

## Declarations of Independence



<p><b>Israeli - May 14, 1948</b> Written and Proclaimed by David Ben Gurion</p>	<p><b>Palestinian - November 15, 1988</b> Written by Mahmoud Darwish and proclaimed by Yasser Arafat</p>
<p>The Land of Israel was the <b>birthplace</b> of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.</p>	<p>Palestine, the land of the three monotheistic faiths, is where the Palestinian Arab people <b>was born</b>, on which it grew, developed and excelled. Thus the Palestinian Arab people ensured for itself an everlasting union between itself, its land, and its history.</p>
<p>Impelled by this historic and traditional <b>attachment</b>, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland.</p>	<p>The undying <b>connection</b> between Palestine and its people secured for the land its character, and for the people its national genius.</p>
<p>This right was recognized in the <b>Balfour Declaration</b> ... giving international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.</p>	<p>And it was the Palestinian people, already wounded in its body, that was submitted to yet another type of occupation over which floated that falsehood that "Palestine was a land without people." This notion was foisted upon some in the world, whereas in Article 22 of the <b>Covenant of the League of Nations</b> (1919) and in the <b>Treaty of Lausanne</b> (1923), the community of nations had recognized that Palestine was to be granted to freedom as a provisionally independent nation.</p>

<p><b>On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution</b> calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.</p>	<p>Despite the historical injustice inflicted on the Palestinian Arab people resulting in their dispersion and depriving them of their right to self-determination, following upon U.N. <b>General Assembly Resolution 181 (1947)</b>, which partitioned Palestine into two states, one Arab, one Jewish, yet it is this Resolution that still provides those conditions of international legitimacy that ensure the right of the Palestinian Arab people to sovereignty.</p>
<p>Accordingly we, members of the People's Council, representatives of the Jewish Community of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist Movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz-Israel and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, <b>hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel.</b></p>	<p>In pursuance of Resolutions adopted by Arab Summit Conferences and relying on the authority bestowed by international legitimacy as embodied in the Resolutions of the United Nations Organization since 1947;</p> <p>And in exercise by the Palestinian Arab people of its rights to self-determination, political independence and sovereignty over its territory,</p> <p>The Palestine National Council, in the name of God, and in the name of the Palestinian Arab people, <b>hereby proclaims the establishment of the State of Palestine on our Palestinian territory with its capital Jerusalem (Al-Quds Ash-Sharif).</b></p>
<p><b>We appeal to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora</b> to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and to stand by us in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel.</p>	<p><b>The State of Palestine is the state of Palestinians wherever they may be.</b> The state is for them to enjoy in it their collective national and cultural identity, theirs to pursue in it a complete equality of rights.</p>
<p>The State of Israel will.. be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; <b>it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants</b> irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions;</p>	<p>Governance will be based on principles of <b>social justice, equality and non-discrimination in public rights of men or women, on grounds of race, religion, color or sex</b>, and the aegis of a constitution which ensures the rule of law and an independent judiciary. Thus shall these principles allow no departure from Palestine's age-old spiritual and civilizational heritage of tolerance and religious coexistence.</p>

<p>and it will be faithful to the <b>principles of the Charter of the United Nations</b></p>	<p>The State of Palestine proclaims its commitment to the <b>principles and purposes of the United Nations</b>, and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.</p>
<p>We appeal - in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months - to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to <b>preserve peace</b> and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.</p> <p>We extend our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples <b>in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness</b>, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.</p>	<p>It further announces itself to be a peace-loving State, in adherence to the principles of <b>peaceful co-existence</b>.</p> <p>It will join with all states and peoples in order to assure a <b>permanent peace based upon justice and the respect of rights</b> so that humanity's potential for well-being may be assured, an earnest competition for excellence may be maintained, and in which confidence in the future will eliminate fear for those who are just and for whom justice is the only recourse.</p>
<p>Placing our <b>trust in the Almighty</b>, we affix our signatures to this proclamation at this session of the provisional Council of State, on the soil of the Homeland, in the city of Tel-Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the 5th day of Iyar, 5708 (14th May, 1948).</p>	<p>Therefore, we call upon our great people to rally to the banner of Palestine, to cherish and defend it, so that it may forever be the symbol of our freedom and dignity in that homeland, which is a homeland for the free, now and always.</p> <p><b>In the name of God</b>, the Compassionate, the Merciful:</p> <p>"Say: 'O God, Master of the Kingdom, Who give the Kingdom to whom you choose, and seizes the Kingdom from whom you choose. You are powerful over everything."</p>

## Similarities

*Suffering.* David Ben-Gurion devotes three paragraphs to the effects of the holocaust suffered by the Jews in World War II; Yasir 'Arafat laces his entire statement with references to "occupation, massacres, and dispersion," causing the Palestinian people to be "wounded in its body."

*A nation.* Each document claims the sovereignty that nationalist ideology promises each people: the Zionists see this as a "natural right" of the Jewish people; the PLO refers to the "national rights" of the Palestinians.

*Connection to the land.* Both emphasize connections to that piece of territory alternately called the Land of Israel or Palestine. Predictably, the Israeli document focuses on two eras, biblical antiquity and recent decades, while the PLO document stresses that Palestinians were "never separated" from the land.

*International recognition.* The Israeli proclamation claims "explicit international recognition to the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and their right to reconstitute their National Home." Similarly, the PLO holds that "the community of nations" recognized Palestine as a "provisionally independent" nation.

In support of these assertions, each declaration refers to two documents dating from the First World War era. The Israelis note the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 and the League of Nations' July 1922 appointment of Great Britain as the mandatory power in Palestine. The first of these called for "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," while the second verbatim endorsed this formulation. As though in direct answer, the PLO resolution refers to two parallel documents-the League of Nations Covenant of June 1919 and the Lausanne Treaty of July 1923.

*The United Nations.* The Israelis promise cooperation with the "organs and representatives of the United Nations," while the PLO declares its "commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations."

Beyond these similarities, the two documents also resemble each other in what they leave out. Neither makes any mention of borders. Nor does either refer to the well-being of its citizens (in striking contrast to phrasing in the American Declaration of Independence about "the pursuit of happiness").

### Sources:

Israeli Declaration - [https://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat\\_eng.htm](https://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.htm)

Palestinian Declaration - <https://www.globalresearch.ca/palestine-independence-day/3864>

From the papers of an obscure Tel Aviv-based lawyer named Mordechai Beham, "It turns out that early drafts of the Jewish state's founding document borrowed liberally from the American Declaration of Independence. ... He also cribbed from the Bible's Book of Deuteronomy, the English Bill of Rights and the United Nations' partition plan for Palestine."

Presented by Ittay Flescher - Education Director, Kids4Peace Jerusalem, [ittay@k4p.org](mailto:ittay@k4p.org)