

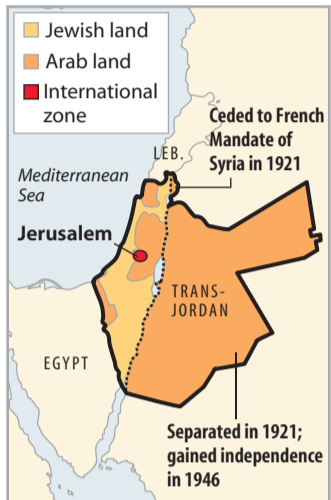
Israel's road to INDEPENDENCE

The struggle for statehood is marked by a series of conflicts between Jews and Arabs. How Israel's borders were first formed:

1946 The beginning of a new nation

Great Britain took control of Palestine in 1917 and made several attempts to establish a government. By 1946, international pressure grew to finally create a Jewish state, which Arabs opposed.

British Mandate of Palestine



1946
The Jewish Agency offers a plan to divide Palestine, with Jerusalem as an international zone.

1947
The British ask the United Nations to form a government.

1946 Jewish Agency plan



Nov. 29, 1947
The United Nations unveils its plan, with Jerusalem as an international zone. Jews accept it; Arabs reject it.

1947 U.N. partition plan



Nov. 30- Dec. 11, 1947
To protest the U.N. plan, Arabs attack Jewish settlements.

Dec. 12-31, 1947
Jewish reprisals increase in response to continuing Arab attacks. In 20 days, 126 Jews and more than 90 Arabs are killed.

1948 January-March 1948
Fighting intensifies. In March, Arabs try to block roads to Jerusalem and attack Jewish transports. About 90 Jews and 330 Arabs are killed in the Haifa and Jerusalem areas.

April 1-May 14, 1948
Attacks occur almost daily along major roads to Jerusalem in the six weeks before Britain permanently withdraws from Palestine.

May 14, 1948
Jewish leaders declare Israel's independence in Tel Aviv.

May 15, 1948
The first Arab-Israeli war breaks out when six Arab armies invade Israel. A counterattack is mounted within 10 days.

June 11-July 8, 1948
A truce is signed ending the first war. Fighting begins 28 days later.

July 19-Oct. 14, 1948
A second three-month truce is mediated by the United Nations through Count Folke Bernadotte, who was assassinated in Jerusalem on Sept. 17.

Oct. 15, 1948
Israeli forces launch aggressive attacks to drive out the Arab armies and secure borders.

January 1949
Israeli forces open roads to Jerusalem that had been closed since May 1948. Jews are driven out of the Old City by Arab forces. Armistice discussions begin with Egypt.

Feb. 24-July 20, 1949
Armistice agreements are signed with Egypt (Feb. 24), Lebanon (March 23), Jordan (April 3) and Syria (July 20). Iraq withdraws its forces without an agreement.

SOURCES: The Routledge Atlas of the Arab-Israeli Conflict by Martin Gilbert, Jewish Virtual Library, GlobalSecurity.org, Sun-Sentinel research Staff graphic/Belinda Long-Ivey bplong@sun-sentinel.com

War breaks out

After months of fighting, a full-scale war breaks out on May 15, 1948, less than 24 hours after Israel declares statehood and the British leave Palestine.



During the war, Arabs flee to Egypt-controlled Gaza Strip or Jordan-controlled West Bank.

Israeli-conquered land that was returned to Egypt by January 1949.

Armed forces in 1948

While the Arab armies had better equipment and fewer troops, Jewish forces had more experience because many of them were World War II veterans.

COUNTRY	ESTIMATED NUMBERS*	*Figures reflect initial number of troops on May 15. By October, Arab forces grew from about 25,000 to 55,000. In contrast, Israeli forces grew to 100,000 and included 20,000 to 25,000 World War II veterans.
Israel	35,000	
Egypt	8,000-10,000	
Jordan	4,000-5,000	
Syria	3,000-4,000	
Lebanon	1,000-2,000	
Saudi Arabia & Iraq	2,000 or less	

The fight for Jerusalem

In April 1948, Arab armies tried to block the main roads to Jerusalem, isolating the city. It took Israeli forces eight months to reopen the roads.



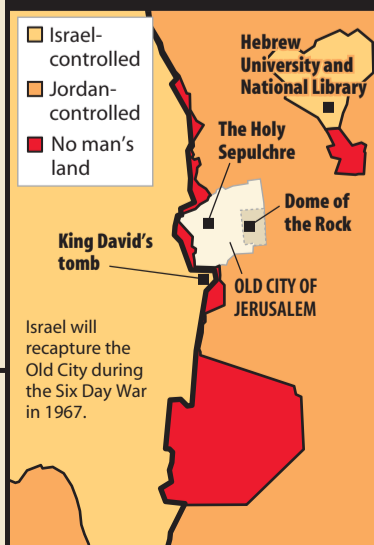
When the war ends

Jews control more land than originally ceded in the 1947 proposal.

Israel loses about 4,000 soldiers and 2,000 civilians — about 1 percent of its 650,000 population.

The United Nations estimates more than 725,000 Arabs fled Palestine between April and December 1948. More than 160,000 return to their homes by 1949.

By January 1949, Jerusalem is cut in half, with Arab armies controlling the eastern portion, including the Old City.



Land ceded by the U.N. by May 14, 1948, when Israel declared its independence.

Land kept under Israeli control after Arab armies invaded on May 15, 1948.

Additional land gained by Israeli forces by June 1, 1948.

Additional land gained by Israeli forces between June and November 1948.

Additional land gained by Israeli forces between November 1948 and January 1949.