

A (very) brief history of the Arab/Israeli conflict

AD

600 Two communities, one Jewish & one Arab/Muslim live in what is now Israel/Palestine. Jerusalem is a holy place for both religions.

1800 Ottoman Government discriminates against Jewish Community

1917 Britain promises land in Palestine to Jews.

1918 Britain offers land to Arabs in return for post war support.

1933 Nazis come to power in Germany. Many Jews are treated badly in Europe & so flee to Palestine. Arabs become afraid that they will lose their land.

1937 Britain suggests dividing Palestine into two countries - one Jewish & one Arab. The Arabs refuse.

1939 - 45 Six million Jews are murdered in the Holocaust in Europe. Palestinian Jews are desperate to bring 250 000 Jews held in camps 'home' to Palestine.

1947 The United Nations tries to divide Palestine into two countries - one Jewish & one Arab. The UN cannot enforce the partition.

1948 The Jews declare an independent State of Israel. Jews & Arabs fight. Israel increases its land.

1968 - 1987 Arab-Israeli fighting

1991 - 1997 Peace process makes very slow progress.

2000 - 2002 Continued violence

2003 Israel starts to build a security fence in the West Bank

2003 - Road Map to Peace. Limited progress

2006 - Hamas (extreme Palestinian group) wins elections in Gaza.

2006 - 2009 Violence between rival groups & between Palestinians & Israelis

Polls on both sides show that most Israelis & most Palestinians accept the need for two separate countries but they cannot agree on the division of Jerusalem nor on Palestinians' right to return to land where they previously lived.