

FLAME HOTLINE

Facts & Logic About the Middle East

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Fight False Palestinian History: Jews Are Israel's Indigenous People

Dear Friend of FLAME:

Palestinian Arabs base their claims to all of Palestine—including all of Israel—on the assertion that Arabs are the indigenous people of the Holy Land and, bizarrely, that Jews have no history there.

Without this justification, the Palestinian argument against the Jewish state crumbles pitifully. For this reason, pro-Israel advocates can do no more important job than teach the world that Jews—not Arabs—are Israel's indigenous people.

The people of Israel have the earliest claim of being indigenous, as well as a continuous culture rooted in its national existence in the land of Israel. Arabs arrived 1,800 years later. But, the current mix of peoples referred to as "Palestinians" are an amalgam of relatively recent arrivals. They have no distinctive culture or history as a nation.

Israel's advocates must defend this position when this favorite talking-point is brought up by anti-Israel or ill-informed friends and colleagues—or in mainstream media.

Whether called "Palestine" or "Israel," that piece of Middle East geography has hosted many different populations over the millennia. The term "Palestine" was a Roman renaming of what had been the Jews' indigenous land for over a thousand years.

In 135 C.E., Emperor Hadrian had crushed the Bar Kochba revolt in "Judea," and hoped to break the Jewish nation's spirit by eradicating the name of their indigenous country from the map.

Searching for the most insulting new name he could find, he was told that Israel's oldest enemy—from way back in King David's time—

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YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE TRUTH...

Peace with Palestinian Dictators?

Governments of the Palestinians' two ruling dictatorships are in shambles—and at war with each other. How can Israel possibly achieve peace with them at this time?

Neither the Palestinian Authority in Judea Samaria (the West Bank) nor the Islamic State group Hamas in Gaza has held elections since 2006, and the two factions are battling one another in a vicious power struggle. Both refuse to recognize the Jewish state or accept Israel's offer of peace.

What are the facts?

While Israel, with the United States, made generous land-for-peace offers to the Palestinians in 2001 and 2008—and left the entire Gaza Strip to the Arabs in 2005—neither of the two major Palestinian groups has accepted Israeli offers—or even the right to exist. What's more, both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas governments are in chronic, widespread practice of recruiting a bitter terrorism war. Could these warring Arab factions reconcile—and accept Israel as their neighbor— if it's impossible to imagine a peace agreement among them?

Background Palestinian Movement: Following Israel's repulsion of five Arab attacks in 1947, Arab leaders in Palestine formed the autonomous Palestine Liberation Organization, under Egyptian Yasser Arafat. Arafat launched the First Intifada, a terrorist guerrilla effort against Israel, which ended with the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords. Under these accords, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was created from Arab parts of Gaza and Judea Samaria, while Israel has controlled the remaining parts until the Israeli-Arab conflict was resolved through peace negotiations. After Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza, terror group Hamas was Palestinian legislative elections in 2006, then seized control of Gaza from the PA. Since 2007, Hamas has ruled Gaza as an Islamic fortress, and the PA and Hamas remain tense enemies to this day.

The Palestinian Authority: Secular Dictatorship. While recognized in Muslim values, the Palestinian Authority has always been secular. Following Arafat's death in 2004, Mahmoud Abbas was elected president of the PA for a five-year term, yet he held the grip of power ever since. Today's Palestinian Authority is rife with corruption, its economy is effectively bankrupt, it suffers from unemployment of 20%, and without foreign subsidies it would collapse. Despite its charter under the Oslo Agreement to make peace with Israel, the PA has remained dedicated to eradicating all of the Holy Land from Jewish control. It has demanded that all Arab refugees from Israel's War of Independence in 1948—as well as some five million non-Jews of those expelled—be "returned" to Israel, thus denying the Jewish state demographically based—under the sponsorship of President Bill Clinton in 2001 and George W. Bush in 2002—of the Palestinians about 98% of Judea Samaria, as well as a significant portion of Jerusalem, in return for peace.

Hamas: Islamist Dictatorship. An outgrowth of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood—which also sponsored al-Qaeda in Bosnia—a fundamentalist Islamic organization, the charter calls for the conquest of all Palestine—including present-day Israel—and the establishment of an Islamic state. Because of Hamas' brutal use of suicide bombings and rocket attacks on Jewish civilian populations, it has been declared a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department and the European Union. While Hamas was power after Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, it has refused to reject violence, and in fact took violent control of Gaza. Today Hamas rules Gaza brutally, according to strict Sharia law. Hamas has benefited from war against Israel, most recently in 2014. Because of Hamas' hegemony, Gaza is currently under no control from Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian Authority. While the PA and Hamas have made some attempts at reconciliation, all have failed, and relations between them remain poisonous. The people of Gaza suffer an unemployment rate of 40%, just five hours of electricity daily and a dysfunctional economy. Hamas routinely invades Israel's territorial support from Iraq and Turkey, much of which is used to sustain the terror group's war against Israel.

In order to bring an Israel-Palestinian peace, all parties must sincerely want it and the capability of carrying out a plan for reconciliation. It's clear that today's Palestinian dictatorships lack the ability to make peace among themselves, let alone govern their people or commit to peace with Israel. While Israelis pray for peace, Palestinian leaders still pray for Israel's destruction.

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was Philistia. Hadrian romanized it to "Palestine," and that provincial name stuck for almost 2,000 years-until it was dubbed "Israel" in May of 1948.

Palestine—actually, the full name was "Syro-Palestine"—remained its designation through a long succession of empires over the centuries. It always designated a minor province of Christian and Arab empires, and never was a nation-state.

In the wreckage of World War I, Palestine became a "Mandate" of Great Britain, and Jews living there were called Palestinians. With the independence of Israel in 1948, the term Palestine disappeared as a formal name for any of the land, since Jordan stole and annexed the parts of Palestine not under Israeli control.

Only after the 1967 War did the idea of a distinctive Palestinian Arab identity and nationality gain traction.

Arab leaders claimed a national pedigree for their Palestinian brethren, and invented claims that Palestinian Arabs were the indigenous people of the land, supplanted by foreign Jewish colonialists.

The Arabs' spurious claim of being a displaced and delegitimized indigenous people is used as a potent cudgel against Israel, particularly among anti-colonial left-wing advocates.

But it is simply a lie, and Israel's advocates must press Israel's case as the indigenous people of the area.

By culture, language, religion, national history and other measures, Jews have a unified—if multi-faceted—national identity, reinforced through a hundred generations. The only land attached to that unifying national identity is Israel. Genetic studies vector Jewish DNA from all over the world to the land of Israel.

The Palestinian Arab population can support no such valid claims to being indigenous.

In short, the myth of Arabs being indigenous to the land of Israel is false, as this week's featured FLAME *Hotline* article (see below) describes. Syndicated columnist Bennett Ruda enhances the argument by showing that the vast majority of 1948's Arabs were not even long-term residents of Palestine, much less an ancient, dispossessed indigenous people.

I hope you'll also quickly visit FLAME's lively [new Facebook page](#) and review the P.S. immediately below, which describes FLAME's recent *hasbarah* campaigns exposing the root cause of Palestinian peace-making failure—their dueling dictatorships in Gaza and the West Bank. I hope you agree with and will support this message.

editorial hasbarah messages placed in media nationwide every month: The dire threats from Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah, the injustice of BDS, Palestinian anti-Semitism and more. If you support a bold voice that tells the truth about Israel in American media, please donate now.

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HOTLINE E-
NEWSLETTER**



FLAME's Hotline e-newsletter keeps you up to date on the most important pro-Israel advocacy issues and features our choice of the week's most informative and thought-provoking article on Israel and the Middle East. If you only subscribe to one pro-Israel news service, make it the FLAME Hotline.

[SUBSCRIBE NOW >](#)

Best regards,

Ken Cohen

Editor, Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)

P.S. You've probably read about the new peace plan expected from the Trump administration, possibly coming in the next few months. We at FLAME believe such a proposal—no matter what its tenets—will be a mistake, if for no other reason than that the autocratic governments of both Palestinian factions are currently unequipped and unsuited to be Israel's partners in peace. That's why FLAME has created a new editorial message—"[Peace with Palestinian Dictators?](#)"—which is running in mainstream magazines and newspapers, including college newspapers. In addition, it will be sent to every member of the U.S. Congress and President Trump. If you agree that this kind of public relations effort on Israel's behalf is critical, I urge you to support us. Remember: FLAME's powerful ability to influence public opinion—and U.S. support of Israel—comes from individuals like you, one by one. I hope you'll consider giving a donation now, as you're able—with \$500, \$250, \$100, or even \$18. (Remember, your donation to FLAME is tax deductible.) To donate online, just go to [donate now](#). Now, more than ever, we need your support to ensure that the American people, the U.S. Congress and President Trump stay focused on the true obstacle to peace, which is the lack of a credible Palestinian peace partner.

As of today, more than 15,000 Israel supporters receive the FLAME Hotline at no charge every week. If you're not yet a subscriber, won't you join us in receiving these timely updates, so you can more effectively tell the truth about Israel? Just go to [free subscription](#).

Why Jews Are Indigenous To Palestine—And Arabs Are Not

By Bennett Ruda, *The Jewish Press*, September 27, 2018

When people argue about Israel, various words get tossed around. People will talk about "occupation," "disproportionate force" and "apartheid"—words that have real-world meanings that tend to get lost.

Another word that is increasingly misused is "indigenous."

Here is [Ariel Gold of Code Pink, tweeting last month](#):

"Fascinating article. Makes great points. But no address of equality/liberalism for non-Jews (Palestinians). 'Israel would be a home to all Jews, from all over the world.' What about the indigenous population? For me as a Reform Jew Palestinian rights are part of my religion."

Not only does she not apply the word "indigenous" to Jews, but according to her—it is the Arabs who are indigenous to Palestine.

Is she right?

Well, if you ask Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, he will tell you he is "[the proud son of the Canaanites](#)," with a history in Jericho going back some 10,000 years. ([hat tip: Elder of Zion](#))

But let's be serious.

In 1946, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was assembled to examine the political, economic and social conditions in then-Palestine in order to make recommendations on the issue of Jewish immigration and settlement. The committee consulted representatives of both the Arabs and the Jews.

In [Chapter VI of their report](#), the committee presented the Arab side:

Stripped to the bare essentials, the Arab case is based upon the fact that Palestine is a country which the Arabs have occupied for more than a thousand years, and a denial of the Jewish historical claims to Palestine.

Those were the good old days—when the Arabs were satisfied just to deny the Jewish ties to the land, without feeling the need to exaggerate their own.

Basically, there are 3 ways that the Arabs could have found their way from Arabia to Judea:

- Invasion, followed by occupation and settling the land
- Conversion of Jews to Islam ([which we have already discussed](#))
- Immigration due to economic problems where they lived and/or economic opportunity in Palestine

But just how many Arabs living in Israel today are descended from the original Arab invaders from the 7th century?

In their article, "[Whose Palestine?](#)"—a review of Joan Peters book "From Time Immemorial"—Erich Isaac and Rael Jean Isaac note:

But not only are the Palestinian Arabs not descendants of Canaanites, it is highly doubtful that more than a very few are even descended from those who settled the country as part of the Arab invasion of the 7th century. For over a thousand years following the Arab conquest, Palestine underwent a series of devastating invasions, followed by massacres of the existing population: Seljuk Turks and Fatimid reconquerors were followed by Crusaders who were followed by waves of Mongol tribes who were followed in turn by Tartars, Mamelukes, Turks, and incessant Bedouin raiders.

They explain further that while various invasions cut down on the number of Arabs descended from those who originally invaded the land, the foreign Arabs who immigrated from abroad during the 18th and 19th centuries, further diluted the original Arab invader population:

- Egyptians arrived in a number of waves, especially from 1832 to 1840.
- Sudanese successfully pioneered in the swampy marshlands.
- Tribes of Bedouin came from as far away as Libya to settle on the coastal plain.
- Lebanese Christians resettled abandoned villages in the Galilee
- Armenians, Syrians, and Turks settled in the coastal towns
- French expansion in North Africa resulted in waves of refugees immigrating to Palestine
- Many of the followers of the Algerian resistance leader Abd el Kader founded villages in the Galilee
- Russian expansion into the Caucasus led to the emigration of many of its Muslim peoples (Circassians and Georgians) to Palestine
- Austrian advance into the Balkans led to the emigration of Bosnian Muslims to Palestine.
- Turkomans from Russian Central Asia and Kurds also immigrated

By 1931, instead of an Arab population that could trace itself to the 7th century (let alone thousands of years) a census of Palestine listing the birthplaces of the inhabitants of Jerusalem included in addition to Palestine itself: Syria Transjordan, Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, Persia, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, Tripoli, Tunis, Albania, France, Greece, Spain, Great Britain, the USSR,

the US, Central and South America and Australia. [See "From Time Immemorial," p.227, quoting Census of Palestine-1931, vol I, Palestine; Part I]

[Daniel Pipes quotes from 11the edition of The Encyclopedia Britannica](#), (1910-1911). The entry on 'Palestine' was written by the Irish archeologist Robert Alexander Stewart Macalister, who also notes that the population of Palestine at the time was anything but homogeneous:

The inhabitants of Palestine are composed of a large number of elements, differing widely in ethnological affinities, language and religion. It may be interesting to mention, as an illustration of their heterogeneousness, that early in the 20th century a list of no less than 50 languages, spoken in Jerusalem as vernaculars, was there drawn up by a party of men whose various official positions enabled them to possess accurate information on the subject.

Macalister describes the towns:

In each there is primarily a large Arab element . . . There are very large contingents from the Mediterranean countries, especially Armenia, Greece and Italy, principally engaged in trade. The extraordinary development of Jewish colonization has since 1870 effected a revolution in the balance of population in some parts of the country, notably in Jerusalem.

Pipes summarizes the article:

This overview of Palestine mentions in no less than 20 foreign ethnicities other than the native fellahin (farmers) and the Jews: Assyrian, Persian, Roman, Arabian, Crusader, Nawar, Arabian, Turkic, Armenian, Greek, Italian, Turkoman, Motawila, Kurd, German, Bosnian, Circassian, Sudanese, Algerian, and Samaritan.

In her article "[Were the Arabs Indigenous to Mandatory Palestine?](#)" Sheree Roth points out the book "The Rape of Palestine", written by William B. Ziff—the co-founder of the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company. Published in 1938, Ziff's book notes that the hodgepodge of immigrants in Palestine consisted not only of those *fleeing from* somewhere or *running to* Palestine. Sometimes they were *imported*:

It was always the foreign soldier who was the police power in Palestine. The Tulunides brought in Turks and Negroes. The Fatamids introduced Berbers, Slavs, Greeks, Kurds, and mercenaries of all kinds. The Mamelukes imported legions of Georgians and Circassians. Each monarch for his personal safety relied on great levies of slave warriors. Saladin, hard-pressed by the Crusaders, received one hundred and fifty thousand Persians who were given lands in Galilee and the Sidon district for their services.

Out of this human patch-work of Jews, Arabs, Armenians, Kalmucks, Persians, Crusaders, Tartars, Indians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, Sudanese, Turks, Mongols, Romans, Kharmazians, Greeks, pilgrims, wanderers, ne'er-do-wells and adventurers, invaders, slaves . . . was formed that hodge-podge of blood and mentality we call today "Levantine."...

Ziff fleshes out the list of immigrants mentioned by Isaac and gives some numbers:

In the fourteenth century, drought caused the immigration into Palestine of eighteen thousand "tents" of Yurate Tartars from the Euphrates. Soon followed twenty thousand Ashiri under Gaza, and four thousand Mongols under Moulai, who occupied the Jordan Valley and settled from Jerusalem south. Kaisaite and Yemenite tribes followed in their trail . . .

In 1830 the Albanian conqueror Mehemet [Muhammad] Ali colonized Jaffa, Nablus, and Beisan with Egyptian soldiers and their Sudanese allies. Fourteen years later, Lynch estimated the thirteen thousand inhabitants of Jaffa to be composed of eight thousand Turco-Egyptians, four thousand Greeks and Armenians, and one thousand Jews and Maronites. He did not consider that there were any Arabs at all in that city.

One hundred years ago, [Jaffa] had a population of four thousand. Today it holds seventy thousand, overwhelmingly Arab, who are largely descendants of the Egyptians and Ethiopians brought in by the conqueror Ibrahim Pasha [Muhammad Ali's son]. The few thousand Jews who lived here fled during the 1936 riots, abandoning their shops and property.

There are many ways to describe this Arab population—but indigenous clearly is *not* one of them. More importantly, considering the ongoing influx of all those different nationalities and ethnicities, Arab and otherwise, Jewish immigration whether in the 20th century, the 19th century and even earlier is certainly no less valid. That is even truer considering the indigenous ties Jews have to the land.

According to [the "UNHCR Resettlement Handbook" \(2011\)](#):

Indigenous groups are descendants of the peoples who inhabited land or territory prior to colonization or the establishment of state borders. They often have strong attachment to their ancestral lands and natural resources, an attribute that can distinguish them from other minority groups. They may also have distinct social, economic and political systems, languages cultures and beliefs. Their right to self-determination has frequently been impeded by subsequent migration of other ethnic groups into the territory where

they reside. (p. 201)

There has been a continuous Jewish presence in Palestine. The Jews of Israel today are ultimately descendants of the Jews who lived on the land long before the Arab occupation of Palestine in the 7th century. The strong attachment of Jews to their ancestral lands is well established in terms of their distinct history, culture, sacred places, language and literature. And yes, this right to self-determination was frequently impeded: most recently by the invasion and migration of the Arabs-and by the Palestinian Arabs today.

In contrast, Palestinian Arab history, culture, sacred places, language and literature are ultimately tied, as is true of all Arabs, to Arabia.

Along those lines, note that in 2007, the United Nations General Assembly passed the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#):

Article 11

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

Article 31

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

By all rights, this declaration should apply in full to Israel's indigenous rights.

Instead, we have seen the UN violate its own declaration, for example through UNESCO attempting to usurp the indigenous Jewish ties to Hebron and Jerusalem and the indigenous Jewish connection and right to the Temple Mount.

When the UN decides to get serious about indigenous rights, they

should let Israel know.

FLAME

Facts and Logic

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