

# KURDISH ISSUE AND PALESTINIAN ISSUE: DO ALL NATIONS DESERVE THEIR OWN STATE?

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*Middle East Crossroads*

# NATIONS AND NATIONALISM

- A nation is a group of people that has got a common language, culture, historical experience and often also the territory where they live.
- The borders of the states often do not respect the territories inhabited by individual nations.
- Today, there are more than 190 states in the world and more than 5,000 ethnic groups.
- There are about 82% of the states where more than 2 ethnic groups live together on one territory.
- The nationality becomes significant when the members of a concrete ethnic group distinguish themselves from the other ethnic groups in the state and call for the guarantees of their national rights.

# NATIONS AND NATIONALISM

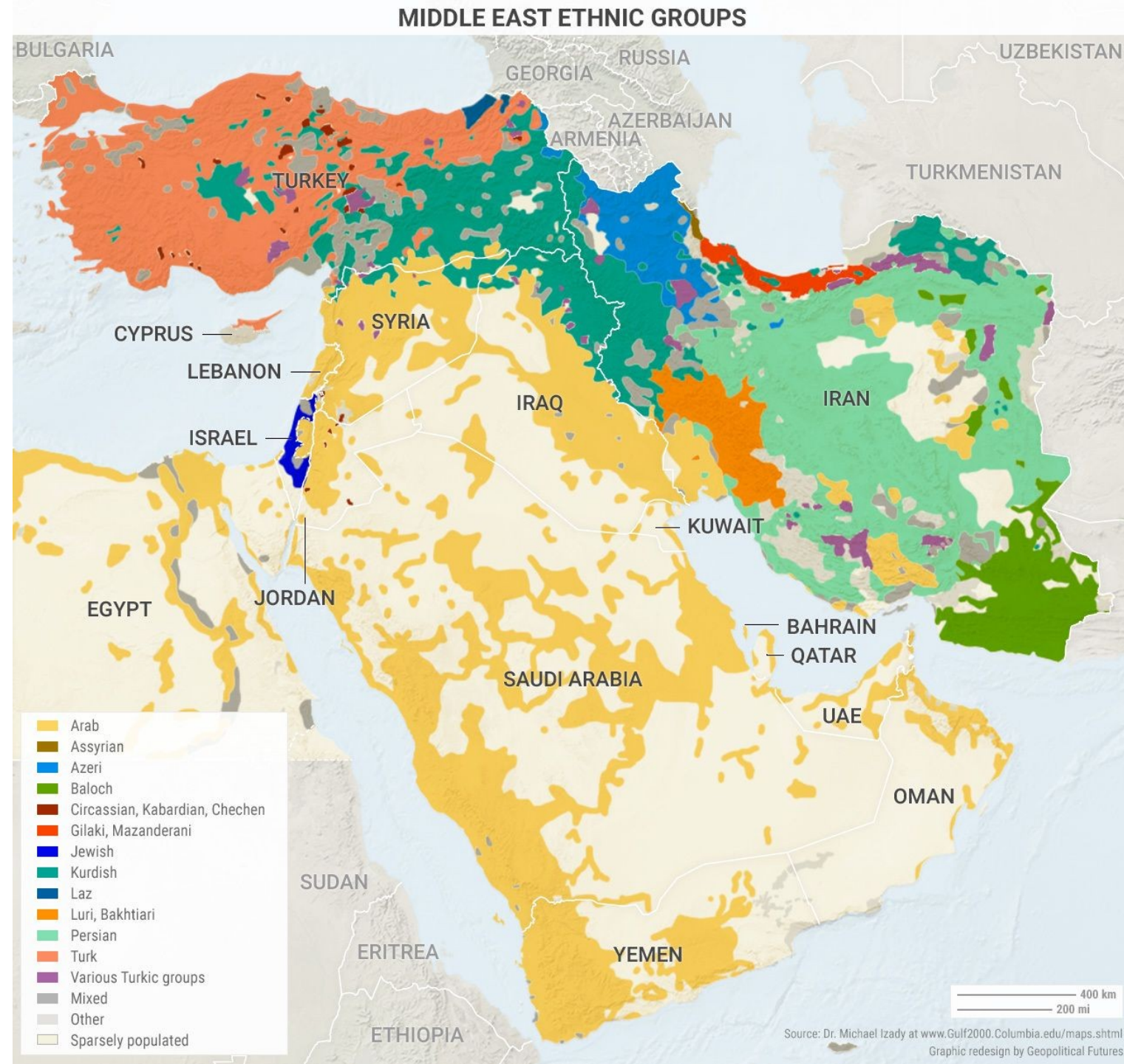
- Modern nationalism dates back to the times of French revolution (1789) – awaking of nations in Europe, later also transferred to the other regions including the Middle East.
- Right to self-determination for the nations – the assumption that the individual nations differs due to their internal characteristics and identity → national state.
- Extreme nationalism (chauvinism) claims that some nations are better than the others.
- UN Charter (article 1,2): *“To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.”*

*DO ALL NATIONS DESERVE THEIR OWN  
STATE?*



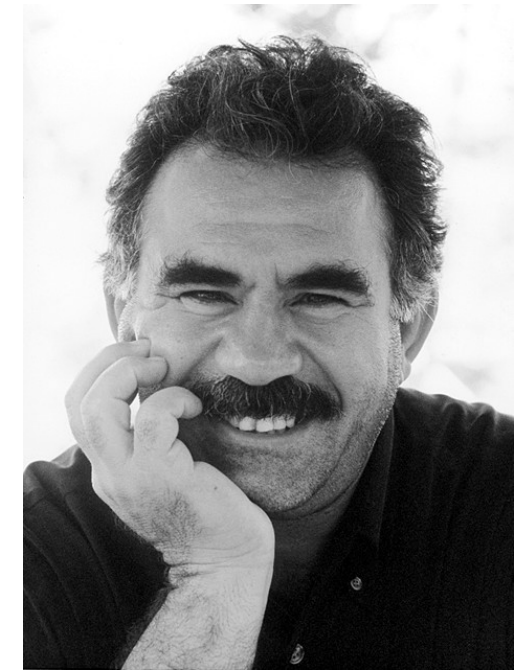
# MIDDLE EAST ETHNIC GROUPS

- The Middle East has a population of about 246 million.
- Three most numerous ethnic groups: Arabs, Turks, and Persians.
- Variety of many others – not all of them aim to have their own state.



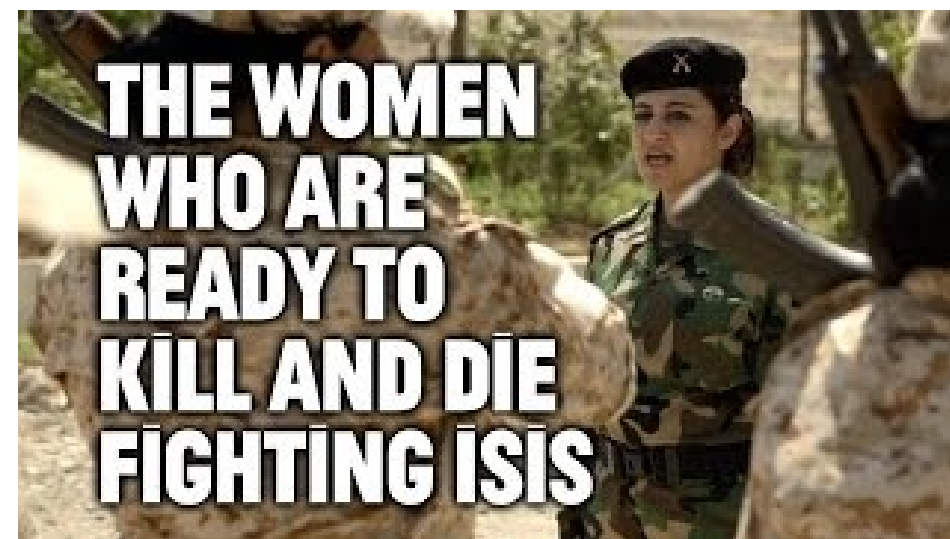
# KURDISH NATION

- Indo-European origin – various languages (Kurmanji, Sorani).
- Estimated population: 30 millions (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria, diaspora).
- Most of the Kurds share the nationalist dream of independent state.
- Attempts of turkification of the Kurds in 20th century in Turkey.
- Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) established in 1970s by Abdullah Ocalan – originally Marxist ideology, the use of violence.
- In Iran, the Kurds are generally seen as one of the Iranian nations.
- Complicated status in Iraq – in 1980s genocide of the Kurds by Saddam Hussein's regime.



# KURDISH DREAM OF INDEPENDENCE

- Treaty of Sévres (1920) proposed the idea of Kurdish autonomy – never realized.
- Vision of a smaller state that would cover at least a part of a territory inhabited by the Kurds (?northern Iraq?).
- Hopes that Kurds shall be rewarded for their fights with ISIS.
- Resistance of the regional powers – especially Turkey.
- Lack of unity among the Kurds.



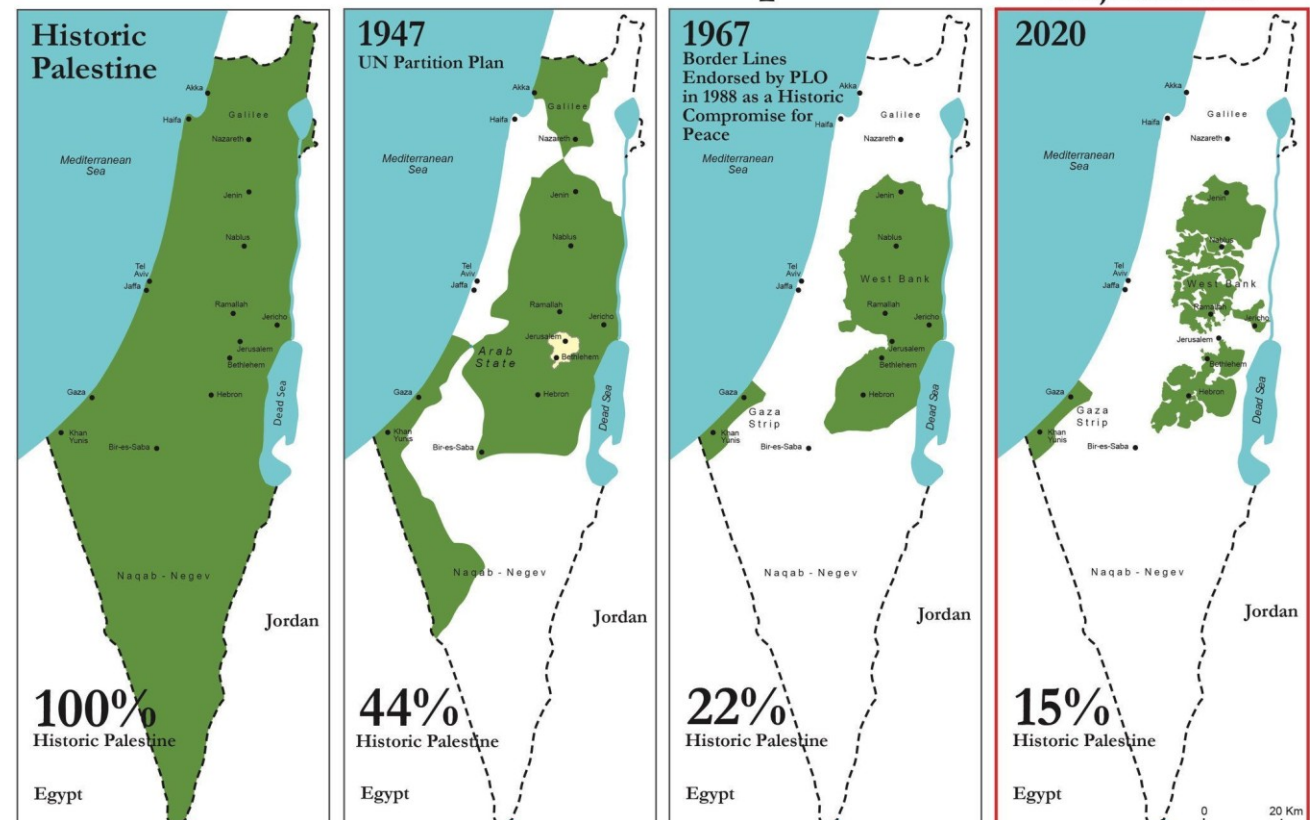


# PALESTINIANS

- Arab origin, estimated population about 11 millions of people (Jordan, West Bank, Gaza Strip, Israel, Lebanon, other countries).
- Palestinian identity developed during the conflict with Israel.
- Originally, the Palestinians were represented by the king of Jordan.
- Rise of Palestinian nationalism since 1960s.



## The Palestinians Historic Compromise





# PALESTINIAN DREAM OF INDEPENDENCE

- One state solution vs. two state solution.
- Lack of unity in Palestinian leadership especially after the death of Yasser Arafat (Fatah vs. Hamas).
- Frozen peace process with Israel in last two decades – lack of international support for the Palestinian issue.
- Are the Palestinians still the priority for the Arab world?



*WHAT MAKES A NATION TO SUCCEED  
IN CREATING THEIR OWN STATE?*

# POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS

- 1. Federalism and shared power**
  - Switzerland, Lebanon
- 2. Separation**
  - Czechoslovakia, ?Israel/Palestine?
- 3. Outside intervention**
  - Cyprus
- 4. Exhaustion of all sides of the conflict**
  - Lebanon

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**