

The Truman Institute

# Atlas

of the  
Jewish-Arab  
Conflict

Shaul Arieli



The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has already raged for a century, and will probably continue to be the chief concern of the two peoples that live in Israel/Palestine for many years to come. This atlas offers a clear and concise explanation of the development of the conflict in its various aspects, focusing particularly on territorial, demographic, and diplomatic aspects. It begins with the start of modern Jewish immigration to the country and ends at the present day.

Dozens of colored maps present a wealth of information in an accessible form, providing a clear graphic illustration of the historical course of the conflict. Concise accompanying texts enhance the maps and create a credible and informative historical narrative.

This atlas is intended for anyone who is interested or engaged in the history of the conflict and can benefit from an effective tool to this end. The author of the atlas, Dr. Shaul Arieli, is one of the leading experts in Israel on the history of Israel's borders and the development of the Middle East conflict.

**The Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace  
at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem**

At the cornerstone ceremony for the Institute in July 1966, it was declared that the Institute would be "a center for studies devoted to peace-building—studies that, we hope, will make a real contribution to shaping international harmony and promoting cooperation between peoples and countries around the world." The Institute has been active since then in advancing research and in encouraging public activities and creating a platform for discourse and encounters on the subjects of peace and conflict resolution. While the core of the Institute's work is devoted to the Jewish-Arab conflict in Jerusalem and the Middle East, the Truman Institute also encourages research on core issues in other conflict zones around the world.

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**Shaul Arieli**

Translated by Shaul Vardi

Shaul Arieli  
**The Truman Institute Atlas  
of the Jewish–Arab Conflict**

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& The Truman Institute  
Hebrew University of Jerusalem  
Mount Scopus

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# A Place for Everyone

## The Truman Institute Atlas of the Jewish–Arab Conflict

Harry Truman has a place of honor in Israeli history. As the president of the United States in 1948, when David Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel, Truman was the first foreign leader to recognize the new nation. Twenty years later, with his blessing, the Friends of the Hebrew University in the United States established an institute bearing his name dedicated to advancing peace through research and public activity. The Truman Institute is located on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem, a vantage point that embodies the realities of the conflict. Since its establishment, the Institute has rested on two foundations. In the field of research, it seeks to understand how to promote peace and resolve conflicts between countries, societies, cultures, tribes, and individuals. The second foundation seeks to promote peace, bring together the hostile parties, and encourage the quest for common ground and solutions to conflict. These two foundations are connected by a bridge devoted to combining research and action, questions and problems on the ground, and knowledge and life. From this bridge, the Truman Institute presents its Atlas of the Jewish–Arab Conflict.

Any solution to the conflict must begin with an understanding of the territory over which it is waged. The small piece of land that is the core of this bloody conflict can be presented and depicted in many different ways. The Truman Institute has chosen to do so through an atlas, aware that maps are the most graphic way in which we can portray territory and land. This atlas is not a full-fledged historical work, but the history and sociology of the conflict, as well as its practical ramifications, are evident from the maps presented here, which span a century of human history—a century of conflict.

When we think of boundaries and maps we tend to take them for granted, often forgetting that they are the product of human hands, and sometimes perpetuate arbitrary decisions and even human errors with potentially fateful consequences. The marking of the border in Jerusalem after the 1948 War illustrates this point. When Moshe Dayan and Abdullah a-Tal met to pour over the map of the city, they sat on a floor made from wooden beams in the Musrara neighborhood of the city. The marker they used to draw a line on the map jumped slightly due to the rough wooden surface, causing their map to show a dotted line. The “Green Line” of 1949 was drawn using a pen with a five millimeter tip on a small-scale map. As a result, the border line was 200 meters wide on the ground. Such stories and moments, whether true or apocryphal, later become maps, borders, and sacrosanct principles that divide nations and disrupt life.

The Truman Institute Atlas of the Jewish–Arab Conflict was completed during the Coronavirus epidemic. This period proved to us all that the greatest threats to human life pay no attention to borders or longstanding conflicts. The virus ignores such petty details. Only a global effort, through research to identify medicines and vaccines, and through concerted action to revive devastated economies, societies, and individual lives, can win us back the life we deserve. Nevertheless, the Middle East needs borders: not because borders are a goal in their own right, but because in this region, at least, they would seem to be essential to any effort to resolve disputes and define identities. This atlas strives to speak mainly through its maps, and only secondarily through its texts. It combines the study of peace with the longing for peace and invites readers to enhance their understanding of the relevant history and territory, to

understand the region and appreciate the social ramifications of borders, and to share in the hope that this conflict can indeed be resolved. Many thanks to Dr. Shaul Arieli for his partnership and his initiative.

May there be a place for everyone—in our maps, in our lives, and in our hearts.

**Professor Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi**

Head, Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace,  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

# Introduction

The question of Israel’s borders has been a permanent item on the agenda of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel since the Balfour Declaration. The struggle between the revived Jewish presence in the Land of Israel and the Arab inhabitants of the land, and later between the State of Israel and the Palestinians and Arab states, is a struggle for self-determination in the territory of Mandatory Palestine. It is also the struggle of Israeli society to define its collective identity, its connection to the international community and to the neighboring countries and peoples, and its place in the region.

The sequence of events in a conflict that has persisted for over a century is speckled with countless diplomatic, military, and social events. In this atlas we have chosen to present the most significant and formative events of the conflict in two main areas—diplomacy and security, and to a lesser extent in related fields, such as demography and settlement.

The formative moments of the dispute have their origins in the international promises made to both peoples, and in the attempts by the international community, before the establishment of the State of Israel, to resolve the conflict by means of various partition plans. These plans were based on the assumption that both sides have valid claims to a state within the territory of the Land of Land of Israel/Palestine. Subsequent key events included the Israeli–Arab wars that shaped Israel’s borders, particularly the 1948 War of Independence and the Six Day War of 1967; and later the diplomatic agreements, some of which managed to secure peace between Israel and some of its neighbors, while others shaped a new reality in the relations between Israel and the Palestinians.

The aim of the explanatory notes that accompany each map is to provide as factual a description as possible of the relevant event. As far as possible we have attempted to avoid controversial interpretations, presenting the positions of both sides so as to enable the reader to appreciate the key points of each event.

In order not to overburden the reader, we have not included detailed, tiresome references for the various quotes. All the sources are given in the short bibliography at the end of the atlas.

The initiative to publish this atlas reflects a growing understanding, shaped over years of academic teaching and encounters with diverse audiences, that there is a need for a concise and concentrated foundation that can create a common denominator for study, discourse, and debate—within Israeli society and between this society and others. We hope that this atlas will indeed make a contribution to this goal.

**Shaul Arieli**

December 2020

## **Maps of the Jewish–Arab Conflict**

# McMahon-Hussein Correspondence

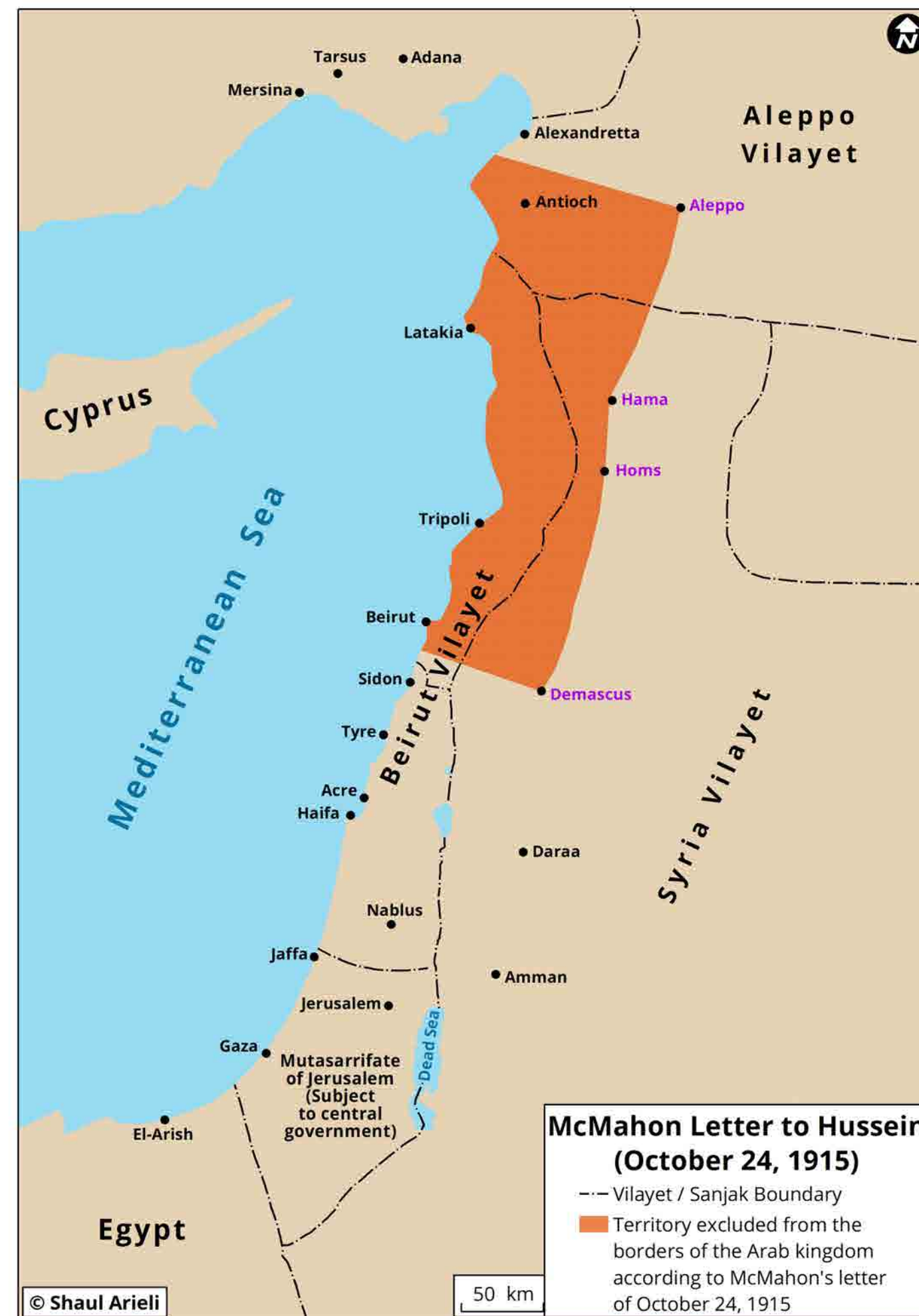
October 24, 1915

The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence refers to 15 letters exchanged over the period 1915–1916 between Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, and Sharif Hussein bin Ali from the Hashemite dynasty, the ruler of the Hejaz province and the guardian of the holy places at Mecca and Medina, under the overall authority of the Ottoman Empire. The exchange of correspondence took the form of negotiations concerning the conditions in which Hussein would support the Arab revolt across the Middle East against the Ottomans—a process that served British interests in the region—in return for his appointment as “King of the Arabs” over a new Arab kingdom. The letters were first officially published at a round table conference held on February 7–17, 1939 convened to discuss the Arab claims that the Balfour Declaration contradicted the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence.

In the letters, Hussein delineated the borders of a large Arab kingdom that was due to include the Arabian Peninsula (with the exception of the port of Aden in Yemen), Iraq, Syria (including Lebanon), and Palestine—a land that at the time was inhabited by Arabs and was not under British influence. In a reply dated October 24, 1915, McMahon clarified the British position: “The two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the limits demanded.”

The Arabs regard this statement as proof that Palestine was promised to the Arabs before the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration of 1917, based on the logic that “this clause does not exclude Palestine from the scope of the promises.” The explanation is simple: “Palestine lies to the **south** of the area to the west of the four districts of Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and Damascus. There is no justification for interpreting ‘districts’ as ‘provinces’ [*vilayet*, an Ottoman administrative term], since there never existed *vilayet* named Homs or Hama. Evidence that the term ‘district’ refers to a region and not to a *vilayet* is the fact that the letter refers to the area ‘to the west of the district of Aleppo.’ If the reference were to the *vilayet*, there could be no possibility of any area to the west of the district of Aleppo, since the *vilayet* of Aleppo reached as far as the sea. And if this is the intention concerning Aleppo, Homs, and Hama, where the reference is clearly to a district and not to a *vilayet*, then this is evidently the intention concerning Damascus, so that the area to the west of the district of Damascus lies **north** of Palestine and does not include it.” To prevent any doubt, a letter dated September 19, 1919 from British Foreign Secretary Curzon to Faisal, the son of Hussein Bin Ali, explicitly stated that the intention was to the four cities, and not to provinces.

However, the McMahon’s next letter, dated December 14, 1915, includes a clear stipulation that the fulfillment of the British promise depends on the extent to which the Arabs play their part in the war. In practice, only the tribes of Hejaz revolted against the Turks; following the conquest of Aqaba, they were joined by the Bedouin tribes to the east of the Jordan River. The Arabs of Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia fought alongside the Ottoman forces against the British. Moreover, both letters also expressly note that the understanding between the British and Hussein is also conditioned on the agreement of the Allies, and in particular of France, and related to “those regions lying within those frontiers wherein Great Britain is free to act without detriment to the interest of her ally, France.” From 1922 onwards, the official British position was that Palestine had not been included in the areas promised to the Arabs. For various reasons, the British refrained from publishing the exchange of correspondence until 1939.





# Sykes-Picot Agreement

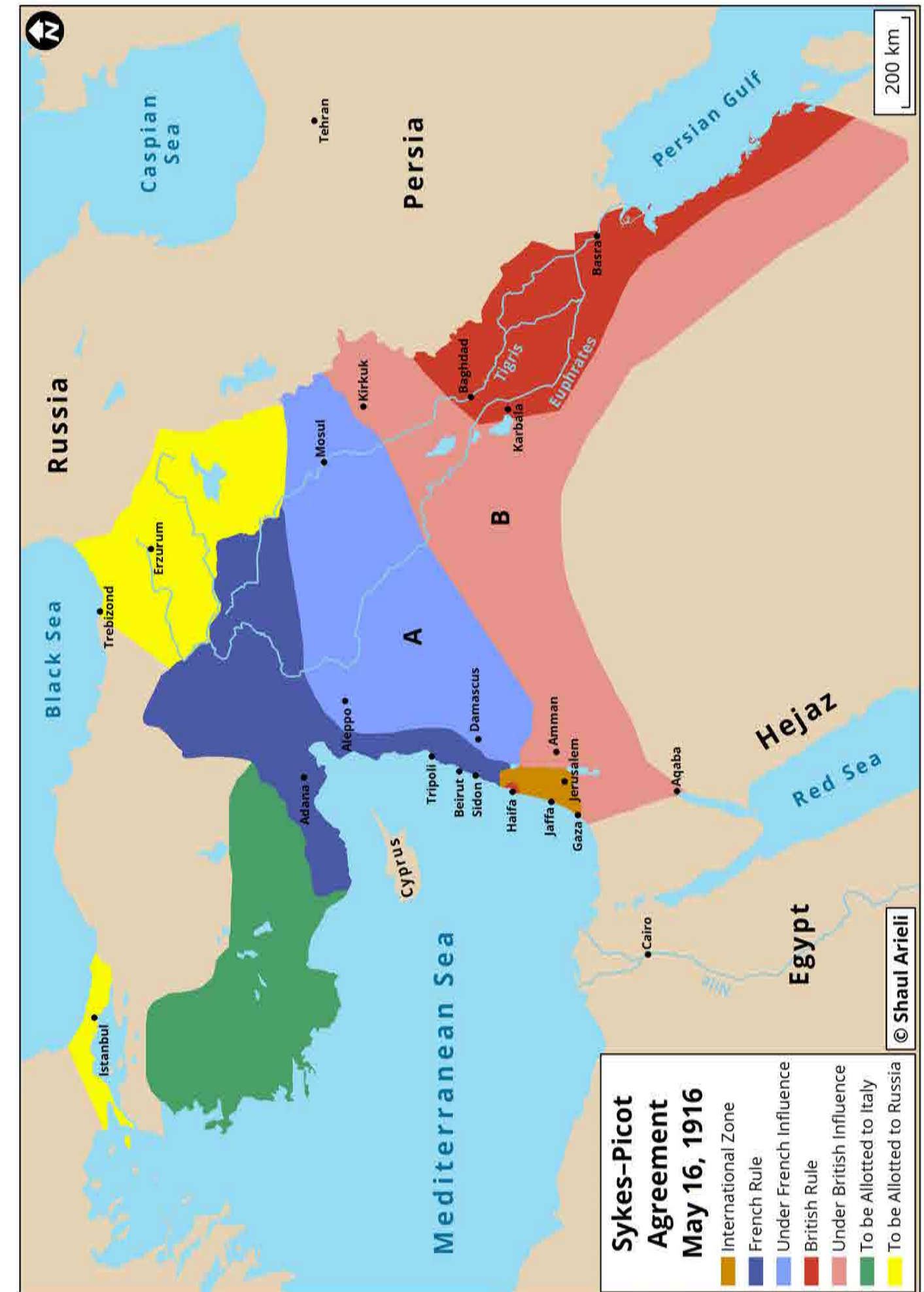
May 16, 1916

The Sykes-Picot Agreement was a diplomatic agreement between France and Britain, with the consent of the Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Italy. The agreement was authored by representatives of the two governments: Mark Sykes for the British Foreign Office and François Georges-Picot for the French Foreign Ministry. The purpose of the agreement, ratified on May 16, 1916, was to determine the future areas of control of the two powers in the territories of the Ottoman Empire after the end of the First World War. The agreement was confidential and not published, but after the Communist revolutionaries seized power in Russia and found the document in the offices of the intelligence services, they quickly published it on November 23, 1917 in the newspapers *Izvestiya* and *Pravda* in order to mock Western colonialism. The agreement ceased to be legally binding in 1918.

The agreement embodied France's historical claim to a special status in the Levant while respecting British interests in the region. The British had begun to extract oil at Abadan near Basra in the Gulf in 1913, and Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, had launched a three-year plan to convert British navy vessels from coal to oil (the agreement did not discuss the later oil pipe project, but included the Baghdad-Haifa railroad). According to the agreement, the region would be divided roughly along a line from Kirkuk (today in northeastern Iraq) to Acre. The area to the south of the line would be under British influence (and was shaded red), while the area to the north would form the French zone of influence (and was shaded blue). Britain would receive Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq and part of Jordan) and a strip along the eastern coast of the Arabian peninsula, as well as Haifa Bay and Zevulun Valley within Palestine; France would receive the northeastern Mediterranean coast as far as the Afro-Syrian Rift. The agreement also provided for the establishment of two independent Arab states: Area A (modern-day Syria) under French auspices, and Area B (Western Iraq and Transjordan) under British auspices.

Regarding Russia (areas shaded yellow on the map) and Italy (green), the agreement stated that "Russia will annex the provinces of Erzurum, Trebizond [...] up to a point to be agreed later," as well as a certain area in Kurdistan, and added that any agreement should examine "the question of claims of Italy to a share in any partition or rearrangement of Turkey in Asia." As for Palestine, part of the area was designated for international administration by France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy, and an Arab representative. The area shaded brown on the map included "the center of Palestine, to the south of the blue area (a line from the Sea of Galilee through to the Rosh HaNikra area), and as far as the straight line passing from the center of the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean near Gaza."

The agreement was never implemented. Great Britain did not honor its provisions, and in practice the region was divided by the League of Nations through the mandates it issued granting control to Britain and France by way of a deposit pending the establishment of independent states in the region. Nevertheless, even a cursory glance at the map shows that it left its mark on several of the future borders in the region—particularly regarding Syria, Iraq, and Jordan.



# Balfour Declaration

November 2, 1917

On November 2, 1917, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration, which was made in the form of a letter from Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to the Honorary President of the Zionist Federation in Great Britain, Lord Walter Rothschild.

"I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours 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 in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation."

The declaration expressed for the first time the support of a major world power for the vision of the Zionist movement, and it naturally had a dramatic impact. It is worth noting some subtleties in the text of the declaration that are significant in the context of the borders of the Jewish state. The name "Palestine," which is central to the declaration, was an accepted term for the Land of Israel in the European languages. However, no specific province or area formally bore this name. During the first centuries of Muslim-Arab rule in the area, a district called *Jund Falastin* included most of the area to the west of the Jordan River (though its northern border was in the Jezreel Valley, and the southern part of the country, the Negev, was not included). However, at the time the Balfour Declaration was made, the area in which the Jewish "national home" was to be established lacked any clear or recognized borders. The region was managed on the basis of the internal divisions in the Ottoman Empire as defined in 1884 (see map)—borders that are completely different to those we are familiar with today. The borders of Palestine were only determined some years later, when Great Britain received the mandate over the area from the League of Nations.

Given this reality, the British government was careful to avoid making any commitment regarding the entire territory of Palestine. This is apparent, for example, if we compare the final draft of the proposed wording formulated by the Zionist Federation (which Balfour presented to the British government, and which was rejected) to the eventual text of the declaration. The Zionist Federation proposed the formulate: "His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that the Land of Israel should be re-established as the national home of the Jewish people." By contrast, the version ultimately approved refers to the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people **in** Palestine—a wording that neither requires nor prevents the establishment of additional political entities within that same area.

The Palestinians regard the Balfour Declaration as a denial of their right to self-determination, particularly since at the time they constituted the majority population in Palestine. As Edward Said stated: "The Declaration was made by a European power about a non-European territory in flat disregard of both the presence and wishes of the native majority resident in the territory and it took the form of a promise about this same territory to another foreign group so that this foreign group might quite literally make this territory a national home for the Jewish people."





# Zionist Movement's Proposal for Borders of Palestine

February 3, 1919

On January 18, 1919, after the end of the First World War, the powers that won the war convened a peace conference at Versailles outside Paris. The Zionist movement planned to present the conference with its proposal for determining the borders of Palestine, and the various Jewish organizations held countless discussions in order to agree on a joint position. The proposal, which was based on a memorandum prepared by Aaron Aaronsohn, sought to establish boundaries that would provide an economic basis for the presence of a modern state in Palestine: "the geographical area of Palestine should be as large as possible so that it may eventually contain a large and thriving population which could more easily bear the burdens of modern civilised government."

The Committee of Jewish Delegations, headed by Chaim Weizmann and including Nachum Sokolov, Menachem Ussishkin, and Aaronsohn, presented the agreed proposal of the Zionist organizations to the conference on February 3, 1919. They did not submit maps, but the borders they delineated were extremely broad. In addition to all of Palestine west of the Jordan River, the committee also claimed part of southern Lebanon, including the Litani River, the Golan Heights, areas to the east of the Jordan River, and part the Sinai Peninsula. In the words of the proposal:

"Starting on the North at a point on the Mediterranean Sea in the vicinity South of Sidon and following the watersheds of the foothills of the Lebanon as far as Jisr El-Qaraoun, thence to El-Bire, following the dividing line between the two basins of the Wadi El-Korn and the Wadi E-Teime, thence in a southerly direction following the dividing line between the Eastern and Western slopes of the Hermon, to the vicinity West of Beit Jenn, thence eastward following the northern watersheds of the Nahr Mughaniye close to and west of the Hejaz Railway.

In the East a line close to and West of the Hejaz Railway terminating in the Gulf of Aqaba.

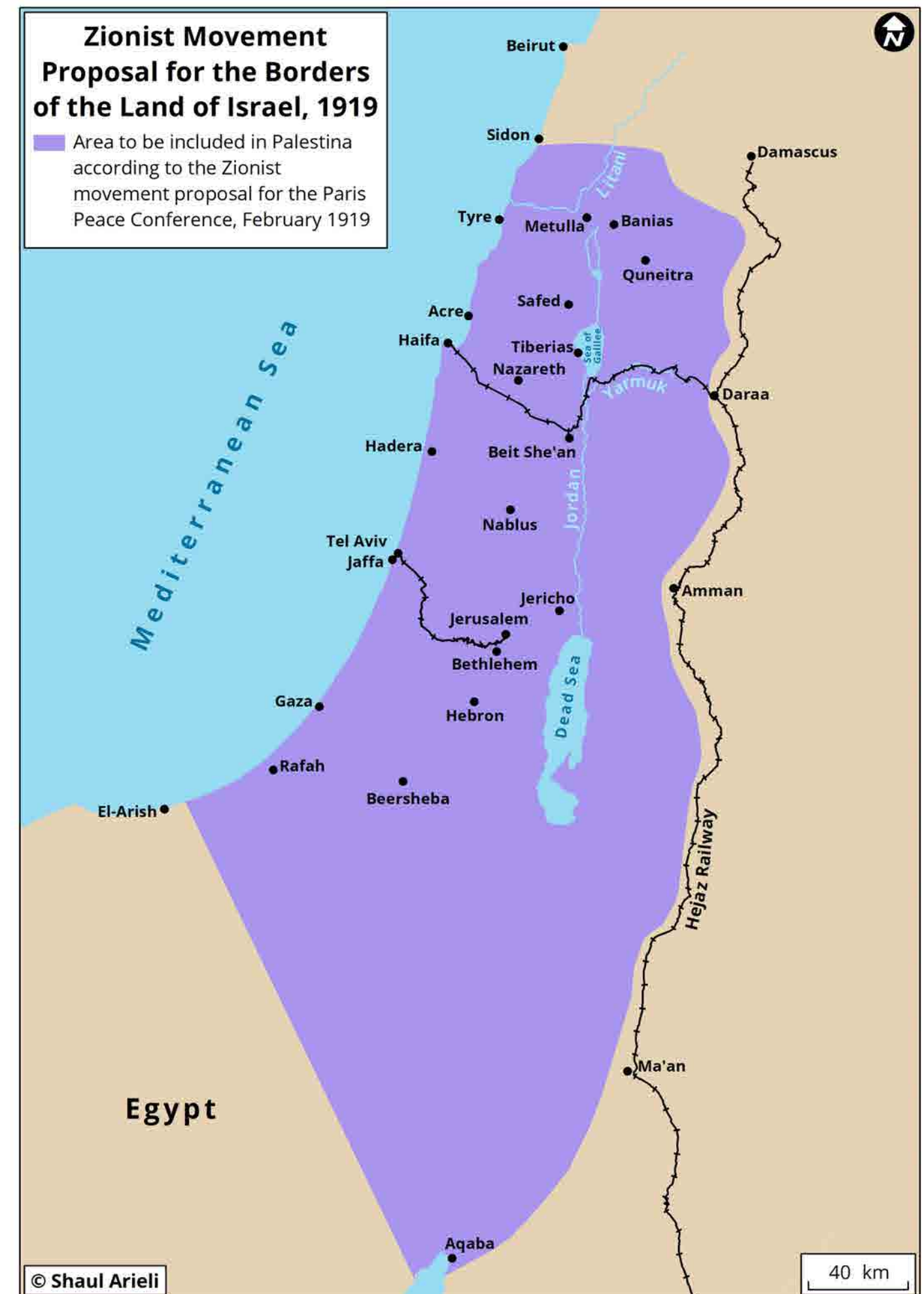
In the South a frontier to be agreed upon with the Egyptian Government.

In the West the Mediterranean Sea."

These borders create a territory of approximately 45,000 sq.km.—almost twice the area allocated to Palestine at the end of the process.

The Zionist Federation's proposal was influenced by various diplomatic constraints. The understandings between Chaim Weizmann and Emir Faisal bin Hussein led to the confinement of Zionist demands east of the Jordan to the area west of the Hejaz railroad. In the north, in what later became Lebanon, the Zionist movement took into account the French aspirations in the Levant, proposing a line from Sidon to the east. In the south, the demands were curtailed due to the need to reach a compromise with the British based on a line from El-Arish to Aqaba. As seen above, the memorandum recognized that the border between the Jewish national home and the Sinai Peninsula would have to be agreed with the Egyptian government (the map here reflects the intentions of the Zionist movement).

The proposal regarded the entire Land of Israel, or Palestine, as a single functional, political, and economic unit with clearly-defined borders. From this point on, the Zionist movement attempted to adhere to the Versailles proposal, and any agreement or decision that deviated from its parameters was regarded as a retreat or the usurping of parts of the Land of Israel.





# San Remo Conference

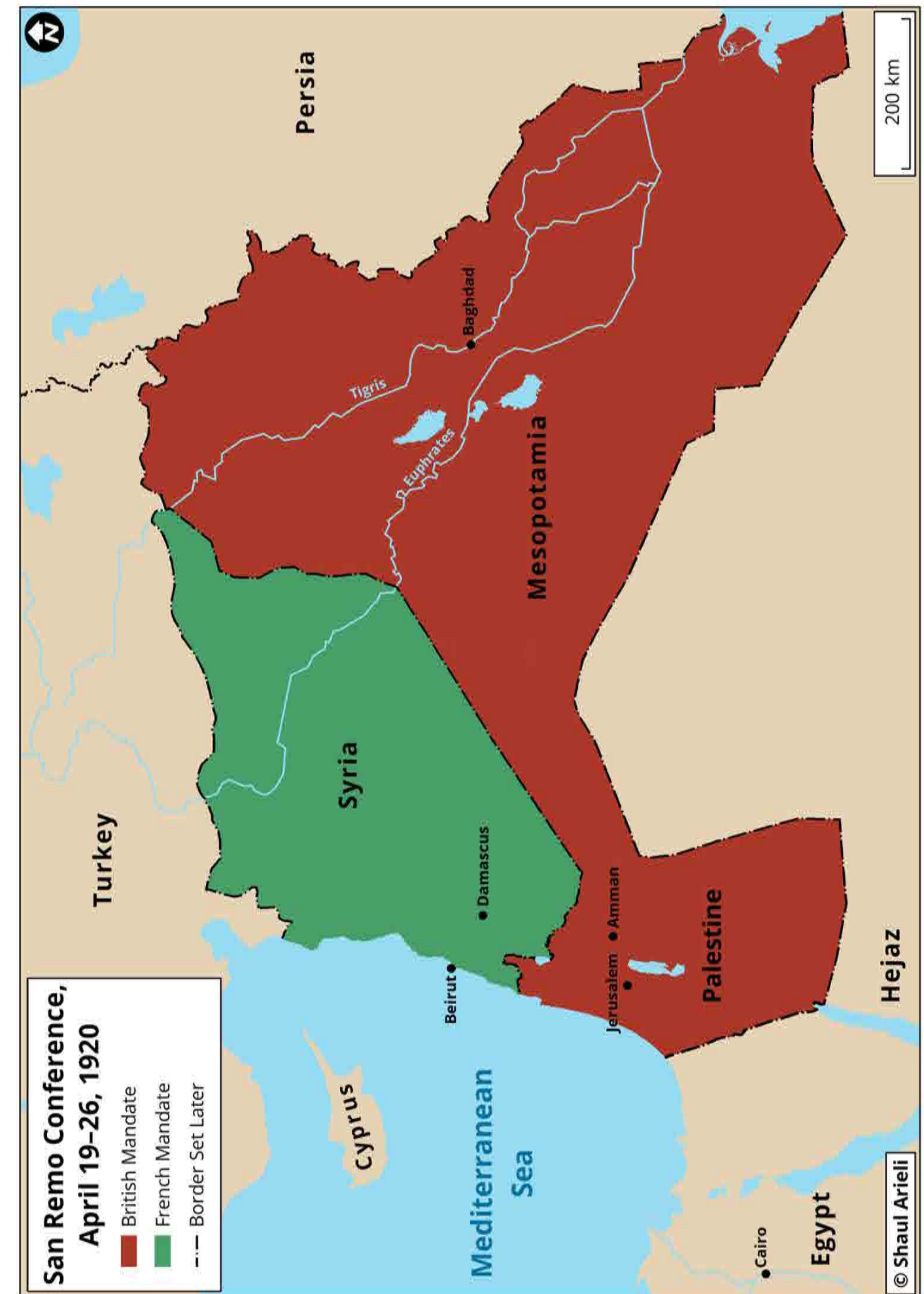
April 19-26, 1920

In April 1920, the Allied powers of the First World War held a conference at San Remo in Italy, attended by the prime ministers of Britain, France, Italy, and Greece, as well as representatives of Japan and Belgium. The participants discussed the division of the former Ottoman Empire among the victorious European powers.

On April 24, under pressure from Britain and despite France's reservations, the Conference decided to include in the mandate the Balfour Declaration and to impose on Britain, as the mandatory power, the responsibility for its implementation. The resolution stated: "The High Contracting Parties agree to entrust, by application of the provisions of Article 22, the administration of Palestine, within such boundaries as may be determined by the Principal Allied Powers, to a Mandatory, to be selected by the said Powers. The Mandatory will be responsible for putting into effect the declaration originally made on November 8, 1917, by the British Government, and adopted by the other Allied Powers, in favour of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people [...] The terms of the mandates in respect of the above territories will be formulated by the Principal Allied Powers and submitted to the Council of the League of Nations."

It was also decided that Syria and Lebanon would come under a French mandate, despite opposition from the Arabs, while an additional British mandate was supposed to be formed in what were once the Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra, to be known as the British Mandate for Mesopotamia. "The High Contracting Parties agree that Syria and Mesopotamia shall [...] be provisionally recognized as independent States, subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The boundaries of the said States will be determined, and the selection of the Mandatories made, by the Principal Allied Powers." The conference did not define borders, which were only finalized at a later stage. The final border between Syria and Palestine, for example, was determined in 1923 and approved by the League of Nations in 1934. The decisions concerning the borders in the region were approved by the League of Nations, hence ensuring that they enjoyed international legitimacy.

On June 22, 1922, the British Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, published the White Paper document detailing Britain's policy intentions regarding the future of Palestine under its mandate, including its decision to allocate Transjordan to Emir Abdullah. Churchill reiterated that "the terms of the [Balfour] Declaration referred to do not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded 'in Palestine.'" On July 7, 1922, the British Parliament approved the White Paper by a large majority, and on July 24 the League of Nations approved the mandate in its amended form, which emphasized that the borders would be determined by the powers; that Britain was the mandatory power; and that the Balfour Declaration was to be implemented. As for Palestine east of the Jordan River, Article 25 of the Mandate stated: "In the territories lying between the Jordan and the eastern boundary of Palestine [i.e. in Transjordan] [...], the Mandatory shall be entitled, with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations, to postpone or withhold application of such provisions of this mandate as he may consider inapplicable to the existing local conditions, and to make such provision for the administration of the territories as he may consider suitable to those conditions." On August 6, 1922, the 13th Zionist Congress, meeting in Carlsbad, approved the White Paper and the mandate. On May 14, 1923, the League of Nations granted final approval for the removal of Transjordan from the area of application of the clauses in the mandate concerning the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.



# Palestine

## 1922-1923

The border between Palestine and Egypt was already delineated on October 1, 1906, as an administrative boundary within the Ottoman Empire between the Hejaz province and the Jerusalem district, on the one hand, and the Sinai Peninsula, on the other. At the end of the First World War, as the Ottomans lost their assets in the area, the British found themselves on both sides of the border, as Egypt was a British protectorate. In 1919, a few months after the war ended, it was decided after lengthy discussions between British officials in Egypt and the British Foreign Office that the border would remain intact.

The border between Palestine (which was referred to in Hebrew during the British mandate period as "Palestina-EY," where the Hebrew acronym stood for "Land of Israel") and Transjordan was also determined by British officials. From the British perspective, this was an internal dividing line between the two parts of the area under its mandate. The British perception of the line was based in part on a familiarity with the biblical expression "from Dan to Beersheba." The British sought to base their borders on physiographic ("natural") features, while taking into account any relevant historical factors. In this instance, they determined that the border should run down the middle of the Dead Sea, head north through the Jordan Valley, and continue along the course of the Yarmuk River. The British were also concerned to address future needs due to development plans, including the quarrying of minerals from the Dead Sea, to be exported through the Gulf of Aqaba, and the production of electricity from the waters of the Jordan River. These considerations led to the inclusion of a land corridor in the Arava desert, from the Dead Sea south to the Gulf of Aqaba, as well as an area for the construction of a port on the gulf. Half of the gulf was left as part of Transjordan, providing the new country with its only outlet to the sea. The border was officially established in a statement by British High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel on September 1, 1922. On May 14, 1923, the Council of the League of Nations approved the removal of Transjordan from the area addressed by the Balfour Declaration, in accordance with Article 25 of the mandate.

The border between Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon has its origins in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The border followed the shortest route between the Mediterranean, at a point north of Acre, and the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee. Two years later, after the First World War, a more northerly border was determined in order to include the area under British military control. Accordingly a new line was drawn from a point on the Mediterranean north of the modern-day Israeli city of Nahariya along the Rosh HaNikra ridge, and on to the southern shore of Lake Hula. One of the goals of this border was to protect Haifa Bay, where by 1933 the British would complete construction of a deep water port and oil refineries. Later, on December 23, 1920, an agreement was signed in Paris between Britain and France stating that from the Arab village of Sasa the border would extend to the north. The goal of this change was to include Metulla, which the British (and French) regarded as the site of the biblical Dan. The outcome was the creation of the Galilee panhandle. From there the border was supposed to continue to the Golan Heights before turning south to the west of Quneitra and on to the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee (which was to be divided between Palestine and Syria). The border was then to continue to Tzemach, and from there to the Yarmuk River by the shortest line. The final border was only agreed by Britain and France in March 1923: the British ceded the Golan Heights to France (so that the area formed part of Syria), but all of the Sea of Galilee was included in Palestine, including a coastal strip on the eastern shore from Ein Gev south to Hamat Gader. This line left an area within Palestine for a power station in keeping with the vision of Pinchas Rutenberg. Moreover, the entire Jordan River was included in the area of Palestine, in order to encourage irrigation-based agriculture and the construction of a hydroelectric plant using the river's waters. The League of Nations only approved the agreement in 1934, at which point the dividing line became an internationally-recognized border between the two mandate countries.





# Peel Commission

July 7, 1937

The Peel Commission, officially titled the Royal Commission of Inquiry to Palestine, was established in August 1936 by the British government of Neville Chamberlain. Headed by Lord William Robert Peel, and appointed by Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore, the commission was charged with clarifying the reasons for the outbreak of the Arab Revolt and for proposing a solution to the conflict between Arabs and Jews. The commission was also asked to examine the functioning of the mandate government in Palestine and its obligations toward Jews and Arabs.

The Peel Commission published its proposal on July 7, 1937, based on its perception of "Partition as the only method we are able to propose for dealing with the root of the trouble." The Commission proposed a border designed to secure two outcomes: "separation of the area of Jewish land and settlement from that of wholly or mainly Arab occupation [...] and reasonable allowance [...] within the boundaries of the Jewish State for the growth of population and colonization." The Commission also recommended a partial transfer of the population in order to create a clearer ethnic division. At the same time, transportation aspects were also taken into consideration, for example in the recommendation that the Wadi Ara district be included in the Jewish state. The British were also concerned to protect their own interests, such as connecting Jerusalem to the sea and leaving the newly-opened airfield at Lod under their control. Accordingly, the Commission recommended: 1) The establishment of a Jewish state on the coastal plain and in Galilee, with an area of 4,840 sq.km. and a population of 650,000—one third of whom were not Jews; 2) Attaching an area of around 21,000 sq.km., with a population of 500,000 Arabs and 1,250 Jews, to Transjordan, which at the time had a population of 300,000 Arabs; 3) Creating a British-controlled corridor with an area of 900 sq.km. connecting Jerusalem to Jaffa; the corridor would have a population of 300,000, most of whom were Arabs.

The 20th Zionist Congress, which convened in Zurich in August 1937, accepted the principle of partition embodied in the report of the Peel Commission; it did so only after passionate debate, however, and did not accept the specific borders proposed in the report. The Zionist movement reconciled itself to the idea of partition after concluding that a reduction in the size of the Jewish national home was essential for both political and settlement reasons. At a meeting of the Central Committee of the Mapai party a year earlier, Mordechai Namir summed up this position: "A reduction of the territory is the price we must pay for the fatefully late manner in which the Hebrew people began to build the Land, and for the rapid growth of the Arab movement."

On the other side, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the head of the Supreme Arab Committee, rejected the Peel Commission report on the day it was published, utterly dismissing the idea of partition. In addition to the rejection of the idea of any Jewish right to self-determination in Palestine, the historian Mustafa Kabha offers three reasons for the Arab refusal: Firstly, the mandate government excluded from the areas designated for the Arabs key centers and emblems of the Palestinian national movement, such as the cities of Jerusalem, Lod, Ramla, and Nazareth. Secondly, the idea of a population transfer as presented in the proposal discriminated against the Arabs: while some 1,250 Jews living in the areas to be allocated for the Arabs were to be relocated, some 300,000 Arabs would be required to leave their homes in areas designated for the Jews, particularly in the Western Galilee. Thirdly, Arabs owned around 3.25 million dunams of private farmland in the areas intended for the Jews, while Jews owned around 100,000 dunams in the areas designated for the Arabs. The Commission's report was shelved and never implemented.





# United Nations Partition Plan

## Resolution 181, November 29, 1947

The Partition Plan was presented on August 31, 1947 by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). The committee was appointed on May 14, 1947 following a request submitted by Great Britain in February of the same year. Its plan proposed to partition Palestine west of the Jordan River into two states, one Jewish and the other Arab, alongside an international zone in Jerusalem. On November 29, 1947 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 181, with 33 countries voting in favor, including the United States and the Soviet Union, most of the Latin American countries, the Eastern European bloc (with the exception of Yugoslavia), and a number of Western European countries. The resolution was opposed by 13 countries, mainly Arab and Muslim, together with Greece and Cuba. Ten countries (including Great Britain) abstained, while Thailand was absent from the vote.

UNSCOP stated that “the basic premise underlying the partition proposal is that the claims to Palestine of the Arabs and Jews, both possessing validity, are irreconcilable, and that among all of the solutions advanced, partition will provide the most realistic and practicable settlement and is the most likely to afford a workable basis for meeting in part the claims and national aspirations of both parties.” Each of the two states was supposed to comprise three territorial units connected at two points. The Jewish state would occupy 55 percent of mandatory Palestine (27,009 sq.km., including the Sea of Galilee and Lake Hula) and have a population of some 530,000 Jews and 480,000 Arabs. The Arab state, in 45 percent of the territory, would have a population of around 700,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews. The “corpus separatum” or “separated body” of Jerusalem and its surroundings would have an area of 187 sq.km. and a population of approximately 100,000 Jews and 100,000 Arabs. This was the first time that any plan had explicitly delineated the borders of separate political entities within mandatory Palestine.

The proposal was based on a number of geographical principles: The distribution of the Jewish and Arab populations; the borders of villages; land owned by Jews; the need to provide reserves of land for future Jewish immigration; and the desire to provide the Jewish state with access to the Red Sea. With the exception of the Jerusalem area, all contiguous areas where there were essentially no Arabs were allocated to the Jewish state. Most of the Arabs who were due to remain within the Jewish state lived in mixed cities and areas where it was impossible to separate Jewish and Arab settlements. Jaffa would remain as an Arab enclave within the Jewish area, while enjoying access to the sea, in order to avoid a situation where a major Arab city was left within the Jewish state. Conversely, Haifa and Tiberias, where Arabs formed a minority and which were surrounded by areas with a Jewish majority, were included in the proposed Jewish state. Setting aside the “corpus separatum” in Jerusalem, most of the Arab cities would be included in the Arab state, whereas the rural areas would be divided between the two states.

The demarcation in the Partition Plan was proposed on the basis of the desire for peace and economic cooperation between the two countries to be established in Palestine. The partition specified that the political division would be accompanied by an economic union in the following fields: customs, currency, railroads, roads linking the two countries, telephone and telegraph services, seaports and airports connected to international trade, joint economic development, and the importing of water and electricity for both countries and for Jerusalem.

United Nations Resolution 181 was never implemented. The Arab side rejected the plan and Arab states joined together to wage a war designed to prevent its implementation. The Yishuv (the organized Jewish community in Palestine) accepted the resolution, and on this basis the establishment of the State of Israel was declared on May 14, 1948.



# Armistice Lines

## February–July 1949

At the end of the War of Independence, which began in 1948, Israel signed armistice agreements with four Arab countries. The negotiations were conducted separately with each country and differed according to the military and geopolitical reality on each front. However, all the talks were held on the basis of a resolution adopted by the Security Council, under the auspices of the United Nations and with a mediator on its behalf.

The first armistice agreement was signed on February 24, 1949, ending the state of war between Israel and Egypt. Israel was required to agree to an Egyptian military presence in Gaza and to withdraw its troops from Beit Hanun in the north of the Gaza Strip and from an area adjacent to the cemetery in Rafah, in the south of the area. A demilitarized zone was also defined on both sides (see map on p. 31). of the border by Auja al-Hafir on the Sinai border. Conversely, Israel managed to exclude all the eastern part of the southern Negev region from the terms of the agreement. The agreement also gave Israel military control over the northern Negev and left it free to take the south, which had been earmarked for the Jewish state in the United Nations Partition Plan. The agreement strengthened Israel's diplomatic standing and its chances of admission as a member of the United Nations. In addition, the fact that the largest Arab country signed an agreement made it easier for other Arab countries to follow suit. Ben-Gurion had good cause to comment that the signing of the agreement was "the greatest event of a year of great and wondrous events."

On March 23 a ceasefire agreement was signed with Lebanon. The two countries agreed that the international border would follow the ceasefire line, and that after signing the agreement Israel would withdraw from Lebanese territory. Israel had been holding a strip of land seized by the IDF at the end of October 1948 as part of its Operation Hiram, including fourteen villages.

On April 3, 1949 an armistice agreement was signed between Israel and Jordan, accompanied by maps approved by both sides. In the southern Arava region, the border followed the 1922 line (though this was not stated explicitly). Along the so-called "Iraqi Front" in Samaria the border was based on a land swap agreement signed with Abdullah on March 30, while in the Jerusalem area the border followed the "Honest Truce" agreement signed on November 30, 1948. In the wider Jerusalem area, Hebron, and the Dead Sea, the border was based on the lines the two sides reached as of the truce of July 18, lines marked on the map accompanying the agreement with Abdullah, and lines approved by the UN observers in the Dead Sea area.

Lastly, on July 20, 1949, an armistice agreement was signed between Israel and Syria. Under pressure from the UN representative, Syria agreed to withdraw from areas it had conquered within the territory earmarked for the Jewish state in the Partition Plan; for many years, these demilitarized areas would form the focus of the main disagreements between the two sides. The vague wording of an explanatory note drafted by UN envoy Ralph Bunche on June 26, 1949, allowed both sides to adhere to their own interpretations concerning the status of these areas. Israel regarded them as falling under its sovereignty, so that the UN role was confined to ensuring their demilitarization; the Syrians argued that these areas were being held under UN supervision pending the resolution of their status in a final agreement.

All the armistice agreements included the clarification that "No provision of this Agreement shall in any way prejudice the rights, claims and positions of either Party hereto in the ultimate peaceful settlement of the Palestine question;" elsewhere, it was emphasized that "the provisions of this Agreement are dictated exclusively by military considerations." The armistice lines came to be known as the "Green Line," according to the color used in the printed maps.





# Special Areas in Armistice Agreements

## 1949–1950

With the cessation of hostilities on July 22, 1948 and the beginning of the second truce in the war, the Iraqi army took up positions in northern Samaria overlooking Wadi Ara and the central Sharon plain. In February 1949, following the signing of armistice agreements with Egypt and Jordan, talks resumed concerning the border areas with Transjordan. Between March 1 and April 3, 1949, official talks were held on Rhodes. The situation concerning the Iraqi-held areas remained unclear—the Iraqis did not send representatives to the talks and were reluctant to empower the Jordanians to negotiate on their behalf. At the beginning of March the Iraqis agreed to a proposal that their troops be replaced by forces from the Arab Legion. However, on March 13, after Israel learned of this plan, it informed the UN mediator that this would constitute a violation of the truce and Israel would not recognize the forces. Meanwhile, Israel suggested to King Abdullah of Jordan that the two countries redraw the dividing line in Samaria. Abdullah was unable to recruit British and American support for his position, and accordingly on March 19, 1949 he agreed to Israel's demands. The arrangement was formalized on March 24, signed on March 30, and included in the armistice agreement of April 3, 1949.

Under the agreement, Israel received a strip of 410 sq.km. from Sandala to the north of Jenin to Kafr Qasim in central Israel, including 29 Arab towns and villages. Israel sought control of this area in order to secure vital transportation routes between different parts of the country that had been disrupted by the location of the front line. The border line eventually imposed in the hills of Samaria was intended to provide Israel with a security belt and control of the Hadera-Afula highway and the railroad from Lod to Haifa. At the same time, it reflected a minimalist approach, since Israel also sought to avoid annexing a large additional Arab population. In Samaria, therefore, Israel sought to ensure topographical control by assuming positions along a line no more than 100 meters above sea level.

At Latrun, a no man's area was defined from the village of Qataneh to Budrus (46 sq.km.) after the two sides were unable to agree on the division of the area between their front lines. This area provided control of two important transportation routes between the Jerusalem area and the coast. Another factor in the decision was the Jordanian abandonment of an agreement that had been supposed to lead to the dismantling of the two front lines along the section from Husan to Ma'ale Hahamisha.

The armistice agreement with Egypt defined a ceasefire line beginning from "Wadi Hasi in an easterly direction through Deir Suneid and across the Gaza-Al Majdal Highway to a point 3 km east of the Highway, then in a southerly direction parallel to the Gaza-Al Majdal Highway, and continuing thus to the Egyptian frontier." In practice, the precise course of the border was determined by a joint committee of Israeli and Egyptian officers accompanied by a UN representative. The border was close to the line defined in the agreement; local deviations were due either to the Egyptian desire to distance the border from the Gaza-Rafah highway and control the hills to the east or to Israeli demands to allow for the construction of a dam and exploitation of artesian water reserves around Nahal Shikma. Defined as a "temporary compromise," the agreement was signed in February 1950.





# Border Lines in Jerusalem

## 1948–1949

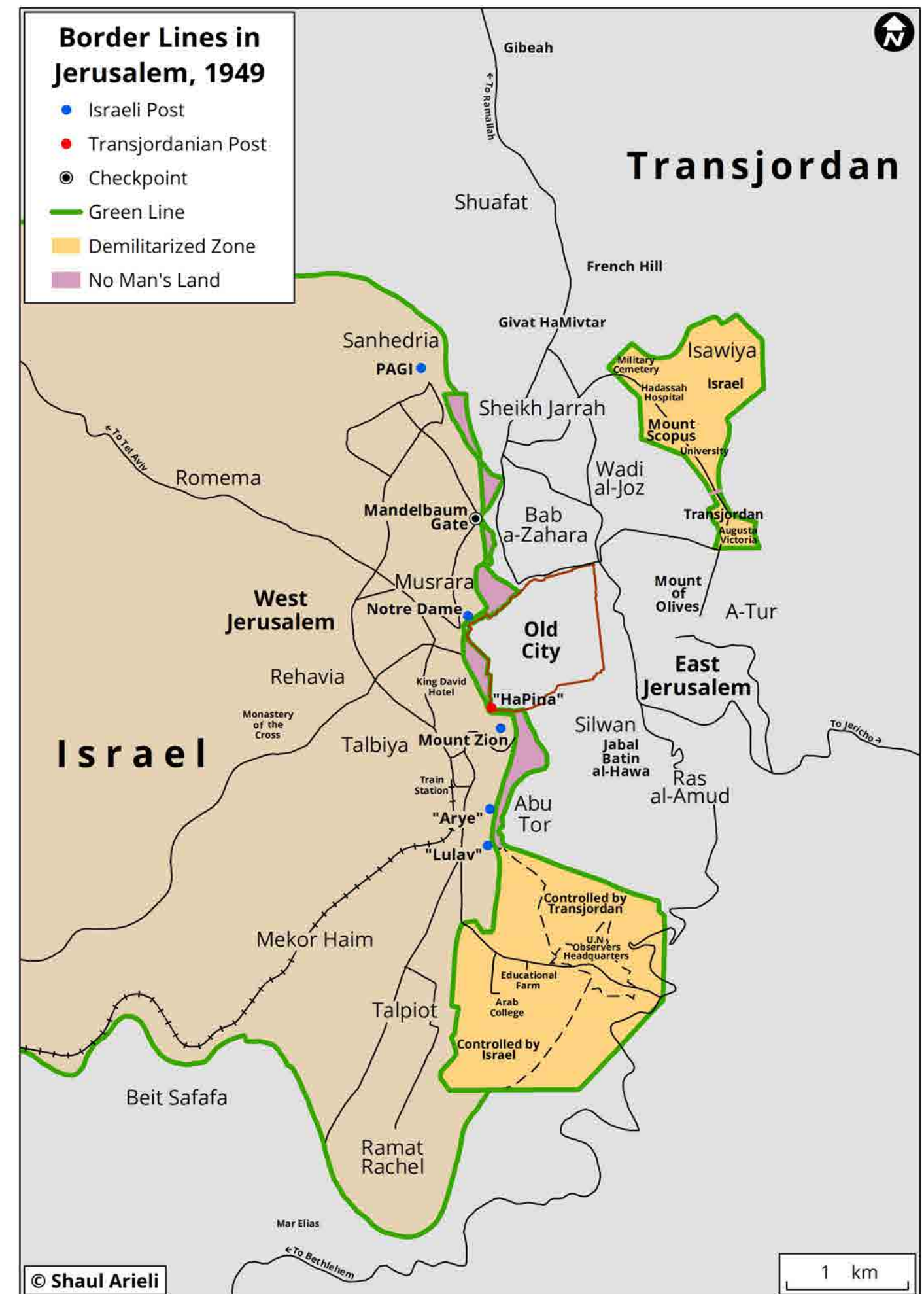
On November 30, 1948 a meeting took place in Jerusalem between Major Abdullah Tal of the Arab Legion and Lt.-Col. Moshe Dayan, commander of the IDF forces in the Jerusalem area. The two officers signed the “Honest Truce” agreement, which froze both sides at their front positions. Off the record, the two sides agreed that the same provisions would apply in the Latrun and Jerusalem Corridor areas.

As in Latrun, the small no man’s land in Jerusalem, with an area of around two sq.km., was created due to the positions of the two sides’ front lines. Both sides were only permitted to enter the area with the agreement and supervision of the other. The largest area of no man’s land in the city was around the High Commissioner’s residence in the south, comprising three distinct compounds: The residence and its gardens (under UN control); the area to the southeast of the residence and an area close to the village of Sur Baher (under Jordanian control); and the remainder of the area to the west (under Israeli control).

On the other side of the city, Mt. Scopus was defined as a demilitarized zone. The zone included an Israeli enclave within Jordanian territory (containing the Hebrew University, Hadassah Hospital, and the village of Isawiya) as well as an area under Jordanian control (the Augusta Victoria compound). A narrow strip of no man’s land divided the two areas. The agreement allowed Israel to station 85 police officers in the area, armed only with light weapons, as well as 33 civilian workers. The number of police officers on the Jordanian side was limited to 40. It was also agreed that every two weeks an Israeli supply convoy would visit the area to allow for exchanges of personnel. The convoy comprised two armored vehicles, as well as a truck that brought supplies to the area and left with books from the National Library on the mount, which were transferred to university libraries on the Israeli side of the city. The convoy was supervised by the UN and departed from Mandelbaum Gate to the northeast of the Old City. In reality the Israeli personnel who entered the area were not police officers but soldiers, in all probability with the tacit agreement of the Jordanians and the UN.

At a government meeting on December 1, 1948, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion reported on two meetings between Dayan and Abdullah Tal, who “met at the beginning of the week along with United Nations supervisors at the High Commissioner’s Residence [...] The main subject was the decision on a sincere and effective ceasefire in Jerusalem, as the commanders agreed between themselves [...] Tal again demanded that electricity be supplied to the Old City in Jerusalem. He agreed that Jews could visit the Western Wall and that the Jews of the Old City could return to their neighborhood, while in return the Arabs would return to Katamon. Moshe told him that he did not have sufficient authority to decide on such matters.”

A year later, on December 20, 1949, Ben-Gurion reported on the developments in the negotiations with King Abdullah toward a permanent agreement (which was not ultimately reached): “Abdullah himself expressed his desire to meet with me in Jerusalem. According to Samir’s draft in Arabic, the agreement was this: The Jews will receive the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, up to and including the Western Wall, and this will form part of Jewish Jerusalem [...] They [the Arabs] will receive the road to Bethlehem.”



# Sinai War

October 29–November 5, 1956

The Sinai War (also known in Israel as the “Kadesh Operation” and in Arabic as the “Tripartite Aggression”) was a short conflict between Israel, Great Britain, and France, on the one side, and Egypt on the other. The war lasted just eight days, from October 29 to November 5, 1956. Britain and France initiated the war with the goal of retaking control of the Suez Canal after it was nationalized by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Israel joined the two superpowers at their request, in part in response to the blocking of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli ships and activities by border “infiltrators.” Israel occupied the entire Sinai Peninsula, with the exception of a narrow strip along the Suez Canal, destroying Egyptian infrastructure and seriously damaging the Egyptian military.

On November 6, 1956, the 9th Brigade of the IDF held a victory gathering in Sharm a-Sheikh at the southernmost extremity of Sinai. The event was modest: two command cars were placed together facing one another to create a makeshift stage and the soldiers, in combat uniform, gathered around. Chief-of-Staff Moshe Dayan read out a letter from Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion: “You led to the successful conclusion of the greatest and most splendid military operation in the history of our people, and one of the most wondrous operations in human history. Again we may sing the song sung by Moses and the ancient Children of Israel: ‘The peoples have heard, they tremble; pangs have taken hold on the inhabitants of Philistia. Then were the chiefs of Edom affrighted; the mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away, terror and dread falleth upon them.’ Eilat will again be the chief Hebrew port in the south, and Yotvata, known as Tiran, will again form part of the Third Kingdom of Israel.”

Alongside the Israeli campaign, Britain and France waged a joint battle to seize control of the Suez Canal, known as Operation Musketeer. The Franco-British operation only began on November 5, after most of Sinai was already in the hands of the IDF. British and French forces seized the Egyptian cities at the north of the Suez Canal and began to proceed south. However, on the initiative of the US and the USSR, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution calling on the powers to suspend the operation, and the forces duly halted at the town of Qantara, halfway between Port Said and Ismailia. Thus the two powers failed in their attempt to seize control of the canal, while under joint pressure from the US and the USSR, Israel was forced to withdraw from all the territory it had conquered.

By December 22, an emergency UN force deployed along the Canal and began to take up positions inside Sinai alongside the IDF withdrawal. Israel secured some significant gains: The UN resolution guaranteed that Israeli ships would be able to move freely in the Gulf of Aqaba; the threat from the Egyptian army and from infiltrators was removed; and all the country’s borders, with the exception of the Syrian front, were quiet for several years. Moreover, the war strengthened Israel’s image as a military power on the international stage—a factor that also had economic ramifications. However, Israel failed to meet its assumed long-term strategic objectives, such as weakening or even overthrowing Nasser’s regime, forcing Egypt to engage in peace talks with Israel, or opening the Canal to Israeli ships.





# Six Day War

## June 5-10, 1967

The Six Day War between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, aided by other Arab states, lasted from June 5 to June 10, 1967. The war erupted against the background of actions by Egypt and its Arab partners that threatened Israel's security and economic interests. The Egyptians expelled from Sinai the UN emergency force that had been stationed in the area since the 1956 Sinai War, blocked the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, and brought the armies of Syria and Jordan, as well as Iraqi expeditionary forces, under Egyptian military command. Egypt moved numerous military units into Sinai, thereby obliging Israel to mobilize its reserve forces at a heavy cost to the economy. The arrival of Iraqi forces in Jordan, heading for the West Bank, raised concern at an assault exploiting Israel's "narrow waist"—a point close to the city of Netanya where the country could be split into two.

After several weeks of tense anticipation, during which unsuccessful attempts were made to find a diplomatic solution, the war began at 7:45 AM on Monday, June 5, 1967. Israel launched a massive aerial assault, and over a few hours 185 air force planes commanded by Mordechai Hod attacked Egyptian military bases and airfields, before continuing to launch attacks on Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. Although the entire region had been on a state of high alert, the attack came as a surprise and the outcome of the war was effectively dictated during its first few hours after most of the Arab air forces were put out of action.

At 8:15 AM the code "Red Flag" sounded over the IDF's communication systems and Israeli forces launched an attack on the Egyptian troops in Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Three divisions moved along separate routes while two brigades undertook independent functions. Israel soon conquered the entire Sinai Peninsula, as well as the Gaza Strip and the Red Sea islands of Tiran and Sanafir, which Egypt leased from Saudi Arabia. On the Jordanian front, in just three days the Israeli forces secured key areas in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The remaining Jordanian troops quickly retreated across the Jordan River and the IDF completed the conquest of the West Bank with very little resistance. On June 9 the IDF launched an attack on the Golan Heights, completing the operation in the area by the next night. By June 12 Israel had taken the Golan Heights and part of the crest of Mt. Hermon.

After the war, on November 22, 1967, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 242. The main articles in the resolution called for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied" in the Six Day War, and for the "termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force." The resolution also noted the need "for guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area; for achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem; for guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones." Egypt and Jordan accepted the resolution almost immediately, Israel did so in December 1967, while Syria followed suit only after President Assad came to power (1970). The Six Day War had profound and long-lasting ramifications in terms of internal politics, economics, geopolitics, and the course of the Cold War.





# Jerusalem

## 1948–1967

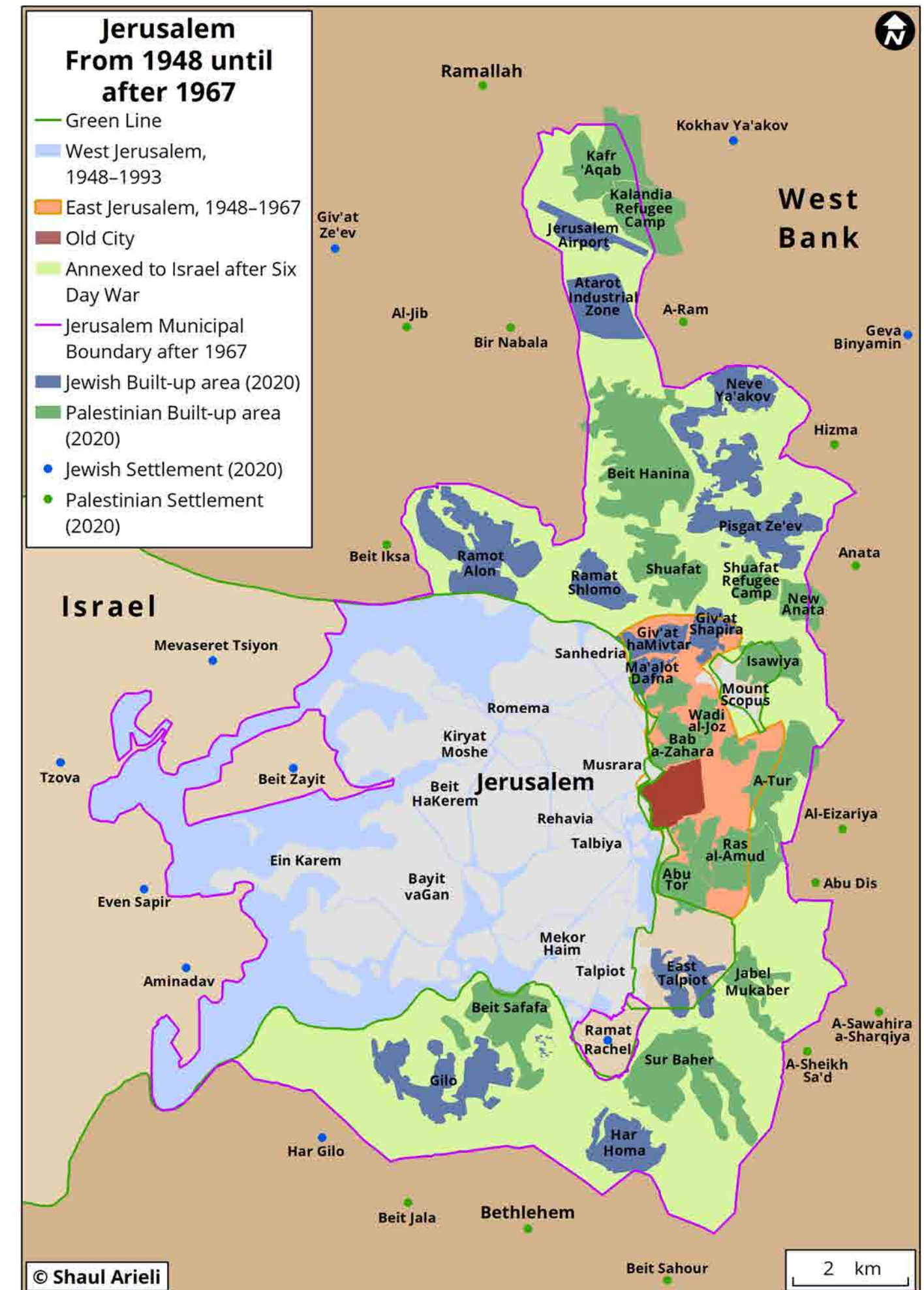
On December 5, 1949, David Ben-Gurion declared Jerusalem the capital of the State of Israel; eight days later the Knesset (Israel's Parliament) voted to relocate to the city. Immediately thereafter, in January 1950, the government moved to Jerusalem, thereby completing the presence of all three branches of power in the city (the Supreme Court had already been founded in Jerusalem in 1948).

On December 13, 1949, Jordan annexed the entire West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The annexation became *de jure* in May 1950, after the Jordanian Parliament approved an order on the subject issued by King Abdullah. Only three countries recognized the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank: Britain, Iraq, and Pakistan; Britain emphasized that it did recognize Jordanian sovereignty over Jerusalem, but merely its *de facto* control of the city. The Arab League only reconciled itself to the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank on May 31, 1950, after Jordan promised that the annexation would not impair the eventual resolution of the Palestinian problem. The new Hebrew city extended over 38 sq.km.; East Jerusalem, or Al-Quds in Arabic, had an area of just six sq.km.

Shortly after the Six Day War, on June 27, 1967, the Knesset passed a legislative amendment stating that "the law, jurisdiction, and administration of the State shall apply in every area of Land of Israel as determined by the government in an order." In accordance with this provision, the government issued an order the next day stating that the area delineated in the addendum to the order was "territory in which the law, jurisdiction, and administration of the State apply." The area defined in the addendum included the Old City of Jerusalem and the neighborhoods to its east and north, from Kafr Aqab in the north to a point close to Rachel's Tomb in the south, and as far as the eastern slopes of Mt. Scopus to the east. On June 28 an order was signed establishing the borders of the annexed area, and the interior minister published the "Jerusalem Proclamation," a regulation attaching the annexed area to the municipal boundaries of the Jerusalem Municipality. At noon on June 29, the police removed the barriers that had divided the city into two. The Jordanian mayor of the city, Ruhi al-Khatib, and the members of his council were summoned to the military governor, who informed them that "in the name of the IDF [...] the Jerusalem Council is hereby disbanded." The newly-created city, with an area of 108 sq.km. at the time, was given the name "United Jerusalem."

In 1980, against the background of the autonomy talks between Israel and Egypt, and fearing Israeli concessions in Jerusalem, MK Geula Cohen of the Tehiya Party advanced the "Basic Law: Jerusalem, Israel's Capital, 1980." The law declares that "entire and united Jerusalem" is Israel's capital. The Knesset approved the basic law on July 30. On January 15, 1981, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution rejecting and nullifying the declaration of united Jerusalem as Israel's capital; foreign countries moved their embassies out of the city in response to the law. In 1993 the city limits were again expanded, this time to the west, with the result that the city currently has an area of 126.4 sq.km., making it the largest city in Israel.

On December 6, 2017, US President Donald Trump announced that his country recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital and ordered plans to be made to relocate the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. A ceremony marking the relocation of the embassy was held on May 14, 2018, the day after Jerusalem Day.





# Israeli-Syrian Border

## 1967-2020

During the Six Day War, Israel occupied about two-thirds of the Golan Heights. The ceasefire line established after the war was known as the “Purple Line,” and included an area of 1,260 sq.km. on the Golan Heights, up to a point east of Quneitra. During the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Syrians managed to take about half this area for several days. However, the IDF not only managed to retake the area by the end of the war, but also moved on to control additional areas deep inside Syrian territory.

On May 31, 1974, a troop separation agreement was signed between Israel and Syria. Under the agreement, Israel returned to the “Purple Line,” with the exception of an area of about 60 sq.km. including the city of Quneitra, which was returned to Syrian civilian control. A strip of Syrian land adjacent to the ceasefire line was defined as a buffer zone between the Israeli and Syrian forces, and is under the military control of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). Close to Quneitra there is a single crossing point along the current border between Syria and Israel. There is no direct contact between Israelis and Syrians at the Quneitra Crossing, and it is managed by mediators from UNDOF. The crossing is usually closed to people and goods, and is used mainly by UN personnel. Druze residents of the Golan Heights occasionally use the crossing, but this requires special arrangements and UN mediation.

On December 14, 1981, the Knesset passed the Golan Heights Law, which states that “the law, jurisdiction, and administration of the State shall apply in the Golan Heights.” The law relates to an area of some 1,200 sq.km. on the Golan Heights—the entire area between the international border of 1923 and the limits of Israeli control as determined in 1974 in the troop separation agreements. The UN Security Council subsequently adopted Resolution 497, which denies the validity of the Israeli legislation under international law and emphasizes that the Fourth Geneva Convention still applies to the Golan Heights.

Just four Druze villages and one Alawite village, Ghajar, remain on the Golan Heights, after some 130,000 Syrian residents left or were expelled. The first Jewish settlement in the area, Merom Golan, was established as early as 1967. The Golan Regional Council, which was granted municipal status in 1979, covers an area of around 1,100 sq.km. from Mt. Hermon in the north to Hamat Gader in the south. The area includes 32 settlements: nine kibbutzim, 13 moshavim, five cooperative moshavim, and five community settlements.

Four Israeli prime ministers—Yitzhak Rabin, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Barak, and Ehud Olmert—pursued overt and confidential contacts with Syria regarding the border issue. The main obstacle to an agreement was the gap between Israel’s demand to move the mandatory border slightly to the east and the Syrian demand to return to “the borders of June 4, 1967”—a phrasing that raises questions concerning the control of the waters of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee. The border of June 4, 1967 turns the water of the Sea of Galilee, the northern section of the Jordan River, and the Banias into international waters, with important ramifications for Israel’s right to the water. To date, none of the contacts between the two sides have developed into an agreement.

On March 21, 2019, US President Donald Trump declared that his country fully recognizes Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights; on March 25 he signed a declaration to this effect.





# Agreements between Israel and Egypt

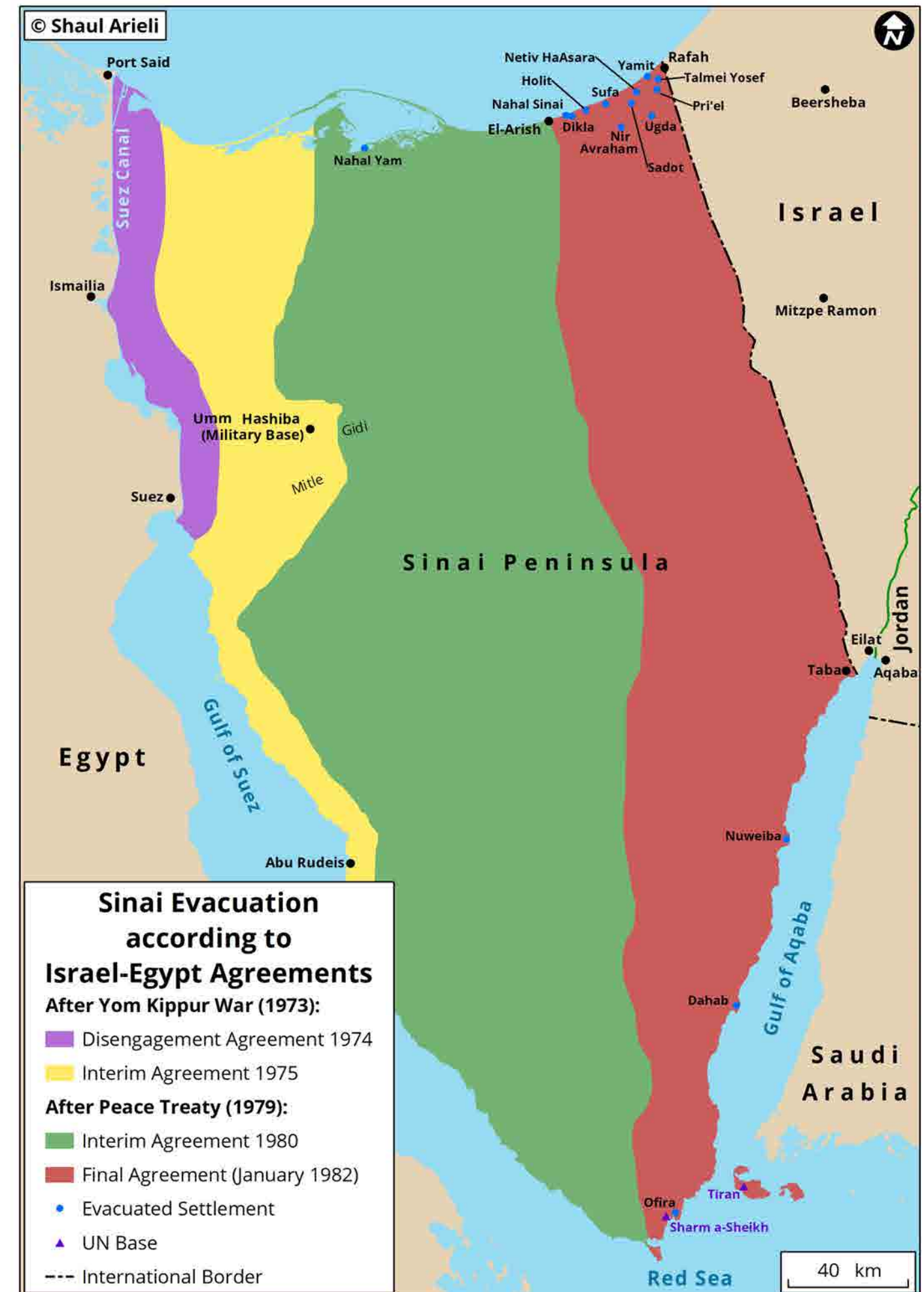
## 1967-1985

During the 1967 Six Day War, Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula. On October 6, 1973, the Yom Kippur War erupted, initiated by Syria and Egypt. The war continued until October 24, when a ceasefire came into effect (on the eastern front in Sinai, exchanges of gunfire continued for another two days). Israel and Egypt signed a ceasefire agreement on November 11, 1973, and on December 21 a peace conference opened in Geneva, attended by Israel, Egypt, and Syria. On January 18, 1974, Israel and Egypt signed a troop separation agreement, leading to the removal of the Egyptian blockade of the Red Sea. The Suez Canal also opened for shipping, and Israel withdrew to a line 20 kilometers east of the Canal.

In 1975, a further agreement was signed, called the Interim Agreement. The agreement was approved by the Knesset on September 3, by a majority of 70 in favor, 43 against, and seven abstentions, and the following day it was signed in Geneva. The agreement required Israel to withdraw from a strip to the east of the previous line, with a width of 30-40 km—an area that includes the Mitla and Gidi passes in western Sinai. This area became a buffer zone under the supervision of UN forces. Israel also withdrew from a long, narrow strip down the Gulf of Suez, including most of the oilfields in Sinai. This area became a demilitarized civilian zone, and arrangements were made for both Israel and Egypt to continue to use the highway parallel to the gulf. Provisions were also made for the continued operation of the Israeli early warning station at Umm Hashiba, in the area under UN supervision, and for the operation of a similar Egyptian facility nearby. Both sides were required to restrict the presence of their troops on either side of the buffer zone.

Following the historic visit to Israel by Egyptian President Sadat in 1977, peace talks were held between the two countries. The talks led to the Camp David Agreements, framework agreements for peace in the Middle East, that were signed in 1978 by US President Jimmy Carter, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. The first agreement, Framework for Peace in the Middle East, centers around the declaration that Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are the basis for peace. The first part of the agreement discusses the West Bank and Gaza Strip, advocating an autonomy plan for the Palestinian population, leading to a permanent agreement after five years. The second part related to normalization between the two countries, to be followed by similar agreements between Israel and Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The second agreement was the Framework for Peace between Egypt and Israel. This treaty was based on a full withdrawal by Israel “up to the recognized international border between Egypt and Mandatory Palestine.” The withdrawal would be followed by normal relations, including mutual recognition and diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties. The Knesset approved the Camp David Agreements on September 27, 1978: 84 Members of Knesset voted in favor, while 19 opposed the deal.

The permanent peace agreement between Israel and Egypt ends the state of war between the two countries, defines their permanent border, and includes provisions for demilitarization and troop restrictions in Sinai. The agreement provides for the founding of normal neighborly relations as customary in international law. Arrangements are included for a multinational force to supervise the implementation of the agreement in Sinai. The Knesset approved the final agreement on March 22, 1979 by a vote of 95 in favor and 18 against. The signing ceremony for the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt was held on March 26, 1979 at the White House. Israel completed its withdrawal from Sinai by 1982, including the evacuation and demolition of all its settlements in the Yamit strip. In 1985, after an international arbitration process, Israel also withdrew from Taba.



# Israeli-Jordanian Peace Agreement

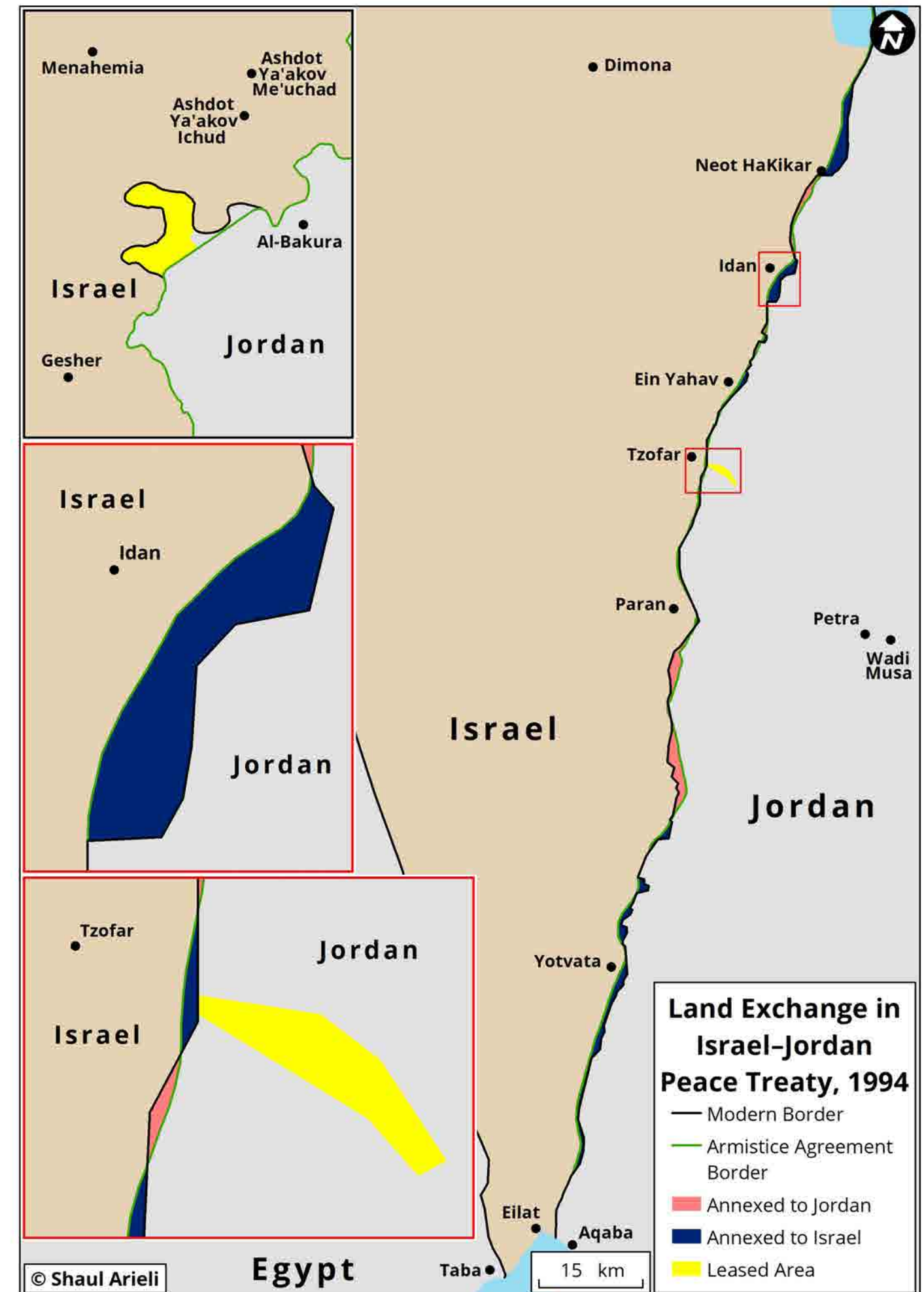
October 26, 1994

Following the signing of the armistice agreement in 1949, Israel began to establish agricultural settlements in the Arava (Yotvata, Ein Yahav, Paran, Idan, and others). Since the fertile soil and artesian water sources lay on the Jordanian side of the border, and were mainly unused, Israel adopted a policy of creeping annexation, taking control of land within sovereign Jordanian territory that was handed to settlements such as Yotvata, Lotan, Ketura, Idan, and Grofit. An area of 2,000 dunams at a considerable distance from the border was allocated to Tzofar when the community was founded in 1976. In addition, Israel drilled 22 wells in Jordanian territory that provided 15 million cu.m. of water a year. Israel even constructed a security system within Jordanian territory to protect its settlements, and the total area that was *de facto* annexed was almost 340,000 dunams. In addition, the 1949 armistice agreement left Israel in control of the so-called "Island" at Naharayim, an 830-dunam site created due to the construction of Rutenberg's power station to the east of the Jordan River in 1927. Immediately after 1949, Israeli farmers began to work this land.

The declaration by King Hussein in July 1988 abolishing Jordan's annexation of the West Bank, and the signing of the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO in 1993, paved the way for negotiations toward a peace agreement between Israel and Jordan. An agreed agenda for negotiations was signed on September 14, 1993, and on July 25, 1994, the two sides issued the "Washington Declaration," announcing their intention to sign a peace treaty. During the negotiations, the Jordanians insisted that the 1949 armistice line should serve as the border (in this area, this line was identical to the border defined in 1922). Israel argued that some terms in the British declaration of 1922, such as "Wadi Araba" or "the middle of Wadi Araba," were ambiguous, but the Jordanians rejected this claim. However, King Hussein agreed to the request of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the areas in the Arava east of the border continued to be held by Israel. In return, Jordan received areas of rocky land in Israel to the west of the border. A total of 16.5 sq.km. was exchanged on a one-to-one basis. The remainder of the border was adjusted according to the mandatory line, including the return of over 300 sq.km. to Jordan. The subject of the land swap is not mentioned in the peace treaty, but the agreement includes a reference to the attached aerial photographs.

Regarding the "Island" at Naharayim in the north, a special arrangement was agreed for a period of 25 years. Israel recognized Jordanian sovereignty over the area, but both sides agreed that residents of Kibbutz Ashdot Yaakov would continue to farm the area on the basis of special legal agreements, with the possibility of extending the arrangement for an additional 25 years. A similar arrangement was reached at Moshav Tzofar in the Arava, whose farmland lay to the east of the agreed border. In both cases no leasing was involved and Israel or the communities themselves did not pay Jordan for the use of the land. The agreement also stated that Israel would provide Jordan with 50 million cu.m. of water a year from the Kinneret in exchange for its continued extraction of water from its drillings inside Jordanian territory.

The peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was signed on October 29, 1994 at the Arava border crossing between the two countries. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and King Hussein signed the treaty, and US President Bill Clinton added his signature as a witness. In October 2018 King Abdullah II of Jordan decided not to extend the period of the two appendices to the agreement relating to the Israeli use of the Tzofar enclave in the Arava (2,000 dunams) and the "Island" at Naharayim (approx. 800 dunams). The decision was within the terms of the peace treaty, and the "Island" at Naharayim was returned to Jordan in October 2019. The Tzofar enclave was returned in April 2020.





# Oslo Accords: Declaration of Principles and Interim Agreements 1993-1999

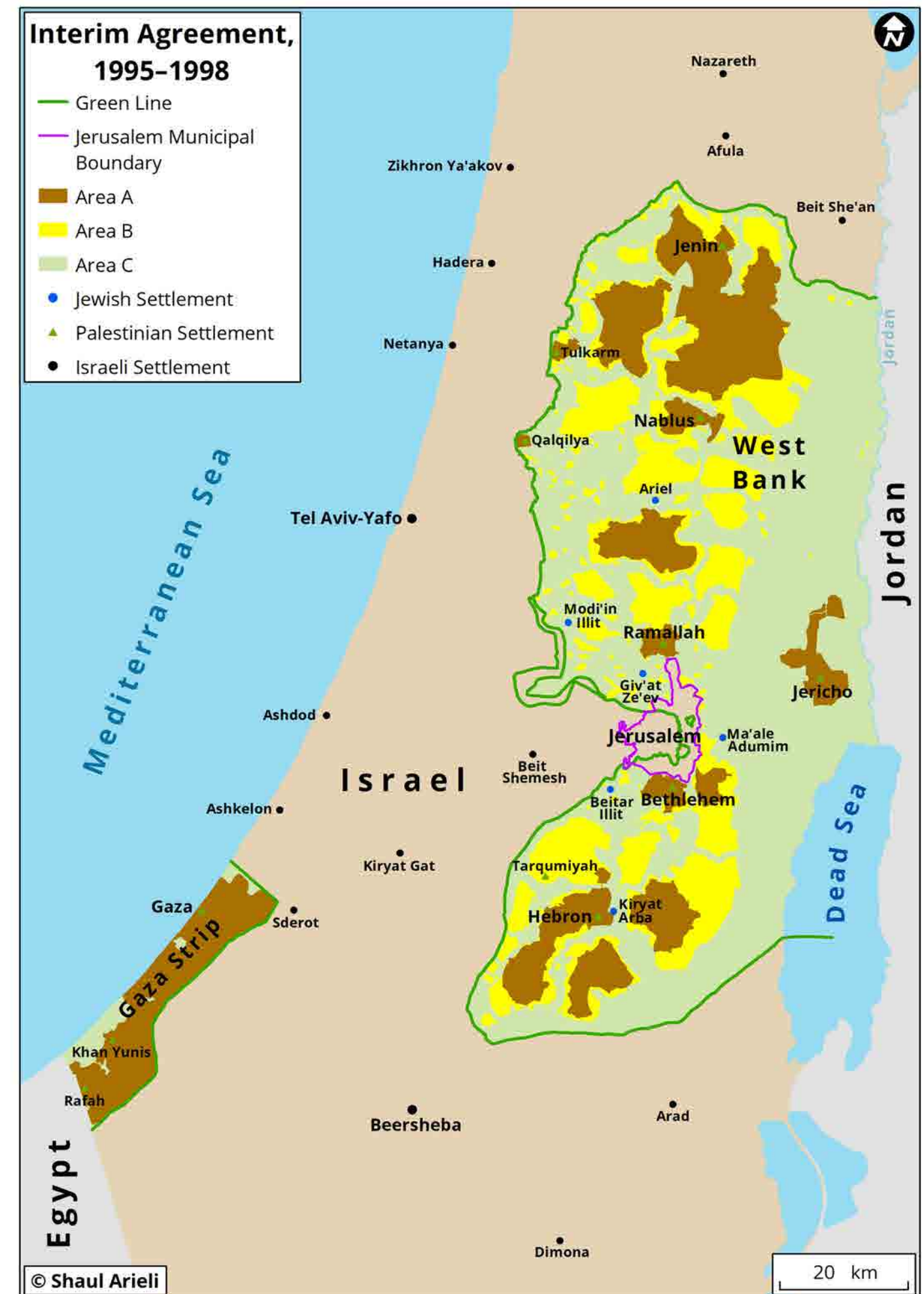
On September 13, 1993, Israel and the PLO signed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in Washington DC. Detailed negotiations began on October 13, and on May 4, 1994, the two sides met in Cairo and signed the Interim Agreement, which provided for the transfer of Gaza and Jericho to the Palestinian Authority. The agreement was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat; the US, Russia, and Egypt served as witnesses.

The Second Interim Agreement between Israel and the PLO was signed in Washington DC on September 28, 1995. This agreement defined three types of areas in the West Bank. Area A, including all the cities in the area with the exception of Hebron, would be transferred to the civilian and security control of the future Palestinian Authority. Area B, including Palestinian villages and smaller towns, would be transferred to Palestinian civilian control, but Israel would continue to exercise overall security control. Area C, the remaining parts of the West Bank (including dozens of small Palestinian villages), would remain under Israeli security control and partial Israeli civilian control. Jewish settlements and military installations in the West Bank would enjoy special status within Area C. The agreement stipulated that before the elections to the Palestinian Council, Israel would position its forces in the area according to an attached map. Following the establishment of the Palestinian Council, Israel would undertake three further adjustments of its military forces in accordance with the Declaration of Principles. The three stages were to be implemented at intervals of six months, leading to their completion within 18 months from the formation of the Council.

On January 15, 1997, after two months of negotiations, The Hebron Protocol was signed as an appendix to the Interim Agreement. The protocol, agreed between the Netanyahu government and the PLO, defined the redeployment of the IDF in the city of Hebron. The city was divided into two zones: H1, where the Palestinian Authority would enjoy a status similar to that in Area A; and H2, where Israel would retain full responsibility for internal security and public order. Israel would also continue to bear overall responsibility for the security of Israelis.

On October 23, 1998, under pressure from US President Clinton and his Administration, Prime Minister Netanyahu, Chairman Arafat, and Clinton signed the Wye Memorandum in Maryland. Israel undertook to transfer 13 percent of Area C to the Palestinian Authority—12 percent with the status of Area B and one percent to be added to Area A. The Palestinians undertook that three percent out of the 12 percent (areas in the Judean Desert to the east of Tekoa) would be defined as nature reserves.

The Sharm a-Sheikh Declaration was signed on September 4, 1999 between Prime Minister Barak and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, in the presence of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, King Abdullah II, and Egyptian President Mubarak. The declaration stated that the sides would make a determined effort to reach a framework agreement for a final agreement by February 13, 2000, and to sign a final and full peace agreement by September 13, 2000. The declaration also addressed the implementation of the Wye Memorandum, including timetables for the first and second realignments and the transfer of land from Area C and B to Area A. After completing all the realignments, Area A and B now jointly account for just 40 percent of the area of the West Bank. Since Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip in 2005, the entire area has been defined as Area A.



# Israel-Lebanon Border

## 1923-2000

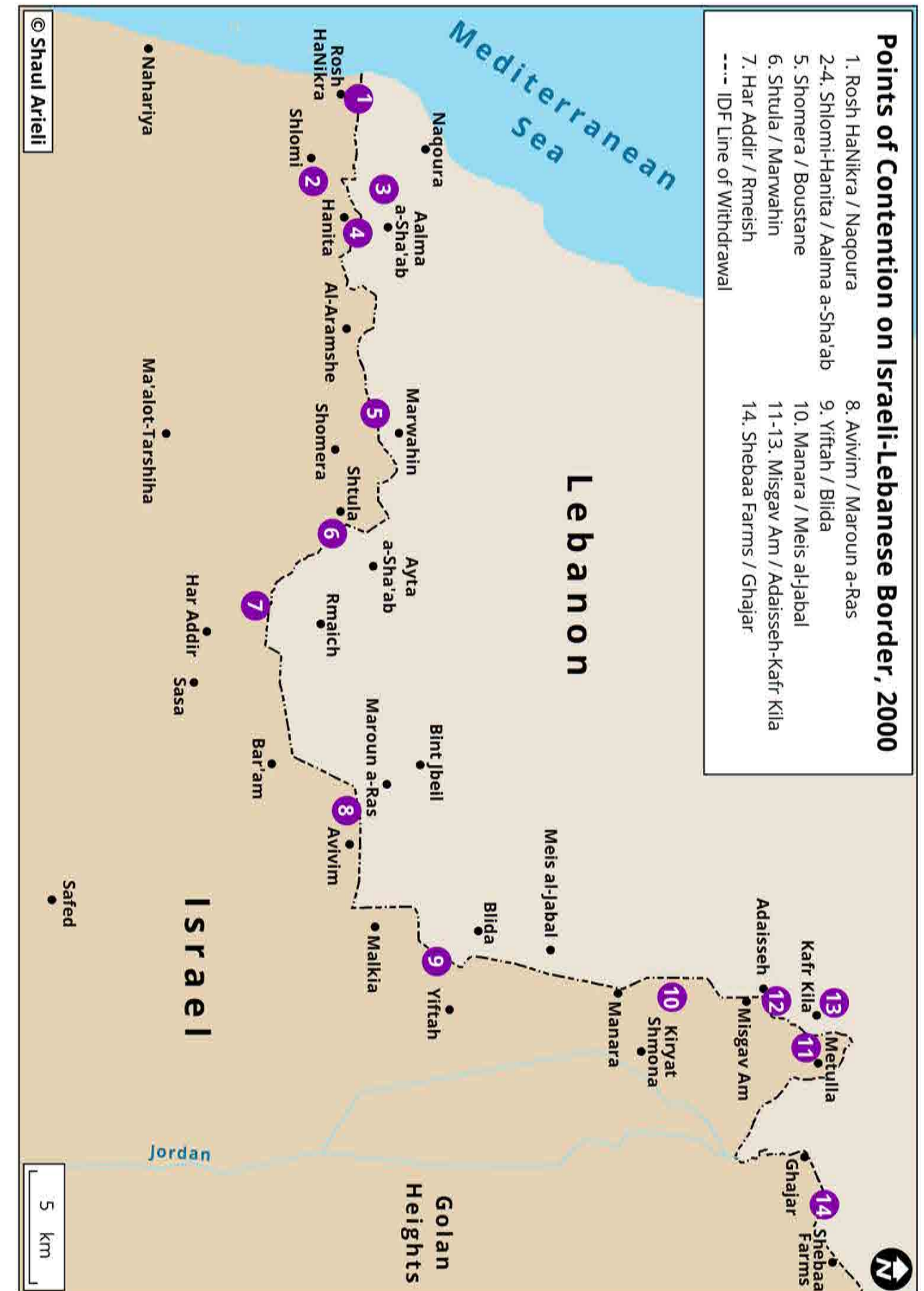
The border between Palestine and Syria and Lebanon has its origins in the Sykes-Picot Agreement signed by France and Great Britain on May 16, 1916. The border followed the shortest line between the Mediterranean Sea, at a point north of Acre, and the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee. After the First World War, the border was shifted to the north (the "Deauville Line") in order to include areas that had come under British military control. The new line was drawn from a point on the Mediterranean north of the modern-day Israeli city of Nahariya, along the Rosh HaNikra ridge, and on to the southern shore of Lake Hula. Later, on December 23, 1920, an agreement was signed in Paris between Britain and France stating that to the northeast of Sasa the border would extend to the north, in order to include Metulla and all of the Jordan River within Palestine.

During the marking of the border on the ground, it emerged that the agreed line divided the lands of the adjacent villages. Accordingly, the British representative Newcombe and his French counterpart Paulet agreed on land swaps based on the land ownership in these areas as presented by the village elders. The Jewish settlement of Metulla was obliged to leave much of its land behind in Lebanon since the direct highway between Quneitra on the Golan Heights and Tyre in Lebanon passed through this area and was regarded by the French as a vital interest. These areas, and land in other villages, led to the functional agreement known as the "Good Neighborly Arrangement" between Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, signed by the British and French commissioners on February 2, 1926. The agreement was only implemented in full in April 1924, when 192 sq.km. of land, including 20 villages, passed from French to British control. The agreement itself was approved by the League of Nations in 1934, and at this point the boundary became the recognized border between the two mandate countries.

During the 1948 War of Independence, as part of Operation Hiram (October 29-31), the IDF took control of the Upper Galilee, going beyond the border to seize a strip including 14 villages. On March 23, 1949 the armistice agreement was signed with Lebanon and the two countries agreed that the international border would serve as the ceasefire line. Accordingly, Israel withdrew from the Lebanese territories.

In 1978, the Israeli government launched Operation Litani following an attack on a bus inside Israel that was planned and staged from areas in Lebanon under Palestinian control. The IDF held the territory it seized during the operation for around three months, and thereafter continued to maintain a military presence in southern Lebanon through the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

The First Lebanon War erupted in June 1982 (under the name Operation Peace for the Galilee). At the beginning of the war the IDF occupied the southern part of Lebanon, at one point extending its control as far as Beirut. In September 1983 Israel began a gradual withdrawal, and in 1985 it withdrew from a substantial part of the area it had occupied, while maintaining a "security zone" in the south. Israel only withdrew completely from Lebanon on May 24, 2000, under the government of Ehud Barak. In cooperation with Israel, the United Nations marked the line of withdrawal of the IDF forces using barrels painted light blue (the color of the UN flag). Today, the "Blue Line" crosses into Israel territory at some points, while near Misgav Am and the village of Ghajar it lies within Lebanese territory, creating enclaves. As of 2020, the border is still disputed at 14 points, although the areas involved are very small.





# Camp David

## July 11-25, 2000

The Middle East Peace Summit at Camp David was held on July 11-25, 2000 at Camp David, Maryland, bringing together US President Bill Clinton, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. The summit focused on four key issues:

**Borders:** The gap between the two sides on the territorial issue was enormous. Barak rejected the principle that the 1967 borders should serve as the basis for a solution to the conflict. Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami suggested that Barak give the Americans a “deposit” on the subject of the 1967 lines, in the spirit of Yitzhak Rabin’s “deposit” regarding the Golan Heights, but Barak opposed this suggestion. The head of the Palestinian Desk in the Research Division of Israel’s Military Intelligence presented the Israeli decision makers with a detailed analysis of the Palestinian position, noting that “Arafat and the Palestinian leadership are planning to exhaust the diplomatic process in order to reach a two-state solution based on the longstanding and well-known Palestinian position adopted by the PLO in 1988: A state within the 1967 borders, including Arab Jerusalem, on the basis of UN Resolutions 242 and 338.” Military Intelligence emphasized that “the issue of territory is an essential one for the Palestinians, whereas the right of return serves as an important bargaining chip against Israel.”

Israel’s opening proposal at Camp David called for the annexation of 13 percent of the West Bank; an additional 10 percent would be held by Israel for many years. Thus Israel proposed a Palestinian state on 77 percent of the territory of the West Bank, along with most of the area of the Gaza Strip. Before the teams met to discuss the territorial issue, Barak instructed them to reject the idea of land swaps. The Palestinian delegation held an internal discussion on July 16, focusing on the question of areas of the West Bank that would remain under Israeli control. Abu Alaa proposed 1.5 percent, while Yasser Abd Rabbo, supported by Hasan Asfour, suggested 2.5 percent and Nabil Sha’ath three percent. Arafat did not adopt any of these proposals, and in all probability had already promised Clinton a more substantial territorial concession.

Four days before the end of the summit, the Israeli team presented the Palestinians with a map showing that the area to be handed over immediately totaled 77.2 percent; a few years later an additional area of 8.8 percent would be transferred. Accordingly, Israel would annex 13.3 percent of the West Bank; some very small areas still awaited a final decision. In an interview, Barak claimed that he offered the Palestinians 90-91 percent of the West Bank at Camp David, including a land swap of one percent with areas inside the Green Line. He stressed that he never agreed to withdraw from the Jordan Valley. However, Barak’s final official proposal presented to President Clinton referred to a Palestinian state on 89 percent of the area, with an overland passage connecting the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In his book *The Labyrinth of Power*, the Israeli intelligence veteran Danny Yatom details Barak’s proposal to Clinton: “An area of not less than 11 percent, in which 80 percent of the settlers live, will be annexed to Israel [so that 156,000 Israelis in 71 settlements would remain under Israeli rule, out of a total at the time of 190,000 Israelis in 126 settlements in the West Bank]. We will not transfer sovereign areas to the Palestinians [...] For a few years Israel will control around one-fourth of the Jordan Valley in order to ensure control of the crossings between Jordan and Palestine.” This proposal was far removed from the Palestinian position, which agreed to leaving no more than 2.4 percent of the area under Israeli control, and insisted on land swaps on a one-to-one basis.





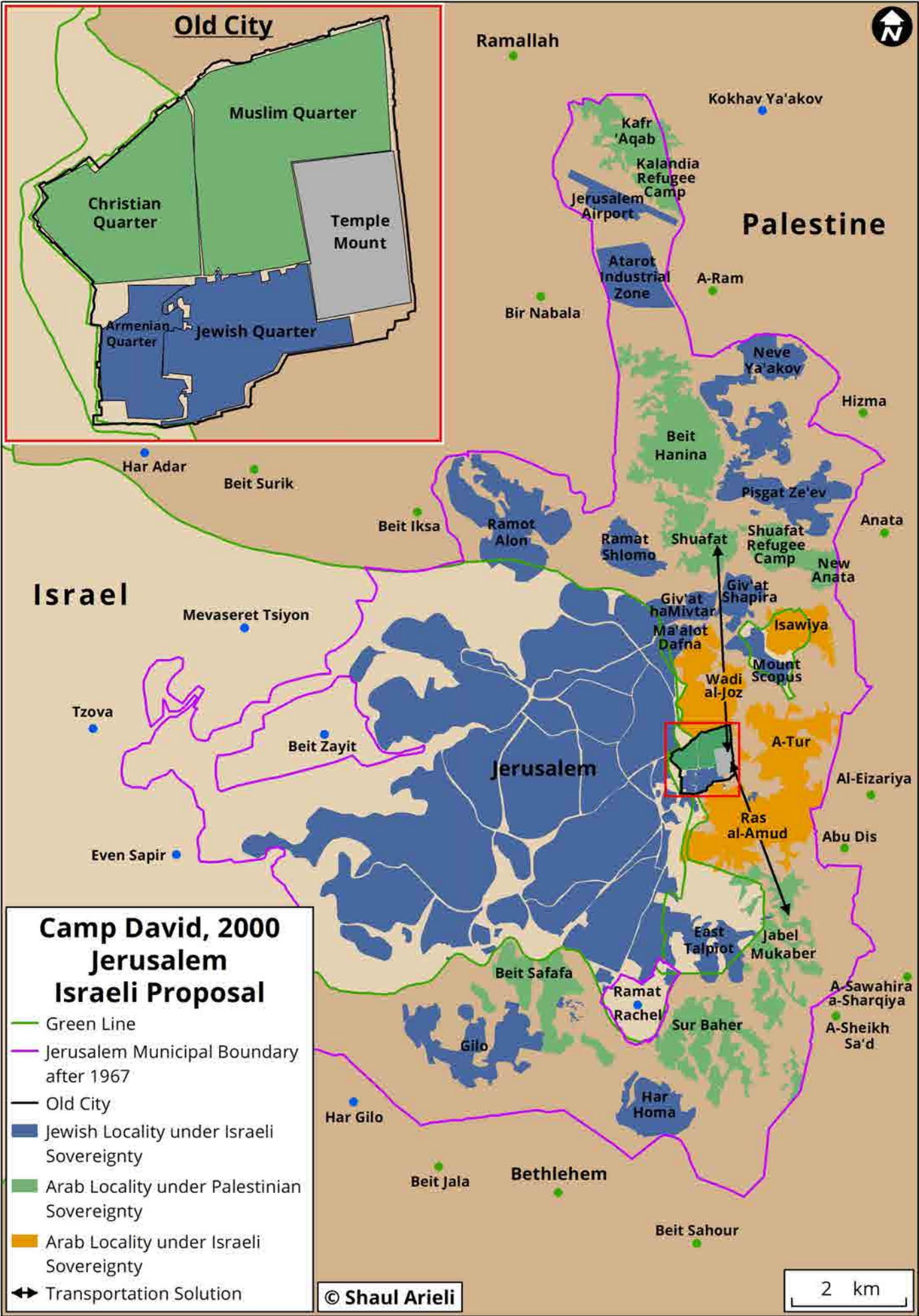
**Security:** As noted, Israel insisted on retaining control of around one-fourth of the Jordan Valley for several years, and demanded that the Palestinian state be demilitarized. The Palestinians continued to oppose any annexation of the Jordan Valley for security needs, but were willing to negotiate on the length of a temporary military presence in the area. The two sides agreed that Israel could maintain early warning stations along the central mountain ridge in the West Bank; the Palestinians asked that an American or other representative be present at the facility, as well as Palestinian liaison officers. Israel and the Palestinians agreed that the whole area would be covered by a single air control system and that Israel would maintain security responsibility in the air. The Palestinians emphasized that this must not impair their commercial flights in any manner, and that their airport would continue to function. They accepted the principle of demilitarization, but demanded that the definition be that “the Palestinian state will be restricted in its armament,” without reference to “a demilitarized state.” The parties agreed that an international force would take up positions in the Jordan Valley, and the Palestinians noted their desire that this force should be American.

**Jerusalem:** The summit saw fluctuations in the level of flexibility shown by Israel regarding a solution in Jerusalem. The last proposal made by Israel, which was also the most generous, was presented at a meeting between Barak and Clinton. According to Yatom, Barak proposed the following formula: “The Temple Mount will be under Israeli sovereignty, with a type of Palestinian custody and permission for Jews to pray on the mount. In the Old City Arafat will receive sovereignty over the Muslim Quarter and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. He can also be offered the Christian Quarter, whereas Israel will maintain sovereignty over the Jewish and Armenian quarters. The outer Muslim neighborhoods will be transferred to Palestinian sovereignty, while the inner Muslim neighborhoods will remain under Israeli sovereignty with a special arrangement; the neighborhood administrations will receive powers from the Israeli sovereign. We will build transportation solutions enabling Muslims to come from the outer neighborhoods for prayers on the Temple Mount without passing through sovereign Israeli territory.”

Clinton’s efforts to satisfy both sides reached a peak in his proposal to “divide” the Temple Mount vertically: the most sacred lower levels would remain under Jewish sovereignty (which would not be realized in practice, but would prevent Palestinian excavations on the site), while the ground level of the plaza would be under Palestinian sovereignty. The Palestinian position was simple: the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem would be under Israeli sovereignty, while the Palestinian neighborhoods, including those close to the Old City and the Old City itself (with the exception of the Jewish Quarter) would be under Palestinian sovereignty.

**Refugees:** The PLO representatives sought to distinguish between recognition of the right of return and its actual implementation in a manner that would not threaten the Jewish majority in Israel. The Israeli representatives hoped to completely ignore the right of return and concentrate on practical solutions: The absorption of refugees outside Israel (whether in Palestine or in their current countries of residence), or payment of compensation. The two sides agreed that any solution would be implemented through an international mechanism.

Virtually no progress was made on the refugee issue at the 2000 Camp David summit. Israel rejected any possibility of absorbing refugees. The Palestinians demanded full Israeli recognition of the right of return, while proposing international frameworks for rehabilitation and absorption that would ensure that only a negligible number of refugees would actually seek to return to Israel. The two sides did not manage to reach agreement by the end of the summit regarding the description of the problem, compensation, or the number of refugees to be absorbed in Israel.





# Taba Conference

## January 21-27, 2001

On December 23, 2000, President Clinton convened the Israeli and PLO delegations at the White House and presented what became known as the Clinton Plan. The Palestinians responded by submitting 24 reservations, which taken together essentially implied the rejection of the plan. The Israeli government accepted the proposal but added some reservations. The Israelis and Palestinians then met at Taba on January 21, 2001 for negotiations based on these positions. The discussions took place under time pressure: President Clinton would be leaving office in just a few weeks, while direct elections for prime minister were due to be held in Israel the next month. The talks were overshadowed by the Second Intifada, which was intensifying at the time. Once again, the negotiations focused on the four core issues.

**Borders:** Clinton suggested that “in a fair solution, the Palestinian state should be allocated to 94-97 percent of the territory of the West Bank.” In exchange for the territory to be annexed to Israel, the Palestinian side must be compensated with a land swap at around one to three percent, in addition to territorial arrangements, such as a permanent passage between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Israeli proposal sought to annex over six percent of the West Bank, while compensating the Palestinians with less than three percent. The Palestinians sought to minimize the area to be annexed by Israel and to ensure that any land swap was based on a one-to-one principle.

The first Israeli map presented to the Palestinians provided for the annexation of eight percent of the territory, in areas including 85 percent of the 363,000 Israelis living in the West Bank at the time (no land swap was offered). The Palestinians claimed that this percentage was higher than the maximum level in the Clinton Plan (six percent), and demanded that the parties work on a map including a five-percent annexation, as a compromise between the low and high figures in the Clinton Plan. The Israeli delegation initially rejected this position, but eventually submitted a map to the Palestinians based on a six-percent annexation. Israel refused to offer a 1:1 land swap, and instead offered benefits such as use of Ashdod Port and the creation of a corridor for Palestinian traffic between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (under Israeli sovereignty). The area the Palestinians offered for Israeli annexation rose to 3.1 percent; unlike the Israeli map, this did not include Ma’ale Adumim, Givat Ze’ev, and several smaller settlements.

**Security:** Israel sought to maintain five emergency positions within the Palestinian territory; the Palestinians agreed to two positions at the most, to be operated by the international force with a clear deadline for their removal. The Palestinians refused to accept the deployment of Israeli forces in their territory in emergency situations, but were willing to consider ways in which an international force could fill this function as part of the efforts to develop regional security cooperation. Israel asked to operate three early warning stations in Palestinian territory, and the Palestinians agreed to this on various conditions. Israel accepted the principle of Palestinian sovereignty over its electromagnetic spectrum, but sought to maintain control over the spectrum for security reasons. The Palestinians demanded full sovereignty, but agreed to meet reasonable Israeli demands in accordance with international rules and regulations. The two sides agreed that the Palestinians would have sovereignty over their airspace, and Israel promised to respect Palestinian civil aviation rights in accordance with international regulations. However, Israel’s goal was to ensure that there would be a single air control system under overall Israeli control, and it also sought to secure access to Palestinian airspace for military needs (both operational and training). The Palestinians were willing to consider various models for cooperation and coordination in the field of civil aviation, but not to grant Israel overall control of the airspace.



**Jerusalem:** President Clinton proposed that in dividing the city “Arab areas are Palestinian and Jewish ones are Israeli. This would apply to the Old City as well.” Regarding the Temple Mount, the President proposed: “Regarding the Haram / Temple Mount, I believe that the gaps are not related to practical administration but to symbolic issues of sovereignty and to finding a way to accord respect to the religious beliefs of both sides.” The Palestinian delegation, which included Yasser Abd Rabbo, Saeb Erekat, Hasan Asfour, and Abu Alaa, agreed to Israeli sovereignty over the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, with the exception of Har Homa, provided that this did not impair the contiguity of the Palestinian area. They insisted on Palestinian sovereignty over the Haram / Temple Mount. The Palestinians rejected the proposal to establish a special regime in the “Historical Basin,” and instead suggested that the Jewish Quarter and half the Armenian Quarter remain under Israeli sovereignty, while the remainder of the Old City would be under Palestinian sovereignty. The Israeli delegation, headed by Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami, presented maps that left the Jewish neighborhoods in the east of the city under Israeli sovereignty. Israel proposed a special regime in the Historic Basin based on the maintenance of the religious and administrative status quo at the holy sites. According to the proposal, functional sovereignty in the Armenian and Jewish Quarters would be granted to Israel, and in the Muslim and Christian Quarters to Palestine.

**Refugees:** The Clinton Plan stated that Israel would recognize the mental and material suffering of the refugees as a result of the 1948 War and the need to help the international community address this problem. Refugees would be offered five alternatives for absorption: in the Palestinian state; in the territories Israel would transfer as part of the land swaps; in the countries in which they are currently resident; in third countries willing to absorb them; and in Israel, conditional on individual approval. Both sides would confirm that this solution constituted the implementation of UN Resolution 194. It should be clarified that refugees would not be able to realize the right of return to Israel on a free basis, and that the agreement would note that Palestinians have the right to return to historical Palestine or to their “national home.” The agreement would mark the end of the conflict. Yossi Beilin and Nabil Sha’ath led the negotiations at Taba on the refugee issue. In light of the gulf between the narratives of both sides regarding the responsibility for the creation of the refugee problem and the right of return, it was agreed that each side would present a concise summary of the events from its perspective, as well as its interpretation of Resolution 194, while confirming that the implementation of this resolution would be in accordance with the Clinton Plan. Israel would continue to allow family unification in special humanitarian cases. The two sides also discussed the related issue of compensation for Jews from the Arab countries who lost property. It was agreed that UNRWA would cease to operate within five years.

The Taba talks also ended without an agreement. Following the election of Ariel Sharon as prime minister in Israel in February 2001 and the entry of President George Bush Jr. to the White House, Israel and the United States declared that the Camp David understandings, the Clinton Plan, and the Taba discussions did not bind the governments of either country. Conversely, the PLO insisted that negotiations should continue from the point at which they stopped at Taba.





# Geneva Initiative

October 13, 2003

The Geneva Initiative was launched after the stalling of the Taba talks in 2001. Former Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and Yasser Abd Rabbo, General Secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, who had both participated in the official negotiations, continued to hold informal discussions. These talks led to the Geneva Initiative, based on the work of professional teams, some of whose members had also been involved in the formal negotiations between Israel and the PLO. The participants also included ministers, parliamentarians, former security officials, academics, and other leading public figures from both sides. After two years' discussions, the team reached an agreement for a two-state solution based on mutual recognition. The Geneva Initiative included detailed solutions for all the core issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and would mark the end of the conflict and of all the parties' claims. The following are the main features of the Initiative:

**Borders:** Land swaps totaling 124 sq.km allowing 71% of the 398,000 Israelis living beyond the Green Line to remain under Israeli sovereignty. Special arrangements will allow Israelis to use key highways passing through Palestine.

**Security:** The Palestinian state will not maintain a military or armament and will be confined to a police force. The agreement proposes detailed arrangements ensuring Israel's security. Israel will be able to use the airspace above the Palestinian state; Israel will maintain two early warning stations within Palestinian territory for a protracted period; an IDF battalion will remain within Palestinian territory for a protracted period; and so forth. The Palestinians committed themselves to a consistent struggle against terrorism, violence, and incitement. They also pledged not to join or assist any coalition or alliance with hostile intentions toward Israel.

**Jerusalem:** All the Israeli neighborhoods in East Jerusalem (except Har Homa) will become an integral part of the State of Israel. Israeli settlements close to Jerusalem that are currently beyond the Green Line (Ma'ale Adumim, Givat Ze'ev, and the Gush Etzion settlements) will also be annexed to Israel. Some 220,000 Palestinian citizens in East Jerusalem will become citizens of Palestine and lose their permanent resident status in Israel. The Western Wall, the Jewish Quarter, and half of the Armenian Quarter (where Jews live) will come under full Israeli sovereignty, while Israel will manage the cemetery on the Mount of Olives. The Old City will be open to internal traffic for all those who enter the area. Israelis will enjoy free access to the Temple Mount.

**Refugees:** The solution is based on the relocation of refugees to the Palestinian state and financial compensation. Refugees will be able to choose between several options: Settlement in the Palestinian state; naturalization in their current country of residence; or relocation to a third country willing to accept refugees. Israel will absorb a symbolic number of refugees based on the average number absorbed in other countries, while retaining the sovereign right of decisions concerning each individual refugee.

The Geneva Initiative was launched at a ceremony in Geneva on December 1, 2003, and attracted considerable attention in Israel and around the world. For the first time, senior Israelis and Palestinians had shown that it is possible to reach an agreement. In 2009 the full appendices to the Initiative were published, including over 400 pages detailing the arrangements and presenting precise models and maps.





# Seam Zone and Security Barrier

## 2002-2007

In response to the upsurge in terror attacks in 2000-2001 (the Second Intifada), the Israeli government of Ariel Sharon decided to reorganize Israel's security presence in the West Bank. Among other steps, the government decided to establish the "Security Barrier," a physical divide that would make it harder for Palestinians without permits to enter Israel. The decisions regarding the Barrier were taken gradually over a period of several years.

The first government decision on this subject was adopted on June 2, 2001, authorizing the professional echelons to begin discussion of the Barrier. After Operation Defensive Shield in April 2002 failed to halt the wave of attacks, public pressure in Israel to establish the Barrier grew. A poll published in the *Ma'ariv* newspaper on June 21, 2002 found that 69% of the Israeli public supported the establishment of the Barrier, while just 25% were opposed.

On June 23, 2002, the subject of the "Seam Zone" was presented to the Israeli government. The government decided to approve the construction of the first phase of the barrier based on the route proposed by the defense establishment, along a line descending from Salem (North Samaria) to Elkana, and in the northern and southern sections around the outskirts of Jerusalem. At this stage the government approved "the erection of security fences and barriers in the seam zone and Jerusalem Periphery in order to reduce terrorist incursions from the West Bank to perform terror attacks in Israel." In August 2002 the plans for the first phase (100 km) were finalized, including an additional section from Matan to Kafr Qasim, and in December 2002 the government approved the second phase, from Salem eastward through Tirat Zvi (60 km).

On October 1, 2003, the government approved further sections of the Barrier, selecting a proposed course that would leave 17% of the West Bank on the "Israeli" side of the Barrier. The government decision emphasized that "this barrier, like other parts in the seam zone, is solely for defense purposes and does not represent any kind of political border."

On February 20, 2005, the government approved an amended course for the Barrier based on the criteria established in the Supreme Court ruling of June 30, 2004. The Seam Zone was reduced to nine percent of the West Bank, and the proposed Eastern Barrier was cancelled. On April 30, 2006, the cabinet approved various changes to the course of the Barrier, reducing the Seam Zone to about eight percent of the total area of the West Bank.

Along the barrier, different crossings have been established for freight, for Palestinians, and for Israelis (some of the crossings combine two or three of these functions). A total of 17 crossings operate under the authority of the Land Crossings Authority and the IDF. In addition, 32 "agricultural gates" allow access by Palestinians to their farmland on the other side of the Barrier in accordance with a permits regime.

To date the constructed Barrier has a total length of 470 km, and the Seam Zone accounts for five percent of the West Bank. Three main gaps remain, around Ma'ale Adumim, Gush Etzion, and in southeastern part of the Hebron Hills. In addition, proposed "fingers" extending the Barrier around the settlements of Ariel and Kedumim have not been completed. As of 2020, Israel has invested some NIS 20 billion in the Barrier project.





# Disengagement Plan

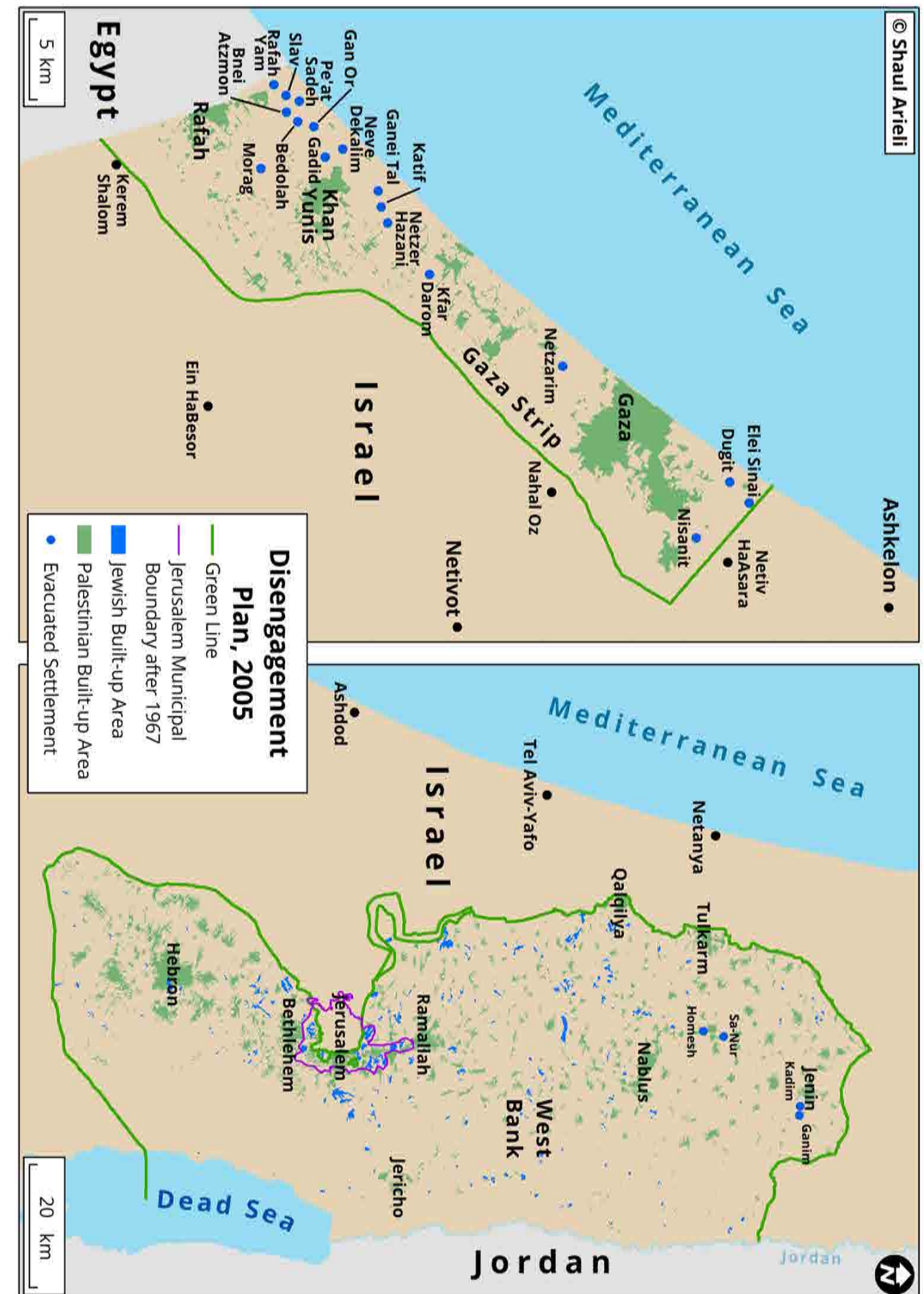
## August 15-September 11, 2005

In a speech on December 18, 2003, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon referred for the first time to the Disengagement Plan from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank. On April 14, 2004, in a letter to US President George W. Bush, Sharon explained: "Having reached the conclusion that, for the time being, there exists no Palestinian partner with whom to advance peacefully toward a settlement [...] I have decided to initiate a process of gradual disengagement [...] designed to improve security for Israel and stabilize our political and economic situation [...] I attach, for your review, the main principles of the Disengagement Plan. [...] According to this plan, the State of Israel intends to relocate military installations and all Israeli villages and towns in the Gaza Strip, as well as other military installations and a small number of villages in Samaria." In an accompanying letter, Sharon undertook to implement the steps required in accordance with the Roadmap presented by President Bush in June 2002.

In a speech immediately before the implementation of the plan, Sharon stated: "The day has arrived. We are beginning the most difficult and painful step of all—evacuating our communities from the Gaza Strip and Northern Samaria. [...] It is no secret that I, like many others, believed and hoped that we could forever hold on to Netzarim and Kfar Darom. However, the changing reality in this country, in this region, and in the world, required another reassessment and changing of positions." Sharon explained his decision in the following terms: "Gaza cannot be held onto forever. Over one million Palestinians live there, and they double their numbers with every generation. They live in incredibly cramped refugee camps, in poverty and squalor, in hotbeds of ever-increasing hatred, with no hope whatsoever on the horizon."

Sharon originally intended to evacuate 21 Jewish settlements in the West Bank, in coordination with the construction of the Security Barrier, alongside the evacuation of 17 settlements in the Gaza Strip. However, pressure from various quarters eventually led him to confine the withdrawal in northern Samaria to just four settlements.

On June 6, 2004, the Israeli government approved the Disengagement Plan, and on October 26 a majority of 67 Members of Knesset voted in favor of Sharon's proposal. On February 20, 2005, the government approved the evacuation of 21 Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria. In August–September 2005, Israel duly evacuated four Jewish settlements in northern Samaria (Ganim, Kadim, Homesh, and Sa-Nur), and all the Jewish settlements in Gush Katif (Neve Dekalim, Morag, Gadid, Gan Or, Bedolah, Bnei Atzmon, Slav, Pe'at Sadeh, Rafah Yam, Katif, Ganei Tal, Netzer Hazani, Kfar Darom, Netzarim, Nisanit, Dugit, and Elei Sinai). On September 11, 2005 the IDF redeployed along the Green Line outside the Gaza Strip.





# Annapolis Conference

## 2007-2008

The Annapolis Conference was held on November 27-28, 2007 at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. The conference was attended by representatives of Israel, the PLO, the “Quartet” (the EU, US, UN, and Russia), and representatives from most of the Arab League countries. Unlike the Oslo Accords and the Wye Memorandum, but similarly to the Madrid Conference, the Annapolis Conference did not seek to summarize preceding discussions, but rather to open a new page in the negotiations. The purpose of the conference was to restart the peace process, which had been frozen since 2001, and to kick-start intensive negotiations toward a permanent Israeli-Palestinian agreement. The Israeli delegation was headed by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, and the Palestinian delegation was headed by Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas, in his capacity as Chairman of the PLO, and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

After the conference, a Negotiations Administration was established within the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office. The administration was headed by Brig.-Gen. (Rtd.) Udi Dekel, and its staff were chosen jointly by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. The negotiations proceeded simultaneously on three levels:

1. Leaders—Olmert and Abbas discussed the core issues and formulated an overall perception of the peace process;
2. The political echelon—the heads of the negotiating teams, Livni and Abu Alaa, discussed the core issues and served as a steering committee for the process;
3. The professional echelon—Udi Dekel and Saeb Erekat coordinated the discussions and managed 12 expert committees that discussed the different professional aspects.

The negotiations took place over eight months, including around 300 meetings on the various levels.

### Borders

Regarding the question of borders, the discussions were based on the idea of land swaps between Israel and Palestine in order to resolve the inherent tension between the principled positions of each side. The Palestinian side emphasized UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, which was adopted a few months after the 1967 War and called on the sides to reach peace treaties based on an Israeli withdrawal from territories it had occupied in the war. From the Palestinian perspective, this applied to *all* the territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, accounting for 22 percent of mandatory Palestine. Israel argued that consideration must be given to ensuring defensible borders and to demographic facts created on the ground since the 1967 War. Accordingly, the land swaps were intended, on the one hand, to maintain the overall size of the Palestinian state according to the area of territories occupied in 1967, while at the same time encouraging the support of the Israeli public for the process by reducing the number of Israelis who would be required to leave the West Bank.

On September 16, 2008, after the rounds of negotiations were completed, Olmert proposed that Israel annex 6.5% of the West Bank (380 sq.km.). This area included 43 of the 138 Jewish settlements and neighborhoods in the area, and 84% of the 486,000 Israelis living over the Green Line at the time. In return, Olmert proposed to transfer areas inside Israel equivalent to 5.8% of the area of the West Bank, together with a land corridor between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which he calculated at 0.7% based on its importance to the Palestinians (though





its actual size was just one-tenth of this figure). Israel insisted that this corridor must remain under its sovereignty, based on the argument that before June 1967 there had been no land connection between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Olmert believed that these formulas would allow Abbas to claim to the Palestinian public that he had secured land swaps on a one-to-one basis.

Unlike the Camp David proposals, but similarly to the Taba process, Israel's proposals for the borders prioritized demographic and political considerations over security. This was reflected in an attempt to annex as many Israelis as possible without any additional Palestinian population.

The Palestinians officially proposed land swaps of up to 1.9% of the West Bank, including 63% of Israelis living beyond the Green Line. However, it became clear on several occasions that they were willing to agree on up to 4% annexation, provided the agreement was approved in a Palestinian referendum. The Palestinians flatly rejected any possibility that Jewish settlements and Israeli citizens could remain within the Palestinian state, and also opposed any evacuation of Palestinians from within the blocs to be annexed by Israel. Both sides presented detailed maps but did not leave these with the other side. Mahmud Abbas later recalled that after Ehud Olmert presented a map to him at Olmert's home in Jerusalem on September 16, 2008, the Israeli prime minister refused to leave the map in his hand, and accordingly Abbas was forced to recreate it from memory on a napkin.

In a column published in the *New York Times* in September 2011, Olmert summarized his proposal and claimed that the parameters for peace were clear and were included in the proposal he submitted to Abbas in September 2008. He explained that the proposal was based on the borders of June 4, 1967, with agreed land swaps.





During the Annapolis talks in 2007-2008 between Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and PLO Chairman and Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas, Abbas presented the familiar Palestinian positions from Camp David and Taba. The Palestinian concessions included the annexation of the Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem to Israel (except for Har Homa, which was built after the Oslo Accords), and agreement that the Jewish Quarter, half of the Armenian quarter, and the Western Wall would all remain under Israeli sovereignty. Olmert's position stated that all the Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem would remain under Israeli sovereignty; to these he added the village of Beit Safafa in southern Jerusalem, which had been divided in the 1948 War of Independence and reunified after 1967. As for the Historical Basin (also known as the Holy Basin, a term referring to the Old City, Mt. Zion, the City of David in Silwan, the Kidron Valley, and the Mount of Olives), Olmert assumed that neither side would relinquish its claim to sovereignty. Accordingly, he proposed that for an undefined period this area would be managed jointly by Israel and the Palestinians, under the auspices of an international committee with five members—Israel, Palestine, the US, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. Olmert himself later noted that he “proposed a solution in Jerusalem according to which the Jewish parts would be under Israeli sovereignty and the Arab parts under the sovereignty of the Palestinian state. I believed that it would be possible to find a solution in the Holy Basin, and this was defined precisely on a map. The area would be managed by five countries, including Israel, and would remain open to all religions and believers.”

One of the principles that guided the Israeli negotiators during the talks on a permanent agreement was to avoid any solution that would leave Israeli security in a more vulnerable situation than at present. Accordingly, Israel sought to protect two key interests: The Palestinian state must not allow the growth of terrorist infrastructure on its territory or serve as a platform for an attack against Israel if an anti—Israeli coalition emerged on the eastern front in the medium or long term; and terror originating or activated from the Palestinian state must be prevented.

The emerging arrangement thus sought to meet Israel's needs while minimizing the violation of Palestinian sovereignty, and included the following key elements: Firstly, the Palestinian state would be demilitarized and would not possess military capabilities threatening Israel; neither would it be permitted to invite or allow any foreign army to be present in its territory. The Palestinian security forces would have limited access to airplanes, tanks, canons, and rockets; and lists of permitted and prohibited weapons would be agreed. Israel would be able to use Palestinian airspace for its security needs, in addition to civilian use. Secondly, the Palestinians would establish a strong internal security force capable of imposing law and order, combating terrorism, preventing terrorist infrastructures, and preventing weapons smuggling and infiltration. Thirdly, two early warning stations would operate in the area; the Palestinians agreed to this on condition that the stations would be operated by American rather than Israeli personnel. Fourthly, international forces would be deployed in sensitive areas for both





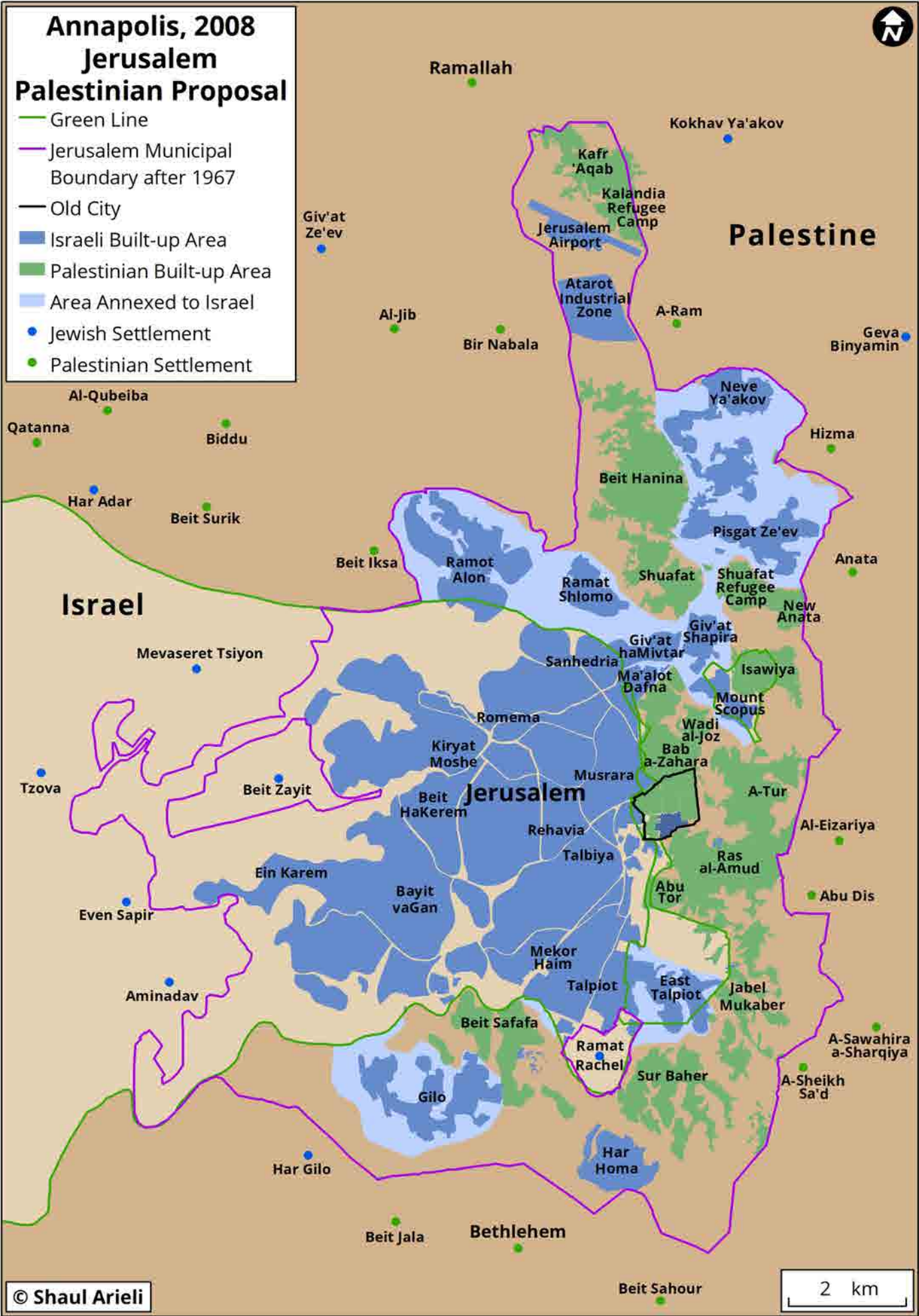
sides, particularly along the external borders of the Palestinian state with Jordan and Egypt and at international border crossings. The Palestinians expressed concern at a possible threat from Israel requiring a force to protect them against invasion, but Israel refused to accept the idea of an international buffer force between the two sides. The functions of the international forces would include supervising the implementation of the security arrangements, and a coordination and liaison mechanism would be established between all the sides.

Refugees

The issue of refugees was the most sensitive, in light of the Palestinian narrative that insists on Israel’s exclusive moral and legal responsibility for the creation and perpetuation of the refugee problem. Discussions between Mahmud Abbas and Ehud Olmert exposed the huge gap between the positions of the two sides regarding the “right of return” of Palestinian refugees to Israel and the number of refugees Israel was expected to absorb. Olmert refused to recognize any right of return, but agreed to absorb 1,000 refugees a year over five years as a humanitarian gesture. Conversely, Abbas stressed that he was not empowered to relinquish the right of return enjoyed by every refugee. He adhered to the figures raised during earlier rounds of negotiations, according to which Israel was to absorb 10,000 refugees a year for 10 years (the discussions of the Refugee Committee later yielded a willingness by the Palestinians to reduce this to a total of 80,000). However, it is worth recalling a comment by Abbas in 2008 revealing his willingness to restrict the number of refugees who would be allowed to return to Israel : “It would be illogical to ask Israel to take five million [refugees], or indeed one million. That would mean the end of Israel.”

Under pressure from US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the sides agreed to establish an international mechanism to address the refugee problem. The body would be responsible for providing compensation, rehabilitating refugees in the Arab host countries, absorption in third countries, and the return of refugees to the Palestinian state. Both sides agreed that after the establishment of a Palestinian state and the activation of the mechanism, the UN agency for refugees (UNRWA) would be disbanded. The Palestinian side argued that the solution to the refugee problem must be “just and agreed,” and must be based on the Arab Peace Initiative and their interpretation of UN Resolution 194, which embodies the right of return. Israel retorted that if there is a right of return, this applies only to the Palestinian state, since Israel is the national home of the Jewish people and Palestine of the Palestinians. The Palestinians demanded that Israel accept moral and legal responsibility or apologize as a core component. Israel rejected this demand and agreed only to recognize the suffering of the Palestinians. The Palestinians demanded restitution and compensation for material and non-material damage, including compensation for the host countries, while Israel proposed that only the refugees themselves would receive compensation, and that this should also include Jewish refugees who fled from the Arab countries. Regarding the funding of the international mechanism, the Palestinians demanded that Israel pay a large proportion of the fund due to its liability for the harm caused to the Palestinians. Israel refused to accept overall liability, but agreed to provide a fixed and predetermined amount toward the fund.

The understandings and decisions reached by the two sides at the Annapolis talks were never implemented. At the end of 2008 Israel launched Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and a few months later Prime Minister Olmert resigned in order to face trial on corruption charges.





# President Trump's Vision for Peace

January 28, 2020

The Vision for Peace of US President Donald Trump was presented to the world on January 28, 2020. The plan had been prepared over the preceding three years by the US team to the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, headed by Jared Kushner, a senior advisor to the President.

The Vision for Peace constitutes a statement of intentions and an outline plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with the participation of Arab states and under US leadership. The plan is based on the two-state solution, while overtly adopting the Israeli narrative. The plan prioritizes Israel's positions concerning security, Jerusalem, the settlements, and refugees; adopts an unusual interpretation of UN Resolution 242 that contradicts other decisions by the UN Security Council and General Assembly; and ignores the achievements of the previous rounds of negotiations and the points at which they ended.

The plan includes the following key points:

**Borders:** Palestine will not have any borders with neighboring countries (such as Egypt to the west or Jordan to the east), and it will be entirely surrounded by Israeli territory. The length of the border between the two countries will be 1,700 km. Palestine will include 17 Israeli enclaves with 16,500 Israeli residents, and 130 km of roads will connect these enclaves to other areas annexed to Israel. Within Israel there will be 43 Palestinian enclaves with a population of 106,000. Land swaps will be at a rate of 1:2.13 in Israel's favor, and will include the transfer of some 150,000 Arab citizens of Israel, along with their towns and villages, to Palestinian sovereignty. A land corridor will connect the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

**Security:** Israel will maintain superior security powers in Palestine, which will be demilitarized and will not hold heavy weapons. Israel will be responsible for the security of the Israeli enclaves in Palestine and for that of the Palestinian enclaves in Israel, as well as along the connecting highways. Israel will control Palestine's external borders and border crossings, its airspace and maritime space, and its electromagnetic spectrum. The Security Barrier will be dismantled and a new barrier (four times as long) will be constructed in accordance with the new border.

**Jerusalem:** All of Jerusalem will remain united under Israeli sovereignty, including the Old City and the Temple Mount (93 percent of the city's current territory). The only exceptions will be the neighborhoods situated outside the Security Barrier. Freedom of worship and access at the holy places will be ensured under Israeli security control. The Palestinian capital will comprise three disconnected units of territory, all situated outside the area recognized as Al-Quds by the Arab and Muslim world (historical Jerusalem).

**Refugees:** No Palestinian refugees will return to Israel. Israel will have a veto over the identity of any refugees who are permitted to settle in Palestine. The issue of housing and compensation will be handled by an international mechanism. A separate international mechanism will be established to regulate compensation for Jewish refugees from the Arab countries.

The Vision for Peace uses most of the key concepts of the preceding process—two states, a Palestinian capital in Jerusalem, land swaps, territorial contiguity, demilitarization, and so forth. However, it attaches aspects to all these terms that contradict anything previously agreed by the two sides or by the international community, and particularly by the US itself.





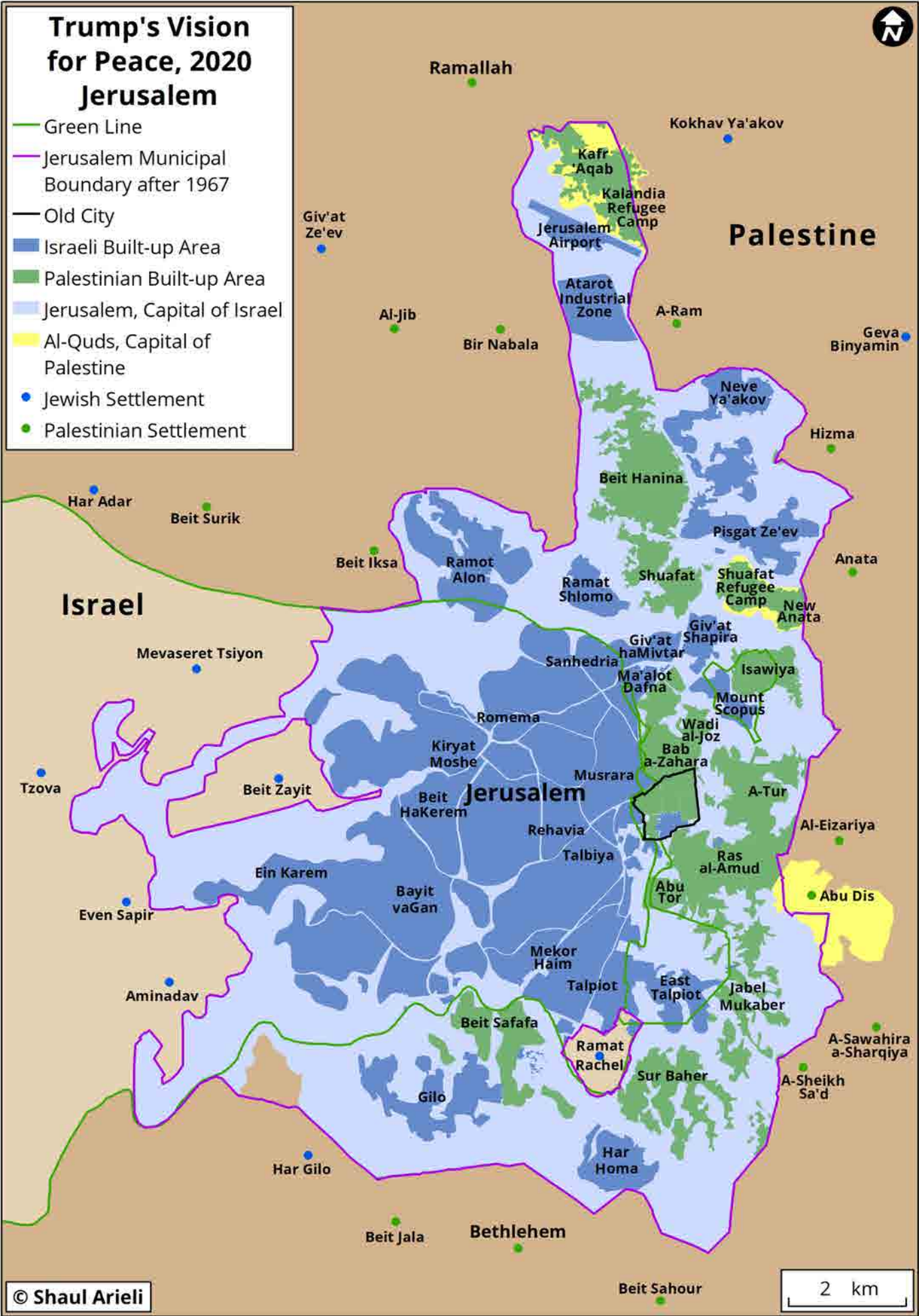
Parameters based on the international resolutions that were redefined beyond recognition in the Vision for Peace include: borders based on the 1967 lines, with land swaps on a one-to-one basis; a demilitarized Palestinian state with extensive security arrangements; two capitals in Jerusalem based on a demographic division and special arrangements at the holy places; and the return of refugees to Palestine, with compensation and other arrangements.

The realization of the Vision for Peace would raise numerous and substantial difficulties in the political, territorial, economic, and demographic realms. The contiguity of the Palestinian state would be damaged and would not permit a reasonable fabric of life with regard to law and order, the economy, and communal life. The plan would require the IDF and Israel to devote enormous resources and personnel to routine security needs throughout the Palestinian territory. Moreover, the plan undermines international treaties on the right to property, freedom of movement, and other rights.

The Palestinian position published in response to the Vision for Peace emphasizes that no Palestinian or Arab partner can be found for resuming negotiations or for signing a permanent agreement otherwise than on the basis of the common interpretation of the UN resolutions and the outcomes of previous rounds of negotiation.

Israel under Benjamin Netanyahu, who was a key partner in formulating the plan, welcomed Trump's Vision for Peace. The fervent minority in Israel that favors unilateral annexation saw the plan as evidence that the Trump Administration offered a one-time chance to annex all the Israeli enclaves, while eliminating most of the Palestinian enclaves.

The Palestinians, under Mahmud Abbas, were excluded from the process at the start and did not cooperate with the US team when invited to do so. They utterly rejected the plan. Reactions in the Arab world and the international community ranged from neutral and noncommittal statements through polite rejection (an insistence on the Arab Peace Initiative) and on to outright negation and support for the Palestinian position. In the final analysis, the Vision for Peace failed due to the inability to locate any Palestinian and/or Arab partner for its implementation.





# Proposal for an Optimal Border between Israel and Palestine

Assuming that the agreed basis—and the approach accepted by the international community—for a two-state solution is a return to the 1967 borders, decisions concerning the future border between Israel and Palestine must begin with the principle of land swaps. As a matter of fact, this principle guided the negotiations between the two sides until Netanyahu returned to power in Israel in 2009. Land swaps create three interrelated “costs:” The need to evacuate settlements from the West Bank and absorb their residents in Israel; damage to the fabric of Palestinian life and Palestinian contiguity due to the annexation by Israel of “blocs” and “fingers” penetrating Palestinian territory; and damage to Israeli communities close to the border that will lose land due to the land swaps and find themselves close to the new border.

Damage to the fabric of Palestinian life includes a wide range of factors: Damage to economic and family connections; impaired access to regional centers and medical services; the inability of the residents of villages to continue to hold or farm their land; a reduction in the number of residents employed in agriculture (permanent or temporary); reduced access to water sources, and so forth. On the other side of the border, the transfer of land from Israel to Palestine will cause economic and other damage to the Israeli communities that use this land, which must be examined according to such parameters as the size of the area, its distance from the community or from vital infrastructures, the ownership of the area, land uses, future development plans, and so forth.

In the internal Israeli context, the most difficult question is the scope of evacuation of settlements, particularly those distant from the Green Line. Annexing such “isolated” settlements will cause extensive damage to the fabric of Palestinian life, and will also require more extensive land swaps, thus also increasing the damage to Israeli communities inside the Green Line. Any attempt to restrict the cost of one component will raise the remaining two “costs.” Annexing more Jewish settlements will limit the need for the agreed (or coerced) evacuation of the settlements, but will increase the damage to the fabric of Palestinian life and to Israeli communities near the border. Conversely, in order to limit the damage to Palestinians and Israelis along both sides of the border, more Jewish settlers must be evacuated from the West Bank in order to reduce the scope of the land swaps.

An examination of all these components and considerations suggests that the optimal border between Israel and Palestine will mainly include the annexation of settlement blocs near the Green Line. The proposed border requires land swaps of 242 sq.km., representing 3.9 percent of the area of the Palestinian state (6,205 sq.km.). The length of the proposed border will be 741 km. The number of Jewish settlements in the annexed areas will be 49 (including 12 neighborhoods in East Jerusalem), and the number of Israelis in these areas will be around 513,000 (79% of all Israelis who live east of the Green Line). Inside Israel, 20 Israeli communities will lose 20% or more of their land, and 24 Israeli communities will be within one kilometer of the proposed border. On the other side, 69 Palestinian communities will lose an average of 15.2% of their land, although there will be no damage to Palestinian territorial contiguity or transportation.





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