

Chronologies

Chronology of Events in Israel and Palestine

The decision taken by the United States on 6 December 2017 to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and subsequent move of the US embassy from Tel Aviv sets much of the agenda of the Arab-Israeli conflict for 2018. In response to the US decision, the Arab League announces a diplomatic drive for the United Nations to recognize Palestine as a state with the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) decides to suspend its recognition of the State of Israel and end security and economic cooperation until Israel recognizes Palestine as a state and the International Court of Justice announces that it has received a complaint filed by the State of Palestine against the US over its decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem. Outside of the diplomatic arena, the US decision sparks a new surge in protests and violence in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem, especially as of 30 March, Palestine's Land Day, and 14 May, the inauguration date for the new diplomatic delegation, the ceremony for which is attended by representatives of a number of countries including, Austria, Romania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Albania, FYROM, Serbia, Ukraine and Georgia. The inauguration takes place a day before the Palestinians commemorate Nakba (catastrophe in Arabic), which remembers the 700,000 Palestinians who were expelled or forced to flee with the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent Arab-Israeli war. Washington's decision to move its embassy to the Holy City, thereby fulfilling one of President Trump's electoral promises, is joined by that of Guatemala, which inaugurates its delegation on 16 May.

Other countries also announce their transfer to Jerusalem, including Honduras, Brazil and Romania, the latter being the first EU member country to adopt the measure, which goes against the Union's criteria. Turkey, in contrast, expels the Israeli consul in Istanbul over the death of 60 Palestinians in Gaza in the context of the protests against the embassy opening, a decision that Israel responds to with a similar measure. Clashes between Palestinian demonstrators and the Israeli army are the most intense since 2014, as are the missile attacks launched from Gaza and Israel's corresponding response. The attacks continue unabated throughout the year prompting Palestine to file a complaint in May to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, the UN Human Rights Council's approval to urgently dispatch an independent international commission to investigate alleged violations and abuses in the Israeli military operations and the approval of a resolution in the UN General Assembly, backed by the Arab countries, which condemns Israel's response to the protests on Palestinian territory. In addition, there are two noteworthy ceasefires between Israel and Hamas in an effort to halt the spiral of violence in Gaza, agreed in talks brokered by Egypt and the UN on 21 July and 13 November. The second of these meetings leads to the resignation of the Israeli Defence Minister, Avigdor Lieberman, and leader of the ultra-right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home). But the change in direction of the Trump Administration's strategy towards Israel and Palestine with respect to the Obama Administration's guiding principles leads to other worrying developments in 2018, such as Washing-

ton's decision to cut US funding of the United Nations Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), a decision aimed at forcing Palestine to resume the deadlocked peace talks, dynamited by the US President himself when he recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, ordered the closure of the PLO delegation in Washington and downgraded the Consulate General in Jerusalem, which acted as representation for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and which is absorbed by the new embassy in Jerusalem. In this regard, Donald Trump announces, in the context of the United Nations General Assembly in September, that the new peace plan for the region, ambitiously dubbed the "Deal of the Century," will be ready to be presented in early 2019. The deal contemplates the two-state solution, despite Jordan's rejection at the beginning of the month of the US proposal to create a confederation between Jordan and Palestine, insisting that the two-state solution is the only viable way of resolving the conflict between Palestine and Israel. The year's events are also marked by Israel's growing involvement in the conflict in neighbouring Syria - particularly with attacks on Iranian targets - and by two new laws in Israel: the widely criticized nation-state law, which sparks large-scale protests in Tel Aviv and other cities, and the debate on the final draft of the new law on applying the death penalty for crimes of terrorism, crimes against humanity and high treason, driven forward by Yisrael Beiteinu and which extends the authority to apply the death penalty to civil courts and eliminates the criteria of unanimity in the court ruling. As regards the Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories, throughout 2018,

new constructions are approved, along with extensions to various settlements in the West Bank, like Adam or Efrat, which lead to unrest at the entrances to the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary and on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip. In September, however, the Israeli Supreme Court authorizes the demolition of the Bedouin town of Khan al-Ahmar after rejecting the appeal filed by its residents. This ruling leads the PLO to file a new complaint against Israel at the ICC. The year in Israel ends with a disagreement in the government coalition over the military service law for ultra-Orthodox Jews, leading to early elections being scheduled for 2019 by Benjamin Netanyahu, who is being investigated in a number of different corruption probes.

January 2018

Israel

- On 4 January the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) gives its preliminary backing to the possibility of applying the death penalty for anyone found guilty of terrorism. The bill, sponsored by the Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman from the far-right Yisrael Beiteinu, is condemned by the Palestinian authorities, who warn that its definitive approval will lead to state-sponsored terrorism against Palestinians.
- On 6 January, in Bethlehem, a group of Christian Palestinians attack the car carrying the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem in protest against his church's decision to sell land to Jewish groups.

Palestine

- On 4 January hundreds of Palestinians demonstrate at a refugee camp in the north of the Gaza Strip in protest against the poor economic situation and the energy crisis.
- On 6 January the Arab League announces a diplomatic drive in the United Nations to gain Palestine's international recognition as a state with the borders established before the 1967 war and with East Jerusalem as its capital.
- On 7 January the Israeli government restores the Gaza Strip's power supply

after the PNA agrees to resume payments for the electricity Israel supplies to the Palestinian enclave.

- On 15 January the PLO executive committee votes in favour of suspending its recognition of the State of Israel, in light of the US decision on 6 December to recognize Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.

Peace Negotiations

- On 6 January Israel expresses its support for the Trump Administration's plans to cut US funding of UNRWA, if the measure is applied gradually. The threat is aimed at forcing Palestinians to resume negotiations which were dynamited by the US President himself when he recognized Jerusalem as the Israeli capital in December 2017.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 3 January the Israeli army bombs Hamas positions in the Gaza Strip, hours after three missiles fired from the Palestinian enclave land in the south of Israel.
- On 4 January a Palestinian is injured by shots fired by Israeli forces during clashes following the funeral of a Palestinian teenager who was killed on 3 January in clashes in the West Bank.
- On 15 January a young Palestinian is killed in clashes in Jayyous, the West Bank.
- On 17 January an Israeli military court extends the detention of the Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi until her trial on 31 January. The teenager was filmed in December 2017 hitting Israeli soldiers following the death of her cousin from a shot to the head fired by Israeli soldiers.
- On 17 January a Palestinian is killed in clashes with Israeli forces in Jenin, north of the West Bank. A further two demonstrators are arrested.

February 2018

Israel

- On 4 February the Egyptian army denies a report published the previous day in *The New York Times* on an Is-

raeli airstrike on jihadists in Sinai, authorized by Cairo.

- On 4 February the Israeli government starts the procedure of issuing notices to between 35,000 and 40,000 migrants from Sudan and Eritrea, asking them to leave the country within 60 days in exchange for financial support of 3,500 dollars and a flight ticket.
- On 9 February the Lebanese Energy Minister Cesar Abi Khalil announces that preparations are underway to explore an oil and gas field, following an agreement signed with Russian, Italian and French companies, despite it being partially located in waters disputed by Israel.
- On 10 February an Israeli helicopter intercepts and downs the first drone sent directly into Israeli airspace by Iran and not by Hezbollah. In addition, eight Israeli fighter jets attack a military facility close to the Syrian city of Palmyra, from where Iran had sent the drone. For its part, the defensive batteries of Bashar al-Assad's regime fire 25 missiles at Israeli warplanes, one of which is shot down and explodes in Galilea. This is the first Israeli fighter jet to have been shot down by enemy fire since the 1982 Lebanon War. The situation triggers a rapid escalation between Israel, Iran and Syria.
- On 13 February the Israeli police recommend that the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu be charged for bribery, fraud and breach of trust in the so-called Case 1000 and Case 2000. According to Case 1000, the Netanyahu received gifts to the value of more than 200,000 euros between 2007 and 2016 from the Australian businessman James Packer and the Hollywood film producer Arnon Milchan. According to Case 2000 Netanyahu held meetings as of 2009 with the owner of the media group in control of the *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper and *Ynet* news site, Arnon Mozes, to give positive news coverage of Netanyahu in exchange for a reduction in the circulation of the rival freesheet, *Israel Hayom*.
- On 25 February the Christian leaders in Israel close the Church of the Holy Sepulchre indefinitely to protest against the tax measures taken by the Israeli government, under which church-owned "commercial" land - i.e., land

not dedicated to worship - is taxable by Jerusalem.

- On 26 February the Israeli army arrests 10 Palestinians during a military operation in Nabi Saleh. All those arrested are family members of the young symbol of Palestinian resistance Ahed Tamimi, whose trial for slapping an Israeli soldier during a protest against the US decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel began on 13 February.

Palestine

- On 6 February the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warns of an imminent humanitarian catastrophe if fuel is not sent immediately to the Gaza Strip, where the entity says there are only enough reserves to keep critical services in operation for a period of 10 days, due to the struggle between the PNA and Hamas for control over the public services.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 5 February an Israeli is stabbed to death near the Ariel settlement in the West Bank, allegedly by a Palestinian assailant, who then fled the scene.
- On 7 February a Palestinian is shot down and killed by an Israeli security guard after stabbing and wounding another agent at the entrance to the Karmeit Zsur settlement, in the West Bank.

March 2018

Israel

- On 21 March in the context of the army's decision to declassify secret documents, Israel acknowledges for the first time that, in March 2007, the then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert ordered the destruction of an incipient Syrian nuclear reactor after Mossad agents in Vienna successfully hacked into the computer of the head of the Syrian Atomic Energy Commission Ibrahim Othman and that soldiers were sent to northern Syria to gather evidence to confirm Bashar al-Assad's plans to build the reactor.

- On 21 March the Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi's reaches a "plea bargain" with the military prosecution in exchange for eight months in prison, according to the NGO Human Rights Watch.

Palestine

- On 13 March the Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah escapes unharmed from a bomb blast in Beit Hanoun shortly after his convoy passed during an official visit to the Gaza Strip to inaugurate a wastewater treatment plant.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 16 March two Israeli soldiers are killed and a further two injured in a car-ramping attack carried out by a Palestinian, close to the Mevo Dotan settlement in the West Bank, on a day when Hamas had called for a Day of Rage to mark 100 days following US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital.
- On 26 March the Israeli army attacks two targets in the north of the Gaza Strip hours after the Iron Dome anti-missile system mistakenly activates in response to machine-gun fire coming from inside the Strip identified as missiles. The shots came from military manoeuvres carried out by Hamas' armed wing, the Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades.
- On 30 March some of the fiercest protests in recent years break out in the Gaza Strip, after Israeli soldiers fire on 30,000 Palestinian demonstrators approaching the fence on the border with Israel during the "Great March of Return" protest. At least 16 of the demonstrators are killed making it the bloodiest day in the Strip since the war in 2014.

April 2018

Israel

- On 2 April Benjamin Netanyahu announces the cancelation of the plan to expel more than 30,000 migrants who have entered Israel illegally over the last decade. The government was set to legalize the situation of 16,000 undoc-

umented migrants, while the UN would have managed the relocation of another 16,000 people to Western countries in the coming five years. The announcement is critical for the right-wing parties in the Parliament. Six hours later, Netanyahu himself posts a message on his Facebook page saying that he is going back on the decision and suspending the application of the agreement reached with the United Nations. On 3 April he officially cancels the agreement fearing the loss of his base support to his great right-wing rival, the Education Minister Naftali Bennett.

- On 3 April Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi crown prince, recognizes Israelis' rights to have "their own land," like the Palestinians, in an interview with *The Atlantic*.

- On 21 April Romania announces that it will move its Israeli embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, making it the first EU country to follow the US initiative, after Guatemala and Honduras.

- On 30 April the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accuses Iran of lying about its secret programme to obtain nuclear weapons during a public appearance in which he presents evidence obtained by the Israeli secret service. According to Netanyahu, the Islamic Republic has a secret plan called "Project Amad" thereby violating what is laid out in the agreement reached with the G5+1 in 2015. During his presentation, Netanyahu asks for the agreement to be suspended and revised, days before the US President Donald Trump adopts a final decision on the possible US withdrawal from the agreement, undersigned by his predecessor Barack Obama.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 3 April a Palestinian man is shot dead by Israeli soldiers to the east of the Bureij refugee camp during the unrest on the border with the Gaza Strip, where dozens of demonstrators are protesting over the deaths that occurred at the end of March.

- On 6 April Israeli soldiers fire and injure at least 40 Palestinian demonstrators participating in the large-scale protests at the fence that separates Israel from the Palestinian enclave. Protestors

set fire to tyres before throwing them over to the Israeli side of the fence.

- On 20 April on the fourth Friday of the so-called March of Return, two Palestinians are shot dead by Israeli soldiers on the border with the Gaza Strip.
- On 21 April the Palestinian engineer and scholar Fadi al-Batsh is shot dead at the entrance to a mosque in Kuala Lumpur, in an action attributed to the Israeli secret service, Mossad, by the young man's family and intelligence sources, which although unrevealed are cited by *The New York Times*. The assassination is said to be aimed at dismantling a project run by the Hamas government in Gaza to send its most prominent scientists and technicians to other countries to obtain weapons for fighting against Israel.
- On 27 April four Palestinians are shot dead by Israeli soldiers on the Gaza Strip border during the fifth Friday of the so-called March of Return, in which some 200 people have been injured according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

May 2018

Israel

- On 4 May the Knesset approves a law, by 62 votes in favour to 41 against, which brings the decision to declare war down to just two people - the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister.
- On 16 May Guatemala becomes the first country to move its Israeli embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem following the initiative led by the US, which did so on 14 May. In the opposite direction to Guatemala's decision, Turkey expels its Israeli consul in Istanbul Eitan Naeh, over the death of 60 Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli army on 14 May, in the context of the protests against the opening of the US embassy in Jerusalem and the commemoration of the day of Nakba. Israel responds by expelling the Turkish consul in Jerusalem Husnu Gurcan Turkoglu.
- On 24 May the Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman announces that he will ask for approval for a plan to build 2,500 Israeli homes in 30 West Bank settlements and that he will also ask for authorization for the future construction of a further 1,400 homes.

Palestine

- On 4 May Mahmoud Abbas is re-elected chairman of the PLO's executive committee, which meets in Ramallah for the first time in 22 years, an event which is boycotted by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian factions. At the meeting, Abbas says that the persecutions, pogroms and massacres suffered by the Jews in Europe since the 11th century until the holocaust were the result not of their religion, but because of the "social behaviour" and "activities related to banks and interests," while in the Islamic world there was "not a single attack against the Jews in 1,400 years." He also adds that Adolf Hitler offered the Jews money for them to go to Palestine under the British mandate "so the Jewish State would be under the rule of the Third Reich and would be useful" and that Israel is a mere colonial project bearing no relation to Judaism. He goes as far as to claim that there is no relation between Jews and the territory of Israel and Palestine.
- On 15 May Egypt authorizes the entry into its territory of Palestinians injured during clashes in the Gaza Strip between demonstrators and Israeli soldiers during the commemoration of Nakba.
- On 16 May the PNA Foreign Minister summons its main diplomatic representatives in Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria for consultations after the ambassadors of these four countries in Israel participate in an event organized on 13 May by the Israeli Foreign Ministry to celebrate the transfer of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- On 17 May the PNA presents its instrument of accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), for its entry into force on 16 June, and another two United Nations mechanisms: the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 14 May the US inaugurates its embassy in Jerusalem, thereby fulfilling one of President Donald Trump's election promises. Palestinian groups call for

widespread marches and protests against the measure and to commemorate the Nakba, which, on 15 May, remembers the 700,000 Palestinians who were expelled or forced to flee with the creation of Israel and the subsequent Arab-Israeli war 70 years ago. For its part, the head of al-Qaeda Ayman az-Zawahiri calls for jihad against the US.

- On 15 May the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights denounces Israel's "seemingly indiscriminate killing" and reminds Israel that an attempt to jump over or damage the border fence does not justify the use of lethal force. The condemnation comes after at least 58 people are killed and 1,360 injured - 2,700 according to the Palestinian Health Ministry - from shots fired by the Israeli army during the protests against the inauguration of the new US embassy in Jerusalem and the commemoration of the day of Nakba.
- On 17 May the Israeli army attacks Hamas military positions in the north of the Gaza Strip.
- On 18 May the UN Human Rights Council approves, by 29 votes in favour, two against and 14 abstentions, the urgent dispatch of an independent international commission to Gaza to investigate the violations and abuses reported in the context of the Israeli military operations against the protests which began in March 2018. According to the Palestinian Health Ministry, since December 2017, 142 people have been killed and 19,000 injured during the protests against Israel and the new US policy in the region.
- On 22 May Palestine files a complaint about Israel to the ICC for war crimes and other crimes in the settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip.
- On 27 May three Palestinian militants are killed in an Israeli attack on an Islamic Jihad border position in the south of the Gaza Strip, located next to the border where an explosive device was planted the previous day, subsequently detonated by an Israeli army robot.
- On 29 - 30 May the Israel Defence Forces say their Iron Dome system has intercepted most of the 70 or so missiles launched from the Gaza Strip, which have left five people injured in southern Israel. In response, the Israeli

air force bombs some 80 Hamas and Islamic Jihad positions.

- On 30 May Hamas declares a ceasefire for the Gaza Strip, on the condition that it is respected by Israel.

June 2018

Israel

- On 17 June the government approves the proposal put forward by the ultra-nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu, sponsored by the Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman, for a draft law which bans filming or publishing footage of the actions of Israeli troops, and envisages five-year prison sentences for attempts to “demoralize soldiers” and up to 10 years for attempts to “damage national security.”
- On 21 June the Israeli public prosecutor formally accuses the Prime Minister’s wife Sara Netanyahu of “crimes of systematic fraud and breach of trust” by racking up more than 84,000 euros in expenses at the official residence between 2010 and 2013.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 1 June the US vetoes the approval in the UN Security Council of a resolution proposed by Kuwait calling for the protection of Palestinian civilians in Gaza, because of its “grossly one-sided” focus.
- On 2 June the Israeli army reports that it has attacked around 15 Hamas positions in the north of the Gaza Strip in response to the launching of two mortar shells from Palestinian territory by an unidentified group, thereby breaking the declared unilateral ceasefire.
- On 13 June the UN General Assembly approves a resolution backed by the Arab countries which condemns Israel’s response to the protests in Gaza and demands that international protection be organized for the Palestinian people. The approval comes after the Assembly narrowly rejects a US amendment to condemn Hamas “for repeatedly firing rockets into Israel and inciting violence along the boundary fence, endangering civilian lives.”
- On 18 and 20 June the Israeli army attacks around 20 targets in the Gaza

Strip in response to the launching of several incendiary kites and balloons from the Palestinian enclave.

- On 29 June two Palestinians are killed and more than a hundred injured by shots fired by the Israeli army in new protests in Gaza next to the border fence with Israel.

July 2018

Israel

- On 15 July Syria’s state media report that Israeli rockets have hit a military facility close to the Syrian Nayrab Airport, in Aleppo, which was being used by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard.
- On 17 July the Parliament approves a law that could stop groups critical of the government’s politics towards the Palestinians from accessing Israeli schools and speaking with students.
- On 19 July the Israeli Parliament approves the nation-state law by 62 votes in favour, 55 against and two abstentions, which defines Israel as “the national home of the Jewish people,” establishes Hebrew as the only official language, defines the creation of Jewish communities in Israel as a national value and restricts the right to self-determination to Jews.
- On 23 July Israel activates its David’s Sling defence system for the first time, operative since March 2017 in the north of the country, faced with the increase in fighting in the Syrian province of Quneitra.
- On 24 July the Israeli army shoots down a Syrian fighter jet which had entered two kilometres into Israeli-controlled airspace.
- On 29 July the Palestinian activist Ahd Tamimi is released from Hasharon prison in the West Bank, after being held there for eight months for slapping two Israeli soldiers in Nabi Saleh on 15 December 2017, during a Friday of protest against the occupation of the Palestinian territories.
- On 29 July the Israeli navy intercepts the ship al-Awda (Return), from the Freedom Flotilla, and escorts it to Ashkelon along with the ships Freedom and Falestine, which were trying to break through the maritime blockade on the Gaza Strip.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 14 July the Israeli air force attacks more than 40 Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip, in response to the firing of 35 missiles at Israeli locations near the border. Israel’s action is responded to with the launch of around a hundred missiles into southern Israel, one of which hits a synagogue in Sderot. Israel then responds by attacking a building that served as a Hamas training facility.
- On 20 July an Israeli soldier is shot dead by Palestinian snipers in Gaza in a new Friday of protests in the Strip. In response, the Israeli army launches a large-scale attack on Hamas targets in which at least four members of its armed wing are killed. Hamas’ spokesman Fawzi Barhoum announces a ceasefire, mediated by Egypt and the UN.
- On 23 July a Palestinian teenager is shot dead by Israeli soldiers during a raid on the Dheisheh refugee camp, near Bethlehem, in the West Bank.
- On 27 July the Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman announces the construction of 400 new homes in the West Bank settlement of Adam in response to the previous day’s killing of an Israeli in the settlement by a Palestinian man, who is also killed in the action. On the same day, there are clashes in Kobar, the assailant’s home town, between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli security forces. There are also new clashes on the border between Israel and Gaza and at the entrances to the Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary in Jerusalem.
- On 27 July young masked men shoot fireworks and stones in the direction of Israeli police near the al-Aqsa mosque, in Jerusalem, and clashes break out between demonstrators and the security forces.

August 2018

Israel

- On 1 August Israel considers the information provided by Russia as insufficient, according to which the Iranian forces in Syria have withdrawn their heavy weapons to a distance of 85 kilometres from the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

- On 4 August the Israeli army intercepts the Swedish ship *Freedom*, the second of three ships that make up a new *Freedom Flotilla*, as a symbolic attempt to break the Israeli blockade on Gaza.
- On 4 and 11 August thousands of people demonstrate in Tel Aviv against the new law on the nation-state of the Jewish people.
- On 14 August the government admits that the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu travelled in May to Egypt to meet with the President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to discuss a possible long-term truce with Hamas in the Gaza Strip.
- On 20 August the Israeli authorities approve an application from the settlers to build 106 new homes in the Efrat settlement, in the district of Bethlehem.
- On 26 August the Israeli authorities order the administrative detention - i.e., indefinite detention without charge - of 36 Palestinians, 26 of whom are already in Israeli jails, this being a renewal of their previous administrative detention.

Palestine

- On 16 August the media reports that Israel has handed 10 tonnes of letters and packages over to the Palestinian postal service, which had been withheld since 2010 by Israeli security forces on the Jordanian border for unspecified security reasons.

Peace Negotiations

- On 31 August the US announces that it will no longer commit funding to UNRWA, describing it as “an irredeemably flawed operation” which has not played the role it should have done to reactivate peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 7 August two members of Hamas’ armed wing the Ezzedeen al-Qassam Brigades are killed in an Israeli bombing in the north of Gaza, in response to a previous attack launched from the Strip.
- On 8 - 9 August 180 missiles are fired from Gaza into southern Israel, 30 of which are intercepted. Israel responds

by bombing 150 targets in Gaza. After the massive exchange of fire, which leaves three people dead and around twenty injured, Israel and Hamas reach a ceasefire agreement for the Gaza Strip, thanks to Egyptian and UN mediation.

- On 16 August Israeli settlers attack numerous vehicles and a Palestinian home in Nablus after an Israeli is accidentally run over and killed by a Palestinian.
- On 17 August at least two Palestinians are killed and 241 injured in clashes with Israeli security forces on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip. The unrest comes in the context of the Great March of Return protests which began on 30 March to demand the rights of refugees to return to the lands they were expelled from with the creation of the State of Israel.
- On 19 August the Israeli navy fires on dozens of Palestinian ships trying to symbolically break the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip.
- On 24 August Israel reports that a Palestinian assailant shot down by Israeli security forces after firing and throwing a bomb at Israeli soldiers from the Gaza Strip worked for the NGO Médecins Sans Frontières.
- On 31 August at least 120 Palestinians are injured in clashes between Palestinian demonstrators and Israeli soldiers on the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

September 2018

Israel

- On 3 September the mayor of Jerusalem Nir Barkat announces his intention to expel UNRWA from the city.
- On 3 September Amir Weissbrod, the new Israeli ambassador in Jordan, is sworn into his post in Amman, in the context of improved bilateral relations.
- On 5 September the Supreme Court of Israel authorizes the demolition of the Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar after rejecting the appeal presented by residents. The Civil Administration sets 1 October as the deadline for the eviction. For its part, the PLO secretary general Saeb Erekat announces that a case has been filed against Israel with the ICC

for war crimes, with regard to the situation of Khan al-Ahmar.

- On 5 September Mario Abdo Benítez’s new government in Paraguay announces that he will be moving the country’s embassy in Israel back to Tel Aviv after the previous President Horacio Cartes decided on 21 May to emulate the US and relocate the country’s diplomatic delegation in Jerusalem.

Palestine

- On 10 September the US President Donald Trump orders the closure of the PLO’s delegation in Washington.
- On 29 September the ICC announces it has received a complaint filed by the State of Palestine against the US over Washington’s decision to move its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

Peace Negotiations

- On 3 September Jordan rejects the possibility of creating a confederation between Jordan and Palestine and insists on the two-state solution as the only viable way to resolve the conflict between Palestine and Israel. The announcement comes after the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas reveals that the US President Donald Trump proposed confederation as a solution to the conflict.
- On 26 September, for the first time since he assumed the US Presidency, Donald Trump expresses his support for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the two-state solution. In this respect, the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declares in his speech before the UN General Assembly his opposition to Trump’s peace plan - nicknamed by the US President himself as the “Deal of the Century” - described by Abbas as a “US-Israeli peace plan.” Abbas puts forward the alternative of holding the international peace conference and implementing a multilateral mechanism, whereby mediation would not be exclusively undertaken by Washington, since he no longer considers the US as an impartial party in the process.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 16 September an Israeli man is stabbed to death by a Palestinian close to

the Gush Etzion settlement, after which the assailant is shot down.

- On 20, 23 and 24 September three Palestinians are shot dead, respectively, by Israeli soldiers during new protests on the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel.
- On 23 September clashes break out between Israeli security forces and Palestinian demonstrators after the arrest of the secretary of Fatah in East Jerusalem, Yasser Darwish.

October 2018

Israel

- On 7 October the trial against Sara Netanyahu, the wife of the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for the misuse of public funds to order catering services begins.
- On 14 October the Israeli government approves the expansion of an Israeli settlement in the centre of Hebron, in the West Bank.
- On 15 October Israel reopens the Quneitra crossing, on the border with Syria and located in the Golan Heights, and which has been closed since August 2014 because of the civil war in Syria and the control of the area by rebel groups.
- On 18 October the Supreme Court allows the entry into Israel of the US student and granddaughter of Palestinians Lara Alqasem, who had received a visa from the Israeli consulate in Miami after being accepted by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, but who had been detained since 2 October at Tel Aviv Airport accused of supporting the campaign of the Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against the State of Israel.
- On 19 October the US downgrades the consulate general in Jerusalem, which dealt with relations with the PNA. The consulate general is now absorbed by the embassy that has been moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, in a decision which implies a radical *volte-face* to seven decades of international consensus on the city's status quo.
- On 20 October Israeli police arrest the Palestinian governor of the district of Jerusalem Adnan Gheith without giving grounds for the arrest.

- On 21 October Abdullah II of Jordan announces his intention to annul two annexes to the bilateral peace treaty signed in 1994 with Israel, which establishes the 25-year lease of Baqoura and Ghumar (Naharayim and Zofar, in Hebrew), to Israel. Under the annulment, both areas will come under complete Jordanian control in 2019.
- On 24 October Israeli police forcibly quell a protest held by the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Copts in Jerusalem against Israel's Antiquities Authority starting urgent work to restore Jerusalem's St. Michael the Archangel Chapel, without the participation of the Patriarchate, the owner of the temple since the Ottoman era.
- On 30 October Israel holds municipal elections which will see a second round held on 13 November in those municipalities where no candidate wins 40% of the vote. In Jerusalem, the conservative Moshe Leon, from the Our Jerusalem party, and the secular candidate Ofer Berkowitz, from the liberal Hitorerut party (Wake up), will come up against each other in the second round. For their part, the Palestinians from East Jerusalem boycott the elections in protest against the Israeli occupation since 1967 and the annex in 1980. In Tel Aviv, Labour's Ron Huldai wins his fifth consecutive term. Labour also wins in Haifa with a strong victory for Einat Kalisch Rotem, the first woman to become mayoress of one of the main Israeli cities. In the Golan Heights there are clashes with Druze demonstrators carrying Syrian flags, who try to boycott the voting.

Palestine

- On 1 October Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip take part in a general strike to support the protests of Arab-Israelis against the nation-state law, passed in July by the Israeli Parliament.
- On 9 October fuel delivered by Qatar to Gaza to allow the operation of the Strip's only power station enters Palestinian territory by the Kerem Shalom border crossing after receiving Israeli authorization.
- On 16 October a Rand Corporation report supports the predictions made by the United Nations that indicate that un-

der the strict Israeli blockade, the Gaza Strip will be uninhabitable after the next decade. The study states that 97% of the water for Gazans is no longer drinkable, which is responsible for 25% of the illnesses in the territory and is the greatest cause of infant deaths.

- On 29 October the PLO's Central Council decides to suspend its recognition of Israel and end security cooperation and economic relations until it recognizes Palestine as a state.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 5 October the demonstrations of Palestinians on the border between Gaza and Israel leave three demonstrators dead, from Israeli army gunfire, and more than 370 injured. On 6 October, in response to the persistent demonstrations, the Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman orders the reduction of the fishing zone in Gaza from 9 to 6 nautical miles.
- On 7 October two Israelis are shot dead by a young Palestinian on an industrial estate near the Barkan settlement, in the West Bank.
- On 11 October an Israeli soldier is wounded after being stabbed by a Palestinian outside the Samaria Territorial Brigade base, in the West Bank.
- On 11 October Israel reports the destruction of a tunnel that penetrated Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip and says that it was built by Hamas in order to carry out an attack on a nearby Israeli community.
- On 17 October two missiles fired from the Gaza Strip land in Beersheva and in the Mediterranean close to Gush Dan. In response, the Israeli air force launches airstrikes on Hamas positions in Gaza and the Israeli army chief Gadi Eizenkot interrupts his visit to the US to attend an emergency government meeting.
- On 25 October Israel bombs Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip in response to a rocket fired from the Palestinian enclave.
- On 27 October the Israeli army attacks around 80 military targets in Gaza in response to the launch of more than 30 rockets into Israel, which Israel attributes to Hamas.
- On 28 October three Palestinian minors are killed by an Israeli missile

fired from a drone close to the border between Gaza and Israel, when, according to the Israeli army, they were trying to storm the border fence.

November 2018

Israel

- On 2 November Brazil's President-elect the far-right Jair Bolsonaro confirms his intention to move the Brazilian embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- On 5 November with the agreement of his coalition government partner, Naf-tali Benet's HaBayit HaYehudi (Jewish Home), the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu authorizes the Parliament to debate the final approval of the modification of the law under which the death penalty can be applied in Israel for crimes of terrorism, crimes against humanity and high treason. The bill, sponsored by the former Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu, had been held in the Parliament's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee awaiting the Prime Minister's green light since January, when its first reading was approved. The modification removes the limitations of the previous text under which death sentences could only be handed down by a military court composed of three judges by a unanimous ruling. Now capital punishment can be ordered both by military and civilian courts and it does not require unanimity in the judges' ruling. The death penalty has not been effectively applied in Israel since 1962, when the Nazi officer Adolf Eichmann was executed.
- On 13 November Israel holds the second round of its local elections for those municipalities where no candidate has won 40% of the vote in the first round, held on 30 October. In Jerusalem, the Sephardi conservative candidate Moshe Leon wins against Ofer Berkovitch.
- On 14 November the Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman resigns after disagreements with the government over its previous day's acceptance of a truce with Hamas in Gaza.
- On 16 November at least 23 Palestinian demonstrators are injured by the Israeli army in protests in the Gaza Strip.

- On 19 November at least four Palestinians are injured by shots fired by the Israeli army in Deir Abu Mash'al, the West Bank.
- On 20 November Israel confirms that, together with Poland, it will not sign the United Nations Global Compact for Migration, which is due to be approved in December's forum in Marrakech.
- On 25 November the Israeli authorities rearrest Adnan Gheith, the Palestinian governor of Jerusalem, at his home in Silwan, East Jerusalem, under suspicion of recruiting a citizen in Israel to be part of an unspecified armed group.
- On 27 November the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with the President of Chad Idriss Deby, who, two days before, began an unprecedented visit to Israel to reestablish diplomatic ties, which were severed in 1972. The meeting is part of the Israeli government's strategy to open diplomatically to certain Arab and African countries, thereby breaking half a century of regional isolation since the occupation of the Palestinian territories. The strategy will also include countries like Bahrain and Oman.

Palestine

- On 9 November, in coordination with the UN, Qatar proceeds with the payment of part of the salaries owed to 23,000 Palestinian civil servants in Gaza, after receiving Israel's approval.

Peace Negotiations

- On 23 November the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reiterates Moscow's readiness to mediate between the Israelis and Palestinians to reactivate the peace talks, which stalled four years ago.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 11 November a new surge in violence erupts in Gaza following the failed Israeli special forces operation, which was taken by surprise when trying to leave the Strip, after killing a Hamas commander. On 14 November, after more than 400 rockets launched by Palestinian factions, and 150 attacks from Is-

raeli fighter jets and artillery, the death toll in Gaza stands at, at least 14 Palestinian militants, one Israeli soldier and a Palestinian civilian, in the worst clashes in the Palestinian territory since 2014, and which lead to an Egypt-brokered truce between Israel and Hamas on 14 November.

December 2018

Israel

- On 2 December the Israeli police recommends opening a trial against Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara in what is known as Case 4000 or the Bezek-Walla Affair. According to the police inquiries, which began in February, between 2012 and 2017, the Prime Minister supported government policy that was financially beneficial to the Bezeq telecommunications group owner and personal friend, Shaul Elovitch, in exchange for favourable news coverage of Netanyahu and his wife. This case is added to another two police probes involving the Mr. and Mrs. Netanyahu, the Cases 1000 and 2000.
- On 4 December Israel reports the launch of Operation Northern Shield to locate and destroy cross-border attack tunnels from Lebanon, dug by Hezbollah.
- On 17 December Australia recognizes Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, although for the time being its embassy will remain in Tel Aviv.
- On 25 December Benjamin Netanyahu announces early legislative elections for April 2019 due to the disagreement in the coalition government on the law regulating the military enlistment of ultra-Orthodox Jews.
- On 25 - 26 December the government approves plans for the construction of 2,191 new homes in settlements in the West Bank.
- On 26 December the Knesset approves its dissolution to hold early elections in April 2019.
- On 27 December the former army chief Benny Gantz launches the Zionist and liberal party Hosen Le Yisrael (Israel Resilience).
- On 31 December the Education and Justice Ministers of Benjamin Netan-

yahu's government, Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked, found the party HaYamin HeHadash (The New Right) after abandoning HaBayit HaYehudi.

- On 31 December the Israeli Parliament passes a bill that outlaws prostitution, creates social rehabilitation mechanisms for sex workers and establishes fines for anyone soliciting sexual services.

Palestine

- On 17 December the United Nations and the PNA appeal for 350 million dollars in humanitarian aid for Palestinians in 2019.

Conflicts between the Parties

- On 4 December the Israeli Defence Forces kill a young, mentally disabled Palestinian man, who was not participating in any protest, during a raid on the West Bank Tulkarem refugee camp. Mohammed Habali's death sparks clashes with Palestinian demonstrators.

- On 9 December a group of Israelis is shot at by a Palestinian man in the Ofra settlement in the West Bank, leaving a newborn baby dead.

- On 11 December two members of the Israeli security forces are run down and killed by a Palestinian in the Barkan settlement in the West Bank. The perpetrator is killed on 13 December in a police raid.

- On 13 December two Israelis are killed in the West Bank Givat Asaf settlement by shots fired by a Palestinian,

who then flees towards Ramallah, hours after the Israeli forces kill two Palestinians involved in two attacks claimed by Hamas' armed wing, the Ezzeldeen al-Qassam Brigades: one on 7 October in which two Israelis were killed in Barkan and another on 9 December in the Ofra settlement, which left seven people injured including a pregnant lady whose unborn baby dies. Parallel to this, two Israeli police officers are wounded in a stabbing attack in the Old City of Jerusalem carried out by a Palestinian who is then shot down by police. The surge in violence leads the Israeli authorities to encircle the town of al-Bireh and block the entrances to Ramallah, send reinforcements to the occupied West Bank to carry out raids, announce the accelerated demolition of the perpetrators' homes, revoke permits for leaving the West Bank of relatives of terrorists and collaborators and ask the attorney general for permission to build 82 new homes in the Ofra settlement.

- On 28 December there is a new Friday of Protest in Gaza which ends in new clashes with the Israeli army in the context of the Great March of Return, which leave one demonstrator dead and eight injured.

- On 29 December Israel bombs a Hamas military target in Gaza after reporting the launch of a missile into Israeli territory from the Strip.

- On 30 December dozens of Palestinian students are suffocated by tear gas used by the Israeli forces to disperse a protest against an Israeli raid on the town of Sebastia, the West Bank.

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