This book is about my home, Gaza. I’ve put my memories and dreams into these pages. I’ve shared with you the view from my window. This body of work contextualizes Gaza’s ever-changing realities, offering an exploration of home, politics, and identity.

There is no free press in Gaza. Most of the news channels cater to political parties that use violence to silence opponents. This book exposes many horrifying experiences I would never have been able to speak about had I not left home.

For years, I clung to the idea of fleeing my country for the Western world. In 2016, I managed to leave Gaza Strip for New York, and, soon after, began the process of seeking asylum in Berkeley, California. People wanted to know how they could help my wife and I, aside from offering financial assistance. Then I received the opportunity to publish my photographs. It’s an opportunity so many of the refugees arriving in the US every day aren’t afforded: the chance to share one’s experience.

My experience is one of a Palestinian, the son of a jihadist who killed and contributed to the killing of innocent Israelis. I condemn these actions. Though, many in Gaza sound out for justice for my father—a Palestinian hero—one who carried out valiant operations for the sake of his country and religion. I come from a place overflowing with weapons where my father could casually buy a pistol and shoot it into the air while creating the sounds of war. It was a place where on any night you could be awoken by a bomb exploding in your neighbor’s home, stored there by a member of their family who belonged to an armed faction. A place where on any night you could be awoken by a bomb exploding in your neighbor’s home, stored there by a member of their family who belonged to an armed faction.

Introduction

My father spent many years participating in armed struggle, both within the framework of Palestinian armed organizations and outside it, which he believed to be justifiable resistance to the Israeli occupation. In December 1986, with Gaza still under the direct rule of the Israeli Occupation Force, my father was arrested once again, second time while at his home in the refugee neighborhood of Khan al-Khalil. In September 1988, he was released. My father was a student at the Al-Azhar University in Gaza. He was charged with joining the Islamic Jihad movement and training with weapons, possessing a firearm and grenade, and being a member of a group that killed Israeli civilians. My father was detained and questioned for six months, at which point an Israeli military court sentenced him to life in prison in Israel. He died in December of 1986. My father was a student at the Al-Azhar University in Gaza. He was charged with joining the Islamic Jihad movement and training with weapons, possessing a firearm and grenade, and being a member of a group that killed Israeli civilians. My father was detained and questioned for six months, at which point an Israeli military court sentenced him to life in prison in Israel. He died in December of 1986.
prison. He pleaded guilty to some of the charges but denied participation in the killings.

A few days his court session, my father and five other prisoners escaped from the notorious central Gaza prison, the headquarters of the Israeli military governor in the Gaza Strip. In the weeks following their escape, the Israeli army killed three of the escaped prisoners and arrested a fourth. My father and the last escapee, Khaled Saleh, managed to make it to the Sinai Desert, in Egypt. My father returned to his activity with the Islamic Jihad movement, traveling between several Arab countries before finding himself in Syria in 1989, where he married my mother, Sadeya Al Hourrani, a Palestinian refugee. As happens with most Arab marriages, my father proposed to my mother without ever having met her. He had arrived just a month earlier, from Algeria. My mother’s father had promised him that, in order to preserve their right of return, he would marry his daughters only to Palestinians. And so, as the decision was my grandfather’s rather than my mother’s, my grandfather gave consent for the marriage directly to my father. My own story began in 1995, when I was four years old, and my parents returned to the Gaza Strip to settle near my father’s family. Two years prior, the Israeli army had partially withdrawn from the Gaza Strip, restoring my father’s family to its former prominence. My father was returning from a trip abroad as he was in the eyes of his family and community. We moved into a flat on the fifteenth floor of a building owned by the al-Saftawi side of our family. My father worked for the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, which, in practical terms, meant he worked in the management of mosques. On top of his professional duties, he acted as the imam of mosques around the Gaza Strip, where he would lecture about religion. My mother was a housewife, seeing to our education and raising us according to our father’s methods and rules.

My parents cared for their children and tried to make life enjoyable, but we constantly berated. My siblings and I were made to feel guilty about our soft hands. We were threatened and punished if we didn’t go to the mosque for the five daily prayers. We were woken at dawn, and forced to go to the mosque for the Fajr (dawn prayer). We were chased, and punished if we heard from one of the sheikhs at the mosque that we hadn’t attended prayers or study. Our lives were the way through which I understood life. Reality (the People’s game) formed the world. Islamic books filled the shelves, along with animal statues that my father had broken the heads off in accordance with the Islamic rule prohibiting the portrayal and embodiment of spirits. Our lives went on like this until I reached age nine, in 2000, and my father was arrested by the Israeli army again, at the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. He remained in prison for the next eighteen years. Since his recent release, he has served as a brigadier general in Hamas’s ministry of interior.

I’m now seven thousand miles away from him, from Gaza, and I walk as a free man. Working as a journalist in Gaza is like walking barefoot in a field of thorns. You must always walk where you step. Each neighborhood is composed of its own intimate social network, and traveling through them with a camera makes you a significant suspicion. You’re caught between the two sides of the conflict: The rulers of Gaza limit what you can photograph and write about, imprisoning and torturing those who disobey. At the same time, the Israeli army sees you as a potential threat that must be eliminated, as has been the fate of many Palestinian journalists. Standing behind the camera, your hands shake as you document the suffering. These photographs are visual memories that explore the lives behind the headlines. This work is dedicated to all those trapped in the hardships of this life, surviving in the hopes of a better tomorrow.
A young Palestinian drives his donkey cart on Salah al-Din Road, in the southern Gaza Strip.
July 13, 2010, 1:25 p.m.
A memorial billboard for Tariq Dubik Hamad is on display beside Salah al-Din Road. In 2004, twenty-four-year-old Tariq blew his car up among an Israeli army patrol, injuring four soldiers. The billboard displays scenes from the operation and the words “there had risen the spirit of the al-Qassam martyr commander.”

December 31, 2011, 11:45 p.m.
Gazans celebrate New Year’s Eve at the Beach restaurant in Gaza City.

September 27, 2010, 1:07 a.m.
The view from the roof of the six-story house in the al-Saftawi neighborhood where I spent most of my childhood. My parents returned to Gaza from Sudan in 1995, where my father had worked for the local Islamic Jihad office. My siblings and I grew up in this house with four ultraconservative uncles who pressured us to go to the mosque five times a day. During frequent clashes with the Israeli army, Palestinian militant factions used a field in front of our house as a base to fire rockets at Israel. When Israeli tanks invaded, the militant factions erected sand hills in the middle of our street and the surrounding ones in preparation for street fights.
February 12, 2012, 11:58 a.m.

Ahmed Salah al-Samouni, seven years old, gives a lukewarm smile in his classroom in the al-Zaytoun neighborhood. Ahmed’s sister, grandmother, and grandfather were killed before his eyes during Operation Cast Lead, Israel’s twenty-two-day assault on Gaza in 2008 and 2009. Forty-eight members of his family were killed that day, and his father, mother, and two brothers were injured. In the aftermath, Ahmed lay in a pool of his family members’ blood; his mother didn’t know Ahmed had survived until he shouted out to her.

November 24, 2012, 12:19 p.m.

A Palestinian man works in one of the Rafah tunnels, which run from Gaza to Egypt and serve as underground routes for transporting goods and people. Gazans dug the tunnels in response to severe restrictions on Palestinian movement and the import of consumer goods, medicines, and construction materials. These restrictions paralyzed all aspects of life and development in Gaza. The tunnels are often guarded by Hamas police; one dangerous place to work. The Egyptian army has pumped poisonous gas and sewage water into the tunnels, and Israel has bombed the tunnels. To visit, I had to receive permission from the Hamas-run interior ministry.

November 24, 2012, 1:19 p.m.

A bottle of water for Palestinian tunnel workers hangs on the wall of a tunnel linking the Gaza Strip and Egypt. During my descent into this tunnel, which ranges from fifteen to twenty meters deep, I immediately felt pressure and shortness of breath. Two hundred and thirty-two Palestinian tunnel workers died and 597 were injured between 2006 and 2013.

May 31, 2013, 10:12 a.m.

Kids play soccer in front of their homes in Gaza City’s al-Shati refugee camp, which translates to “beach camp.”

June 3, 2013, 2:26 p.m.

A boy sells sweet corn in front of his house in Gaza City’s al-Shati refugee camp.
A mechanic eats lunch with his children and an employee at his workshop in the al-Shati refugee camp. The camp is located on the Mediterranean coast in the Gaza City area, and was established for the tens of thousands of Palestinians forced to flee their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The camp began as a collection of tents and developed into concrete homes, out of which residents opened small workshops. Al-Shati is now home to more than 72,000 refugees. They all reside within only 0.52 square kilometers. It's the third-largest refugee camp in the Palestinian territories.
June 22, 2013, 11:51 p.m. A crowd of youth in Gaza City takes to the streets to celebrate Mohammed Assaf winning the Arab Idol contest. Thousands gathered on Omar al-Mukhtar Street for hours after the announcement. Minutes after I arrived, security police stopped me, seized my camera, and handed me over to uniformed officers for interrogation.
A farmer feeds his cows on the first day of Eid al-Adha and prepares to receive customers. On this holiday, Muslims offer a sacrifice of an animal and then divide the meat into three portions: one is given to relatives, friends, and neighbors; another to the poor; and the final one is kept at home for the family.
Friends, family, and members of militant factions celebrate a Palestinian prisoner’s release from an Israeli prison at the Erez Crossing on the Gaza-Israel border.

Propane canisters smuggled from Egypt through the Rafah tunnels wait for distribution within Gaza. Movement is not easy in this area, especially if you’re carrying a camera. On the day I took this photograph, I was stopped and interrogated multiple times by undercover Hamas police. Years later, I was arrested and my equipment was taken while I was working on a film here. It was brought to our Al Shabab al-Qassam Brigades site, where my phone was confiscated for fifteen days, during which time they accessed my email and social media accounts. During and after these fifteen days, I was interrogated at many military and governmental sites. Days before leaving Gaza for good, I was ultimately told that Hamas would prohibit me from completing this film or doing any other documentary work on the border.

A building—partly destroyed during clashes between Palestine and Egypt—sits abandoned near the Rafah tunnels.
An Egyptian soldier stands on a watchtower overlooking the Rafah tunnels, which cross between Egypt and Gaza. Tents cover the tunnels’ entrances. The Egyptian army turned a blind eye to the tunnels until relations with Hamas deteriorated, leading to Egypt’s decision to close the tunnels in 2013.

Residents of Gaza wait in line to fill up their propane tanks. A driver who had been waiting for hours said to me, “Whenever there’s an Israeli holiday, they close the crossing and cause shortages, and the prices go up. Our life stops and we don’t make enough money to feed our families.”

A man takes a nap while waiting for his turn to fill his propane canisters during one of the frequent gas crises in the Gaza Strip. Israel regularly extorts Gaza’s government by closing the Israeli Kerem Shalom Crossing, the main import route for gas and fuel. During these crises, it often takes the local gas distributors more than two months to return a canister, usually in a van with dozens of the highly pressurized canisters stacked on top of one another.
Palestinian kids face challenges getting to school due to flooded rainwater and bad infrastructure in Gaza City.

Moments before Odeh Hamad’s burial, his brother grieves in the Eastern Cemetery in northern Gaza Strip. Odeh was fatally shot by an Israeli soldier almost a kilometer from Gaza’s Israeli-sealed border. Odeh and another brother, Raddad, had been collecting discarded plastic products, a common activity for unemployed Gazans. Raddad was shot in the hand the same day.

Palestinian protesters rally with mirrors on Gaza’s eastern border with Israel. The protest marked the anniversary of the Ibrahimi mosque massacre. The mirrors were held to force Israeli soldiers to witness themselves shooting Palestinians. The mirrors were also used to reflect sunlight to confuse the soldiers’ vision. Ashraf al-Qidra, the spokesperson for Gaza’s Hamas-run health ministry, announced that Israeli soldiers shot three civilians that day, including a journalist, and injured many others with tear gas.

Following scenes...
June 7, 2014, 3:40 p.m.

My thirteen-year-old sister, Leen al-Saftawi, stands on the rooftop of our house. When Leen was four years old, she accompanied me to visit our father in an Israeli prison. It was her first time meeting him. Two years after this photo was taken, my uncle discovered that Leen had made a Facebook page, so they broke into our family's house, took Leen's phone, and put her on house arrest. They moved Leen without her consent to my father's family building, where for nearly two months she was humiliated and forbidden to leave, except to buy things from the shop down the block.

July 10, 2014, 9:39 a.m.

A shelled media vehicle sits on the street after an attack by an Israeli warplane. The bombing killed the driver, Hamed Shehab, who worked for the Gaza-based outlet Media 24. Eight others were injured. My brother and a friend were passing on the night of the attack and were the first on the scene. They found Hamed's body torn apart by the missile. Some neighbors brought a mattress, and together they collected the body parts.

July 11, 2014, 2:49 p.m.

An ambulance car carries an injured person to the al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City during the Israeli attack on Gaza in July and August of 2014. The hospital reception was in chaos the whole day. Hamas police shouted orders not to photograph injured women and certain injured men. The attack was known as Operation Protective Edge, and it lasted for fifty-one days. According to the UN, the attack killed 2,251 Palestinians, including 551 children, sixty-seven Israeli soldiers, and thirteen Israeli civilians.

July 12, 2014, 1:59 p.m.

Men and children gather at the site of an Israeli missile attack. The attack killed eight people—five of them members of the al-Qassam Brigades—and injured ten others. The men killed were seated just beyond this car, in front of their home in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood, north of Gaza City. It was a direct hit; their bodies were torn to pieces. I arrived minutes after the attack. Blood still fresh on the ground. The casualties were Rateb al-Sai, twenty-two; Azmi Obaid, sixty-one; Nidal al-Malash, twenty-two; Suleiman Obaid, sixty-six; Abu Abdo, seventy; Mostafa Amer, twenty-nine; and Mohamed Salem, thirty.
A resident of Gaza City carries an injured person to the al-Shifa Hospital. Civilians played a key role in transporting the injured during Operation Protective Edge.

Palestinian rockets sail toward Israel. Various Palestinian militant groups headed by Hamas operate out of the Gaza Strip and use its residential neighborhoods to launch attacks on Israel. Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by the US, the European Union, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, and Japan, among other countries.

Residents of the al-Tofah neighborhood wait for the imminent bombardment of a targeted house after receiving a warning phone call from the Israeli army.
Civil defense workers and volunteers extinguish fires after Israeli warplanes shelled the Hashem family home. The family’s women and children gathered outside while the men tried to recover valuables.
July 18, 2014, 1:43 a.m. Light flares fell on the Shuja'iyya neighborhood in eastern Gaza City during an Israeli warplane bombing.
Smoke fills the sky as intensive air strikes rain down on Shuja’iyya. I took this picture from the eleventh-story window of my apartment in Gaza City. My wife, Lara, and I started a livestream during the fifty-one days of Operation Protective Edge, in an attempt to show what we hadn’t been able to during previous conflicts in our city.

Gazans survey Shuja’iyya during the first hour of a ceasefire between Hamas and the Israeli army. Israeli bombardments had targeted large swaths of the neighborhood, leaving tens of thousands homeless.

Residents of Shuja’iyya carry what they can from their destroyed homes. Though the July 26 truce lasted only twelve hours, people continued to evacuate the injured and the dead for two days. Sixty-seven bodies were found in this neighborhood alone in that time—including those of seventeen children, fourteen women, and four elderly people—and hundreds were wounded.

Residents venture to the farthest point they can access in their neighborhood. Israeli tanks were stationed a few blocks away. From this spot, one could hear the ‘tanks’ engines as well as the Israeli drones overhead, surveying the area.

Violence on the day of the July 26 ceasefire was limited to Shuja’iyya, pictured here. Minutes before the truce began, an Israeli strike in Khan Yunis, on the other side of the Strip, claimed twenty-six members of the al-Najjar family. Many of the family members killed were seeking refuge in Khan Yunis after fleeing violence in another village.
Residents of Shuja’iyya return to their neighborhood during the July 26 cease fire between Hamas and the Israeli army.

A man surveys the remains of his house in Shuja’iyya during the July 26 cease fire.

A mosque in Shuja’iyya is left partly destroyed after an Israeli attack. Hamas uses mosques as headquarters to mobilize people and gain ground control.

In a moment of uncertainty, residents of Shuja’iyya carry what can be salvaged from their evacuated neighborhood during the July 26 cease fire. The previous day, Israel rejected a weeklong truce proposed by US Secretary of State John Kerry. Instead, a twelve-hour truce was approved, starting at 8 a.m. the day this photo was taken.

An Israeli air strike hits the al-Muntada police compound, in western Gaza City. I took this photo from my apartment.

Following pages:
Israeli flares light up the sky behind my wife, Lara. She stands on the balcony of our apartment during Operation Protective Edge.

August 1, 2014, 9:13 a.m.
An unexploded Israeli shell remains lodged in the street as residents of Shuja’iyya return home during a ceasefire. The truce collapsed an hour or two after it began, when a firefight broke out between a group of Palestinian armed fighters and a third Israeli soldier, Hadar Goldin, was abducted into Gaza tunnels. The ensuing four days of heavy artillery shelling and bombing, beginning in Rafah and extending throughout the rest of the strip, killed and injured hundreds of Gazans, and destroyed or damaged hundreds of buildings.

August 1, 2014, 10:07 a.m.
Residents of Shuja’iyya rush to retrieve their belongings shortly before the truce collapses. Soon after this photo was taken, people ran for safety as Israeli soldiers opened fire, preventing many who lived on the eastern outskirts of the neighborhood from reaching their homes.
A displaced man shows me the shelter he made for his wife and their two children. His brother and his brother’s family were living next to this man’s family in a similar tent after fleeing the bombing in Shuja’iyya.

Fifty-two-year-old Sabah Qtati and her son sit in a hallway of the al-Shifa Hospital, where they took refuge after evacuating their home in Shuja’iyya. Thousands of displaced Gazans have taken to squares, parks, and hospitals.

A young man pauses for a photo in front of his nearly destroyed home in Shuja’iyya. The ruins of the al-Wafa Hospital are across the street.
August 4, 2014, 4:02 p.m.

Salah Salameen rests in the schoolyard of a UN agency school, where he was injured by shrapnel in an Israeli air strike. More than twenty-five people were injured and fourteen were killed in the attack. The casualties included a UN employee and eight children who had sought shelter at the school, which hosted over 2,900 refugees.

August 6, 2014, 12:13 p.m.

Omar Wahdan, almost four years old, lies on a bed in the al-Shifa Hospital. He and his two brothers were seriously injured in a drone attack on a house in the Jabaliya refugee camp. The attack was part of Operation Protective Edge. The children had been sleeping next to their mother, who was killed. Three other family members were also killed in the attack.

August 6, 2014, 12:14 p.m.

Omar’s two-year-old brother, Mohammed Wahdan, lies on a bed in the al-Shifa Hospital. The brothers, Mohammed, Mosab, and Omar, were injured by shrapnel, which caused severe fractures and burns all over their bodies. Thirty others suffered moderate and severe injuries in the attack, including the boys’ father, who lost both legs and was transferred to a hospital in Egypt. A week earlier, on July 27, their grandfather Zaki Wahdan’s house was blown up. Zaki was killed, along with his wife, his daughter-in-law, four grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter. The Wahdan family was one of many that fled border areas in search of safe shelter, only to be followed by Israeli missiles.
The minaret of the al-Soussi mosque remains lodged in a house in the Beach refugee camp after being targeted by Israeli warplanes. Israel struck the mosque with three drone missiles as an evacuation warning to the mosque’s neighbors. Ramez Radwan, the owner of the building the minaret fell on, said there were only seven minutes between the warning and the bombing.

Residents of the destroyed al-Zafer apartment building collect what remains of their belongings the morning after an Israeli air strike. Twenty-two residents of the tower and neighboring buildings were wounded in the bombardment. The thirteen-story structure in Gaza City had forty-four apartments and was located across the street from the building where my wife and I lived. We were both away from home when a resident of our building received a warning call to evacuate. We couldn’t sleep in the apartment for the next three nights out of fear that our building would be targeted next.

The destroyed al-Nada residential buildings sit empty after residents fled Israeli attacks. The buildings made up a complex that sat on the far corner of the far north of the Gaza Strip. They were home to about 400 Palestinian families. This area is close to the Israeli border and was one of the first to be targeted when the Israeli army launched Operation Protective Edge.
Forty-four-year-old farmer Shehda al-Najar shows a picture of his face from when he was shot in the jaw and arm with exploding bullets by an Israeli soldier. When the Israeli army invaded Khuza’a, a village in the southeastern Gaza Strip, they told Shehda to take his clothes off. The Israeli soldiers ordered Shehda’s family members to come out of their house one by one. Shehda hadn’t been able to evacuate Khuza’a before the Israeli invasion because he was under house arrest by Hamas militants, who suspected him of being anti-Hamas. He said, “If I [hadn’t been] shot by Israeli soldiers, [Izz ad-Din al-Qassam militants] would have called me a spy and shot me in the middle of downtown.”

Children sit in front of their destroyed house in Khuza’a. The Israeli army heavily bombed Khuza’a before invading the area.

A neighborhood in Khuza’a reels in the aftermath of Operation Protective Edge. The medical clinic in the house of Dr. Kamal Abu Rujaila once operated on the next block over. Many people in and around the clinic were killed when it was hit by repeated Israeli air strikes in July 2014. Among the dead were women and children, as well as the doctor’s brother. Dozens of injured Khuza’a residents had medical attention at the clinic while their village was deemed a closed military zone by the Israeli army earlier that summer.
A child bikes past a door in Khuza’a that once led to a home full of life. The home was destroyed in Operation Protective Edge. The magnitude of destruction in the village of Khuza’a is shocking. More than 550 houses were destroyed, and 900 more were left uninhabitable. Six mosques were destroyed and three were severely damaged.
A bombed-out classroom in the Jamal Abdul Nasser School in Shuja'iyya sits empty. Large parts of the school were turned to rubble during Operation Protective Edge.
November 16, 2014, 4:16 p.m. Palestinian boys play soccer in a damaged sports club in Shuja’iyya. The building was targeted during Operation Protective Edge.

Emad Saeed Sersawi, twenty, plays soccer as light streams through the damaged parts of the sports club’s walls.
Yassir Mahmoud El Haj holds a picture of his family, who, except for his sister, were all killed in an Israeli bombardment of their house in Khan Younis. On July 10, 2014, at 1:30 a.m., Yassir lost his parents, Mahmoud El Haj and Basma El Haj; and six brothers and sisters: Najla, twenty-eight; Asmaa, twenty-two; Omar, twenty; Tareq, eighteen; Sa’ad, sixteen; and Fatma, fourteen. His only surviving sibling, Fidaa, twenty-seven, lives in her husband’s home. Yassir had left his house to visit a neighbor thirty minutes before the bombing. He was one hundred meters away when he saw two F-16 missiles fall. Yassir couldn’t see where they hit as smoke and dust filled the air. It wasn’t until he heard someone running in the street yelling, “They bombed El Haj’s house,” that he realized his family was under the debris. Yassir couldn’t find a place to rent for the next several months, as property owners feared that he had been the target of the attack. Yassir wonders this himself.

My wife, Lara, sets the table in our apartment in Gaza as my brother Hamza checks his phone. Many of our friends used to gather at our place as an alternative to Gaza’s public spaces. It’s controversial in Gaza for Lara to wear these clothes in front of my brother and our friends, and it would be impossible to share such a picture if we still lived there. In Gaza, women and men aren’t always allowed to mix, and must dress, talk, and act in certain ways.

From our apartment in Gaza City, Lara connects with the world through her phone. For almost two years, she and I desperately waited for our Israeli travel permissions in order to leave Gaza and join the outside world.

Aamir Salah El Mbayed, the deputy director of the Beit Dajan School in eastern Gaza City, stands among students before the start of the evening study period.

Alaa Habib, nine years old, raises her hand on one of the first days of school after summer break. The Subhi Abu Karsh School was heavily damaged in Operation Protective Edge the year before and still had bullet holes in the walls and a big hole in their kitchen which her father fixed.
Palestinians carry a young man who was shot in the leg by an Israeli soldier during a protest. The protesters were on the al-Bureij refugee camp's eastern border with Israel.

Between March 2018 and December 2019, more than 200 Palestinians were killed and some 19,000 injured in a series of protests on Israel's border with the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian youths carry an injured protester shot by an Israeli soldier. Gazans had been protesting the Israeli siege on Gaza when Israeli forces confronted them with tear gas and ammunition. The siege began in 2007, when Hamas gained control of Gaza. In an effort to undercut Hamas’s power, Israel and Egypt imposed a land, air, and sea blockade, dramatically restricting imports to the region. Israel and Egypt also denied Gazans access to the rest of the Palestinian territory and world beyond. The World Bank reports that almost 80 percent of Gazans rely on some form of international aid.

Palestinian protesters hang the Palestinian flag on the fence of the al-Bureij refugee camp, on the border with Israel, and then flee as Israeli soldiers open fire.
Residents of Gaza visit al-Shifa Hospital, the main hospital complex in the Gaza Strip, for medical treatment. Due to the Israeli siege, the hospitals of Gaza are always short on medicine, medical equipment, and fuel to generate electricity.

Palestinian fishermen rest on their boat while the captain, Raed Abu Owda, tells stories about his experiences in Gaza’s sea. Raed was arrested by Israeli navy forces three times. During each arrest they damaged his boat, twice by shooting at the engine.

Palestinian fishermen sail around their fishing nets to protect them from other boats. The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated areas on earth. On average, there are some 6,197 people per square kilometre. This moment was one of the calmest I’ve experienced in Gaza.

Fisherman Raed Abu Owda’s cousin Mohammed Abu Owda collects useful materials from a broken fishing net found in Gaza’s sea. After exploitation, fishing is the largest source of income for Gazans. The fishing industry has been significantly weakened by the Israeli siege on Gaza, which has lasted for more than thirteen years. Israel has closed the crossings for exports, reduced the fishing area, and banned the import of fishing tools.

Mohammed Abu Owda prepares to lift the ship’s fishing nets. The designated fishing area had previously been limited to six nautical miles, imposed by Israel in 2006. Between 2017 and 2019, there were 434 incidents in which Israeli soldiers shot at fishermen while they worked. These incidents killed two fishermen, injured twenty-two, and destroyed fifteen fishing boats. In the same period, Israeli soldiers arrested 121 fishermen, detained twenty-five fishing boats, and seized numerous fishing nets.

Following pages:
April 4, 2016, 6:16 a.m.

Mohammed Nuaija, twenty-eight, makes sure nothing is stuck in his fishing net before throwing it back into Gaza’s sea. He has four children and has been a fisherman for over twelve years. When he started working, there were no wars and the atmosphere at sea was not tense. Today, fishermen feel as if they are on a battlefield. It’s illegal for a person who is not registered as a fisherman to accompany a fishing boat without permission from the Hamas government. I had two meetings over a two-week period with the media office of the interior ministry to get permission to accompany Mohammed and the other fishermen.

November 28, 2015, 12:05 p.m.

The Mediterranean Sea stretches out past western Gaza City. The beach is the only place where Gaza’s nearly two million residents can feel a sense of space. Anywhere else, sandy beaches like these would be a source of revenue and thriving tourism. In Gaza, though, even the most spacious piece of land starts and ends with barbed wire and watchtowers mounted with machine guns.

December 13, 2015, 6:02 p.m.

Ghazi al-Amour grieves beside the grave of his mother, Zaina Attia al-Amour. Zaina was killed at age forty-four by an Israeli tank shell that fell next to her. Zania and her niece, who were injured in the attack, had been working on their farm, which is close to Gaza’s eastern border with Israel.
December 13, 2015, 3:45 p.m.

Zaina’s brother, Zaher al-Amour (right), sits next to Zaina’s son, Ghazi al-Amour, as they try to make sense of her death.

December 15, 2015, 10:54 p.m.

Hundreds of people in Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hall wait for their names to be called from a list approved by the Egyptian government. Those called are permitted to leave Gaza through Rafah’s border with Egypt. Most are students, visa holders, Gazan residents returning to their homes abroad, and patients requiring treatment outside Gaza. The UN reported that in 2015, some 32,000 Gazans were permitted to leave Gaza in order to obtain urgent medical care.

December 16, 2015, 12:13 p.m.

A Gazan resident carrying his ID and travel papers waits in Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hall. He stands among hundreds of others also trying to leave Gaza. In the hall, you can see people’s pain and desperation. They yell out their reasons for wanting to leave and how long they have been trying. Egypt closed the crossing in June 2007, in response to Hamas’s takeover of the Gaza Strip, and it has been reopened and closed many times since.
A distressed woman holds her baby and waits for her name to be called. She told me, through tears, that she had been stuck in Gaza for more than a year and desperately needed to return home to have her baby before she lost her residency abroad.
Palestinians wait for their names to be called. In the meantime, Hamas police hold the doors closed to restrict access to Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hall. In order to leave for the United States, my wife and I had to pay an Egyptian officer to get our names on the list of those permitted to leave Gaza. The Egyptian government sends this list to Hamas. The payment of $2,600 each went through a broker who coordinates bribes payments.

A sewage pipe empties into the Mediterranean Sea. The pipe is near one of the most visited areas of Gaza City's beach. Many visit this area to escape power cuts in their homes.

A Bedouin man rides his camel on the beach in Gaza City. He offers people tours on his camel for five shekels.
Vendors sell sweet corn on the beach road in Gaza City. When the sun sets, vendors light fires and cook corn while visitors arrive at the shore of Gaza’s sea.

A falafel cart is parked on the coastal road during a summer night in Gaza City. Summer heat and power cuts force Gazans to seek relief on the beach. Many unemployed young people use the opportunity to make money to support their families.

Children follow a Hantour horse cart through the al-Sheikh Radwan neighborhood during the month of Ramadan.
Palestinian kids play with burning steel wool, a common street activity for people across the Middle East in celebration of Ramadan.

June 19, 2016, 6:24 p.m. A car parks on the newly built al-Rasheed Street in Gaza City. The construction of the street, which stretches along the coast and is funded by the Qatari government, was part of Qatar’s support of Hamas. Gaza’s government relies largely on foreign aid to improve its infrastructure, but critics assert that Hamas spends too much of this aid on weapons, military infrastructure, and a network of internal surveillance.

Gazan youth display their skills on Rollerblades and bicycles. There are no designated spaces for such sports in the besieged city, which makes it difficult and dangerous to practice them.
June 19, 2016, 11:45 p.m. A crowd of people watch a bike show in the parking lot along Gaza’s coastal road. On weekends, youth gather to show off their talents and attract spectators from around Gaza.

June 25, 2016, 10:00 a.m. Fishermen’s children help to unload their haul from the previous night on the coast of Deir al-Balah, south of Gaza City. The young fishermen rush to the market early in order to maximize their sales for the day.

June 25, 2016, 1:33 p.m. Palestinian fishermen pull their boat out of the Mediterranean Sea in the southern Gaza Strip. The Egyptian border is marked by metal poles. Israeli authorities claim that Hamas uses these maritime borders to smuggle in materials for weapons manufacture. In 2015, a video taken in this area showed a naked, mentally disabled man crossing the border and being shot at by Egyptian soldiers. The video ends with the man lying dead on the soldiers’ concrete barrier.
June 25, 2016, 3:04 p.m.

Children fly homemade kites in front of their homes in the central area of the Deir al-Balah refugee camp.

June 26, 2016, 9:50 p.m.

The electricity crisis leaves Gaza residents in the dark during a power outage. Those who can afford it use car batteries to power small lights or to charge their phones.

June 26, 2016, 9:54 p.m.

A blackout covers Gaza after the city’s only power plant runs out of fuel. Frequent blackouts are a symptom of Gaza’s ongoing electricity crisis.
A Palestinian shepherd tends to his sheep near the buffer zone in the northern Gaza Strip. This area is a unilaterally enforced military no-go zone that extends 300 meters into Gaza, along its entire border with Israel. The UN estimates that the buffer zone eats into about 30 percent of Gaza’s arable land. This shepherd has had many near-death encounters with the remote-control machine guns mounted on some of the Israeli watchtowers. The machine guns will shoot at anything that moves within a certain range.

Goats wander around looking for pasture. Behind them, an Israeli spy blimp performs routine surveillance of Israel’s border with the Gaza Strip.

An Israeli watchtower mounted with a remote-control machine gun protects the buffer zone on Israel’s northern border with Gaza.
The enclosed walkway running along the bottom of this photo is the Erez Crossing corridor. It extends from the Israeli border wall on the right, through the buffer zone, and into the northern Gaza Strip. Palestinians frequently protest the Israeli siege in this area. Most Gazans don’t qualify for exit permits through this crossing. Usually, the only people deemed eligible are international aid workers, patients who require treatment outside Gaza, and subjects of unusual humanitarian crises.
Fadi shows off tomatoes he just harvested. The farm is next to the heavily militarized buffer zone on Gaza’s northern border with Israel.
A Palestinian farmer checks his eggplant crop next to the Israeli buffer zone in the northern Gaza Strip.
Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank the most loving and courageous people in my life: My younger brother, Asad, and my sisters, Fathi and Ausa. My mother, Sadeya al-Hourani, who managed to raise me and my four siblings in Gaza, away from her family and despite all the hardships we faced. My older brother, Hamza, and my wife, Lara Abu-Ramaadan, who underwent years of stress and difficult conversations so that we could develop our own opinions and beliefs. Thank you for your love and support, and for your unspoken courage when I really needed it.

Getting to California would not have been possible without the generosity of the amazing people who offered us their time and trust. Those people have continued to inspire and teach us since our arrival in the US. Thank you, Dave Eggers, for coming to Gaza and for standing by and listening to us from the moment we met. Thank you, Cara Jobson, for your care in ensuring our safe arrival in the US and your invaluable legal guidance. Thank you, Christian Trout and Douglas Bashore, for having brought us further from day one in California. Thank you to the beautiful couple, Abhay Ghiara and Krista Gullickson, for your Seven Stars' Institute Artist Residency and for your faith in us. Krista passed away recently, leaving her boundless, generous love behind for us to reflect on. Thank you, Sarah Anne Minkin and Jon Eldan, for listening and opening your hearts to us. Thank you, Atheer Ismail, for being the amazing person from whom I’ve learned so much. Thank you, Andrew Karney, for your enthusiasm and care. Thank you, Claire Boyle, for your fantastic attention to detail and support of this project. Thank you to the amazing editor, Claire Boyle, for your tireless help navigating this book, word to word, with me. Thank you to dramatic designer, Tara Thompson, who really made this book shine. Thank you, Amanda Ulu, for your kindness and care.
The following timeline and glossary were originally assembled for the collection Palestine Speaks: Narratives of Life Under Occupation (Voice of Witness, 2014). They have been brought up to date and republished with permission, in order to offer context on the complex and contentious history of the lands west of the Jordan River. They were compiled using information from the Palestine Institute, as well as from timelines by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other UN agencies, the Guardian, PBS, the BBC, and other sources.

9000 BCE:
The first permanent human settlements appear in the land west of the Jordan River. These settlements develop into the city of Jericho, which is still inhabited and is located in what is today the West Bank.

8000–1000 BCE:
Control of the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River (known in the ancient world as Canaan) passes through numerous empires, including Egypt and Babylon. Parts of the region are controlled by autonomous Canaanite city-states. Around 1200 BCE, a coastal Canaanite people known as the Philistines form a defensive alliance near the Mediterranean coast around the cities of Gaza, Ashdod, and Ashkelon. Egyptians describe these people as the “Peleset.” Later, Greek writers refer to the entire area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River as “Philistia,” meaning “land of the Philistines.” From this, the English “Palestine” is thought to have developed.

1000–850 BCE:
The Kingdoms of Israel and Judea emerge from confederations of autonomous tribes of the people known as the Israelites. The Kingdom of Israel has its capital in Samaria (near modern Nablus), and the Kingdom of Judea makes Jerusalem its capital.

722–1 BCE:
Part or all of the land now known as Palestine is ruled by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, numerous Hellenistic dynasties, and the Romans, among other groups. Semiautonomous city-states also flourish during this time, including those of the Bostra and other Canaanite peoples.

324–634 CE:
Roman Emperor Constantine moves his capital from Rome to the city of Byzantium (renamed Constantinople). He establishes Christianity as the religion of the new Byzantine Empire, which includes all of Palestine. Palestine passes from Byzantine rule to Persian rule, then back to Byzantine rule. During this period, much of the population of the region is Christian.

634 CE:
Two years after the death of Prophet Muhammad, Islamic Arabs defeat the armies of the Byzantine and Persian Empires and take control of Palestine. In subsequent years, Arabic-speaking peoples move into Syria, Egypt, Eritrea, Africa, and Mongolia.

634–926:
During the Middle Ages, Palestine is ruled by a number of dynasties and sultanates. Power struggles open the way for Crusaders, or Christian armies from Europe, to invade parts of Palestine. In 1099, a Muslim leader from Kurdistan named Saladin conquers the first Crusader kingdom in Jerusalem. During the next century, Palestine is controlled by numerous rulers— including Crusaders—and the Arabic-speaking population known as the Mandate takes control in 1922. Two centuries of Ottoman rule follow. In 1917, the British occupied Palestine, an Arab people from central Asia. After revolu-

610–622 CE:
The religion of Islam is established in the Arabian Peninsula under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad. By the time of his death, in 632, Prophet Muhammad had established Islam on the Arabian Peninsula and made it the basis of control of Palestine. In subsequent years, Arabic-speaking peoples move into Syria, Egypt, Eritrea, Africa, and Mongolia.

1800:
By this year, there are as many as 250,000 people living in Palestine. Through the majority of the population is Muslim, there may be as many as 20,000 Jews and 20,000 Christians living in the region.
The roots of the modern Zionist movement can be traced to the beginning of anti-Semitism and a desire for a Jewish homeland. In the following years, about 2.5 million Jews emigrated from Europe and Russia to North and South America, and some began promoting land in Palestine.

- **1850s:** Hussein plans for a unified Arab nation.
- **1860s:** Bin Ali and Hussein write letters to Arab leader Sharif Hussein in Yemen.
- **1906:** Modern Palestine

**1914:** World War I ends. Britain takes over Ottoman territories.

**1917:** Britain issues the Balfour Declaration, stating support for a Jewish national home in Palestine.

**1918:** World War I ends. Britain, France, and Russia fight against Britain, France, and Russia.

**1922:** Britain becomes the British mandate in Palestine, later renamed Jordan, while Britain receives a mandate to administer Palestine.

**1931:** British and Arab leaders begin to organize military strikes against the British. The British issue the White Paper, which limits Jewish immigration.

**1939:** The Irgun Zvai Leumi orchestrates the bombing of the King David Hotel, which results in the deaths of 91 people. The British respond by arresting 200 Jewish leaders.

**1949:** An armistice is signed, ending the Six-Day War.

**1950:** The UN establishes the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) to monitor the armistice agreements.

**1964:** Fatah establishes the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to represent Palestinian interests.

**1965:** Israel begins attacking the Golan Heights.

**1967:** Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine refuse to sign the armistice agreements. Egypt invades the Sinai Peninsula.

**1973:** Arab and Israeli military forces clash with Fatah. Fatah uses Israeli uniforms to prevent more than three dozen attacks by the end of the year.

**1979:** Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin sign the Camp David Accords, which establish diplomatic ties between Israel and Egypt. The accord is followed by the Egyptian withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula.

**1993:** Israel and Palestine begin negotiating the Oslo Accords, which lead to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.

**2002:** Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visits the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, citing the destruction of the Second Temple.

**2005:** Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announces a plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the West Bank.

**2008:** Pro-Palestinian demonstrators stage a protest in front of the Israeli embassy in Washington, D.C., calling for a end to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

**2010:** The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 1947, calling for a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinian territories.

**2011:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends a conference in Washington, D.C., to discuss the Middle East peace process.

**2012:** The United Nations General Assembly votes to upgrade the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to a full-fledged UN agency.

**2013:** Israel and Palestine begin negotiations on a peace treaty.

**2014:** Israel launches Operation Protective Edge, a military operation against Hamas in Gaza. The operation results in the deaths of more than 2,000 Palestinians and 70 Israelis.

**2015:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the nuclear deal with Iran, which is seen as a significant milestone in efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**2016:** The Trump administration recognizes Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, leading to widespread condemnation from the international community.

**2017:** The United Nations General Assembly votes to recognize East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestinian territory.

**2018:** The Israeli government approves plans for a new settlement in the West Bank, leading to international condemnation.

**2019:** The United States and Israel announce plans to launch a joint venture to develop a new Palestinian expropriation of Gaza.

**2020:** The United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 242, calling for a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinian territories.

**2021:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2022:** The United Nations Security Council votes to impose sanctions on Israel over its settlements in the occupied territories.

**2023:** The United States and Israel begin negotiations on a new peace treaty.

**2024:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2025:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2026:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2027:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2028:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2029:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2030:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2031:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2032:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2033:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2034:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2035:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2036:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2037:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2038:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2039:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2040:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2041:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2042:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2043:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2044:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2045:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2046:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2047:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2048:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2049:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.

**2050:** The United States and Israel sign a joint statement on the potential for a peace treaty.
activist shift from constructing post-Arabicity to a new world order of Palestinian nationalism. Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza seek to challenge Israel’s claim to these territories, and their struggle continues to resonate in political and cultural spheres. The occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israel since 1967 has been the central focus of much of the campaign to establish a democratic and secular Palestinian state. The struggle for Palestinian self-determination has taken many forms, including armed resistance, nonviolent demonstrations, and international advocacy. The ongoing conflict has drawn significant attention from the international community, with numerous resolutions and conferences focusing on the issue.

The Israeli government builds settlements along the West Bank, and the northern Sinai Peninsula, suggesting an even greater sense of threat to the country’s south. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years.

In June, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat agree to a new peace accord, laying out a framework for the establishment of a Palestinian state. The agreement sets deadlines for Palestinian elections, negotiations on permanent status, and land concessions from Israel. The agreement also provides for the establishment of a Palestinian Authority, which would eventually lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. The agreement is the first of its kind, and it marks a significant step toward the establishment of a Palestinian state. The agreement is the first of its kind, and it marks a significant step toward the establishment of a Palestinian state.

After months of talks, a draft agreement is reached. The agreement provides for the establishment of a Palestinian state, with full sovereignty over the territories west of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip. The agreement also provides for the establishment of a Palestinian Authority, which would eventually lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state. The agreement is the first of its kind, and it marks a significant step toward the establishment of a Palestinian state. The agreement is the first of its kind, and it marks a significant step toward the establishment of a Palestinian state.

In December, an Israeli settlement is established in the West Bank. The settlement is named after a Palestinian village that was destroyed during the 1967 war. The settlement is the first of its kind, and it marks a significant step toward the establishment of a Palestinian state. The agreement is the first of its kind, and it marks a significant step toward the establishment of a Palestinian state.

The Israeli government builds settlements along the West Bank, and the northern Sinai Peninsula, suggesting an even greater sense of threat to the country’s south. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years. The war continues for five years.

In September, US president Bill Clinton host
and water into and out of Gaza. The movement of people, goods, electricity, fuel, and settlers into the Gaza Strip. With support from Egypt, Israel restricts the Palestinian Authority. Following Hamas’s takeover of Gaza, Israel fines and 1,200 are wounded. In December, US president Donald Trump delivers an address recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of a new state of Palestine in a new treaty. In November, the Vatican recognizes Jerusalem as the capital and Hebrew as its official language. In April and May, protests erupt along the Israel-Gaza border against the United States embassy’s relocation to Jerusalem. On May 14, the embassy’s official opening day, and the announcement of Palestinian declaration of independence, key Palestinian officials are killed or wounded in the escalating Israel-Hamas conflict. In November, Israel approves plans to annex about 30 percent of the West Bank that would legalize Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and allow Israel to annex about 20 percent of the West Bank. Violence continues between Israeli and Palestinian civilians and soldiers. Meanwhile, attempts to deescalate tensions by providing $204 million in additional work permits to Gazans and 2,000 additional work permits to Gazans and Arabs, and easing restrictions on the territory . Egypt attempts to deescalate tensions by providing more work permits to Gazans and Arabs, and easing restrictions on the territory. Israel-Gaza border tension continues with rocket attacks and incursions.
The 1948 Arab-Israeli War: A conflict between two nations with a long and complex history that has shaped Israel, Palestine, and the region. The war lasted from May 14 to June 11, 1948, and resulted in the establishment of Israel and the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians.

The Partition Plan: Palestinians refer to the war and the establishment of Israel as the Nakba (catastrophe) and have demanded the right of return for those who were displaced. The war and its aftermath have shaped the region's political landscape.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War: A conflict between two nations with a long and complex history that has shaped Israel, Palestine, and the region. The war lasted from May 14 to June 11, 1948, and resulted in the establishment of Israel and the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians.

The Partition Plan: Palestinians refer to the war and the establishment of Israel as the Nakba (catastrophe) and have demanded the right of return for those who were displaced. The war and its aftermath have shaped the region's political landscape.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War: A conflict between two nations with a long and complex history that has shaped Israel, Palestine, and the region. The war lasted from May 14 to June 11, 1948, and resulted in the establishment of Israel and the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians.

The Partition Plan: Palestinians refer to the war and the establishment of Israel as the Nakba (catastrophe) and have demanded the right of return for those who were displaced. The war and its aftermath have shaped the region's political landscape.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War: A conflict between two nations with a long and complex history that has shaped Israel, Palestine, and the region. The war lasted from May 14 to June 11, 1948, and resulted in the establishment of Israel and the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians.

The Partition Plan: Palestinians refer to the war and the establishment of Israel as the Nakba (catastrophe) and have demanded the right of return for those who were displaced. The war and its aftermath have shaped the region's political landscape.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War: A conflict between two nations with a long and complex history that has shaped Israel, Palestine, and the region. The war lasted from May 14 to June 11, 1948, and resulted in the establishment of Israel and the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians.

The Partition Plan: Palestinians refer to the war and the establishment of Israel as the Nakba (catastrophe) and have demanded the right of return for those who were displaced. The war and its aftermath have shaped the region's political landscape.
**Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)**: A governing body of the Palestinian people. Yasser Arafat led the PLO from its birth in 1964 as the Palestine National Liberation Organization. The PLO was formed as part of the Oslo Accords in 1993. The PLO leadership is made up of elected officials from the Palestinian Authority, including the President, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The PLO was dissolved in 2018, following the appointment of the new Palestinian Authority (PA) by the United Nations.

**Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)**: Founded in 1974 as a group of Palestinian resistance organizations. It is considered a terrorist organization and was considered a terrorist organization by the United Nations until 2000. It has been involved in several conflicts, including the First Intifada and the Second Intifada.

**Palestinian Authority (PA)**: A body established in 1994 as part of the Oslo Accords. The PA is responsible for the administration of the Palestinian territories under occupation. It is composed of elected officials from the Palestinian Authority, including the President, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The PA has been involved in several conflicts, including the First Intifada and the Second Intifada.

**Operation Cast Lead**: A military operation launched by Israel in the Gaza Strip in December 2008. It was the Gaza War and the deadliest operation in the 2008-2009 conflict, resulting in the deaths of more than 1,400 Palestinians.

**Oslo Accords**: A series of negotiated agreements between the leadership of Israel and the Palestinian Authority that were intended to achieve a two-state solution. The Oslo Accords were formed as part of the Oslo Accords in 1993. The Oslo Accords were dissolved in 2018, following the appointment of the new Palestinian Authority (PA) by the United Nations.

**Permit system**: A complex system of identification and access permits that allow Palestinians to travel, work, and live in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Palestinians must have permits to travel, work, and live in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The permit system is highly restrictive and has been criticized for its discriminatory nature.

**Ramadan**: The ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims to commemorate the first revelation. For the entire month, all Muslims are obligated to fast from dawn to sunset and to refrain from eating or drinking during this period.

**Rafah Crossing**: A cargo crossing just southeast of Gaza City, which is the sole crossing on the Gaza-Egypt border. It is only for pedestrian crossings into Gaza, and the sole crossing on the Gaza-Sinai border. It was closed by Egypt following the Sinai Peninsula in 1979, and it has been reopened and closed indefinitely since then due to political tensions between Egypt, Israel, and Hamas. Since 2010, the Rafah crossing has been closed for up to 50 days at a time, and has lasted for more than 100 days.

**Refugee camps**: A principle of international law that grants peoples displaced from their homes the right to return to their homes. This right is also referred to as the right of return.

**Right of return**: The right of refugees to return to their home country. This right is also referred to as the right of return.

**RooseveltRecipient**: A person appointed to a position in the United States government.

**Roosevelt’s plan**: A peace plan known as “the two-state solution” for the conflict between Israel and Palestine after the Arab-Israeli conflict. Roosevelt’s plan was announced in 1948 and was based on the idea of creating two separate states. The plan was rejected by both sides and has been unsuccessful so far.

**Right of return**: The right of refugees to return to their home country. This right is also referred to as the right of return.

**UNRWA**: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) is a United Nations agency established in 1950. It is responsible for providing humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees in the Near East. UNRWA operates fifteen camps for Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and Lebanon.
Jehad al-Saftawi is a documentary journalist, photographer, and videographer dedicated to social justice and human rights storytelling. His work has been featured on Reuters, BuzzFeed, AJ+, Mic, Aljazeera America, the Huffington Post, and elsewhere. He arrived in the U.S. from Gaza in 2016 and is currently seeking asylum. He is internationally recognized for setting up one of the few live streams documenting the 2014 Israeli offensive on Gaza.