Why was Israel created as a Jewish state in 1948?

Ancient Palestine
Israel, once known as Palestine, is the ancient homeland of both the Jewish Israelis and Arab Muslim Palestinians. The first Jews came to Palestine around 2000 BC from southern Mesopotamia, now Iraq. Initially settling in the hilly interior of Palestine, the Jews believed this land was their Promised Land, the land that had been given to them in a agreement by their God in exchange for their promise to live according to God's laws. The Palestinians, on the other hand, were of Greek origin who initially settled on the Mediterranean coast around the same time.

The Diaspora
About 200 years after both groups settled in the area, the Jews established a kingdom called Israel. The Roman Empire later conquered the Israeli kingdom and renamed it Palestine. The Jews revolted against Roman rule in 70 AD. The Jewish revolt resulted in the diaspora, during which the majority of Jews were forced from Palestine and scattered throughout Southwest Asia and Europe. While the Jewish population dispersed, the Palestinians remained in the region and mixed with other people there, mainly Arabs.

Zionism
After the Roman expulsion, the Jews who were forced out lived as minorities in different lands, particularly Europe. These Jewish minority groups were often unwelcome guests in their new countries. As outsiders, these Jews faced anti-Semitism, or hatred and discrimination towards Jewish people. From the time of the diaspora, most Jews dreamed of a return to their ancestral homeland in the region of Palestine. In the 1800s, European Jews began organizing political movements aimed at moving back to Palestine and recreating a Jewish state. This movement became known as Zionism. In both western and eastern Europe, many Jews were tired of anti-Semitism. Therefore many joined the Zionist cause, participating in boycotts and protests.

Ottoman Empire Collapses
In World War I (1914-1918), the Ottoman Empire, who controlled most of Southwest Asia, joined forces with the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the fight against the Allied Powers of Great Britain, France, and Russia. During the war, Zionist leaders urged the British to allow for a Jewish country in Palestine should the British win WWI. After winning WWI, the Allied Powers officially claimed the remnants of the former Ottoman Empire in the San Remo Agreement of 1920. According to this agreement, Britain would take control of Palestine under the mandate system. Although many religions claim ownership of Palestine, British control over the region did not become a large problem until about the 1930’s and 40’s. During this time, World War II was beginning and the Jewish community was being mistreated by Hitler’s Nazi party in the Holocaust. Looking for a safe haven during a difficult time, Jews chose to immigrate to Palestine, which they believed was their rightful home.
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**UN Partition Plan**

By 1936, Arab Palestinian unhappiness with British rule and a large amount of Jewish immigration erupted in a three year violent conflict known as the Arab Revolt. By 1947, with British soldiers tired of policing Arab-Jewish violence, the British government turned Palestine over to the United Nations (U.N). The U.N. intended to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by partitioning Palestine into two states, one Jewish and one Arab (Palestinian). While Zionist leaders initially accepted this plan as a step towards reclaiming the Promised Land, Arab leaders were strongly against any plan that called for the division of their homeland. At this time, there were 1.3 million Palestinians and a little over 500,000 Jews living in Palestine. As the majority population that had lived there for thousands of years, the Palestinians believed they had the right to govern all of Palestine. Even so, Jews favored a division of Palestine, and used biblical claims and anti-Semitic persecution as evidence that they should have their homeland.

**Israeli Independence & More War**

Even though the 1947 U.N. partition plan was meant to solve the Jewish-Arab land dispute, the arrangement proved unpopular. On May 14, 1948 the Jewish State of Israel officially declared its independence. The next day, conflict between the two sides broke out in the First Arab-Israeli War. The First Arab-Israeli War ended in 1949, resulting in a variety of treaties that were supposed to protect both Palestinian and Israeli claims to the land. However, the treaties did not have much meaning and war still continues today, as Israel occupies various territories claimed by the Palestinians and the Palestinians fight for their land and rights. Also, different Arab Muslim political and religious extremist groups, such as Hamas, have committed acts of terror against Israelis, creating even more tension between the Jewish and Arab communities. Currently, the United Nations is still making an effort to resolve this conflict through peace talks and peacekeeping acts.

**Your Task**

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a conflict between the Jewish community and the Arabic community, primarily the Palestinians, over ownership of land that is located in Israel. The reading above gave you a picture of the history of Palestine/Israel and the two groups who are still fighting over the land today. You know that the Jews wanted a country in this region and that many opposed this - violently so. Considering all of the violence, you might wonder if it was all worth it. Therefore, your task is to analyze the documents that follow and find evidence to answer the question “Why was Israel created as a Jewish state in 1948?”.