

Two lesson plans on the topic:

The Middle East Conflict In The Age Of Social Media

Edition in English for
secondary level I + II



Conducted by:

Mansour-Initiative für Demokratieförderung
und Extremismusprävention (MIND) gGmbH
Berliner Straße 45
14169 Berlin

Funded by:



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Introduction

The teaching material “The Middle East Conflict in Times of Social Media” combines civic education with the promotion of media literacy. It is based on the observation that many young people encounter the Middle East conflict primarily through social media, where information is often conveyed in a shortened, one-sided, or decontextualized way. The first lesson, “Why Does Every For You Page Look Different?”, explores how algorithms and echo chambers influence perceptions of reality.

In the second lesson, “The Middle East Conflict – What Do We Really Know?”, students engage with the complexity of the conflict and expand their prior knowledge through fact cards and historical context. The aim is to enable them to approach digital content and political conflicts in a critical and nuanced way.

Lesson Plan I

Lesson Plan II

Phase	Content	Phase	Content
Introduction	Joint analysis of the image (5 min.)	Introduction	Jointly establishing discussion ground rules (10 min.)
Development I	"Manipulating" the algorithm through targeted hashtags (15 min.)	Activating prior knowledge	Activating prior knowledge about the Israeli Palestinian conflict (10 min.)
Development II	Understanding how algorithms work through an educational video (15 min.)	Development	Working out key information using fact cards (20 min.)
Application	Preparation and conduct of a topic-based debate (20 min.)	Application	Working with a timeline for historical contextualization (25 min.)
Discussion	Discussion of Israel Palestine dichotomies (25 min.)	Discussion	Joint evaluation and discussion (25 min.)
Transfer	Final image analysis and "confusing" the algorithm (10 min.)		

Lesson Plan I:

Why does every “For You” page look different?

Aims:

1. Students develop their analytical and judgment skills by reflecting on how their own opinions are formed and recognizing and questioning the influence of their social environment and digital media on their perspectives.
 2. Students develop their analytical and reflective skills in the area of media literacy by examining how social media algorithms select content and how this selection can influence their perception and opinion-forming.
 3. Students develop their analytical, judgment, and communication skills by incorporating different perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, identifying the reasons for the particular controversial nature of the topic, and presenting their thoughts on it in a reasoned exchange with others.
1. What knowledge are we exposed to, and how does it affect our assumptions?
 2. What happens when we encounter a piece of information that negates our worldview?
 3. Are we our opinions?

Compressed Lesson Plan: (90 min.)

1. Opening	(5 min.)	4. Conflict and Group Formation exercise	(20 min.)
2. Manipulating the algorithm	(15 min.)	5. Discussion with relation to Israel-Palestine dichotomies	(25 min.)
3. Attention Economy and Social Media	(15 min.)	6. ,Confusing’ the algorithm	(10 min.)

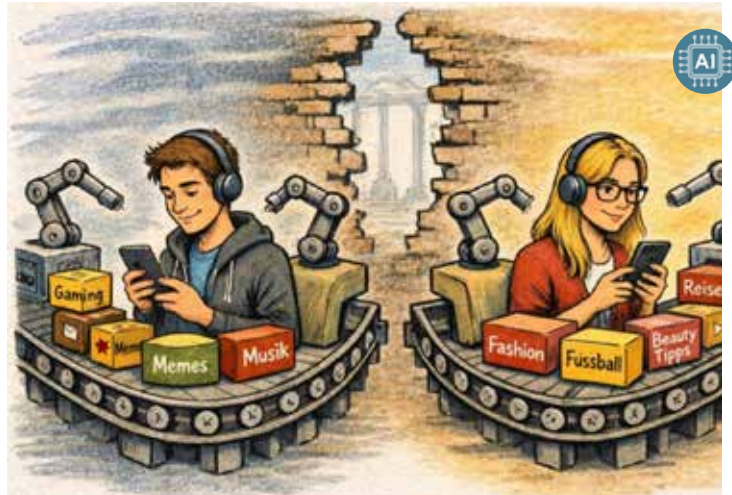
Detailed Lesson Plan:

1) Opening (5 min.)

Analyze the cartoon shown next to the text together with the students.

At this stage, focus the discussion prompts primarily on a careful description of the cartoon, as many students will probably not yet be able to carry out a full content-based analysis and interpretation.

Show the cartoon to the students again at the end of the lesson. Let them demonstrate their learning progress by being able, by the end of the lesson, to analyze and interpret the cartoon in terms of its content.



Opening prompts:

- What exactly can be seen in the picture?
- Describe the figure, its position, and all striking details as precisely as possible.
- Which elements stand out to you the most? (e.g. colors, symbols, text, proportions, or unusual representations)

2) Manipulating the Algorithm (15 min.)

- General Comment: We are going to play a bit with your social media algorithm. Don't worry, the preferences of your phone are something changeable and not permanent, so there's no reason to worry about your feed changing forever.
- Divide the class into pairs; each pair must be either pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian for this exercise.
- Ask the students to open TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube Shorts on their phones.
- For the pro-Israelis, look for keywords such as:
#StandWithIsrael , **#NeverAgainIsNow** oder **#HamasisISIS** .

- E) For the Pro-Palestinian look for:
#FreePalestine , **#EndTheOccupation** oder **#PalestinianLivesMatter**
- F) Let the kids look for three shorts that match their keywords, watch them until they end, and only then move on to the other short.
- G) Let the two students switch phones and look in the other student's feed now. They should probably get more pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian videos on their social media.
- H) Ask the students:

- > What happened here?
- > What kind of videos started showing on your phone?
- > How fast did that happen?

3) Attention Economy and Social Media (15 min.)

Show the students a learning video in plenary on how algorithms and echo chambers work. Access the video by scanning the QR code shown next to it. An internet connection is required.

The class then discusses the following in plenary session:

- > How does the video correlate to the experiment we did at the beginning of class?
- > Has this happened to people you know who dive deep into a subject online?
- > Does it sometimes happen to you?



4) Conflict and Group Formation exercise (20 min.)

A) Randomly divide the students into Pro iPhone and Pro Android or pro Nike and pro Adidas groups.

Example for a Class with 24 Students:



The specific topic on which the students are to take a position is not crucial here and can be determined together with the students. It should be a topic that interests the group and perhaps has already been a subject of discussion within the class in the past.

Possible suggestions include:

- iPhone vs. Android
- Instagram vs. TikTok
- A vacation by the sea vs. a vacation in the mountains
- School uniforms – yes or no
- Social media only from age 14 – yes or no
- Watching a series vs. gaming

B) Each group needs to have two representatives present a two minute long debate in favor of their operating system

C) All the group members should help them in the preparation.

D) Preparation time (10 min.)

E) Presentation time (3 min. x2)

F) After the presentation, the teacher tells the students that each one of them has 10 points to distribute between the groups in 3 possible ways:

Option 1) Your group gets 5 points, and the other group gets 5 points.

Option 2) Your group gets 7 points, and the other group gets 3 points.

Option 3) Your group gets 3 points, and the other group gets 7 points

G) Review the result: in most cases, the highest-ranking options are those favoring one group.

H) Then we ask the students:

- How come we develop such a sense of group when we are in a conflict?
- How did the scarcity of resources influence our sense of group identity?
- Did that contribute to our feeling of belonging?
- What is the resource on which people fight in the online sphere?
Is it likes? Watches? Attention?
- What kind of influencers would be the best and the worst at getting people's attention?

5) Discussion with relation to Israel-Palestine dichotomies (25 min.)

A) The students discuss the following thought-provoking questions together in a plenary session:

- A) What happens to us when we only listen to things that strengthen our sense of self?
- B) How is our judgment impaired by exposure to one-sided ideas?
- C) Could we really understand reality if we only listen to what we want to know?
- D) Why is it so hard to consume opinions that negate our perceptions?
- E) Are we really our opinions?
- F) In the specific topic of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, why is our exposure to social media so problematic?

6) "Confusing" the algorithm (10 min.)

A) Ask the students to return to the opening cartoon and analyze it again on the basis of the knowledge they have gained during the lesson. Encourage them to apply what they have learned by analyzing and interpreting the meaning of the cartoon.



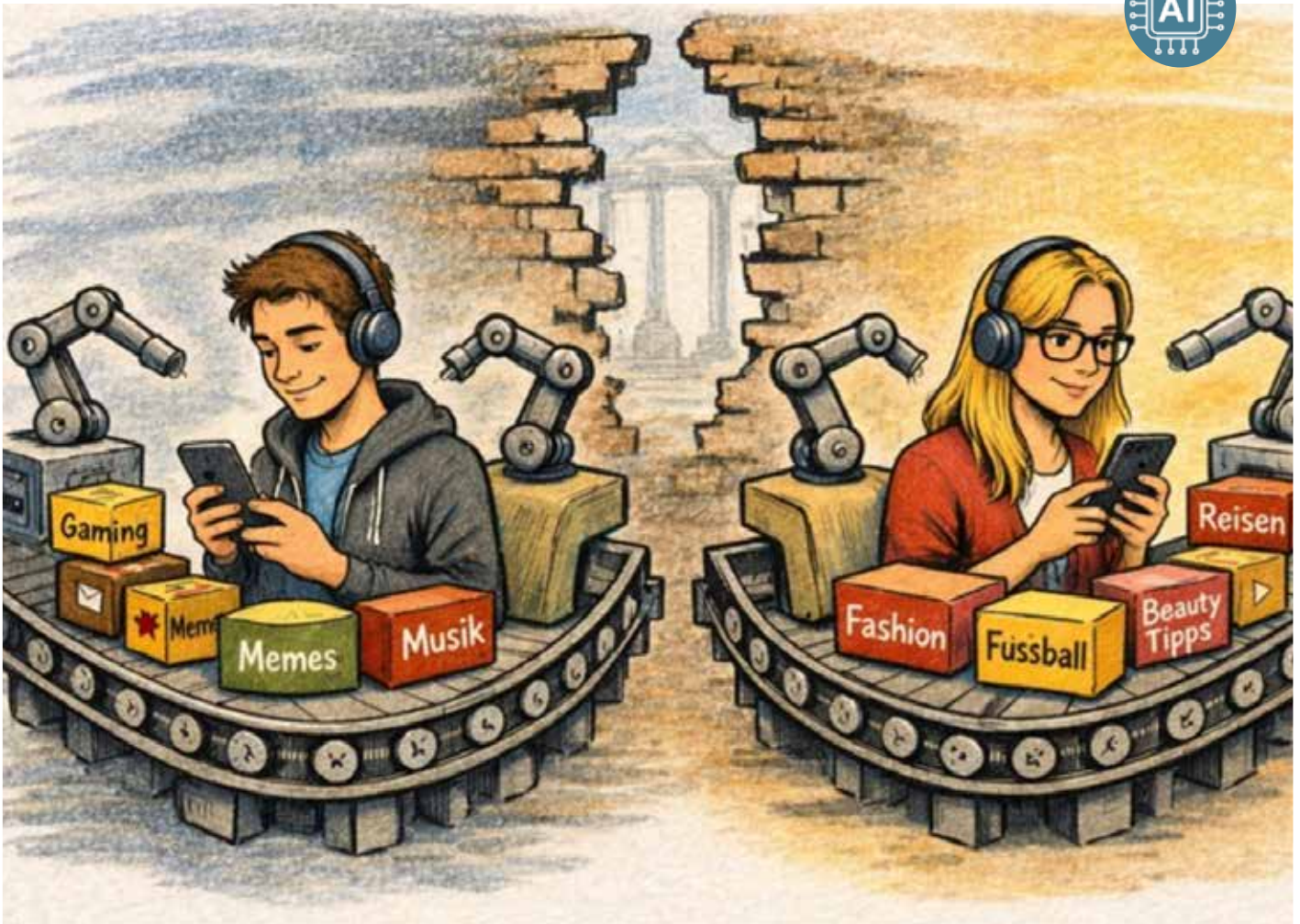
- What meanings might the symbols shown have?
- What message or messages might the cartoon convey about the behavior of internet users?
- What criticism might the cartoon be making of digital media or algorithms?
- In what ways does the cartoon oversimplify the issue?
- What advantages can algorithms also have?
- What would social media look like without algorithms?

If the students do not raise this point themselves, add a critical comment on the cartoon at this stage: Algorithms do not only have disadvantages. They also make sure that the content suggested to us is interesting and that we are not shown content we find boring. The goal is to keep us on the platform for as long as possible. Behind this is simply an economic interest, not a global conspiracy by supposed hidden powers. It is a very popular conspiracy narrative that there are secret forces trying to control us all. Here, we should remain careful and critical: not everyone who talks about the risks of algorithms has factual arguments.

- You can view what are your preferences in your Apps settings under suggested content. You can then see what are your interests and edit/delete keywords from the list.
- In both Instagram and Tiktok it is possible to click the "Reset your feed" button under content preferences.
- Like accounts that promote ideas you disagree with. It might aggravate you but this way you'll be exposed to other views and ideas. And you'll understand better why other people think what they think.

A) Material Lesson Unit I:

Why does every "For You" page look different?



QR-Code Video



You can download the video on our website.

Lesson Plan II:

The Middle East Conflict – What Do We Really Know?

Aims:

1. The students develop their analytical skills by historically and politically situating the conflict area as well as the central interests and objectives of the parties involved.
2. The students develop their methodological skills by arranging events of the conflict on a timeline, establishing historical connections, and tracing lines of development.
3. The students develop their judgment skills by examining the significance of political, territorial, and religious factors in the conflict and discussing different perspectives in a reasoned way.

Overview of the hourly schedule

1. Setting rules for discussion	(10min.)
2. What do we know of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?	(10 min.)
3. Fact cards about the conflict	(20 min.)
4. Timeline mission	(25 min.)
5. Discussion	(25 min.)



Detailed Lesson Plan:

1. Setting rules for discussion (10 min.)

An opening by the Teacher: Show the image next to the text as a silent prompt at the beginning. Ask the students to outline what they can recognize in the image and describe their first thoughts when looking at it. After collecting some student responses, give a brief introductory prompt:

“This is a very contentious issue these days, and we want to have an open discussion about it together.

Public discourse is often quite heated, with people on all sides eager to prove they are right rather than to learn new perspectives. The reality is that, for us here in Germany, this conflict feels very remote, and we all have a lot to learn about it, regardless of our opinions. That’s why it’s important to establish some norms in class for this discussion, so we can genuinely learn from one another.”

Questions:

- 1) How should we treat disagreements between us?
- 2) Do we have any norms we would like to set for this lesson?

2. What do we know of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? (10 min.)

- A) Ask students in Groups of three to pair up and brainstorm anything they know about the conflict. (5 minutes)
- B) Tell them to write everything on a paper, names, places, impressions.
- C) Tell the group to pair with another group and compare their writing. The students should circle the common facts and impressions they have from the conflict. (4 minutes)
- D) Put the papers on a wall so everyone can see what are the commonalities they have. (1 minutes)

3. Fact cards about the conflict (20 min.)

- A) Print and cut the fact cards in the miscellaneous page.
- B) Give each student a fact card and ask them to walk around the room and share their fact with as many other students as possible. When they meet someone with a fact that correlates to their fact, they should walk together and share their facts as a pair. When you see that most students have heard most of the facts, you can ask them all to sit.

C) Ask the students:

1. A fact that really surprised someone.
2. A fact that was contrary to what someone believed.
3. A fact that made someone curious to learn more.

4. Timeline mission (25 min.)

- A) Tell the students to form groups of four and give them the printed timeline and the printed events.
- B) Place the events on the Timeline and try to understand how one led to another.
- C) Arrange the event cards with dates in the correct order. Then place the colored event cards, which do not include dates, in the correct position on the timeline.
- D) What can we learn from the events in the timeline?
- E) How much is the conflict a specific case, and how much is it affected by other world events that have happened?
- F) Information for the teachers: If you think that the event cards contain too much reading for your students, you can also leave out the events with the numbers 3, 9, 10, 12, 14.

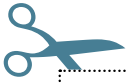
5. Discussion (25 Min.)

A) Discuss with the students:

1. What new things have you learned from both the timelines and the facts method?
2. In which way do you think both sides influenced each other?
3. In what way is the timeline and facts presented here different from the ones presented in the public discourse and social networks?
4. What conclusions do you have from this lesson?
5. What questions would you like to pursue following this lesson?



Fact Cards



Israel and Palestine are in the middle east- on the eastern part of the mediterranean sea.

Palestinians are Arabs and speak Arabic. Palestinians in Israel also speak Hebrew.

The weather there is warm and is good for growing vegetables and fruits.

75% of Israel's population is Jewish and 22% Palestinian-Arab.

The historic land of Palestine Israel has evidence of agriculture that goes more than 10,000 years in the past and so is one of the oldest agricultural lands in the world.

Arabs living in Israel vote in Israeli elections and can serve as civil servants in the state branches and the army. Some of them define themselves as Palestinian and some as Israeli Arabs.

Jesus was born in Bet-Lehem which is located in the West Bank area of Palestine.

Palestinians living inside Israel are Israeli. They enjoy the same fundamental rights as Jewish Israelis.

The Actress Gal Gadot is an Israeli citizen.

Zionism is the Jewish national movement for the establishment of a Jewish state, and later for the support of Modern Israel.

The model sisters Gigi and Bella Hadid are of Palestinian decent.

Palestine is divided into two parts- Gaza and the West Bank. Both are under Israeli military occupation, but self-administered.

Fact Cards



Palestinians are mostly Muslims but a small number of them are Christians.

Israel was declared in 1948.

The countries around Palestine and Israel are Lebanon and Syria to the north, Jordan to the east and Egypt to the south-east.

In Israel there are 7.5 million Jews out of about 15 million worldwide.

Palestine and Israel are often in the news because of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

In the West Bank and Gaza there are 5.5 million Palestinians.

For Jews, Jerusalem is a sacred city. Important sites include the Wailing Wall and the Temple Mount.

Inside Israel live 2 million Arab-Palestinians with Israeli citizenship.

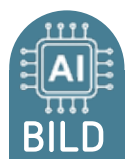
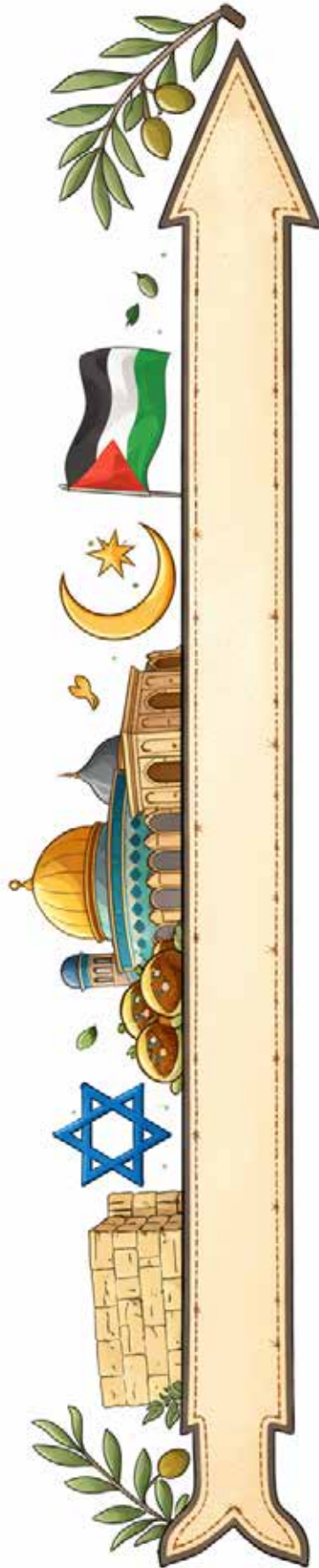
For Muslims, Jerusalem is a sacred city. It's main sites include the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa mosque.

In the countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt there are about 5 million more Palestinians whose family originates in Historic Palestine. There, however, many of them live under difficult conditions, and are not granted citizenship.

For Christians, Jerusalem is a sacred city. Important sites include the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Way of the Cross (Via Dolorosa).

In Israel there are churches, synagogues, and mosques. Religious minorities such as Druze and Samaritans also live there.

Timeline





Historical events

1. The Balfour Declaration (1917):

A formal statement by the British government expressing support for the establishment of a „national home for the Jewish people“ in Palestine. At the time of the declaration, only 10% of residents in Palestine are Jews, the rest are Muslims and Christians.

11. The Six-Day War / The Naksa:

A swift conflict in which Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, Sinai, and Golan Heights, resulting in a new wave of Palestinian displacement and total military occupation.

2. 1920-30s Jewish Immigration:

Large waves of Jews fled rising antisemitism and Nazi persecution in Eastern Europe and Germany, significantly increasing the Jewish population and land holdings in Palestine.

12. Beginning of Israeli Settlements:

Following the 1967 war, Israel began building Israeli civilian communities in the captured West Bank.

3. The Arab Revolt:

A nationalist uprising by Palestinian Arabs against British colonial rule and mass Jewish immigration, which was met with a harsh British military crackdown.

13. The First Intifada was a Palestinian

uprising that began in 1987. It was marked by mass protests, strikes, boycotts, and at times violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces. The conflict lasted for several years and came to an end in the early 1990s.

4. The Holocaust (1941–1945):

The murder of six million European Jews by Nazi Germany, which created a massive humanitarian crisis and international pressure for a Jewish state.

14. The Oslo Accords (1993):

A set of agreements between Israel and the PLO that established a peace process, mutual recognition, and the creation of the Palestinian Authority for limited self-rule.

Historical events



5. World War II ends.

6. 1945–1947 Jewish Refugee Immigration:

Despite British restrictions, thousands of Holocaust survivors attempted to reach Palestine by sea, leading to international tension.

7. The UN Partition Plan:

UN Resolution 181 proposed dividing Palestine into independent Arab and Jewish states with Jerusalem under international control; it was accepted by Jewish leadership but rejected by Arab leaders.

8. The Nakba / War of Independence (1948):

Following Israel's declaration of statehood and the ensuing war with Arab states, 700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled, while Israel established its sovereignty over a larger territory than planned.

15. 2000–2003 Second Intifada & Military Reaction:

Following the failure of further peace process, a period of intense violence characterized by Palestinian suicide bombings in Israeli cities and large-scale Israeli military incursions into West Bank cities.

16. Gaza Retreat & Hamas Takeover:

Israel unilaterally dismantled its settlements and withdrew its military from the Gaza Strip, which was followed by Hamas winning elections and seizing total internal control of Gaza, thus separating the Palestinian polity into the Palestinian Authority-ruled West Bank and the Hamas-ruled Gaza.

17. 2014–2023:

Israel puts a blockade on Gaza, limiting the freedom of movement of Palestinians while letting some of them exit Gaza for work in Israel and medical treatments.



Historical events

<p>9. Jewish Mass Migration:</p> <p>Nearly one million Jews immigrated to the new state of Israel, consisting of European survivors and refugees from Middle Eastern and North African countries.</p>	<p>18. Hamas from Gaza and other militias attack Israeli villages, parties and army bases, killing around 1200 Israelis and taking 250 hostages into Gaza. Around 3,000 armed terrorists entered Israel, while several thousand rockets were fired at Israel.</p>
<p>10. The Founding of the PLO (1964):</p> <p>The Palestine Liberation Organization was established to centralize Palestinian resistance and represent the national goal of liberating Palestine through armed struggle.</p>	<p>19. In the war in Gaza</p> <p>that followed, Israel has sought to defeat Hamas militarily. In northern Israel, there have been clashes with the Lebanese Hezbollah. Later, there were also direct military confrontations with Iran. Palestinians in Gaza have suffered severely as a result of the war. Tens of thousands have been killed, and tens of thousands more have been wounded. The majority of the population has been displaced.</p>

Placement of missing years:

3. The Arab Revolt: 1936 - 1939	11. Six day war /Naksa: 1967
5. WW2 ends: 1945	14. The Oslo Accords: 1993
7. UN Partition Plan: 1947	16. Gaza Retreat & Hamas Takeover: 2005 -2007
9. Jewish Mass Migration: 1949 - 1951	18. Hamas Attack: 2023

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