

The foundation of the state of Israel, 1948

The British mandated territory of Palestine, 1922–47

Britain was entrusted with a League of Nations mandate over Palestine in 1922. This provided an interim resolution to the power vacuum in post-World War I Palestine caused by the 1917 defeat of the Turks by British forces and the subsequent collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The British task was to facilitate the partitioning of Palestine to establish a Jewish national home that did not prejudice the civil and religious rights of the Arab majority. Jewish and Arab communities were granted the right to run their internal affairs, but this was not without tensions and outbreaks of violence, which did occur during the 1920s and 1930s.

In April 1947, after failing to reconcile the conflicting demands of both the Jewish and Arab communities, Britain indicated an intention to withdraw from Palestine and requested that a permanent solution be discussed by the United Nations General Assembly. Subsequently, a United Nations Special Committee was established to draft proposals for the future of Palestine.

Under the chairmanship of the Dr HV Evatt, the Australian Minister for External Affairs, the UN Special Committee recommended the establishment of an independent Jewish State in Palestine, together with a neighbouring independent Arab State, and this was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in November 1947.

The State of Israel was subsequently proclaimed in Tel Aviv on 14 May 1948.

Records relating to the foundation of Israel

Information held by the National Archives relating to the foundation of the State of Israel is contained in the records of the then Department of External Affairs, and key overseas missions such as the Australian High Commission in London, and the Australian Mission to the United Nations. Examples of these records are listed in the table below.

Records series containing information on the foundation of Israel

Department of External Affairs, Central Office (CA 18)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Master set of departmental briefs for, and reports on, international official talks, ministerial visits, etc</u>	1920–ongoing	A2539
<u>Folders of UK Foreign Office prints</u>	1923–62	A6782
<u>Bound volumes of despatches from overseas posts</u>	1940–ongoing	A4231
<u>Copies of top secret inward and outward cables</u>	1940–72	A6367
<u>Printed copies of inward cables, secret and below</u>	1942–79	A6364
<u>Printed copies of outward cables, secret and below</u>	1942–79	A6366
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1947–47	A1068
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1948–89	A1838

Department of External Affairs, London (CA 1759)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1948–50	A3318
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1948–50	A3320

Australian High Commission, London (CA 241)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1918–60	A2910
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1930–52	A2908
<u>Uncontrolled correspondence files</u>	1945–70	A6370

Australian Mission to the United Nations (CA 2758)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1946–ongoing	A5326

Record items relating to the foundation of Israel

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Israel – relations with the Arab States</u>	1943–52	A1838, 175/11/20 Part 1
<u>Palestine – policy</u>	1946–49	A461, E350/1/3 Part 1
<u>Palestine – policy</u>	1946–49	A461, E350/1/3 Part 2
<u>UN Security Council – Palestine – Israel</u>	1946–49	A4534, 43/5/3 Part 1
<u>UN Security Council – Palestine – Israel</u>	1946–49	A4534, 43/5/3 Part 3
<u>Israel – internal – constitutional and citizenship</u>	1946–69	A1838, 175/1/2

<u>United Kingdom's proposals for Palestine</u>	1947	A5954, 1347/9
<u>Palestine – United Nations Commission of Inquiry on – Attitude of Executive Council of Australian Jewry</u>	1947	A434, 1947/3/5952
<u>Palestine Commission</u>	1947–48	A1838, TS852/20/2 Part 1
<u>Palestine Commission</u>	1947–48	A1838, TS852/20/2 Part 2
<u>Palestine Commission</u>	1947–48	A1838, TS852/20/2 Part 3
<u>Palestine Commission</u>	1947–48	A1838, TS852/20/2 Part 4
<u>Palestine Commission</u>	1947–48	A1838, TS852/20/2 Part 6
<u>Palestine Commission</u>	1947–48	A1838, 852/20/2 Part 5
<u>Palestine – implications of withdrawal</u>	1947	A5954, 1912/3
<u>Israel – question of recognition</u>	1948	A432, 1948/594
<u>Israel – recognition by other countries</u>	1948–71	A1838, 175/7/1/1
<u>Palestine – Jewish State</u>	1948–50	A1838, 851/12/3 Part 1
<u>Palestine – Jewish State</u>	1948–50	A1838, 851/12/3 Part 2
<u>Anniversary – inauguration of State of Israel</u>	1949	A461, AR317/1/1

For more information

Research guide:

[Safe Haven: Records of the Jewish Experience in Australia.](#)