



Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque

For Prelims: Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Heritage Site, Arab Israel war of 1948, Six-Day War in 1967, Abraham Accord

For Mains: Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Arab Israel war of 1948, Six-Day War in 1967, Abraham Accord

Why in News?

Recently, tensions flared up again at [Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque](#) between the Palestinians and Israeli police.

- Over the decades, this site in **Jerusalem's Old City** has frequently been a **flashpoint for violence between Palestinians and Israeli forces** and hardline groups and is at the **heart of competing for historical claims**.
- These recurring clashes are part of the ongoing [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](#).

//



What is al-Aqsa Mosque & Associated Conflict?

- The al-Aqsa Mosque is **one of Jerusalem's most recognized monuments.**
- The site is part of the **Old City of Jerusalem, sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims.**
 - The [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#), has classified the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls as a [World Heritage Site](#).
- The mosque's complex is the reason for the conflict **between Israel & Palestine (Islam & Judaism).**
 - **Al-Aqsa Mosque is one of Islam's most revered locations, and the Temple Mount is the holiest site in Judaism.**
- The Temple Mount is a walled compound inside the Old City in Jerusalem, and is the site of two structures:
 - The **Dome of the Rock to the north and the Al-Aqsa Mosque to the south.**
 - To the **southwest of the Temple Mount, is the Western Wall**, a remnant of the Second Temple and the **holiest site in Judaism.**
- **In Islam**, the **Dome of the Rock** is a seventh-century structure, **an important Islamic shrine**, believed to be where the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven.
 - Before modern borders were drawn up in the region, **pilgrims to the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina** would stop over in Jerusalem to pray at this mosque.
- **In Judaism**, it is believed to be the site where **God gathered dust to create Adam.**

- According to the Bible, in **1000 BC King Solomon built the First Temple** of the Jews on this mountain, which **Babylonian troops** tore down some 400 years on the orders of the **Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar**.
- In the first century BC, Jews returned from their banishment and **built the Second Temple**.

What are the Geopolitics of Conflict over Jerusalem?

- Jerusalem has been at the center of the **Israeli-Palestinian conflict**.
- According to the original 1947 [United Nations \(UN\) partition plan](#), Jerusalem was proposed to be an **international city**.
- However, in the first [Arab Israel war of 1948](#), the Israelis captured the western half of the city, and Jordan took the eastern part, including the Old City that houses Haram al-Sharif.
- Following the [Six-Day War in 1967](#), an armed conflict between Israel and a coalition of Arab states primarily comprising Jordan, Syria and Egypt, the Waqf Ministry of Jordan that had till then held control of the al-Aqsa Mosque, **ceased to oversee the mosque**.
 - Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the **Six-Day War 1967** and annexed it later.
- Since its annexation, Israel has **expanded settlements in East Jerusalem**.
 - Israel sees the whole city as its **“unified, eternal capital”**, whereas the Palestinian leadership across the political spectrum have maintained that they would not accept any compromise formula for the future Palestinian state unless East Jerusalem is its capital.

Way Forward

- The world at large needs to **come together for a peaceful solution** but the reluctance of the Israeli government and other involved parties have aggravated the issue more.
 - Thus, a **balanced approach** would help to maintain favorable relations between Arab countries and Israel.
- The recent normalization agreements between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco, known as the [Abraham Accords](#), are the steps in the right direction.
 - All regional powers should envisage peace between the two countries on line with the Abraham Accords.

[Source: IE](#)

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/jerusalem-s-al-aqsa-mosque>