

What is Zionism?

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Format: Self-paced, Asynchronous

Target Audience: Learners Aged 13 - 18

Estimated Duration: 85 - 95 minutes

Module Description: This module explores how Jewish supremacy functions as a central principle in Israeli settler colonialism, its role in the 1948 Nakba, ongoing violence against Palestinians, and the Gaza genocide. Learners will explore:

- Jewish supremacy and its historical and contemporary impact
 - The Nakba and ongoing violence against Palestinians
 - How Jewish supremacy shaped international law and the 1948 Genocide Convention
 - Challenges of accountability under international law
 - Media, evidence, and legal narratives in conflict
- Activities include journal prompts, discussion boards, knowledge checks, reflective exercises, and optional extension projects.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

- Explain Jewish supremacy and its role in Israeli settler colonialism
- Describe historical and contemporary violence against Palestinians, including the Nakba and Gaza genocide
- Analyze how Jewish supremacy shaped the 1948 UN Genocide Convention
- Critically evaluate primary sources, including statements from Israeli leaders and military personnel
- Reflect on challenges and possibilities of accountability under international law
- Discuss the role of law, media, and evidence in shaping global understanding of genocide

Content Advisory Facilitators should be prepared for the possibility that learners may experience emotional reactions when engaging with the content. These reactions may arise from personal, family, or community experiences related to racism, discrimination, violence, or displacement.

Given the complexity and sensitivity of the topics, it is essential to create a learning environment where all participants feel safe, respected, and able to engage thoughtfully.

The goal of discussion is not to force agreement, but to support thoughtful learning, respectful dialogue, and critical analysis of historical events.

Facilitator Guidance - Establishing a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Facilitators should be prepared to:

- Recognize signs of emotional distress in learners
- Pause discussions if needed to allow space for reflection or grounding
- Offer learners the option to step away briefly if they need a break
- Provide access to appropriate support resources
- Encourage respectful dialogue while prioritizing learner wellbeing

Facilitators are encouraged to:

- **Validate feelings:** Acknowledge that learners may experience a range of emotions in response to the content
- **Provide choice:** Offer multiple ways to engage, including writing, discussion, reflection, or listening
- **Encourage autonomy:** Allow learners the option to pause, step back, or observe if needed
- **Promote safety:** Establish and uphold shared agreements for respectful and inclusive dialogue
- **Maintain respect and inclusion:** Ensure all learners feel heard and respected, even when perspectives differ
- **Prioritize learning over debate:** Focus on understanding, inquiry, and reflection rather than argument or persuasion
- **Encourage curiosity:** Support thoughtful questioning and open exploration of ideas
- **Model respectful communication:** Use and reinforce language that is respectful, and inclusive
- **Separate ideas from individuals:** Remind learners to critique concepts and arguments rather than people
- **Acknowledge emotional impact:** Recognize that topics such as racism, colonization, war, and injustice may evoke strong emotional responses
- **Encourage active listening:** Support learners in listening with attention, care, and respect for differing perspectives
- **Provide varied participation options:** Allow learners to engage through discussion, writing, or reflection based on comfort level
- **Ensure equitable participation:** Structure engagement so that all learners have opportunities to contribute, and no single learner dominates, is singled out, or is overexposed

Learners should be reminded that participation in discussions or reflections can be flexible. They may choose to listen, write privately, or participate in other ways that feel comfortable.

Strategies for Managing Difficult Moments

If challenging situations arise during discussion, facilitators may consider the following strategies:

- Pause the conversation if the discussion becomes tense or emotionally charged
- Allow time for reflection or grounding
- Re-center the discussion on the learning goals of the lesson
- Encourage learners to support their ideas with historical evidence or examples from the video module
- Redirect harmful or disrespectful language by reminding learners of shared agreements
- Encourage learners to ask questions rather than make assumptions
- Offer alternative participation options, such as written reflection
- Remind learners that complex historical topics often include multiple perspectives
- If a learner becomes distressed, pause the activity and provide appropriate support or referral

Community Agreements Co-Creations

Facilitators may establish clear community agreements at the outset, such as:

- Listening actively and without interruption
- Respecting diverse perspectives and lived experiences

- Using thoughtful language
- Critiquing ideas, and not individuals
- Maintaining confidentiality if appropriate

Suggested Safe Space Activity (5-10 minutes):

Activity: Community Agreements Co-Creation

Instructions:

1. **Ask learners:** *What do you need in order to feel safe, respected, and heard in this learning space?*
2. Collect responses via discussion board, shared document, or live poll
3. Synthesize responses into a shared set of community agreements
4. Revisit these agreements throughout the module as needed

Optional Reflection Prompt:

- What does respectful dialogue look like to you when discussing complex or sensitive issues?
- How can you contribute to maintaining a constructive learning environment?

Module Structure:

Warm-Up - Word Association & Reflection

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Key Concept: Initial perceptions influence understanding; reflection reveals bias.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Word Association Prompt:** What is the first word or phrase that comes to mind when you hear the term "Palestine"?
 - **Optional Activity:**
 - ✧ Facilitators may create a word cloud using learner responses to visualize common themes, patterns, or differences in perceptions. This activity can be revisited at the end of the module to reflect on how learners' understanding may have evolved.

Part 1: Introduction - Jewish Supremacy in Israel

Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Key Concept: Jewish supremacy structures social hierarchies and shapes societal norms.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Explores how systems of hierarchy influence rights, access, and power within society
 - ✧ Connects the concept to Israeli settler colonialism and territorial expansion
 - ✧ Reflects on how unequal rights structures affect societies
 - ✧ Introduces the concept of Jewish supremacy as a social and political ideology
 - **Journal Prompt:** Define Jewish supremacy in your own words. How does it affect different groups of people?
 - ✧ How does Jewish supremacy relate to Israeli settler colonialism and the idea of Greater Israel?

- **Activity:** Reflection on societal hierarchies: “How does the idea that some people have more rights than others affect societies?”
- **Knowledge Check:**
 - ✎ What does settler colonialism mean? *Answer: A process where people move from their homeland to settle in a new place, taking land, homes, and resources from people already living there.*
 - ✎ When did the Nakba occur, and how many Palestinians were displaced? *Answer: 1948; over 750,000 Palestinians displaced, ~15,000 killed*

Part 2: Jewish Supremacy and Violence in Gaza

Estimated Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Key Concept: Ideologies and religious narratives are used to justify violence and erasure.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✎ Examines how political and religious narratives can be used to justify violence
 - ✎ Explores connections between ideology, territorial expansion, and ongoing conflict
 - ✎ Encourages analysis of rhetoric that frames entire populations as enemies
 - ✎ Encourages critical evaluation of statements and political messaging
 - **Journal Prompt:** How does comparing Palestinians to Amalek justify violence? How does this relate to the idea of a moral army?
 - ✎ What is the connection between Jewish supremacy, Greater Israel, and the ongoing Nakba?
 - **Reflection Prompts**
 - ✎ What is the impact of framing an entire population as an enemy?
 - ✎ How might this influence soldiers, civilians, and international observers?
 - **Sentence Starter**
 - ✎ One connection I noticed between ideas about Greater Israel, political ideology, and the history of the Nakba is...
 - **Knowledge check:**
 - ✎ Who was Captain Chai Hemo, and what did he claim about Palestinians? *Answer: Israeli army deputy commander; claimed “every Arab is a suspect” and promoted settlement and conquest of all land.*
 - ✎ What is “Greater Israel”? *Answer: A vision of Israel expanding to include all of historic Palestine*

Part 3: Jewish Supremacy and the Concept of Genocide

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Key Concept: Jewish supremacy shaped the international understanding and prioritization of genocide.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✎ Examines debates around the hierarchy of genocides in international discourse
 - ✎ Encourages analysis of how narratives about victimhood influence global perception

- ✧ Discusses how these frameworks influence political and legal interpretations
 - ✧ Promotes reflection on the implications for recognizing and preventing genocide
- **Journal Prompt:** How did the Holocaust-genocide hierarchy affect recognition of other genocides?
- **Sentence Starter:**
 - ✧ Some analysts argue that questions of Israel's accountability under international law in this context may be influenced by...
- **Reflection Prompts:** How does portraying the Jewish people as ultimate victims reinforce Jewish supremacy?
- **Knowledge check:**
 - ✧ What is the Holocaust-genocide hierarchy? *Answer: The view that the Holocaust was uniquely terrible, prioritizing Jewish victimhood over other genocides.*
 - ✧ How did this hierarchy affect the perception of the Israeli army? *Answer: It created a belief that Israel has the most moral army in the world*

Part 4: Gaza Genocide and Accountability

Estimated Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Key Concept: International law struggles to hold perpetrators accountable when supremacy and bias exist.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Examines challenges in holding states and individuals accountable under international law
 - ✧ Introduces the roles of international courts such as the ICJ and ICC
 - ✧ Encourages analysis of legal cases and global responses to war crimes
 - ✧ Explores how digital evidence and media documentation influence legal debates
 - ✧ Promotes reflection on the limitations and possibilities of international justice.
 - **Journal Prompt:** How has live-streamed evidence of the Gaza genocide challenged international law?
 - **Sentence Starter:** Legal actions may reshape the international system and Jewish supremacy by...
 - **Reflection Prompts:** What is the significance of the ICJ case brought by South Africa and ICC arrest warrants?"
 - **Knowledge check:**
 - ✧ What is the role of the ICJ and ICC in holding Israel accountable? *Answer: ICJ addresses state responsibility; ICC prosecutes individuals for war crimes and crimes against humanity..*
 - ✧ How does the Gaza genocide reveal the limits of the current international legal system? *Answer: Shows how Jewish supremacy has historically protected Israel, but evidence now challenges that protection*

Part 5: Honouring the Land – Reflection Activity

Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Key Concept: Understanding our relationship to the land can deepen awareness of historical and ongoing displacement.

- Learning Activities:**
1. Use a resource like Native Land Digital to explore the Indigenous territories where you live.
 2. Research local Indigenous communities, their histories, and present-day stewardship efforts.
 3. Reflect on how land and water are protected and managed by Indigenous peoples.
 - **Journal Prompt:**
 - ✎ What is your relationship to the land and waters where you live?
 - ✎ What meaningful actions can you take to support their care and preservation?
 - ✎ How will you commit to these actions moving forward?
 - **Sentence Starter:**
 - ✎ Social movements that acknowledge Indigenous histories and stewardship may be more effective because...
 - ✎ Honoring land may help guide actions for justice and solidarity by...

Part 6: Exit Reflection

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Learning Activities: Students may choose any one of the following formats.

- **Anonymous digital submission** (e.g., Google Form with no name required)
- **Paper reflection slip submitted in a collection box** (no names required if anonymity is preferred)
- **Private journal entry** kept in a notebook or personal document
- **Verbal reflection shared** (if comfortable)
- **Journal Prompt**
 - ✎ One thing I learned
 - ✎ One question I still have
 - ✎ One impactful quote or idea that stuck with me
- **Sentence Starter:**
 - ✎ International law may evolve to promote justice for all people between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea by...

Facilitators should clearly communicate that learners are not required to identify themselves unless they choose to do so.

Optional Extension Activities

- **Mini Essay:** How has Jewish supremacy influenced international law and the recognition of genocide?
- **Case Study Research:** Analyze ICC and ICJ cases against Israel; explore potential outcomes
- **Media Analysis:** Review and critically analyze statements from leaders and soldiers in Gaza
- **Reflection:** What lessons can we learn from the Gaza genocide about the power and limitations of international law?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Jewish Supremacy:** Ideology that Jewish people have more rights than non-Jews in Israel, especially Palestinians

- **Settler Colonialism:** Permanent settlement on land already inhabited, taking control of resources and homes
- **Greater Israel:** Vision of Israel expanding to include all of historic Palestine
- **Nakba:** Arabic for “catastrophe,” mass displacement of Palestinians in 1948
- **Amalek:** Biblical enemy used by Israeli leaders to justify killing Palestinians
- **Holocaust-Genocide Hierarchy:** Idea that the Holocaust is uniquely severe, prioritizing Jewish victimhood
- **ICJ (*International Court of Justice*):** Court addressing state-level responsibility under international law
- **ICC (*International Criminal Court*):** Court prosecuting individuals for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity
- **Gaza Genocide:** Ongoing attacks on Palestinians in Gaza with intent to destroy, as documented by live evidence
- **ICC (*International Criminal Court*):** Court prosecuting individuals for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

