

December 3, 2025

Was Israel Founded by Jewish Terrorists? The Facts

The Lie:

Israel was founded by three Jewish “terrorist groups”—the Haganah, Irgun, and Lehi—that massacred British and Arab civilians.

The Truth:

These groups were **not** terrorist organizations. They were pre-state **self-defense militias** formed to protect Jewish civilians from waves of Arab violence during the British Mandate, often while British authorities failed to provide security.

Background:

- On September 1, 2025 influencer Jacob Forrest claimed in a viral video that Israel was founded by “Jewish terror groups,” citing several of their attacks.
- Terrorism involves using violence for political aims, whereas Article 51 of the UN Charter recognizes a state's inherent right to self-defense in response to an “armed attack.”

Truth Explained:

Claim 1: “Israel was founded by terrorists.”

The Truth:

- Jews in Mandatory Palestine faced repeated pogroms and attacks during the 1920s–1940s, including the 1929 massacres and the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt. ([WJC](#)), ([Jewish Virtual Library](#)), ([Grokikipedia](#))
- Haganah, Irgun, and Lehi** were defensive militias responding to ongoing Arab violence. The British even supported the arming of the Haganah. ([Jewish Virtual Library](#))
- Their goal was to protect Jewish civilians and secure a homeland recognized by the **Balfour Declaration** and **League of Nations Mandate**, not to terrorize civilians. ([Jewish Virtual Library](#))

Claim 2: “The British and UN designated them as terrorist groups.”

The Truth:

- The UN never designated any of these organizations as terrorist groups.**
- The British labeled Irgun and Lehi as terrorists for political reasons; **Haganah cooperated with the British** and later formed the core of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). ([Bar Ilan University](#))

Claim 3: “Irgun bombed markets in Haifa and Jerusalem, killing 80 civilians.”

The Truth:

- These retaliatory attacks took place during the **1936–1939 Arab Revolt**, after Arab militias had **massacred hundreds of Jewish civilians**. Their purpose was to deter further Arab pogroms. ([Grokikipedia](#))

Claim 4: “Irgun bombed the King David Hotel, killing 91.”

The Truth:

- The hotel housed the **British military headquarters and CID intelligence offices**. It was not a civilian target.
- The attack was a direct response to "**Black Sabbath**," when British forces raided the Jewish Agency, seized documents, and arrested more than **2,500 Jewish leaders** in a sweeping crackdown.
- The Irgun issued multiple **warnings** to evacuate the hotel; **British officials ignored them**.
- Casualties included **15 Jews**, underscoring that mass civilian death was not the goal. ([Jewish Virtual Library](#))

Claim 5: “Haganah bombed the Semiramis Hotel, killing 25.”

The Truth:

- Intelligence indicated the hotel served as a **headquarters** for **Arab militias** to organize attacks on Jewish neighborhoods. ([Jewish Telegraphic Agency](#))

Claim 6: “Irgun and Lehi massacred 110 civilians in Deir Yassin.”

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The Truth:

- Deir Yassin was a **fortified Arab stronghold** controlling the road to Jerusalem. From there, Arabs frequently attacked Jewish convoys and suburbs.
- The casualties included **combatants**. Civilian deaths occurred during fierce house-to-house fighting—**not a pre-planned massacre**.
- In preparation for the attack, Jewish forces **planned to warn Deir Yassin's civilians** and provide **safe escape routes**, but the plan was disrupted by Arab fighters. ([Algemeiner](#)), ([Herzog College](#))

Claim 7: “Lehi assassinated UN mediator Folke Bernadotte.”

The Truth:

- The assassination was condemned by Israel’s leadership.
- Lehi acted alone, believing Bernadotte’s plan would **destroy the newly established state** following the Arab invasion. ([Jewish Virtual Library](#))

Claim 8: “These groups implemented Plan Dalet to ethnically cleanse Palestinians.”

The Truth:

- Plan Dalet (March 1948) was a **defensive military plan** to secure strategic positions and protect Jewish communities ahead of the imminent **invasion by five Arab armies**.
- The Palestinian exodus resulted from the wider Arab-Israeli war launched by Arab armies—not from a pre-planned program of ethnic cleansing. ([Jewish Virtual Library](#))

Quotes:

“We don't take orders from the Jews.” — British official after being told to evacuate the King David Hotel (1946)

“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. — Haj Amin al-Husseini, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem (1944)

“This will be a war of extermination and momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Tartar massacre or the Crusader wars.” — Azzam Pasha, secretary-general of the Arab League (1947)

Takeaway:

Israel’s pre-state militias were **defensive groups operating in a violent, chaotic war**, not terrorist organizations. Claims that they were “terrorists” collapse when placed in their proper historical context: a multi-decade campaign of Arab violence, British political suppression, and the Jewish struggle for survival and national self-determination.