



## Embassy Move & Jerusalem Facts

- Today May 14th marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Israeli independence and the opening of the U.S. embassy in Jerusalem.
- The embassy move — which Jewish Federations have lobbied in support of for two decades — reflects a bipartisan effort that has enjoyed cross-party political support in the United States and Israel for decades.
- Israel and the United States enjoy a deep friendship that is centered on the shared values of peace, democracy, freedom and progress.
- Israel, like any other nation, has the right to choose its capital. Israel's historic ties to Jerusalem date back over 3,000 years.
- Jerusalem has, in reality, been Israel's capital and seat of government since 1949. The President's Residence, the Knesset, the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister's Office and most Israeli government ministries are located in the city.
- In remarks made today at the Embassy by Jared Kushner, Senior Advisor to the President, reiterated the U.S. position that the embassy move does not reflect a change in position on final status negotiations regarding Jerusalem.
- The U.S. supports two states for two peoples.
- The new embassy is located at an existing consular building in the Arnona neighborhood of Jerusalem. (see attached fact sheet for location information)
- The Trump administration repeated its support for the peace process. In his speech announcing the move, President Donald Trump said: "The United States remains deeply committed to helping facilitate a peace agreement that is acceptable to both sides. I intend to do everything in my power to help forge such an agreement. Without question, Jerusalem is one of the most sensitive issues in those talks. The United States would support a two-state solution if agreed to by both sides."
- Jerusalem was reunited by Israel in 1967 (on May 13 we celebrated the unification on Yom Yerushalayim) and is today a vibrant cultural and spiritual center that celebrates its diversity and welcomes visitors of all faiths from around the globe.

- Since reunification, for the first time in modern history, Muslims, Christians and Jews are free to worship in Jerusalem at their holy sites. There are over 100 synagogues, 50 churches and over 33 mosques operating freely in Jerusalem.
- There are some 524,700 Jews, 307,300 Muslims, and 12,400 Christians living in Jerusalem.
- All holy places are protected by Israeli law (1967), which reads in part: *The Holy Places shall be protected from desecration and any other violation and from anything likely to violate the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them or their feelings with regard to those places.*
- There was [controversy](#) surrounding one of the speakers at the Embassy opening invited by the Trump administration. Pastor Robert Jeffress, who led a prayer at the opening, has in the past made derogatory comments towards other religious groups, including Jews.

### History of U.S. Embassy & Jerusalem

- 20 years ago, the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities. It has subsequently been reinforced in multiple bipartisan motions — most recently in summer of 2017. Republicans and Democrats, in the House, the Senate and the White House, have long supported the decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.
- Jerusalem Embassy Act, November 1995, reads: “Statement of the Policy of the United States: (1) Jerusalem should remain an undivided city in which the rights of every ethnic and religious group are protected. (2) Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of the State of Israel.”
- Res.176 — a resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem, June 2017:, reads: “The Senate... reaffirms the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 as United States law, and calls upon the President and all United States officials to abide by its provisions.”
- In December 2017, President Trump said, “We finally acknowledge the obvious: that Jerusalem is Israel’s capital... I am also directing the State Department to begin preparation to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.”
- In October 2017, Senator Charles Schumer, Senate Democratic leader, said, “Moving the embassy as soon as possible would appropriately commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Jerusalem’s reunification and show the world that the US definitively acknowledges Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.”

## **Jewish Connection to Jerusalem**

- Jerusalem, the capital of the State of Israel, is one of the oldest cities in the world, dating back some 3,000 years.
- Archeological findings provide evidence of the ancient Jewish kingdoms. For example, a royal seal excavated in the Old City of Jerusalem dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE and confirms the existence of the Jewish King Hezekiah of Jerusalem, as mentioned in the Bible.
- The holiest sites of Judaism are located in the Old City of Jerusalem: The Temple Mount, where the ancient Jewish Temples stood, and the Western Wall, which is the surviving section of the Second Temple compound.
- Jews are indigenous to the city and to the broader region. For some 3,000 years, Jews have inhabited Jerusalem almost continuously and, in the modern era, Jews became the majority ethnic group in the mid-1800s.
- Jews in the Diaspora, who were expelled from the Land of Israel throughout the centuries, have longed to return to Jerusalem. This longing is a central theme of Jewish liturgy, holidays and customs, as expressed in the ancient prayer "Next year in Jerusalem." Jews all over the world always pray in the direction of Jerusalem.

### **Palestinian reactions:**

- A spokesperson for Mahmood Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, said Monday that "with this step, the U.S. administration has cancelled its role in the peace process and has insulted the world, the Palestinian people and the Arab and the Islamic nation and it has created incitement and instability".
- Abbas has said that the Palestinians will not enter US-led negotiations "in any way, shape or form."
- Abbas convenes an emergency meeting in Ramallah after the embassy move, which he brands "a new occupation," and an "assault on our sovereignty, an assault on our established rights," according to a translation from Al-Jazeera.