



HISTORY OF ISRAEL

[THE JUNE 1967 SIX-DAY WAR]



JUNE 5 1967... Israeli Air Force destroys Air Forces of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and then Jordan; Three Israeli columns race into Sinai and reach the midpoint; Jordan bombs Tel Aviv suburbs and West Jerusalem.

JUNE 6 1967 ... Gaza Strip conquered; Paratroopers surround Jerusalem's Old City; Battle of Ammunition Hill; Latrun, Ramallah, and Other parts of the West Bank Captured



JUNE 7 1967 ... Old City of Jerusalem conquered, including Temple Mount; Navy captures Sharm el Sheikh



JUNE 8 1967 Israeli Forces Reach Suez Canal



JUNE 9 1967 Israel Begins Capture of Golan Heights



JUNE 10 1967 Mt. Hermon Captured; Ceasefire Takes Effect



On the morning of June 5, 1967, the Israeli Air Force launched a pre-emptive strike against the Egyptian, Jordanian, Syrian, and Iraqi airfields, wiping out each of those air forces. 309 Egyptian planes were destroyed, along with 60 Syrian, 29 Jordanian, 17 Iraqi, and one Lebanese plane, for a combined total of 416 demolished Arab aircrafts. In contrast, Israel lost a total of 26 aircrafts.

On the ground, Israel attacked in three main strike forces. Israel surrounded the Egyptian troops and reached the Suez Canal, followed by Sharm el Sheikh, and the Straits of Tiran, where the Egyptians had blockaded Eilat. Within 48 hours, Israel had captured the entire Sinai Peninsula.

Israel warned King Hussein of Jordan to stay out of the war. However, this warning failed to stop the king from attempting to penetrate West Jerusalem. Jordanian troops opened a heavy-artillery barrage on West Jerusalem, while also targeting the center of the country. In addition, Jordanian forces seized government houses, including the UN headquarters in Jerusalem.

Israel counter-attacked, first opening a road to Mt. Scopus. A difficult battle was fought on Ammunition Hill, but Israeli forces broke through, and soon surrounded Jerusalem's Old City. On June 7, 1967, Israeli troops entered and secured the Old City, reunifying Jerusalem. At the same time, Israeli forces captured the West Bank, including the cities of Hebron and Bethlehem.

In the final stage of the war, beginning on Friday, June 9th, Israeli troops stormed the Golan Heights, defeating the Syrian army. In only six days, Israel vanquished its three main Arab adversaries. Israel suffered a loss of 776, with more than 4,500 wounded, and 15 soldiers captured.



“ We shall not attack any country unless it opens war on us. Even now, when the mortars speak, we have not given up our quest for peace. We strive to repel all menace of terrorism and any danger of aggression to ensure our security and our legitimate rights. — Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, to the Arab countries (1967).



“ I have said that the situation to be constructed after the ceasefire must depend on certain principles. The first of these principles surely must be the acceptance of Israel's statehood and the total elimination of the fiction of its non-existence. It would seem to me that after 3,000 years the time has arrived to accept Israel's nationhood as a fact, for here is the only State in the international community which has the same territory, speaks the same language and upholds the same faith as it did 3,000 years ago. ... it was not only because there seemed to be a danger to a State, but also, I think, because the State was Israel, with all that this ancient name evokes, teaches, symbolizes and inspires. How grotesque would be an international community which found room for 122 sovereign units and which did not acknowledge the sovereignty of that people which had given nationhood its deepest significance and its most enduring grace...

I think that Israel has in recent days proved its steadfastness and vigor. It is now willing to demonstrate its instinct for peace. Let us build a new system of relationships from the wreckage of the old. Let us discern across the darkness the vision of a better and a brighter dawn.— Yitzchak Rabin (1967).