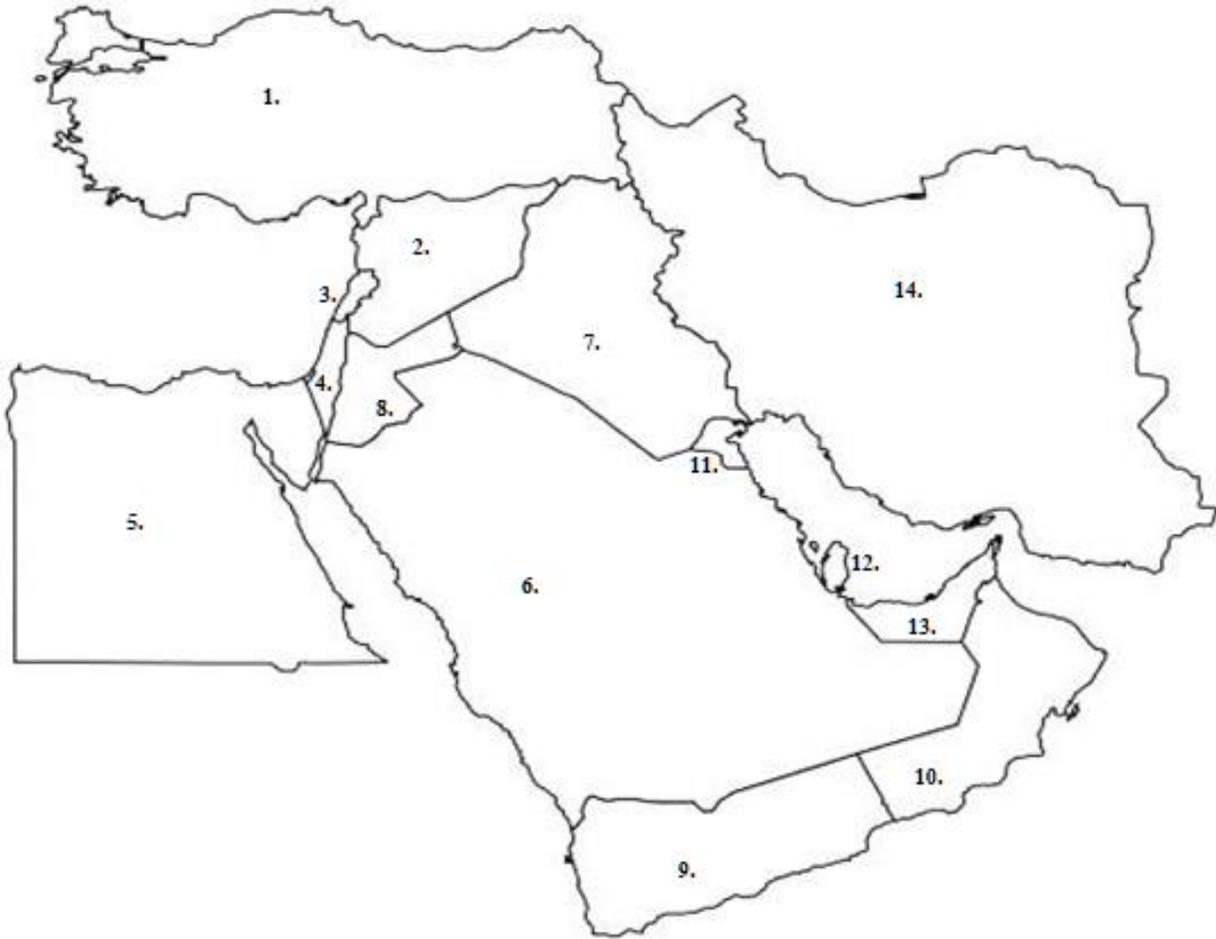


Israel-Iran Conflict



***Please fill in the names of the countries in the above map and match their capitals below.**

Egypt

Iraq

Jordan

Lebanon

Qatar

Syria

UAE

Baghdad

Doha

Cairo

Damascus

Abu Dhabi

Beirut

Amman

Iran

Israel

Kuwait

Oman

Saudi Arabia

Turkey

Yemen

Jerusalem

Riyadh

Tehran

Kuwait City

Sanaa

Muscat

Ankara

Why is the Israel–Iran Conflict in the News?

June 2025 War: Most notably, a 12-day war occurred in June 2025. Israel launched 'Operation Rising Lion', primarily targeting Iran's nuclear sites and military assets, claiming it was a pre-emptive strike to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Iran retaliated with barrages of missiles and drones at Israeli cities and strategic targets. The United States also joined the conflict, carrying out airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities. A ceasefire was eventually brokered by the US.

Iran's Nuclear Program: Israel views Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat, especially as Iran has been enriching uranium to higher purities (reportedly up to 60% purity, though not yet weapons-grade 90%). The recent Israeli strikes aimed to "decapitate" or at least significantly set back Iran's nuclear capabilities.

Proxy Conflicts: For decades, Iran and Israel have been engaged in a proxy conflict. Iran supports various anti-Israel groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza, which Israel considers direct threats. Israel, in turn, has carried out strikes against Iranian allies in Syria, assassinated Iranian nuclear scientists, and supported Iranian rebel groups.

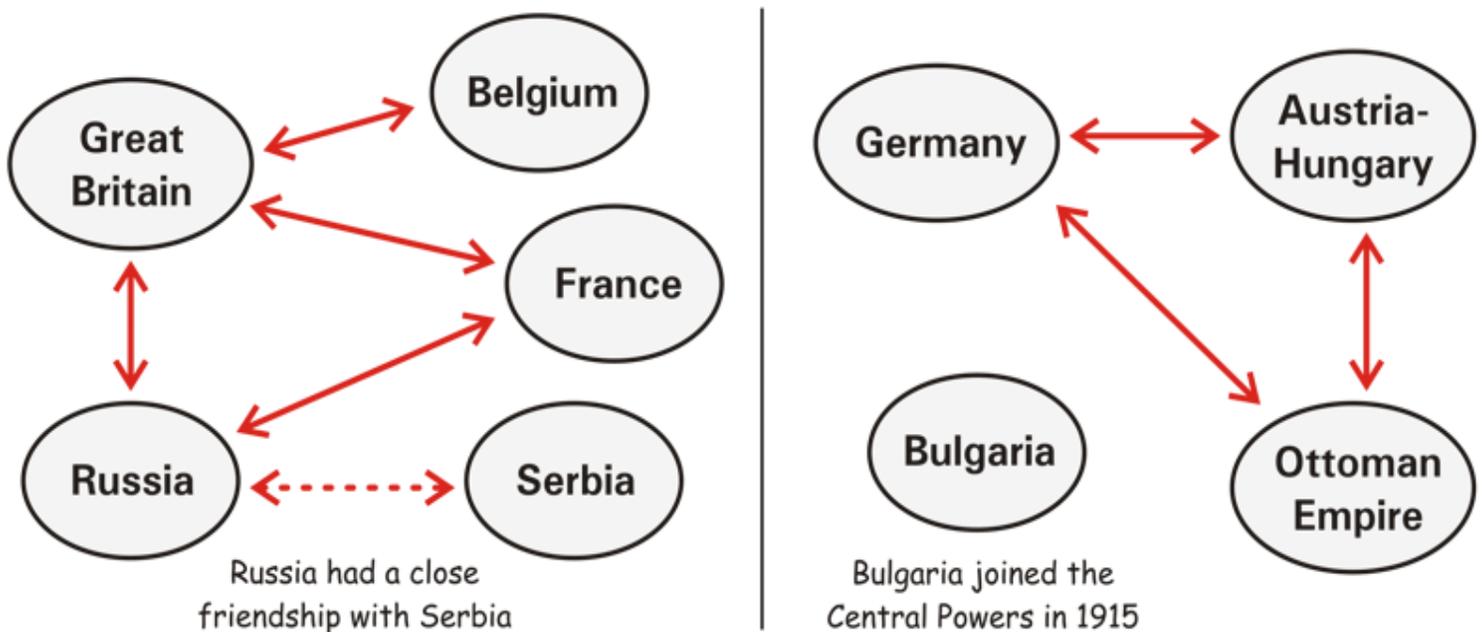
The Beginning: How Did It All Start?

1917 – Balfour Declaration

During World War I, Britain promised the Jewish community that if they supported the Allied cause, they would be granted a homeland of their own.

This promise was formalized through the **Balfour Declaration**, which supported a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

After the war, **Jewish migration to Palestine** (then under British control) increased significantly. However, **the Arab population already living there opposed this influx**, leading to tensions.



Two Communities, One Land – Seeds of Conflict

As Jewish settlements grew, so did Arab resentment. In 1947, the **United Nations proposed a partition:**

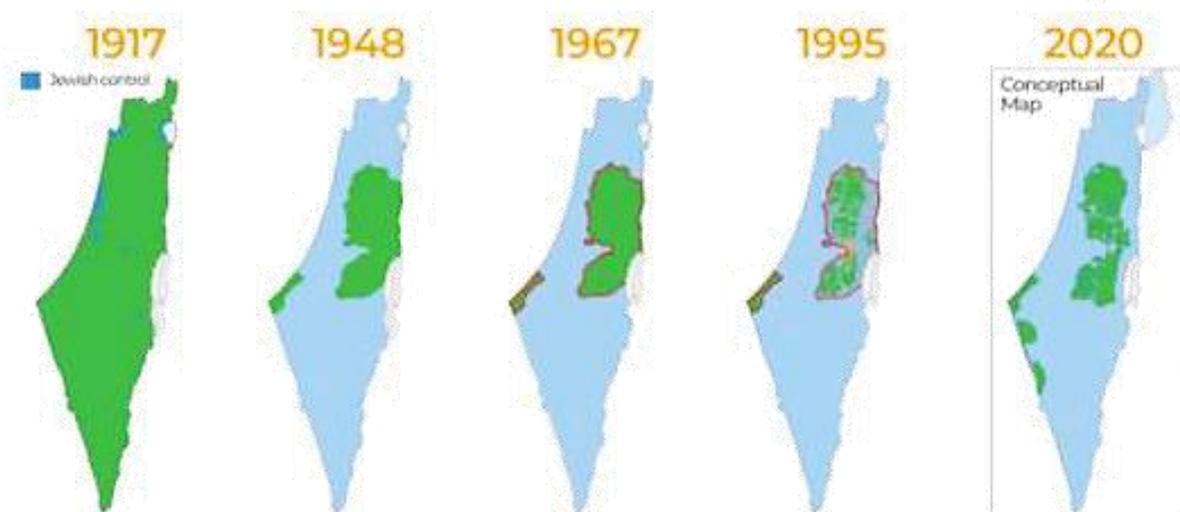
- One state for Jews (Israel)
- One state for Arabs (Palestine)

Jews accepted the plan; Arabs rejected it.

1948: Birth of Israel and War Begins

On **14 May 1948**, Israel declared itself an independent state.

Within 24 hours, Arab countries (including Iran at the time) declared war. Israel managed to defend itself and gained more territory.



Iran and Israel Were Once Friends!

Between **1948–1979**, Iran and Israel had **strong diplomatic and economic ties**. Both were aligned with the USA, shared intelligence, and traded technology.

The Turning Point – 1979 Islamic Revolution

In 1979, Iran overthrew the Shah and established an **Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Khomeini**.

- Iran called Israel “the little Shaitan”
- Supported Palestine against Israel
- **Cut all diplomatic ties** with Israel

Proxy Conflicts – Hezbollah, Hamas, and Drones

Iran funds **Hezbollah (Lebanon)** and **Hamas (Gaza)**

What is the role of Hezbollah in this conflict?

- A Shia militia based in Lebanon.
- Funded, trained, and armed by Iran.
- Involved in multiple wars with Israel.
- These groups often attack Israel.
- Israel responds with:
 - **Air strikes**
 - **Cyber operations**
 - **Drone interceptions**

What is the Iran Nuclear Deal (JCPOA)?

- Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed in 2015.
- Iran agreed to limit its nuclear program in exchange for sanction relief.
- Israel opposed it strongly.

Why did the USA withdraw from JCPOA in 2018?

- Under Trump, the US claimed the deal was too weak.
- Israel supported this move.

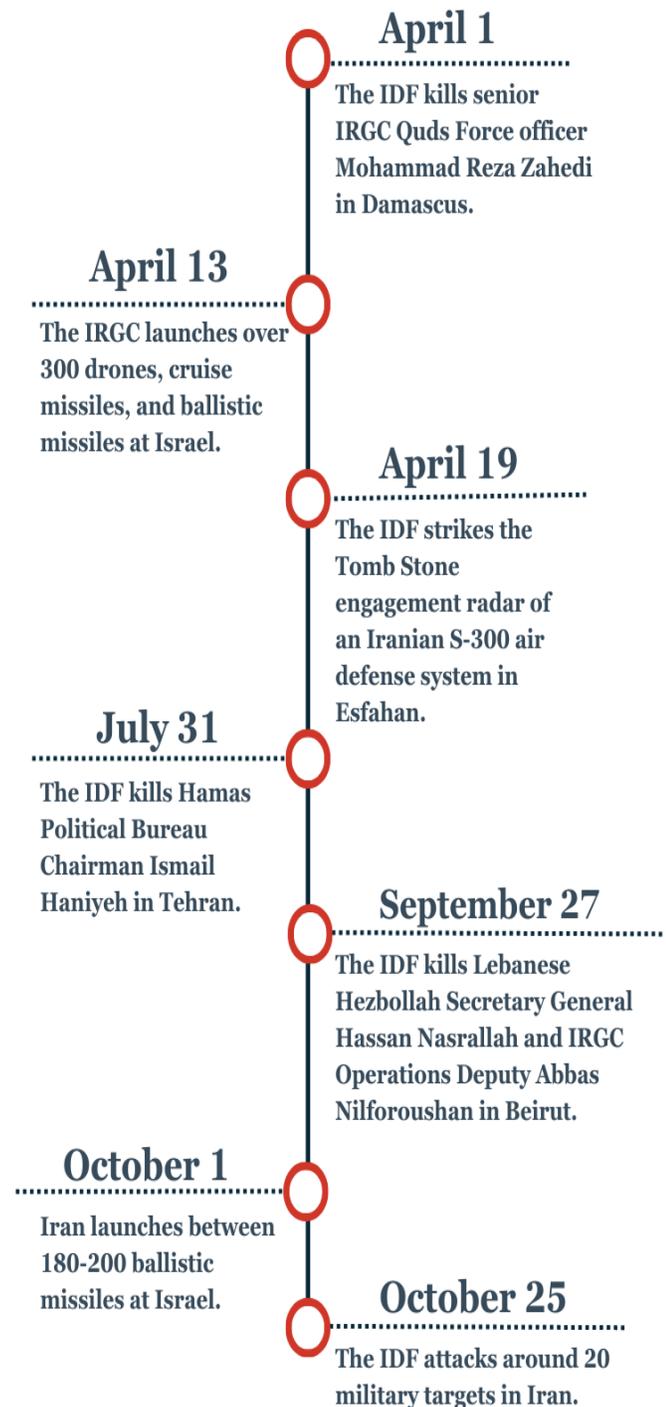
How has Syria become a battleground for Israel-Iran tensions?

- Iran and Hezbollah support Assad.
- Israel regularly targets Iranian installations in Syria.

What is IRGC and why is it important?

- Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.
- Iran's elite force, especially its Quds Force, plays a key role in extraterritorial operations, including anti-Israel activities.

Iran-Israel Escalation Since April 2024



What was the significance of the 2024 Gaza war?

- Marked a significant escalation.
- Iran-backed groups increased attacks on Israel.
- Israel responded with wider regional strikes.

How do other global players impact this conflict?

- USA: Key ally of Israel provides military aid.
- Russia: Supports Iran and Syria.
- China: Engaged in balancing diplomacy (brokered Saudi-Iran deal).

India's Relations with Israel and Iran: A Delicate Balancing (Walking the Tightrope)

India–Israel Relations	India–Iran Relations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diplomatic Ties: Full diplomatic relations were established in 1992, but strategic cooperation began secretly in the 1960s, especially during wars.• Defense Cooperation: Israel is among India’s top 3 defense suppliers.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Supplies drones, radars, missiles (e.g., Barak-8 system)○ Joint ventures in R&D (e.g., DRDO–Israel Aerospace Industries)• Agricultural & Water Tech:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Israel shares desert farming, irrigation, and water recycling technologies○ Indo-Israel Agriculture Centres across Indian states• Cybersecurity & Innovation:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Deepening ties in cyber defense, AI, robotics○ Startup collaboration through the iCreate–Israel Innovation Authority program• Recent Highlights:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2017: PM Modi became the first Indian PM to visit Israel○ 2023–25: Continued cooperation despite regional conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Historical & Cultural Ties: Shared history through Persian language, literature, and Sufism India has maintained a neutral stance even after the 1979 revolution.• Energy Security:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Iran was once India’s 2nd largest crude oil supplier○ Post-2019 U.S. sanctions ended direct oil imports from Iran○ India still eyes Iran as an energy backup• Connectivity: Chabahar Port<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ India built and operates Chabahar Port in southeastern Iran○ Offers access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan○ Part of India’s vision for International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)• Geo-Strategic Relevance:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ India supports JCPOA revival○ Engages with Iran to balance China’s rising influence (esp. in Gwadar, Pakistan)• Cultural Linkages:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Zoroastrian, Shia, and Sufi exchanges○ Indian diaspora in Iran and vice versa

Try to attempt these questions based on the topic.

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA):

1. It is a treaty signed between Iran and Israel.
2. It places restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities.
3. The USA has never been a part of this agreement.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. Hezbollah, often mentioned in news, is:

- (a) A political party in Turkey
- (b) A Shia militant group supported by Israel
- (c) A Sunni radical group in Syria
- (d) A Lebanon-based group backed by Iran

Q3. Which of the following countries share land borders with both Israel and Iran?

- (a) Iraq
- (b) Syria
- (c) Turkey
- (d) None of the above

Q4. With reference to recent global affairs, which of the following best describes the Abraham Accords?

- (a) A peace treaty between Iran and Israel
- (b) A nuclear disarmament plan for the Middle East
- (c) Normalization of relations between Israel and certain Arab countries
- (d) A maritime cooperation pact in the Persian Gulf

Q5. The Quds Force is associated with which of the following?

- (a) Israel's domestic intelligence service
- (b) US military's Middle East command
- (c) Iran's elite overseas military operations unit
- (d) Hezbollah's naval wing

GS Paper IV

Q. *"In international diplomacy, national interest often overshadows ethical considerations."* Discuss this statement in light of India's balanced stance in the Israel-Iran conflict. (150 words)