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Who Are the Palestinians

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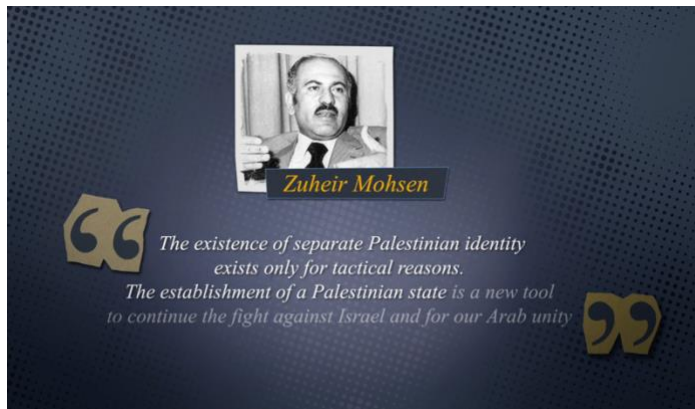
With so much conversation about the Palestinians, maybe it's wise to start with a simple question. Who are the Palestinians? Many people mistakenly believe that the Palestinians are related to the biblical Philistines. But historians and archaeologists tell us that those were people of Aegean origin, not an Arab people group, who also vanished after the Babylonian conquest and were never mentioned again.

The word Philistines, or *Pelishtim* in Hebrew, rooted in “Palash”, which means invaders, indicating no rightful ownership over the land. In fact, the land has historically been known as Israel or Judea, a point that is affirmed even in the New Testament. **[Matthew 2:19-20 NIV]** “¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said,



‘Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel,...’”

The term Palestine was introduced by the Romans in 135 A.D., following the Bar Kokhba revolt. They labeled Judea as Syria-Palestina to erase the Jewish connection to the land. But nevertheless, Jews kept living in the place they called Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel. The name Palestine came back to the world's attention only in the 20th century when the British took control over the area after the World War I. Even then, on official coins, right where it says Palestine, it also had the letters Aleph and Yod, the initials of Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel.



So, was there ever such a thing as historic Palestinian national identity? Zuheir Mohsen, a prominent Palestinian leader, once said, “The existence of a separate Palestinian identity exists only for tactical reasons. The establishment of

a Palestinian state is a new tool to continue the fight against Israel and for our Arab unity.” It’s clear that the answer is no. There is no historical or archaeological evidence of a Palestinian identity. What we do find is a consistent Jewish identity and presence in the land of Israel.

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