

Did the Arabs Steal Palestine? Let's Check the Receipts

[Þetta myndband gefur marga vitnisburði sem styðja greinar mínar í Morgunblaðinu þ. 4 júlí 2025 og 17. mars 2026. Greinarnar eru á vefsíðunni <https://landskuld.is/>. Hlekkir á greinarnar og á leiðara Morgunblaðsins þ. 2 mars 2026 eru með grænum texta. Á youtube.com eru góð myndbönd frá USA hlaðvarpinu "Casual Historian" um ófrið í heiminum af völdum íslams. Af slóðinni: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NapF-Q0e08&t=2812s>

Peel: I feel I can safely assume what the Jews will have to say on this matter.

Does his Eminence think that this country can assimilate and digest the 400,000 Jews now in the country?

Amin: No

Peel: Some of them would have to be removed by a process kindly or painfully as the case may be?

Amin: We must leave all this to the future.

Zvi Elpeleg, The Grand Mufti: Haj Amin al-Hussaini, Founder of the Palestinian National Movement (1993)

T.Í.]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVL55wyatuA&t=3s>

19 mín

Did the Arabs steal Palestine? I will give concrete examples in a moment, but here is one right away. Until 1929, Gaza had a Jewish community. In 1929, an Arab mob in Gaza destroyed that community completely. The same happened in Jerusalem, in Hebron, and in several other places.

But let's start from the beginning. Ken from the channel Elephant in the Room uploaded a video titled, "Did Jews steal Palestine?" It's a great channel that tackles politically sensitive questions and usually comes up with interesting perspectives, but the video he posted last week had some major inaccuracies. The title was, "Did Jews still Palestine?" That question could have been answered in a 2-cond video. The answer is no. If you can provide even one example, one place where Jews stole land from Arabs, then the answer is simple. But of course, the title was just an excuse to make a video about the conflict. And that's fine.

I also try to find the most clickable title possible. In the first few minutes, he gives a decent historical summary, goes over the periods. Then after 5 minutes, he answers the question in the title and begins a chain of mistakes.

Ken: Now, they did it legally according to Ottoman and later British law. They often bought the land from absentee Arabs or Ottoman landlords, and they paid a lot of money for it. They called it Aaliyah, literally ascent, and it meant waves of immigrants who built new towns, including Tel Aviv. But for the Arabs already living there, the sight of newcomers buying land, fencing it off, and setting up self-contained settlements was frightening.

Travelingisrael: He admits that Jews bought the land according to the law, Ottoman law and later British law. But then he says an incredible sentence. "...It being legal was well beside the point...." **So you're saying that they didn't steal, but that doesn't matter. We can still accuse the Jews of stealing throughout the entire video. can constantly romanticizes the Arabs and demonizes the Jews.**

He does it with small words and with big words. And in a minute we will get to the biggest one. He describes Jews buying land, fencing it off. He describes Arabs, local farmers who had worked the land for centuries. He calls Jewish buyers foreign investors using foreign rules. **You just said that the Jews bought land legally according to Ottoman and later British law. And as far as I know, you cannot buy land in Wisconsin according to the rules of France.**

The Arabs in the video are always portrayed as natives, rooted peasants, authentic people. But he completely ignores two things. Actually, three big things. First, **if Arabs lived here for hundreds of years, how come they established only one city in all land of Israel? Ramleh.** Interesting, right?

Second, there is an entire literature world of travelers diaries to the Holy Land. Thousands of **pilgrim literature describing the land as desolated, empty with some wandering bedouins, and with Jews regularly humiliated by Muslims in the cities.** I honestly cannot recall even one description of warm relations or mutual respect between Jews and Muslims in these hundreds of books. [Mark Twain's Journey to Israel in 1860ties]

And third, the most crucial thing can never mentions the massive Arab immigration into the land of Israel. Just one small example, in Gaza, half the population has Egyptian family names. Ismaeli, El Tartir, Barawil, El Masri, Masawa, El Fumi.

Tens of thousands of Arabs came from Egypt in the 19th and early 20th century to escape forced labor building the Switz Canal to avoid being drafted or to find work with the British and the Jews. Sure, there were falahing farmers who farmed the same plot for generations, **but to ignore the massive Muslim immigration completely and only highlight Jewish immigration is simply a betrayal of the truth.** Then comes the big distortion. Pay attention. This is tricky if you don't know the history.

Ken: Tensions erupted again and again. In 1920, 1929, rumors that Jews were trying to take over the Muslim holy sites sparked riots that left hundreds of people dead. By the mid

1930s, those clashes had evolved into the Arab revolt. Underground Zionist groups began attacking British targets, and by 1947, exhausted and broke, Britain had had enough. They handed the entire problem to the UN and walked away. But in the Arab towns, it triggered rage. The day after the resolution passed, civil war broke out between Arabs and Jews inside Palestine.



Travelingisrael: **The only time Ken uses the word attacking is when he talks about Zionist groups attacking the British.** When Arabs attacked Jews [og hrannmyrtu börn, konur og vopnlausá karla; T.Í.] in 1920, 1921-29, he says: “Tensions erupted”, “Sparked riots”, “Clashes evolved”. And in 1948 he says: “Civil war broke out”.

No, no, no. Arab attackers attacked Jews in 1920, in 1921, 1929, and in 1936 to 1939. In those attacks, the Arabs stole Jewish property and land. In Hebron, the Arab attacked wiped out the Jewish community. Arab riots wiped out part of the Jewish community in Jerusalem's old city in 1936. Here are more Jewish communities that Arab destroyed or stole.

Nayoda in the Golden Heights, Safed Karill, a Yei Jewish village, Mdal Ed, and many more. This answers the video's title directly. And in 1948, the Arabs were the ones who started the war by attacking Jewish civilians. And by the way, they didn't start it because they disliked the partition. They started it because **Arabs refused to accept Jewish sovereignty in any part of the land of Israel.**

And here is the point Ken completely ignores maybe the most crucial point for the Arabs. This wasn't and isn't a national issue. It was a religious issue. The Muslim organization's names says it all. Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Republic of Iran, all religious, all Islamic, not national.

Hezbollah = Party of God

Hamas = Islamic Resistance Movement

Islamic Jihad

Islamic Republic of Iran

In Islamic thinking, Jews are considered a lower class. They must pay the Jiza, a tax for inferiors. The idea that inferior Jews want sovereignty is something much of the Islamic world has never accepted.

Ken ignores the religious dimension entirely. And I must say this shows a total misunderstanding of the conflict [Augljósar lygar hjá Ken; T.Í.]. Then when he talks about the UN partition plan, he skips several very important details.

Ken: The Jewish state would get about 55% of the land even though Jews made up only about onethird of the population by then and owned less than 10% of it. The rest would go to an Arab state.

But some argue that statistic can be a little misleading because much of the Jewish portion was the Negev Desert. It was empty, dry, and mostly uninhabitable. The Arab state would have gotten most of the fertile land and towns, a decision made in part to avoid displacing large Arab populations. Jews saw the plan as a lifeline, a legal and moral foundation for the country they've dreamed of for a long time.

Arabs saw it as a betrayal. It was their land and their majority, and now half of it was being handed over to people they saw as recent arrivals backed by a colonial power. The UN vote triggered celebration in Jewish towns with dancing and singing.

Travelingisrael: He says Jews saw the plan as a lifeline. Not true. Many Jews were disappointed because the plan contradict the League of Nation decision and put Jerusalem, the holiest Jewish city, under international control. But Jews always tried to compromise and move forward. So they accepted it. Arabs who did not accept any Jewish sovereignty started a war.

Claims about the partition being unfair are excuses invented later. Arab leaders in 1948 said one thing clearly. "...We will eliminate the Jews. All of them in Israel and in the Arab countries."

Mufti Amin al Husseini



“Arabs! Rise as one and fight for your sacred rights. Kill the Jews wherever you find them. This pleases God, history, and religion. This saves your honor. God is with you.”

The three main Arab leaders in the land, Haj Amin Husseini, Hassan Salame, and Fousy Kawakji, spend World War II years in Nazi Germany doing anti-Jewish propaganda and forming Muslim SS units. Don't believe me? Prove me wrong. Find me one Arab leader who supported Jewish independence.

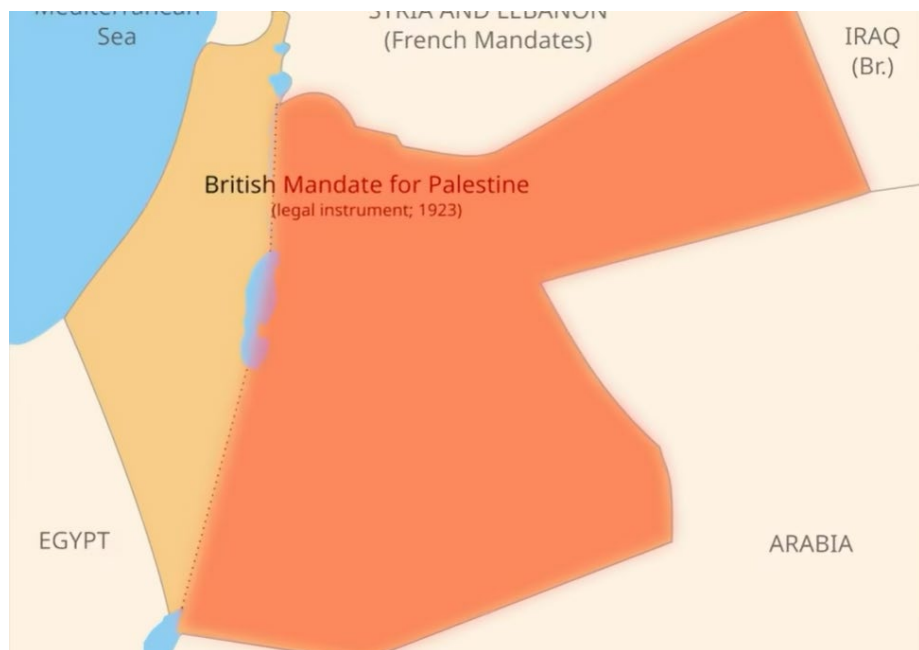
But much more importantly, there was already another newly formed Arab state, one that Ken completely ignores, Jordan. **The British promised the land to both the Jews and Arabs. They fulfilled their promise to the Arabs. They created the Kingdom of Jordan. Not only did they created it, but the British trained its army, funded it, and armed it. The commander of the Jordanian army was British.**





If a British officer had commanded the Israeli army in 1948, you would hear his name non-stop and it would be waved as proof that Israel was colonialist. But when Britain gave Arabs 75% of the mandate and built their army, silence. Jordan, thanks to British training and arms, became the strongest Arab army in 1948 and committed the largest massacre of Jews in the world, the Karition massacre. 130 Jews murdered, many after surrendering. Jordan is the clearest example of colonialist cooperation with Arabs, but no one talks about it as it doesn't fit the narrative.

To be fair, Ken did mention something most videos about the conflict ignore, the Jewish Nakba, the 800,000 Jews expelled from Arab countries. But he immediately made a false comparison.



Ken: Between 1948 and the early 1950s, Jews had a Nakba of their own. Roughly 800,000 Jews were forced out of Arab countries, many from places like Iraq, Yemen, and Egypt, where their families had lived for centuries. Most resettled in Israel, which then doubled in population in three years.

Two groups of people lost their homes almost simultaneously. One side built a new nation. The other side was left stateless, scattered across refugee camps in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria.

Travelingisrael: Here is the real difference. Arabs lost their homes because they started a war, tried to eliminate the Jewish community, and lost. Jews in Yemen, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran lost their homes because of Arab violence, pogroms, and persecution.



[Þessi mynd er sennilega tekin í Bagdad í Írak (hin forna Mesópótamía) árið 1937, þegar múftinn af Jerúsalem var þar að leggja á ráðin með að hrammmyrða vopnlausu gyðinga um öll Mið-Austurlönd. Þá höfðu gyðingar verið vopnlausir um víða veröld í meira en þúsund ár. Þú sérð siðleysi þessa arabalýðs - múslimar, sem veifa stunguhnífum og sveðjum til að fremja illvirkin; það að drepa gyðinga og raunar einnig alla hina, sem ekki eru múhameðstrúar, þar á meðal kristna og hindúa. Elíta múslimanna heldur hvatningarræður á svölunum. T.Í.]

Jews never attacked their Arab neighbors in Morocco or Yemen or Iraq. Ken says something interesting: “One side build a nation, the other remained stateless...” I think that would be an interesting topic for a video. Why do Jews succeeded? Although it is a tiny country, tiny market, no oil, desert and surrounded by enemies, the Jews managed to build a proper country.

While Arabs fell despite oil and the vast market, not only are the Palestinians the most privileged group of people in the world, they get more money than any other group, and they

are the only people who have their own UN agency. Crazy, right? My guess because Jewish society is nonviolent. [Gyðingar voru vopnlausir meðal þjóða heims í þúsund ár. T.Í.] It encourages openness, debate, and innovation. Arab society is class-based, far more violent. Every Arab state is a dictatorship.

And they use the money they get not to build their own nation, but invested in trying to destroy us. That's just how it is. Next, Ken gets to the question of identity. Was there ever a Palestinian people? He quotes correctly that many Palestinian institution under the mandate were Jewish. See the flag of Palestine in a 1939 world atlas.

Ken: Under Ottoman rule, the area wasn't even an official province called Palestine. Most people saw themselves as Ottoman subjects, but gave their real loyalties to their family, their clan, and their hometown rather than to a nation. Under British rule, the word Palestinian still didn't mean what it does today. Early on, it was geographic. Anyone living in the British mandate could be called Palestinian.

In fact, some of the best known Palestinian institutions were actually Jewish, like the Palestine Post newspaper, which later became the Jerusalem Post, and the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra.

Travelingisrael: It stops right before the obvious conclusion. There was no Palestinian identity until 60 years ago. The Palestinian Orchestra, the Palestinian Bank, the Palestinian newspaper, all Jewish, but Jews already had their own identity. So when the British left, we didn't need their colonial name. The Arabs here had no national identity.

Ken: So they took the British colonial name, Palestine. Both the Jordanian and Palestinian people are product of British imperialism. to balance the fact that Palestinian institutions were Jewish. He adds romanticism about Arab unity. Newspapers, political committees, local leaders, they started using the term Palestinian to describe themselves as a distinct community within the Arab world even though they remained Arab just like you could be both French and European. Then that Arab revolt against the British rule and Jewish immigration helped solidify their identity. Peasants from villages fought alongside urban militants and the shared struggle gave birth to a more unified sense of a Palestinian people.

Travelingisrael: Sorry, but this is almost laughable. Anyone who knows Arab society knows this is fantasy. An urban Arab from Haifa, Christian or Muslim would never let his daughter marry a Muslim fisherman from Jerasa. Arab society is extremely class-based, far more racist than Western society.

In Gaza, there is a neighborhood of black Arabs who came from Sudan. Their neighborhood and they themselves are called AB meaning slave. Imagine calling a black person slave in America.

But more importantly during the Arab revolt can mentioned in the beginning Arabs killed 230 British and thousands of other Arabs.

In 1948 in Haifa the Arab elite fled to Damascus and Beirut. They always saw themselves as part of greater Syria, not Palestine. And once the elite left, the Arab villagers and gangs simply killed each other. If you think this sounds unbelievable, first check me. Second, look at the Middle East today.

1 million Arabs killed by other Arabs in Syria and Yemen. 1 million! Do you hear Arabs in Paris, London, or Michigan protesting? They couldn't care less. If you can not blame the Jews, it's not interesting.

Later in the video, there are more mistakes. Some may be accidental, but **one is a downright lie.** He talks about the six- day war, the occupation, the settlements, and then the PLO. It sounds logical. Israel occupied territory, built settlements, and then the Palestinians formed the PLO in response. But when was the PLO, Palestine Liberation Organization, founded? 1964, 3 years before the six- day war, before the occupation, before the settlements.

Its goal was the same as the Arab leaders of 1948, the elimination of Israel. Ken finishes the video with a summary that isn't just false, it's almost meaningless. And I'm sorry I need to be so harsh. Too many people want stories with simple victims and simple villains. I usually can't give that to you and I certainly can't give that to you here. The world is too nuanced.

You begin the video with a serious accusation. "Did Jews steal Palestine?" And end with a conclusion that says nothing. **You accuse Jews without providing a clear answer.** So here's the answer. Clearly, no. **Jews did not steal anything.** Not one case exists of Jews stealing Arab land.

Only **after Arabs started a war and lost did they lose territory,** as happens in every war. Ask the Germans who lost land after they began a war against Poland and Russia. If your channel is called Elephants in the Room and you bring explosive questions to the center of the discussion, you are supposed to give a real honest answer.

Ken, I like your channel, but you disappointed big time. It is not too late to fix it. There is so much misinformation online and so I can really understand where the mistakes came from. As always, I will link the full video below so you can watch and judge for yourselves.

And if you happen to know Ken, please send him this video. If you want to learn more about Israel, you can get my Jerusalem crush course. I will link it below. It is also a great way to support the channel. And please subscribe. The next video or the one after is going to be something special and a bit different. See you in the next one. Yalabai.