Assertion

Israel is an apartheid state in which the non-Jewish, especially the Arab population is disadvantaged and the Arabs are second-class citizens, the opponents of the Jewish state repeatedly claim.

The facts

Israel is a parliamentary democracy – the only one in the Middle East – with a population of around 9.6 million. Of these, 7.1 million are Jews (73.6%) and 2.03 million Arabs (21.1%). The remaining 513,000 inhabitants (5.3%) belong to other population groups.

All Israelis have the same civil rights, regardless of their religion or ethnicity, including the right to vote along with other civil liberties. Arab Israelis are represented in the Israeli parliament with their own parties. Arab Israelis have also held ministerial and other important positions in various Israeli governments. Military service in the Israeli army (Israel Defense Forces IDF) is voluntary for Arab Israelis, while it is compulsory for the Jewish and Druze population.

Previous history

Due to the persecution of Jews and anti-Semitism in numerous European countries, the Austrian journalist Theodor Herzl wrote the book “The Jewish State – An Attempt at a Modern Solution to the Jewish Question” in 1896. The following year, in 1897, Herzl invited 200 Jewish representatives to the 1st Zionist Congress in Basel, where he called for the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Palestine, which at the time was part of the Ottoman Empire. The territory of Palestine comprised present-day Israel, Gaza, the West Bank and present-day Jordan. After the end of the First World War (1914-1918) and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the League of Nations granted the victorious power Great Britain a mandate for the administration of Palestine in 1922. The Mandate Treaty stipulated the creation of a national home for the Jews. The British government had already endorsed this in 1917 in the so-called Balfour Declaration.



Partition resolution of the United Nations 1947 © UNO

The final decision in favour of establishing a state was made two years after the end of the Second World War in the United Nations UN, the successor organization to the League of Nations. On November 29, 1947, the member states of the UN voted by 33 votes to 13, with 10 abstentions, to divide the part of Palestine west of the Jordan River into a Jewish and a Palestinian state. The city of Jerusalem, which was sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, was to be placed under international administration. In the part of Palestine east of the Jordan River, the Kingdom of Jordan, 80% of whose population was also Palestinian, had already been created with the agreement of Great Britain. The USA and the Soviet Union, among others, voted in favor of the partition plan, while the majority of Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Yemen, Lebanon and Syria were against it. The representatives of the Palestinians and the Arab League also rejected it.

The borders between Israel and Palestine defined by the UN were based on the majority population of the respective territory. At the time, 600,000 Jews lived in the territory intended for Israel. The West Bank and Gaza, which were to become the new Palestinian state, were home to 1.2 million Arabs.

At 56.47% of the total area, Israel was larger than the area of the planned Palestinian state. However, around two thirds of the territory designated for Israel by the UN consisted of desert. Only one third of Israel's total area was fertile land along the Mediterranean and the Jordan Valley with the Sea of Galilee inland. In contrast, most of the territory destined for the Palestinian state was fertile land, with only a small spit in the south belonging to the Negev desert.

Due to the refusal of the Arab states to recognize the UN decision and the state of Israel, the partition plan of 29 November 1947 never became a reality. When Israel declared its independence six months later, on May 14, 1948, the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon invaded the newly founded country the next day and attempted to destroy it. The war ended in the spring of 1949 with an Israeli victory.



Mythen und Fakten zur Gründung des Staates Israel



Das Regierungs- und Justizsystem



Zionismus – die Notwendigkeit eines eigenen jüdischen Staates



Warum Israel als Startup-Nation erfolgreich ist



Auch in Israel ist Jude nicht gleich Jude



Israel Defense Forces IDF – ihre ethischen Richtlinien und der Krieg in Gaza