



## Israel's Declaration of Independence

*(Official English Translation from Ministry of Foreign Affairs)*

ERETZ-ISRAEL [(Hebrew) - the Land of Israel, Palestine] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, *ma'pilim* [(Hebrew) - immigrants coming to Eretz-Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.

This right was recognized in the [Balfour Declaration](#) of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the [Mandate of the League of Nations](#) which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people - the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe - was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the comity of nations.

Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL AND, BY VIRTUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT AND ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEREBY DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

WE DECLARE that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel".

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

WE APPEAL - in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months - to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel.

PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE "ROCK OF ISRAEL", WE AFFIX OUR SIGNATURES TO THIS PROCLAMATION AT THIS SESSION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE, ON THE SOIL OF THE HOMELAND, IN THE CITY OF TEL-AVIV, ON THIS SABBATH EVE, THE 5TH DAY OF IYAR, 5708 (14TH MAY,1948).

*David Ben-Gurion*

*Daniel Auster*

*Mordekhai Bentov*

*Yitzchak Ben Zvi*

*Eliyahu Berligne*

*Fritz Bernstein*

*Rabbi Wolf Gold*

*Meir Grabovsky*

*Yitzchak Gruenbaum*

*Dr. Abraham Granovsky*

*Eliyahu Dobkin*

*Rachel Cohen*

*Rabbi Kalman Kahana*

*Saadia Kobashi*

*Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Levin*

*Meir David Loewenstein*

*Zvi Luria*

*Golda Myerson*

*Nachum Nir*

*Zvi Segal*

*David Zvi Pinkas*

*Aharon Zisling*

*Moshe Kolodny*

*Eliezer Kaplan*

*Abraham Katznelson*

*Felix Rosenblueth*

*David Remez*

*Berl Repetur*

*Mordekhai Shattner*

*Ben Zion Sternberg*

*Meir Wilner-Kovner  
Zerach Wahrhaftig  
Herzl Vardi*

*Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hacoheh  
Fishman*

*Bekhor Shitreet  
Moshe Shapira  
Moshe Shertok*

## Basic Law: Israel as the Nation State of the Jewish People

*(Translation from Times of Israel)*

### 1 — Basic principles

A. The land of Israel is the historical homeland of the Jewish people, in which the State of Israel was established.

B. The State of Israel is the national home of the Jewish people, in which it fulfills its natural, cultural, religious and historical right to self-determination.

C. The right to exercise national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people.

### 2 — The symbols of the state

A. The name of the state is "Israel."

B. The state flag is white with two blue stripes near the edges and a blue Star of David in the center.

C. The state emblem is a seven-branched menorah with olive leaves on both sides and the word "Israel" beneath it.

D. The state anthem is "Hatikvah."

E. Details regarding state symbols will be determined by the law.

### 3 — The capital of the state

Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel.

### 4 — Language

A. The state's language is Hebrew.

B. The Arabic language has a special status in the state; Regulating the use of Arabic in state institutions or by them will be set in law.

C. This clause does not harm the status given to the Arabic language before this law came into effect.

## 5 — Ingathering of the exiles

The state will be open for Jewish immigration and the ingathering of exiles

## 6 — Connection to the Jewish people

A. The state will strive to ensure the safety of the members of the Jewish people in trouble or in captivity due to the fact of their Jewishness or their citizenship.

B. The state shall act within the Diaspora to strengthen the affinity between the state and members of the Jewish people.

C. The state shall act to preserve the cultural, historical and religious heritage of the Jewish people among Jews in the Diaspora.

## 7 — Jewish settlement

A. The state views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value and will act to encourage and promote its establishment and consolidation.

## 8 — Official calendar

The Hebrew calendar is the official calendar of the state and alongside it the Gregorian calendar will be used as an official calendar. Use of the Hebrew calendar and the Gregorian calendar will be determined by law.

## 9 — Independence Day and memorial days

A. Independence Day is the official national holiday of the state.

B. Memorial Day for the Fallen in Israel's Wars and Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day are official memorial days of the State.

## 10 — Days of rest and sabbath

The Sabbath and the festivals of Israel are the established days of rest in the state; Non-Jews have a right to maintain days of rest on their Sabbaths and festivals; Details of this issue will be determined by law.

## 11 — Immutability

This Basic Law shall not be amended, unless by another Basic Law passed by a majority of Knesset members.