

25
Short
Answers
to Tough
Questions
About Israel

Produced by
StandWithUs



Morocco

Tunisia

Algeria

Libya

Lebanon

Golan Heights

Israel

Nahariya

Safed

Kiryat

Shatzkna

Tiberias

Nazareth

Hadera

Netanya

Herziya

Tel Aviv

Rishon LeZion

Ashdod

Ashkelon

Gaza

Wihari

Yunis

Sderot

Beersheva

Dimona

Tulkarm

Qalqiyah

Nablus

Ramallah

Jencho

Bethlehem

Hebron

Jerusalem

Israel is 1/800
the size of the
Arab world.



Turkey

Lebanon

Syria

Iraq

Iran*

Cyprus

Golan Heights

Israel

Jordan

Kuwait

Suez Canal

Gaza

West Bank

Bahrain

Qatar

Sinai

Gulf of Aqaba

Egypt

Saudi Arabia

UAE

Oman

Sudan

Yemen

Djibouti

Somalia

* Iran is not an Arab country, but it is a Muslim theocratic republic that sponsors terrorism.

Comoros

1. Are the West Bank settlements the real obstacle to peace?

If settlements were the obstacle, we would have had peace long ago. The real obstacle is Palestinian refusal to accept a Jewish state within any borders, as reflected in Palestinian leaders' statements and in Palestinian media. Indeed, there were no settlements when Palestinian violence against Jews began in 1920 or when violence escalated into wars and terrorism between 1948 and 1967. When Israel evacuated all settlements in Gaza in 2005, terrorism and hostility escalated. When Israel offered to dismantle West Bank settlements for peace in 2000 and 2008, Palestinian leaders said no. The controversy about settlements is a symptom, not a cause, of the conflict, which is rooted in Palestinian rejectionism. When Palestinians return to the negotiating table in good faith, settlements, which comprise less than 2 percent of West Bank land, and other outstanding issues can be resolved.



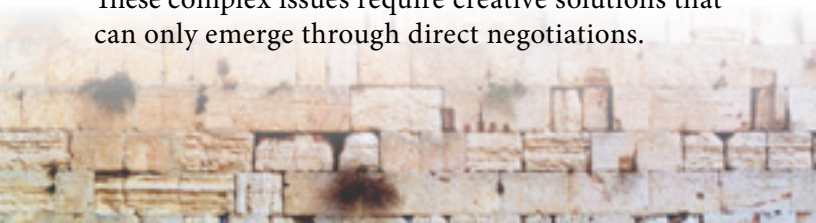
2. Is Israel stealing water from the Palestinians?

Israel is sharing, not stealing, water. It is giving its own water to Palestinians in significantly greater quantities than it agreed to do under the Oslo Accords (40 percent more in 2008). Nor does Israel use West Bank water. It uses the same water sources today that it used prior to 1967, and settlements are connected to Israel's national water system. Furthermore, Israel helped Palestinians modernize the West Bank's water system between 1967 and 1995, helping triple the fresh water available (66 MCM per year to 180 MCM per year), and the number of towns connected to running water rose by over 7,600 percent (four to 309). Today, water usage and planning are regulated by Palestinians and Israelis together in the Joint Water Commission. Israel is at the forefront of innovations in water sustainability and is a leader in seeking comprehensive, regional solutions to managing this vital but sparse resource. (For more information on this issue, see www.standwithus.com/flyers/waterflyer.pdf.)



3. Shouldn't Israel divide Jerusalem and allow the Palestinians to have their capital in eastern Jerusalem?

Dividing Jerusalem is not a simple process. The Jewish people have profound ties to Jerusalem, which has been their spiritual and temporal capital for 3,000 years. It has never been the capital of any other people or nation. Furthermore, Jews again became the majority of the city's population over 150 years ago, and they have lived in eastern Jerusalem for centuries, except between 1948 and 1967, when Jordan illegally controlled the area, expelled all Jews, and desecrated Jewish holy sites. Only under Israeli governance has freedom of worship and protection of every religion's holy sites been ensured. Today, neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem are intertwined, with 270,000 Arabs and 200,000 Jews, and it would not be easy to separate them. Additionally, over two-thirds of Jerusalem's Arabs reported in a May 2011 poll that they want to stay under Israeli governance and do not want to become part of a future Palestinian state. These complex issues require creative solutions that can only emerge through direct negotiations.



4. Does Israel evict Palestinians from their homes in eastern Jerusalem?

Israel is a country ruled by law. Neither Jews nor Palestinians are unjustly evicted. If they are, Israel's court system sees that justice is served. Jerusalem's Arabs, like Israeli citizens, can rent or buy homes throughout the city. Evictions of Jews and Palestinians occur for the same reasons they do in cities around the world: renters refuse to pay their rent or homes have been built without required permits or on public land designated for urban projects, which has required demolitions of illegally built Jewish and Palestinian structures.



5. Why should the U.S. continue to give so much money to Israel when we have serious economic problems at home?

The U.S. assists Israel because it serves America's interests. Israel and the U.S. share fundamental values that America would like to see adopted around the world, and the relationship provides a wealth of mutual benefits in geostrategic interests and cutting-edge research in medicine, technology, and other fields. The aid to Israel is a boon for the U.S. economy. Israel must spend 75 percent of the money it receives in the U.S., providing contracts worth billions of dollars and jobs for tens of thousands of Americans in 47 states. The U.S. also spends billions on other regions and governments all over the world—from Egypt to the Palestinian Authority, from Europe to South Korea—helping to provide aid, military assistance, and defense.



6. Don't Palestinians have a right to ask the UN to establish an independent Palestinian state?

The Palestinians' unilateral bid for statehood through the UN has been an effort to bypass negotiations with Israel and to avoid making the tough compromises necessary for peace, which include recognizing Jewish national rights. Their unilateral move also violates all past Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) agreements with Israel and UN resolutions 242 and 338, which call for negotiations to establish borders. National groups have the right to statehood only to the extent that they reciprocate and extend those rights to others. So far, the Palestinians have failed this test. Their appeal to the UN has been another effort to sidestep reciprocity.



7. Didn't the UN establish Israel?

The UN did not create Israel. In 1947 it recommended that the Palestine Mandate be divided into a Jewish state alongside an Arab state. Jews, who had built the infrastructure for a state over the previous decades, accepted and declared statehood in May 1948, and their state was immediately, officially recognized by major nations such as the USSR and the United States. Palestinian and Arab leaders, however, rejected this compromise and instead went to war to seize the whole territory. After Israel successfully defended itself, the UN admitted it as a member state in May 1949. When the Palestinians' top priorities are state-building and peaceful coexistence instead of destroying their neighbor, they will qualify for statehood and UN membership.



8. How can Israel claim that the security fence exists only to protect Israeli civilians when it cuts through Palestinian towns and was built on Palestinian land?

It is true that many Palestinians are inconvenienced by the fence, and it is unfortunate that the fence had to be built at all. Wars create difficult situations. The security fence was a direct result of the relentless campaign of suicide bombing and other terrorism that Palestinians launched in 2000, which targeted Israelis when they rode buses or went to schools, restaurants, and dance clubs. Security concerns dictated the route. As the security environment improved, and as Palestinians brought complaints about the route of the fence to Israeli courts, many segments of the fence were moved to accommodate Palestinian requests. There has never been a Palestinian state before the one currently being proposed, and to date there is no agreed-upon border. When peace negotiations conclude, the route of the fence can be adjusted to conform to new border agreements.



9. Aren't the Jews in Israel European colonialists?

Jews who immigrated from Europe to join Jews already living in their ancient homeland were the opposite of colonialists. They were not agents of a foreign power and rejected any identification with European nations. They were idealists from countries around the world who sought national self-determination in their ancestral home and labored to restore the unique language and culture that had once prevailed in the land. Over 150 years ago, Jews from around the world immigrated in ever-larger numbers. They again became the majority in Jerusalem in the 1870s and established Tel Aviv in 1909. In 1920 the international community officially affirmed the Jewish people's historical rights to the land and endorsed the Zionist dream of restoring their national homeland.





10. Wasn't the establishment of Israel a grave injustice to the Palestinians?

The only grave injustice was the one Palestinian leaders inflicted on Israel and their own people. Instead of accepting the territorial compromise the UN recommended in 1947, Palestinian and Arab leaders launched a genocidal war to seize the whole territory. They refused to recognize that Jews had any rights to the land, refused any compromises that would allow both peoples to fulfill their national aspirations, and refused to accept the existence of a Jewish state, no matter how small. Far from being an injustice, the UN Partition Plan of 1947 offered historical justice to the Jewish people and justice to Palestinian Arabs, who were offered the opportunity to create the first Palestinian Arab state in history. The Palestinians' ongoing rejectionism and violence were, and continue to be, an injustice to Israelis and Palestinians alike.



11. Why won't Israel simply leave the West Bank?

Israel has repeatedly offered territorial compromises, but Palestinian and other Arab leaders have consistently said no to establishing the first Palestinian state in history, as they did in 1937, 1947, 1979, 2000, and 2008, because it would also have meant accepting Jewish rights. Israel is in the West Bank because Palestinians have refused to make peace, terrorists from the area continue to endanger Israeli civilians, and Israel has no assurances that the Palestinian Authority can maintain law and order. In addition, Israel has legitimate claims to the land, which is the heart of its ancestral homeland. When Palestinian leaders make establishing their own state a more important priority than destroying Israel, there can be compromises that will lead to peaceful coexistence.

12. Doesn't Israel realize that its presence in the West Bank is illegal?

Israel's presence in the West Bank is not illegal. It is the result of Arab and Palestinian aggression. Israel did not seek to expand into the West Bank. The area fell to Israel during Israel's defensive war in 1967. Under customary law and the Hague Conventions, Israel was obligated to administer the area until peace was achieved. **UN Resolution 242** (1967) assumed Israel would administer the territories until Arab countries were willing to negotiate new, more secure borders. The Palestinian Authority has delayed continuing negotiations to determine future borders. In the meantime, Israel continues to face terrorist threats from the area, necessitating its presence. When Palestinian leaders finally say yes to peace, new, secure borders can be established.

UN RESOLUTION 242

13. Are Israel's settlements in the West Bank illegal?

The legality of the settlements is disputed. Settlement building does not violate UN Resolution 242 or Palestinian-Israeli agreements signed in the Oslo Accords. Even so, Israel has not authorized new settlements since the 1993 Oslo Accords, though the number of people and structures within the established settlement boundaries has grown and though some Israelis have violated government policy and set up small, unauthorized “outposts.” Until there is a peace agreement, the West Bank will remain disputed territory because Israel has legal, historic, and security claims to this land, which is the center of its ancient homeland and which Palestinians want for their future state. But Palestinians have delayed resuming negotiations to establish the borders of what would be the first Palestinian Arab state in history.



14. The UN has repeatedly condemned Israeli actions. Why does the U.S. keep protecting Israel at the UN?

The UN has been hijacked by nondemocratic, anti-Israel nations since the mid-1970s. As a result, UN condemnations reflect the prejudices and values of countries like Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, which are not accurate judges of violations of international standards, especially in the Middle East conflict. The U.S. regularly opposes anti-Israel resolutions to uphold international law and humanitarian standards against dictatorial countries that use the UN as a weapon in their war against Israel.



15. Why does Israel continue to stall on implementing a two-state solution?

Israel is not stalling. Peace takes two. Israel has repeatedly offered to make far-reaching compromises, but it cannot move forward alone. Israel cannot simply announce a new border without legitimate Palestinian leaders who can implement an agreement. Israel must have assurances that Palestinians can maintain law and order, control terrorist groups like Hamas, and are educating their societies for peace. Palestinians must understand that continued rejectionism has its price. Israelis cannot move forward while Palestinians postpone negotiations or gather strength for the next attack.



16. Hasn't Israeli intransigence been the main obstacle to peace?

Israel has not stalled the peace process; the facts are otherwise. Over the past 80 years, Israel has repeatedly shown its willingness to make territorial compromises and accept a two-state solution—in 1937, 1947, 1979, 2000, and 2008—but Palestinian and other Arab leaders have repeatedly said no. They have rejected any Jewish state, no matter how small its territory, and tried to destroy it through wars and terrorism. Palestinian Arabs must begin to say yes to peace and agree to compromises that will fulfill the national aspirations of both peoples.




17. Why does Israel block humanitarian aid to Gaza, leaving the population starving and impoverished?

Israel has never kept humanitarian aid from reaching Gaza. To the contrary, it has ensured the shipment of humanitarian goods, even during its war against Hamas in 2008, when it delivered 59,280 tons of aid. Between June 2010 and June 2011, over 6,000 tons of goods were transported each day. International agencies, including the International Red Cross and the World Health Organization, have confirmed there is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza. And, despite Hamas' repressive rule, Gaza has experienced remarkable economic growth over the past two years, with new luxury hotels and malls as well as a glut of consumer goods, according to major news outlets, including the Palestinian Ma'an News Agency.



18. Why is Israel maintaining its illegal blockade of Gaza and imposing collective punishment on Gaza's civilians?

Every discussion about Gaza must begin with the hard fact that Hamas is engaged in a genocidal war against Israel. The world's leading democracies regard the blockade as legal precisely because Hamas is in a state of armed conflict against Israel. Its charter calls for the murder of Jews and Israel's "obliteration," and Hamas has fired over 10,000 rockets into Israeli communities since 2005, when Israel completely withdrew from the area. Nor does the blockade impose collective punishment. Tons of goods have been transported into Gaza every year since the blockade began. The blockade only has the reasonable requirement that Israeli officials inspect all shipments to ensure that Gaza's terrorist groups are not importing weaponry. When Hamas ends its war against Israel, there will be no need for a blockade. Viewed this way, Hamas is the one inflicting collective punishment on Gaza's and Israel's civilians.



19. How can Israel claim it no longer occupies Gaza when it controls Gaza's air space, waters, and borders?

Every discussion about Gaza must begin with the hard fact that Hamas is engaged in a genocidal war against Israel. Control of air space, water, and borders is essential in any war, especially a war of genocidal intentions led by fanatical leadership like Hamas. Israel has had no presence in Gaza since August of 2005. Gaza is governed solely by Hamas with support from Iran. Israel imposed border, air, and naval controls to ensure that Hamas does not import weapons for terrorism. The Gaza Strip is on the same beautiful Mediterranean coast as Tel Aviv. Imagine what a prosperous tourist spot it could be if Gaza's government focused on state-building and peace instead of rocket building and war.





20. Isn't Israel's wall illegal according to the International Court of Justice and a violation of human rights?

The International Court of Justice decision about the wall was widely criticized because it ignored a crucial fact—why Israel originally built the security fence. Israel built the fence for one reason only: to protect Israeli civilians from the relentless Palestinian terrorist war launched in 2000. The security fence was built to separate suicide bombers and other terrorists from their intended victims. Before its construction, no manmade or natural barrier kept terrorists from simply walking into Israel to detonate themselves in buses, restaurants, hotels, and schools. Dozens of countries, including India, Spain, the U.S., the Czech Republic, South Korea, and others, use similar barriers to protect their countries and their citizens. The International Court of Justice could not dispute the fact that the security fence has actually served human rights. It has saved lives. Israeli fatalities from terrorism in Israel dropped by close to 100 percent after the fence was built.



21. When will Israel remove checkpoints, which inconvenience the Palestinian people?

Israel will remove checkpoints when they are no longer needed. The checkpoints unfortunately inconvenience ordinary Palestinians, just as security checks at American airports and borders inconvenience all travelers. Security checkpoints are there to save innocent lives. Like other democracies, Israel implemented policies to protect its citizens. It set up checkpoints during the height of the Palestinian terrorist campaign, which murdered and maimed thousands of Israeli citizens. The number of checkpoints rises or falls with the degree of the terrorist threat. Since late 2009 Israel has been able to dramatically reduce the number of checkpoints as terrorist attempts have decreased.

22. Isn't a Jewish state, by definition, racist and undemocratic?

The Jewish people are a national and ethnic group that created the religion of Judaism. Therefore, the concept of a Jewish state is no more racist or undemocratic than the concept of a Japanese state, a Lithuanian state, or any other modern nation that is a democracy whose citizens are also bound together by shared identity, heritage, and culture. When the UN recommended the establishment of a Jewish state in 1947 and admitted Israel as a member in 1949, it did not see any contradiction between its Jewish and democratic identity. The Jewish state set up a democratic, secular government and is one of the most ethnically diverse and progressive countries in the world. Arab citizens participate fully in government; equal rights are assured for women, gays, and minorities; and freedom of the press and of religion are protected. Israel grants people of Jewish heritage a fast track to citizenship, just as many other modern states, such as Poland, Finland, Greece, Armenia, and Germany, grant their diaspora populations special citizenship rights. Non-Jews can also apply to become citizens of Israel under naturalization procedures similar to those in other countries around the world.



23. Why does Israel believe it has a right to possess nuclear weapons but that Iran does not have that same right?

Israel is the only country in the world that has been openly threatened with extinction by its neighbors since its rebirth in 1948. Discussion about Israel's nuclear weapons should begin only when Israel's existence is accepted in the region. If Israel does have nuclear weapons, we will never know about them unless Israel is attacked. In contrast Iran has been threatening to annihilate Israel for years and is promising to enrich enough uranium to do so. There is a difference. Israel is not threatening its neighbors. Iran is.



24. Does Israel use disproportionate force during its military operations?

Any discussion about war should begin by acknowledging that war is hell and innocent civilians suffer. That is precisely why Israel practiced restraint for three years, even as Hamas fired 7,000 rockets and mortars into Israeli communities between 2005 and December 2008, killing and maiming Israeli citizens. Few countries would tolerate this aggression without responding immediately. The term “disproportionate force” is used when military actions cause more harm to civilians than is warranted by the military objectives. Israel’s military has been praised precisely for its consistent efforts to avoid harming innocent civilians, even while it fights unconventional wars against terrorist groups that violate all humanitarian rules of war, like Hamas and Hezbollah. These terrorist groups use human shields, intentionally fight from civilian centers, and target Israeli civilians. These tactics tragically raise the number of civilian casualties. When Israel responded to Hamas in December 2008, it warned civilians of impending attacks with millions of flyers, broadcasts on Gaza radio, and telephone calls to individual homes. Israel’s military procedures prompted British military expert Col. (ret.) Richard Kemp to testify that “the Israel Defense Forces did more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare.”

25. Does Israel practice apartheid?

The practice of apartheid cannot be applied to Israel, and to say so is a misuse of the term. War does create unpleasant conditions. Building a security wall and administering hostile territory until peace is possible is not “apartheid.” It is common sense. Israel’s security fence was built in response to terrorism. Its purpose is not to separate people by race, religion, or nationality but to separate terrorists from their targeted victims. Nor does Israel employ apartheid against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians are not Israeli citizens and do not wish to be.



They have their own governments, Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. Nor does Israel employ anything resembling apartheid within Israel. While Israel, like all multiethnic democracies, struggles to integrate its minorities more fully, its laws and programs try to eradicate, not enforce, disadvantages and discrimination. “Apartheid” applies more appropriately to those who dream of a Jew-free state of Palestine.



Kiryat Gat, Israel:
*Israeli-Palestinian
Kids' World Cup*

DID YOU KNOW



Size:

Israel is smaller than the state of New Jersey. It is 1/800 the size of the Arab world.

Roots:

Jews are indigenous to Israel and have maintained a continuous presence for over 3,000 years according to archeological and historical evidence and biblical text.

Zionism:

Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people who sought to restore their freedom and independence in their ancestral homeland.

Religious-majority Countries Around the World:

56 Islamic, 49 Roman Catholic, 20 Protestant, 12 Eastern Orthodox, 4 Hindu, and 1 Jewish.

Tel Aviv Was Founded in 1909:

Tel Aviv is over 100 years old. This simple fact tells you that the Jewish people were engaged in nation-building long before Israel's rebirth in 1948.

Security Threats:

Iranian leaders are racing to build nuclear weapons while calling for Israel to be "wiped off the map." Hamas and Hezbollah are Iranian-supported proxies. Iran is considered the world's leading sponsor of global terrorism.

West Bank Palestinian Communities:

Ninety-eight percent of the Palestinian population lives on 40 percent of the West Bank land, leaving over 50 percent of the West Bank virtually vacant.

Israeli Communities in the West Bank:

Built up areas of Israeli settlements now cover less than 1.7 percent of West Bank land. If you include the fence, Israelis live on 5 percent to 8 percent of West Bank land.

Please Support StandWithUs

**Help us send educational
material like this to campuses and
communities around the world.**

Send Your Generous Donation To:

StandWithUs, PO Box 341069
Los Angeles, CA 90034-1069

info@standwithus.com • 310.836.6140
Order this or other booklets at
www.standwithus.com

The logo consists of the text "StandWithUs" in white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a solid blue rectangular background.

StandWithUs

Supporting Israel Around The World

StandWithUs (a.k.a. Israel Emergency Alliance) is a
tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3)
of the Internal Revenue Code.