

# Jerusalem



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

For 61 years of its existence Israel has fought and won three wars. One of the historic wars was fought in 1967, which lasted six days. The first Jerusalem war was fought in 1948. The Israelites call this war the “ War of Independence”, while the Palestinian Arabs refer to it as “ al-Nakba”.

However, one of the most remarkable clashes occurred months before its declaration in May, 1948. This is when the Haganah, the predecessor to Israel’s Defence Department, fought with Arab militias (Kimche, 370). This clash took place in towns of Palestine and on the connecting roads.

When the battle began, Arabs seemed to have the upper hand for the first few months. In March, 1948, a large percentage of the Haganah was in ruins and areas to the west of Jerusalem were under siege (Kimche, 370). They captured residents and ambushed Arab convoys. The Jewish population living in Palestine battled mercilessly against the Palestinian Arabs. With time the Jews conquered a numbers of towns as well as villages. They managed to overtake the war in their favour.

By 1947, as a result of immigration there were almost 500, 000 Jews at Palestine’s shores. Some Jews were from the eastern side of Europe fleeing violence. They had the desire for going to Israel, which was their ancestral territory to attain the resurrection of sovereignty for the Jews, which was a messianic prophesy.

Britain could not settle the problem in Palestine; hence, it transferred this problem to the United Nations (UN).

The UN appointed an inquiry commission named the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which made recommendations that

Palestine should be partitioned to have the Arab and Jewish state. After the partition the two sides got engaged in the war.

### Leadership and the Role It Played in the Struggle for Jerusalem

The structure of symmetric conflicts, which we have been analyzing, scarce conflict awareness and low power balance, i. e., the reciprocal understanding of living conditions and goals of the other side, tend to mean a very small chance of doing well in terms of negotiations and reaching a sustainable peace (Collins & Lapierre, 335).

This shows that unless there is an increased balance of power between Palestine and Israel, and unless each of them tends to consider the side of the other partner at its own level in terms of rights, status, and needs, then the chances of reaching a phase of sustainable piece are unrealistic (Collins & Lapierre, 335). There are two mistakes, which involve the Oslo Agreement. The first one was that Israel decided to negotiate with those partners, who were weak. Secondly, the PLO instead of the Palestinians from the inside hadcore issues of the conflict, which had not been addressed: in particular, the creation of a sovereign state was the main objective of the Palestinian side. From this scenario, we can deduce that the situation on the ground at that particular moment was not promising. When we look at the balance of power, Israel is much stronger as compared to Palestine.

Despite diplomatic attempts meant to foster the national unity between the government of Hamas and Fatah, these two sides are still very far from reaching an agreement, and the separation between the West Bank and Gaza is more evident than that one before. Initially, the lack of peace and

unity has negative impacts on the capacity of the Palestinian people that tend to close the gap with their neighbours Israelis in terms of the power balance. Because of the awareness of the conflict, the strong support, which comes from the government's decision to attack Gaza in December 2008-January 2009, was received from the Israeli population, on the one side, and increased the anti-Israeli feeling among their Palestinian neighbours on the other side, further increasing the distance between Palestinians and Israelis. This resulted in an inverse understanding of the request of their opponent.

Therefore, the objective of this article still remains the main question: how to increase conflict awareness and power balance. It will be too immature to present a "package of instructions" to achieve a certain result. Yet, there are two main major events, which will certainly bring it closer: first, re-establishing the Palestinian unity of factions and addressing the core issues that tend to bring about a conflict, such as the capital of the Palestinian state and its borders (i. e., the future of settlements and the status of Jerusalem) and the problem of refugees.

#### Strengths and weaknesses of Arabs and Jews

Yishuv, which is the community of Jews that was in Palestine, was a smaller group. This small group was tightly held together. This made it easier to effectively manage and control the group during the war. It was well-educated and people employed their skills for the strategic preparation for the war (Collins & Lapierre, 319). They put in place plans that would ensure they won the war. Both Arabs and Jews applied the use of the combination of tactics and strategies during the war.

The two warring sides were highly mobilized in a large number to get engaged in the war. Leaders sought to have groups of soldiers to be taken to the battle field. Leaders took it upon themselves to mobilize their people for the war. The two had committed leaders, who were service-oriented. Leaders were a source of motivation for fighters. They made adequate preparations and sought appropriate arms to be used in the war.

### Weaknesses of Arabs

The illiteracy of the Arab people cost them dearly in the war. High levels of illiteracy lead to people making reckless moves, which resulted in deaths and losses in the war. Disunity leads to the split of people into groups fighting separately (Collins & Lapierre, 319). If all people had fought on the same war front and had been better organized, the results would have probably been different. Fighting in small groups made people easier to be conquered.

Leaders were not service-oriented and could not coordinate people in the war. The group was disorganized, as leaders were poor at the coordination of activities during the war. The educated and richer Christian population was afraid of the Muslims, who formed the majority. This phobia meant that there was tension among the two groups, which could result in a war at any moment.

### Geography and Logistics

Jewish zones were adjacent to the coast. The coastal region was well-developed as compared to other Jewish settlements. Communication could be carried out in the coastal region. Settlements were widely dispersed. They

served as road links. It's important to note that road links were easily targeted for attacks, which were frequent because of the fact that the roads passed through an Arab settlement. The attack on the roads made it impossible for convoys to deliver food to Jerusalem. This resulted in a desperate situation because of the lack of food.

## International Factors and the Role Nations Played in the Struggle for Jerusalem

After 30 years of the national conflict the British Mandate was between Arabic Palestine and Jewish Zionists, while there was no agreement found between the parties, the British government went ahead and terminated the Mandate in February and November, 1947. The partition of Palestine was voted by the United Nations General Assembly (Collins & Lapierre, 319). This voting resulted in a civil war, whereby the Palestinian Arabs were supported by the Liberation Army of Arabs, and Jewish Palestinian also went on rampage against each other, while the region was ruled by Britain. Full-scale wars started in 1948, when Israel decided to declare its independence, and the forces of Syria, Egypt, Transjordan and Iraq fought against the Israelis. 20, 000 lives were lost during this war.

It was under the British mandate that the office of the " Mufti of Jerusalem", which was traditionally limited by the geographical and authority scope, was then refashioned into the one with the " Grand Mufti of Palestine". Moreover, the supreme council for Muslims was then established, and assigned various duties, which were religious endowments, and the administration and appointment of local muftis and religious judges. During the time of the

Ottoman Empire, these duties were fulfilled by bureaucracy in Istanbul (Collins & Lapierre, 319). When dealing with the Palestinian Arabs, the British government negotiated with the elite instead of middle or lower cases (Collins & Lapierre, 321). The elite chose Hajj Amin al-Husayni to be the Grand Mufti despite of him being young and receiving very few votes from the Islamic leaders in Jerusalem (Collins & Lapierre, 322-327).

During the whole Mandate period, Palestinian politics was dominated by the rivalry between al-Nashashibi and mufti. The failure of Palestinian leaders was ascribed by Khalidi to be enrolling mass support. These was because of experiences they gained during the period of the Ottoman Empire, for they were a part of the ruling elite accustomed to give commands, which were respected and followed (Collins & Lapierre, 335).