

## Glossary of Terms

**Note:** We've tried to make these explanations very simple so that you can use them as starting places for understanding. For more complex explanations, keep reading through the materials in this trunk and elsewhere.

**Administrative detention:** holding someone in prison without charge or trial.

**AIPAC:** American-Israel Public Affairs Committee. See "Israel Lobby".

**Amnesty:** a pardon. Sometimes a government will grant amnesty to a prisoner who is then free to leave prison even if her/his sentence has not been completed.

**Anti-semitism:** Semites are people from the Middle East. Although "anti-semitic" is often used to mean "anti-Jewish", the term literally means being against people from the Middle East. People who are against the policies of the Israeli government are sometimes confusingly accused of being anti-semitic, thus mixing up politics with religion/ethnicity.

**Apartheid:** According to the United Nations (1973): "inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them." Often used to refer to a system of control (1948-1994) in South Africa in which the White minority ruled over the Black majority, stole their land, and deprived them of basic rights. Eventually, apartheid ended through a combination of internal resistance and international sanctions. Today many accuse Israel of using apartheid against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. For more discussion of apartheid, see Causes of Conflict CBA lesson II. B. 5

**BDS:** Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. Since 2004, Palestinians have been calling for BDS against Israel in order to help end the occupation. For detailed lessons on BDS, please see the Causes of Conflict CBA II. B. 2. See also Boycott, and Divestment, and Sanctions in this Glossary.

**Boycott:** an activity in which consumers do not buy or use or deal with a product or a person or an organization or a country for political reasons, usually to pressure it to change. See also BDS.

**Breach of the law:** breaking a law.

**Collective punishment:** being punished for what someone else in your group did; being held responsible for something that you did not personally do.

**Declaration of Principles:** see Oslo Accords.

**Dedevelopment:** a term coined by Dr. Sara Roy of Harvard and applied to the Occupied Territories. The process of lowering a place's economic standard. Specifically, the

West Bank had a higher standard of living and economic infrastructure (roads, electricity, factories, work, etc.) in 1967 before it was occupied by Israel than it has today. Israel has systematically disrupted work and denied permits to build factories, repair roads, etc.; consequently, Palestinians have a lower standard of living in the 21st century than they had before the Israeli occupation.

**Demolition:** destroying something. Israeli authorities often use house demolition to try to force Palestinians to leave an area; Israeli occupation forces have demolished tens of thousands of Palestinian homes. The Israeli authorities usually say that an addition to a home has been built without a permit (permits are rarely granted) or that someone in the family or neighborhood has committed a crime. Typically, Palestinians are only given a few days or hours notice before their home is demolished. Israeli soldiers often drive armored Caterpillar D-9 bulldozers to destroy homes. Caterpillar is a United States company. In Gaza in 2003, American college student Rachel Corrie tried to stop a house demolition, but she was crushed to death underneath a Caterpillar bulldozer. See the Dig Deep CBA for more information.

**Deportation:** expelling/exiling people from their own land, forcing them to leave their country.

**Disproportionate:** Too large or too small compared with something else. In international law, armies are supposed to use necessary and proportionate force; they are not supposed to use disproportionate force. Armies are prohibited from using excessive force compared to the military advantage gained and the number of civilian deaths. If you are researching this subjective standard, start with the 1907 Hague Regulations, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute.

**Divestment:** an activity where people/shareholders withdraw their monetary investments from companies or countries. This is called disinvestment or divestment. See also BDS.

**Fatah:** major secular Palestinian political party and head of the Palestinian national movement. Founded by Yasser Arafat in the 1950s. For more information, see the Causes of Conflict CBA, lesson II.B.4.

**Flotilla:** a group of ships sailing together.

**Geneva Conventions:** a treaty, signed by most countries in the world, governing war and occupations.

**Green Line:** the imaginary line between Israel and the West Bank. Before 1967, it divided Israel from the Jordanian-occupied West Bank.

Hamas: major Islamic Palestinian political party. Formed in 1987 (with covert help from Israel, who hoped it would undermine Fatah). For more information, see the Causes of Conflict CBA, lesson II.B.4.

House demolition: see Demolition.

Human rights law: laws governing how people are treated. Sometimes people do not have all of these rights during wars or occupation. See also humanitarian law.

Humanitarian law: a fancy way of saying “the laws of war and occupation.” Laws governing how soldiers and civilians are treated during war and occupation. See also human rights law.

*Intifada*: literally, this means “shaking off” in Arabic; refers to major Palestinian uprisings/resistance to the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. There have been two intifadas so far: 1987-1993 and 2000-2005.

“Israel Lobby”: this refers to people and organizations who advocate to US government members for a pro-Israeli-government position in American foreign policy. Some people view “the lobby” as very strong and coordinated, others do not see it as a large actor in American foreign policy. For some articles on this issue, see the Causes of Conflict CBA, Lesson II. B. 6.

Labor: Center-left Israeli political party. For more information, see the Causes of Conflict CBA, lesson II.B.4.

Land confiscation: taking someone else’s land. Israeli occupation authorities often take Palestinian land by declaring it a “closed” area where only the Israeli army can go. Later, the army transfers the land to an Israeli settlement so that settlers can build on it. At other times, Israeli occupation authorities will confiscate land by declaring it a nature preserve, like a state forest. The result is the same: Palestinians no longer have access to their own land.

Law of Return: Israeli law that allows Jews anywhere in the world to immigrate to Israel. See also Return.

Likud: Center-right Israeli political party. For more information, see the Causes of Conflict CBA, lesson II.B.4.

Occupied Territories/occupation: The land occupied by Israel in 1967: the West Bank including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights of Syria. In international law, an occupation occurs when the army of one country invades another. Occupations are supposed to be short and end when the war ends. Since acquiring territory by force is illegal under international law, countries are supposed to withdraw their armies and give back the territory at the end of the war.

Oslo Accords: the 1993 agreement between Israel and the PLO that granted Palestinians some limited autonomy in their own affairs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel retained the right to veto any law and enter the Occupied Territories at any time. Most of the difficult issues (settlements, borders, refugees, etc.) were left to be decided in the future. For more information, see Causes of Conflict, lesson II.B.7.

Peace Process: is the term used for negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis. Oslo is the most famous, but there have also been Madrid, Camp David, Taba, Roadmap, Geneva, and Annapolis peace processes. For more information, see Causes of Conflict, lesson II.B.7.

PFLP: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Left-wing Palestinian group.

PLO: Palestine Liberation Organization. Umbrella of Palestinian groups struggling for the liberation of Palestine, the end of occupation, and the return of Palestinian refugees.

Palestinian Authority (PA): PA is the name for the group of Palestinian parties which is supposed to govern local Palestinian affairs in the Occupied Territories (since the Oslo Accords of 1993). Actually, the PA has little power and can be overruled by Israel.

Rachel Corrie: In Gaza in 2003, American college student Rachel Corrie tried to stop a house demolition as part of an international solidarity movement to end the Israeli occupation, but she was crushed to death underneath a Caterpillar bulldozer driven by an Israeli soldier. See Demolition and the Dig Deep CBA for more information.

Refusers: Israelis who have chosen not to serve in the Israeli army, or not to serve in the Occupied Territories. Sometimes refusers must go to jail for their choice. Some of these refusers are Israeli high school students.

Return: there are two issues dealing with “return” in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. One helps Palestinians, the other helps Jews. 1) The *Right of Return* is an international law that says that all people have a right to return to their homes (found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 13). UN General Assembly Resolution 194 says that Palestinian refugees and their descendants have the right to return home or be compensated (their choice). 2) By contrast, the Israeli *Law of Return* allows any Jew in any part of the world to come to Israel and be granted citizenship.

Right of Return: Under international law, all refugees have a right to return to (or near to) their homes. Palestinians claim this right. See also Return.

Sanctions: an activity in which one country or group of countries adopts certain measures to pressure another country or individual to change. Often this involves not selling certain items to the targeted country or individual. See also BDS.

Settlement: an Israeli village/town/city that has been built on Palestinian land and is considered illegal according to international law. Settlements in the West Bank are built on land taken from Palestinians without compensation. Settlements are designated for Jews only, they are accessed on Jewish-only roads, and they are allocated more water per person than Palestinian towns. Settlement residents are subject to Israeli domestic law, not the harsher Israeli military law that governs Palestinians in the West Bank.

Settler: someone who lives in a settlement. See settlement.

Sniper: a person who shoots from a hidden position.

Targeted Assassinations: occur when authorities send soldiers to kill a particular person. Extrajudicial, summary, arbitrary, or willful killings/executions are other synonyms or closely related terms. These actions are usually illegal under international law unless the authorities have absolutely no alternative.

Terrorism: although there is no single definition of “terrorism” that nations can agree on, terrorism basically means using violence or threats of violence against civilians for a political purpose. Terrorism is designed to make people feel terrified. One reason that nations can’t agree on a definition is that many nations use violence against civilians, either when they go to war or in an undeclared war on people they want to control. Nations don’t want to condemn terrorism and then be defined as terrorists themselves. “State-sponsored terror” is also a term used to describe a country’s actions when it uses violence against civilians. “Terrorism” always has negative connotations; by contrast, “freedom-fighter” has positive connotations and is a term used to describe violence for a cause the speaker supports. One person’s freedom fighter is often another person’s terrorist. To add to the complexity, the United Nations condemns terrorism but supports peoples’ rights to struggle for self-determination/independence using violence (but not against civilians). See also the Causes of Conflict CBA, International Law section II.A.2.

Torture: Intentionally making someone feel severe pain and suffering, physically or emotionally. According to the United Nations, torture is: "... any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions." (UN Convention Against Torture, Article 1)

Transfer: a term used to describe moving one group of people off their land and moving them to another place.

United Nations: an organization composed of representatives from every country in the world. The UN can make international laws. Israel is a member. Palestinians currently have “non-member observer state status” in the General Assembly and participate to a limited extent. The Security Council (composed of only a few countries, including the US, but not Palestine or, usually, Israel) of the UN has more power to make and implement decisions than the General Assembly. For more information, see Causes of Conflict CBA Lesson II. A. 2 on international law.

Wall/Fence: the controversial barrier that Israel is building through the West Bank.

War crimes: major/grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions. War crimes are listed in Article 147 in the Geneva Conventions. Examples: torture, deportation, willfully killing civilians, using disproportionate force.

Zionism: usually, the belief that there should be a nation state for Jews.