state governed by Islamic Sharia law. This language is an explicit rejection of the two-state solution. Not surprisingly, those who care about Israel find this language violent and threatening.
- **What is an “intifada”? Why are people calling for it?** Intifada means “uprising” in Arabic. A call to “intifada” does not represent a call for peaceful or civil protest. **Instead, it is a call for violence against Jews.** The last Intifada occurred in the early 2000s, when Palestinian terrorists attacked Jewish civilians inside of Israel, using suicide bombers in buses, cafes, nightclubs, and other locations. Many Israelis died or were injured during the Intifada.
- **Is Israel an “apartheid” state? No.** This is an accusation leveled at Israel in an attempt to create a parallel between Israel and South Africa’s prior policies. Detractors of Israel improperly use the term to gain support for a boycott against Israel. **Israel cannot be an apartheid state, because minorities and members of all faiths are part of its democratic system of government.** Jews, Muslims, Christians, and Druze are represented and serve in the Israeli parliament, hold judicial appointments, and serve in the Israeli army. In addition, educational opportunities are significantly better for Arab women, Muslims, Christians, and Druze living in Israel than any other country in the Middle East. It is also worth noting that Arabic is an official language of the State of Israel.
- **Is Israel a “settler-colonialist” state? No.** This term implies that Israel “colonized” or “stole” land, which is **false**. Jews have lived in Israel since biblical times, except for periods when Jews were forced to flee or convert to other religions. In modern times spanning from the late 1800s through the early 1900s, Jews purchased land from owners in parts of the Ottoman Empire, which would later become Israel. Israel was established in 1947 by the United Nations, which created two countries, one for Jews and one for Arabs. Arab nations rejected the partition plan, and many of these countries have been trying to destroy Israel since that time. Israel gained additional land in a defensive war after it was attacked by surrounding Arab countries. Over half of the current population of Israelis came as refugees from Middle Eastern or North African countries, where their families had lived for centuries before being expelled, as shown below. Most Arab countries continue to be unsafe for Jews. Israel is the only country in the Middle East where Jews are welcomed.

- **Is Israel committing “genocide” or “ethnic cleansing” in Gaza? No.**

Genocide is an internationally recognized crime where acts are committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. **Israel’s response to the terrorist attacks by Hamas is aimed at ensuring the safety of the Israeli people by eliminating the ability of Hamas**

to launch attacks and removing them from power. The charge of ethnic cleansing in Gaza is simply false. Israel unilaterally withdrew its citizens and military from Gaza in 2005 and has not made any efforts to destroy a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group and repopulate the region with Israelis.



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