

I think the key to clarifying is to not over simplify the complex nature and story behind the problems.

1. The Israeli Authority is NOT the same thing as Israeli civilians, Jewish people or Jewish religion. Prime Minister Netanyahu is the longest standing has failed to obtain a majority after 4 elections in 2 years. PM Netanyahu is currently being indicted for corruption. The Jewish people I met and know all wish for peace. See [www.peacenow.org](http://www.peacenow.org) for more information.

2. Since 1947, Arabic Palestinians have lost land through force. The Oslo accords, 1993, were supposed to make Israeli occupation temporary.



3. The West Bank, where I visited, is a walled off region under occupation by Israeli Authorities. Locally ruled by the Palestinian Authority, headed by President Mahmoud Abbas. The people I met showed resilience and a peaceful mindset. Every Palestinian carries an identity card. Movement has to be 'permitted' and is often denied by Israeli occupying forces. Palestinians cannot vote for the Israeli government and local elections for the PA are 13 years late! The local government is often viewed as somewhat powerless anyway.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/5/1/why-palestinians-should-vote-no-at-the-upcoming-elections>

4. Gaza is a small strip of land over 70 miles from the West Bank. It is almost impossible for anyone to enter or exit the region. Hamas, formed in 1987 and defined as a terrorist group by numerous countries, has local

control and Israeli Authorities occupy the territory with heavy restrictions. Locals lead an impoverished life, reliant on international aid. Most are afraid of Hamas but see them as the only ones opposing the occupation. When I was in Israel in December 2019, rockets were reported to have been fired by Hamas but were intercepted by the Israeli defence (the 'iron dome').

5. The civilians in Israel and Palestine have lived their daily lives overall peacefully for many years and violence has been between Hamas and Israeli authorities with civilians caught in between. I was very impressed with how peaceful the West Bank and Jerusalem communities were and how the normal civilians just want to live, work, worship and thrive without fear.

6. In Jerusalem (close to the West Bank but part of Israel), all religions tend to live alongside one another and share the holy sites without violence. The Israeli police has a strong presence. The holy sites are kept very secure but accessible. It was noticeable that Arab Palestinians allowed to work in Jerusalem tend to have lower paid roles and I witnessed frequent checks and some aggressive use of force against them by the armed police. High levels of security have kept Hamas militants at bay and prevented the suicide bombings last seen in 2002. Tourists are usually able to feel safe and visit Israel (usually as part of an organised tour) without noticing the subtle divisions or measures to maintain security.

6. The recent violence is very different to the usual situation as CITIZENS from Palestinian territory and Israel have started to turn on each other. Usually, violence is between Hamas and the Israeli government. Civilians I spoke to all wanted peace and had nothing negative to say about different religions or people. However, the presence of Hamas in Gaza and the actions of Israeli forces in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, many in violation of international law, including the Geneva Convention and Human Rights laws mean that changes are needed.

7. PTP supports refugees in the West Bank. We have no connections with Gaza as the region is beyond our scope. People in Gaza suffer terrible difficulties but the region requires larger and specialist aid organisations that can negotiate access and work safely.

PTP holds no religious or political bias. We work to bring sustainable help to communities that suffer from poverty and injustice.

What can we do?

A political solution is some way off but now is the time to call for changes to the current situation that inflicts hardship on all communities caught in the middle who want and deserve better.

You can write to your MP quickly and easily with the below form to push for change: <https://www.map.org.uk/campaigns/end-the-violence-and-impunity-across-palestine#EmailyourMP>

You can donate Covid vaccines at <https://www.gavi.org/donate> or help Medial Aid Palestine <https://www.map.org.uk/>

You can still contribute to our house rebuilding in partnership with Amos Trust: <https://projecttheproject.org/shop>

The history of the conflicts is summarised at <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/>

Always be aware of where you source your news and information. Social media and some outlets contain biased and prejudice content.