

# The Origins of the Oslo Process

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## Timeline:

1992	Yitzhak Rabin wins the 1992 election after promising he would "...undertake to reach an agreement with the Palestinians in the territories within six to nine months of taking office."
4 December 1992	Initial contact made between Abu Ala'a and Yair Hirschfeld.
22 January 1993	First meeting in between the parties in Oslo. Palestinians outline a basic ten points they believe will lead to agreement.
11 February 1993	Hirschfeld presents the Palestinians with a draft Declaration of Principles.
30 April 1993	Abu Ala'a delivers an ultimatum – either the Israelis step up the levels of the talks, or the Palestinians will walk out.
20 May 1993	Uri Savir leaves Israel for Oslo to take part in the negotiations in order to report back directly to Rabin and Peres.
10 June 1993	Rabin instructs Peres to suspend the talks. But is convinced to continue with negotiations, but on the understanding the PLO will not yet be recognised by Israel.
13 June 1993	Singer meets with the Palestinian delegation. He has more than forty difficult questions and the reaction of the Palestinians is not at all accommodating.
27 June 1993	Singer proposes the second DOP, this time excluding many of the conditions the PLO consider absolutely necessary.
11 July 1993	The Palestinians return with an equally incendiary DOP – taking many traditionally hardline PLO positions. They explain to Savir that his combative tactics would lead to the breakdown the negotiations. Both parties agree to strive for a more equitable settlement.
16 July 1993	Yasser Arafat arrives in Oslo and together with Larsen, outlines the geographical gains and concessions he is willing to make.
25 July 1993	After fifty-six hours of talks, the parties realise they cannot agree on at least 16 essential differences. Savir and Ala'a agree the Palestinians will concede 8 points in return for official recognition of the PLO by the state of Israel.
18 August 1993	The final differences were agreed to, including issues that would be discussed in later permanent status negotiations. After 7 hours of negotiations between Arafat and Peres, agreement was reached.
27 August 1993	The American government agrees it will support the agreement.
13 September 1993	The accords are officially signed in Washington DC by Arafat and Rabin, in the presence of Bill Clinton.

### Israelis

**Yitzhak Rabin** – Israeli Prime Minister.

**Ehud Barak** – Israeli Chief of Staff.

**Shimon Peres** – Foreign Minister.

**Yossi Beilin** – Deputy Foreign Minister.

**Yair Hirschfeld** – Professor from Haifa University. Beilin's friend.

**Ron Pundak** – Hirschfeld's former student and a member of the Israeli delegation.

**Uri Savir** – Director General of the Foreign Ministry. Sent to Oslo to report back to Rabin and Peres.

**Joel Singer** – legal advisor to the Israelis in regards to the DOP.

### Norwegians

**Terje Rod Larsen** – an academic with a passionate interest in Israeli-Palestinian relations.

### Palestinians

**Yasser Arafat** – The head of the PLO and accepted Palestinian people's representative. In exile in Tunisia.

**Hanan Ashrawi** – the Palestinian's Washington spokesperson.

**Abu Ala'a** – (Ahmed Qurei) PLO's finance chief and head of the Palestinian delegation.

**Hassan Asfour** – secretary to the negotiations team supervising the Washington talks – also on the Palestinian delegation.

**Maher al-Kurd** – an economist who worked on the Palestinian delegation as a translator.

**Mahmoud Abbas** – PLO official in charge of Palestinian-Israeli affairs.

### Americans

**Bill Clinton** – U.S. President 1992–2000

## The Principles of the Accords:

**Mutual Recognition** – the Israeli government recognised the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, while the PLO recognised the right of Israel to existence and renounced violence and the desire for the destruction of the Israeli state.

**Separate State Solution** – the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and West Bank, and affirmed the Palestinian right to self government.

**Economic Cooperation** – agreement to the establishment of an Israeli-Palestinian continuing Committee for economic cooperation focussing, among other things, on water, electricity, energy, finance etc.

**Regional Development** – an agreement to cooperate in the context of multilateral peace efforts promoting a development program for the region, to be initiated by the G7.

## Bibliography

### *Literary Sources:*

Bard, M.G., *Middle East Conflict*, 2008. Penguin: London.

A basic outline of people and events – not particularly useful or nuanced but a good overview.

Bregman, A., El Tahri, J. *The Fifty Years War*, 1998. Penguin: London.

The most detailed source – it contains an incredibly detailed retelling of every step of the Oslo process, complete with quotes from all people involved. Dense but well put.

Bickerton, I.J., Pearson, M.N. *The Arab–Israeli Conflict*, 1986. Longman Cheshire Pty Ltd: Melbourne.

This was published five years before the Oslo Accord, so it contains no information on the negotiations; however it gives a good, simple outline of the events leading up to Oslo and the state of the region.

Carroll, R. *The Palestinian Question*, 1983. Impact: USA.

As above – no specific information on Oslo, but a good outline of the lead up.

Farouk-Sluglett, M. *The Middle East: The Arab World and its Neighbours*, 1991. Times Books: London

Published the year the Oslo talks took place – again useful to judge the attitude of the future powerbrokers. Because it looks at all of the Middle East, not just Israel-Palestine, the information is brief.

Kort, M.G., *Yitzhak Rabin: Israel's Soldier Statesman*, 1996. Millbrook Press: Connecticut.

Told completely from Rabin's point of view of the negotiations. Although Israeli-centric it provides nuance to the process, focusing significantly on Rabin's motives for taking part in Oslo.

Nusseibeh, S. *Once Upon A Country: A Palestinian Life*, 2007. Picador: New York

Sari Nusseibeh was a prominent Palestinian writer and politician – he advised Arafat on the Oslo Accords, though he never took part in them. Well written, a good primary source from someone who watched the process but did not take part.

### *Electronic Sources*

*Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements*

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/dop](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/dop)

A full-text copy of the Accords.

*Israeli 1991 to Present: Oslo Accords*

[www.palestinefacts.org/pf\\_1991to\\_now\\_oslo\\_accords](http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1991to_now_oslo_accords)

An overview of the Accords and the agreements made.

*The Oslo Declaration of Principles*

[www.mideastweb.org/meoslodop](http://www.mideastweb.org/meoslodop)

A full text copy of the Accords, including a brief introduction.