

# The 1947 UN Partition Plan

## Arielle, Maya and the necklace

Arielle and Maya were walking in the street in Jerusalem on a school trip. Suddenly Arielle saw a necklace on the ground and pointed excitedly at it. Before she could say anything Maya picked the necklace up. The two girls started arguing over who should get the necklace – Arielle, who saw the necklace first, or Maya, who picked the necklace up.

### Discussion questions:

If you were the teacher and saw the two girls fighting over the necklace, what would you do?

Which one should get the necklace?

Maya explained to Arielle that her grandmother had one just like it many years ago but it was taken from her. Therefore, she should get it.

Arielle told Maya that she had no necklaces at all, and so she should get it.

Did your answer change? Who would you give the necklace to? Why?

How is Arielle and Maya's conflict similar to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

What is similar? What is different between the conflicts?



# The partition plan



\*Listen to the November 29th UN vote.

Before the state of Israel was founded, the British Mandate of Palestine, which ruled the land of Israel, faced a problem similar to Maya and Arielle's teacher.

After the terrible things that happened in the Second World War, including the Holocaust, a new organisation was set up for countries to work together without fighting in order to make the world a better place and resolve conflicts. This organisation was called the United Nations. On 29th November 1947, the members of this new organisation met in a building in New York City to work together to try to resolve the issue of a homeland for the Jewish people and to also take into account the needs of the Arab mainly Muslim population who also lived there. At the time the land was controlled by the British under something called British Mandate of Palestine. Britain wanted to withdraw, and the vote was to agree to divide the land into two states, one for Jews and one for Arabs. The Jews were to get 45% of the usable land and the Arabs 55% of the usable land.



This was great news for Jews all over the world and they were happy to agree, but the Arab nations did not accept the decision.

To pass, the motion needed a two-thirds majority. By a narrow margin, the motion passed into UN Resolution 181, announcing the re-creation of a Jewish state. The Arab nations rejected the Resolution, refusing to create a Palestinian state that would include anything less than the entire Mandate land.

Following the declaration there was much celebration amongst the Jewish population but it was short lived. When Israel declared Independence on 14 May 1948 it was attacked by its neighbouring Arab countries in what is known as the War of Independence (מלחמת העצמאות).



Nevertheless, the joy of that day in November is still celebrated and commemorated as can be seen by this street sign.



## Activity

Research which countries voted in the UN Partition Plan on 29 November 1947 and which way they voted. Did they vote for, against or abstain from the motion to create two new states, one for the Jews and one for the Arab population.

Choose three countries, one who voted yes, one who voted no and one who abstained and write a paragraph trying to explain the perspective of each.

As Jews we believe that the land of Israel is our indigenous homeland that we were separated from for many hundreds of years. However, we never stopped yearning and praying to return. Recreating the State of Israel as a safe place for all Jews and all people who choose to live there peacefully is our religious, historical, cultural and moral obligation.

