

What Should We Know About Palestine?

WHAT IS ZIONISM?

Zionism is an ideology calling for the **creation of a Jewish homeland through the colonization of Palestine**. Theodore Herzl outlined it in his 1897 book *The Jewish State*. Though **most Jews were not Zionists**, the ideology gained backing from European colonial powers. In 1917, Britain declared support for a “Jewish homeland,” though **Palestine was already home to Palestinians**.

Early Zionists, such as David Ben Gurion, made clear their intent to “brisk away” – i.e. ethnically cleanse – Palestinians.

WHAT IS PALESTINE?

Palestine is the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, historically home for centuries to a predominantly Arab population called Palestinians.

Israel’s creation in 1948 displaced over 700,000 Palestinians and destroyed hundreds of villages—an event known as the Nakba, or “catastrophe.” Today, Palestine usually refers to the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip—still under Israeli military occupation and blockade. **Palestinians continue to seek freedom, self-determination, and justice.**

WHAT IS THE FIGHTING ABOUT?

Land and Displacement

Palestinians face **ongoing land loss** through Israeli settlements, home demolitions, and military occupation. They are denied both the right to return to ancestral homes and the right to a sovereign homeland.

Human Rights Violations & Discrimination

As Israel defines itself as a Jewish state, Palestinians face **unequal treatment** under the law. This includes arbitrary detention (over 10,000 political prisoners), harsh movement restrictions through blockades and checkpoints, and **routine deadly violence**.



PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI CASUALTIES, FROM 2000-OCT 6, 2023



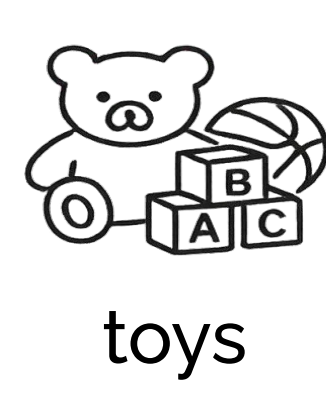
Post-October 7, 2023

Israel has killed an estimated hundreds of thousands of Palestinians since Oct 7, 2023. Exact numbers are not known since the fighting is ongoing and many people are missing or presumed dead.

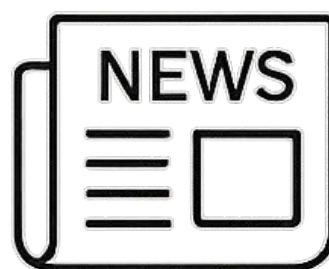
Casualties Inside vs Outside Borders

During this period, about 90% of casualties were Palestinian, almost all killed on their own land. Israelis made up ~10% of casualties, with half killed outside Israel’s legal borders.

SOME ITEMS NOT ALLOWED INTO GAZA BEFORE OCT 7, 2023



toys



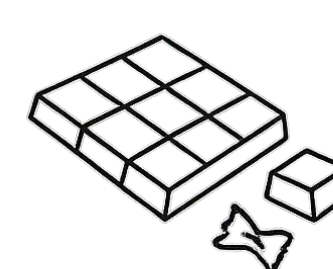
newspapers



pasta



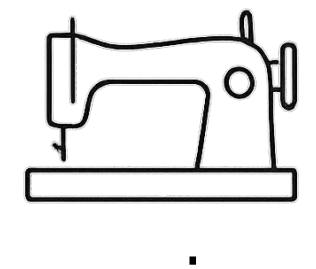
instruments



chocolate



wheelchairs



sewing machines

For almost 20 years, Israel has imposed a blockade on Gaza that prevents thousands of items from entering. These are items that allow people to live **healthy, dignified lives**.

IS THERE A SOLUTION?

Some advocate a **two-state solution**: an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel—often along the 1967 lines with land swaps—paired with security guarantees, arrangements for Jerusalem, and a resolution of the refugee question. Others call for a single, democratic state where Palestinians and Jewish Israelis share equal rights, protections, and political representation regardless of ethnicity or religion.

Whichever framework prevails, the status quo—one state controlling another people through routine physical and psychological oppression—is unacceptable. As Pope Paul VI declared: “If you want peace, work for justice.” A just peace requires Catholics and all people of conscience to insist on justice.

