

# Jerusalem from 1947 to 1953

Courtesy of the  
Institute for Palestine  
Studies.

The following chronology presents the main developments that affected – militarily, diplomatically, and politically – the fate and status of the city of Jerusalem during the period of the *Nakba* and the ensuing few years.

The events were selected and adapted by the Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS) from *The Interactive Timeline of the Palestine Question*, an online platform conceived and developed by IPS, in a joint project with the Palestinian Museum.

## UNGA 181 (II): Palestine Partition Plan, Special Regime for Jerusalem

29 November 1947

The United Nations General Assembly recommends the adoption and implementation of the Plan of Partition of Palestine by a two-thirds majority (33 to 13 votes with 10 abstentions). The resolution stipulates that independent Arab and Jewish States and a Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem shall come into existence two months after the evacuation of the Mandatory armed forces but not later than 1 October 1948.

## Fate of Diplomatic Representations in Jerusalem

11 February 1948 – 1 May 1948

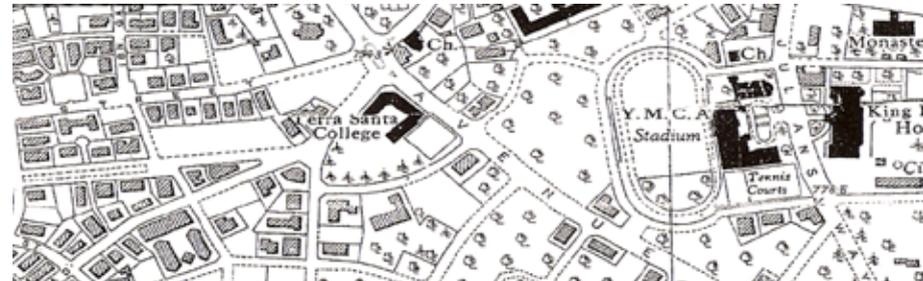
On 11 February, in preparation for the possible establishment of the international regime for Jerusalem, the Holy See opens an “Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem and in Palestine.” (Before that date, Palestine was under the responsibility of the Pontifical Representation in Cairo.) Thus, the Holy See joins 22 countries that had official consulates in Jerusalem during the British Mandate. Among these, however, Arab states (Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Iraq) are compelled to evacuate their

consulates from Jerusalem (mainly Qatamon quarter) by 1 May. Apart from the Apostolic Delegation, only 9 states (the US, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Greece, Sweden) will maintain general consulates in the city. Known as the “Consular Corps of the Corpus Separatum,” their representatives will not submit their credentials to either Israel or Jordan. But 16 other countries will have opened embassies in West Jerusalem before the 1967 war: Netherlands, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Zaire, and Kenya. For developments after 1967, see: <https://www.paljourneys.org/en/timeline/overallchronology?sideid=21123>.

## Zionist Operations Shifon and Kilshon in Jerusalem

14 May 1948 – 28 May 1948

On the day the Zionist leaders proclaim the establishment of the State of Israel, the Haganah launches Operation Schifon to capture the Old City. It also



■ Talbiyyeh in 1947. Photo courtesy of David Kroyanker. Courtesy of Mona Halaby.

launches Operation Kilshon to occupy strategic areas in Jerusalem evacuated by the British, and Palestinian residential areas outside the Old City. On 19 May, Palestinian defenses are broken in the Old City, but the Arab Legion comes to the rescue. On 28 May, the Arab Legion will take control of the Jewish quarter in the Old City.

## Jerusalem and Count Folke Bernadotte's Palestine Plan

28 June 1948

UN mediator, Count Folke Bernadotte, proposes to the Arab and Jewish authorities a plan whereby Palestine and Transjordan will form a Union comprising two states, one Arab and one Jewish. The plan envisions the inclusion of the City of Jerusalem in Arab territory.

## Jordan and Israel Sign Agreement on Demilitarization of Mount Scopus Area, Jerusalem

7 July 1948

Jordan and Israel sign a special agreement under the auspices of the United Nations regarding Mount Scopus. During the fighting, the Hadassah Hospital and Hebrew University area had been a Jewish enclave within the territory

controlled by the Jordanian army. The agreement provides for the following: the enclave will be demilitarized, as well as the neighboring Augusta Victoria Hospital and the Palestinian village of Issawiyya; each side will be allowed to have limited civilian police; the three sectors will be under the security responsibility of the UN; the latter will ensure that both sides receive adequate supplies of food and water.

### Jordan Repulses Israeli Operation Qedem in Jerusalem

8 July 1948 – 17 July 1948

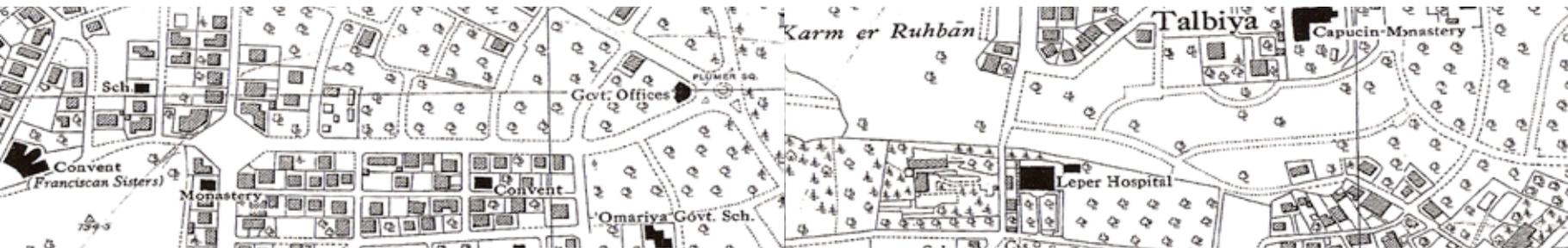
At the end of the First Arab-Israeli Truce (which had been declared for a four-week period 11 June – 8 July), the Israeli army launches a series of operations on different fronts. The Arab Legion repulses Operation Qedem that is undertaken on 16–17 July against the Old City of Jerusalem.

regime), Israel's Provisional Council issues an ordinance that stipulates in particular: "Any law applying to the whole of the State of Israel shall be deemed to apply to the whole of the area including both the State of Israel and any part of Palestine which the Minister of Defence has defined by proclamation as being held by the Defence Army of Israel." The ordinance states that it applies retroactively as of 15 May 1948. It thus implicitly validates the military proclamations that were issued on 2 August concerning Jerusalem.

### Bernadotte Second Plan on Jerusalem

16–17 September 1948

After his unsuccessful first proposal, UN mediator Count Folke Bernadotte abandons the idea of a Union and presents a new plan in



■ Talbiyyeh in 1947. Photo courtesy of David Kroyanker. Courtesy of Mona Halaby.

### Israel Declares Jerusalem Occupied City

2 August 1948

In his capacity as defense minister, David Ben-Gurion issues two military proclamations. The first one provides for the application of Israeli law to "the area encompassing most of the city of Jerusalem, part of its western suburbs and outskirts, and the roads connecting Jerusalem with the coastal plain." In the second proclamation, Ben-Gurion appoints a military governor for the area. Both texts constitute a response to UN mediator Folke Bernadotte, who had suggested the demilitarization of Jerusalem during a visit to Palestine on 26 July. Having secured a corridor between Jerusalem and the coast, and having gained control of Palestinian areas around West Jerusalem and emptied them of their inhabitants, Israeli leaders feel they can henceforth actively oppose the internationalization of Jerusalem as provided for in the Partition Plan.

### Israel's Area of Jurisdiction and Powers Ordinance

16 September 1948

In order to confer indefinite legality to Israeli control of Palestinian territory beyond the UN Partition Plan, and especially of West Jerusalem (considered as part of the Corpus Separatum to be governed by a special international

which Jerusalem "should be placed under effective United Nations control." The new plan is rejected by both the Arab League and Israel. He is assassinated by Lehi-Stern Gang in Jerusalem the following day.

### Israel Strengthens Its Political Control over Jerusalem; Military Government Dissolved

20 December 1948 – 17 February 1949

To strengthen its political hold on the part of Jerusalem it controls and to foreclose the prospect of internationalizing the city, Israel decides on 20 December to start transferring governmental institutions to West Jerusalem. It had earlier (14 September) established there the seat of the Supreme Court. On 25 January 1949, residents of the city participate in the elections for the first Knesset. On 2 February, Ben-Gurion, as minister of defense, issues a proclamation abolishing the military government in Jerusalem and instituting civil administration as it is in force in other parts of Israel. The newly elected Knesset holds its first session in Jerusalem on 14 February and elects two days later Chaim Weizmann as first president of the state. It is in Jerusalem that the latter takes his oath of office the following day. However, the Knesset will hold its sessions in Tel Aviv until December 1949 and the President's residence will be in Rehovot until the death of Weizmann in November 1952.

## UNGA 303 (IV): To Place Jerusalem under a Permanent International Regime

9 December 1949

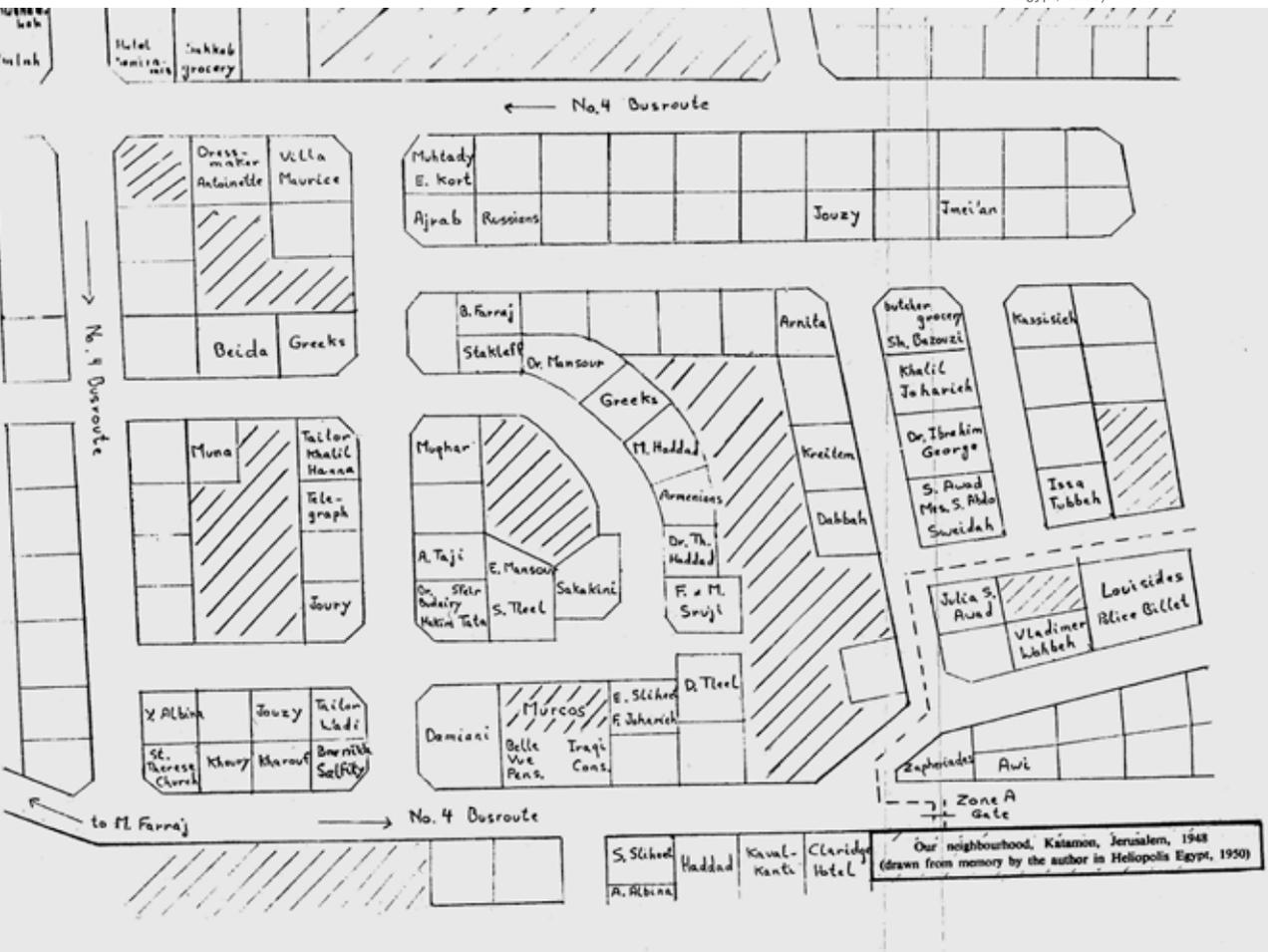
The resolution confirms the provisions of the Partition Resolution 181 (1947) relative to Jerusalem, according to which the City of Jerusalem “shall be established as a corpus separatum under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations.” Both Jordan and Israel will quickly express their opposition to international control of the city.

## Israel’s Measures to Make Jerusalem Its Capital

23 January 1950 – 13 July 1953

The Knesset issues a proclamation stating that “with the establishment of the State of Israel, Jerusalem has returned to be its capital.” On 13 December 1949,

Our neighbourhood,  
Katamon, Jerusalem, 1948  
(drawn from memory by  
Hala Sakakini in Heliopolis,  
Egypt, 1950).



as a response to General Assembly Resolution 303 (IV) that had confirmed the principle of an international regime for the holy city, the Knesset decided to transfer its seat and that of the government to Jerusalem. The President’s official residence is moved to Jerusalem in December 1952 with the election of Yitzhak Ben-Zvi after Chaim Weizmann’s death. The transfer of government ministries is completed at the end of 1951, except for two: the ministry of defense, on which a decision is taken to keep it in Tel Aviv for alleged security reasons; and the ministry of foreign affairs, whose transfer is delayed because of US opposition, but which finally takes place on 13 July 1953.

## Special International Regime for Jerusalem

4 April 1950

The UN Trusteeship Council approves a Statute for Jerusalem, providing for a Special International Regime for the city and constituting it as a corpus separatum under the administration of the UN.

## 23<sup>rd</sup> Zionist Congress Is Held in Jerusalem

14 August 1951 – 30 August 1951

The World Zionist Organization holds its 23<sup>rd</sup> Congress in Jerusalem for the first time since its establishment in 1897.

## Israel’s Foreign Ministry Moves to Jerusalem

10 July 1953 – 12 July 1953

The Foreign Ministry informs foreign embassies and legations that it will move its offices from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on 12 July, thereby asserting Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.