

# MIKE HUCKABEE

**IMPACT:** Mike Huckabee is the former governor of Arkansas, a Baptist minister, political commentator, and ran to be the Republican presidential candidate in 2008 and 2016. He is a staunch supporter of Israel, has questioned Palestinian identity, supports settlements, and has a history of making anti-Palestinian and Islamophobic statements. In 2024, President-elect Donald Trump picked Huckabee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Israel.

- Mike Huckabee is an evangelical Christian born in Arkansas. From 1993 until 1996, Huckabee served as Lieutenant Governor of Arkansas. **Huckabee became Governor of the state in 1996 and held this position until 2007.**
- **Between 2008 and 2015, Huckabee had his own talk show, Huckabee, on the Fox News Network. From 2017 onward, the show has found a home on Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), the world's largest Christian television network.**
- In **November 2024, President-elect Donald Trump** picked Huckabee to serve as the **United States Ambassador to Israel, saying Huckabee "loves Israel, and the people of Israel, and likewise, the people of Israel love him"**. Huckabee's daughter, current Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders, served as Trump's press secretary for part of his first term as president, from 2017 to 2019.
- **Huckabee is a staunch supporter of Israel and rejects Palestinian statehood.** He has "led religious pilgrimages to Israel and visited the country dozens of times over the course of several decades." A 2016 Haaretz piece noted that **Huckabee is "involved in organizing and giving tours of Israel to Americans identified with the Republican Party and among these many Evangelical Christians. These tours also include visits to Israeli settlements in the West Bank."** The piece also revealed that Huckabee has "close connections with the Yesha Council, an umbrella organization of Israeli settlements, as well as more radical elements in the settlement movement."
- **Huckabee has described himself as an "unapologetic, unreformed Zionist".** A 2010 piece in the New Yorker by Ariel Levy quoted Huckabee as saying, "I worship a Jew!" I have a lot of Jewish friends, and they're kind of, like, 'You evangelicals love Israel more than we do.' I'm, like, 'Do you not get it? If there weren't a Jewish faith, there wouldn't be a Christian faith!'"
- A 2015 web archived clip from Huckabee's website, ([www.mikehuckabee.com](http://www.mikehuckabee.com)) advertised a trip to Israel led by Huckabee. It read "Tour Israel with Mike Huckabee and hear him share about the nation's heritage from a Biblical and historical perspective. Top Israeli officials will share about the strategic place Israel holds today, and why America is such a valuable ally to her." **A 2015 piece in The Washington Post noted that on past trips, "Huckabee and his guests have met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon."**
- A 2018 *Times of Israel* piece highlighted Huckabee's presence at the inauguration of new housing at an Israeli settlement in the West Bank (the UN Security Council has ruled that Israeli settlements in the West Bank have "no legal validity" and are a "flagrant violation under international law"). At the event, there were large red "Build Israel Great Again" signs, a play on Trump's presidential campaign slogan. Huckabee reportedly said at the event, "If President Trump could be here today, he'd be a very happy man". **At the event, Huckabee also expressed a desire to live in the illegal settlement, stating he "might one day like to purchase a holiday home" there.**
- **Following the announcement of Huckabee as the ambassador to Israel, Israeli far-right and pro-settler security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, celebrated the announcement on X.** He posted emojis of the US flag, the Israeli flag and a heart alongside Mike Huckabee's name. **Ben-Gvir has previous convictions for inciting racism and supporting terrorism and as a lawyer has represented several "radicals suspected in cases of Jewish terror and hate crimes."** In August 2023, the US State Department condemned Ben-Gvir following his comments, "My right, my wife's, my children's, to roam the roads of Judea and Samaria are more important than the right of movement of the Arabs." The State Department said it condemned the "inflammatory comments" and "all racist rhetoric".
- **During a 2008 campaign stop, Huckabee stated, "there's really no such thing as a Palestinian."** He went to say "You have Arabs and Persians, and there's such complexity in that. But there's really no such thing. That's been a political tool to try and force land away from Israel." **In a 2015 interview with The Washington Post, Huckabee repeated the bigoted claim that Palestinians are not a real people, arguing that the claim that the Palestinians "have a long history going back hundreds or thousands of years is untrue".** During one of his tours to Israel, the Washington Post reported that Huckabee

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called the Jews “the only people who ever had this as their homeland.”

- During his 2016 presidential campaign, **Huckabee spoke to journalists at a press conference in Jerusalem where he said the “West Bank, which he insisted on calling by its Biblical name of Judea and Samaria, should not be considered ‘occupied.’ That would imply Israel stole somebody else’s land, he said, but ‘I don’t see it that way.’”** Huckabee further argued, “It’s interesting to me that often our government has put more pressure on the Israeli governments to stop building bedrooms in their own neighborhoods than they put on Iran to stop building bombs.”
- In a **2017 interview, Huckabee claimed that “There is no such thing as a West Bank. It’s Judea and Samaria (the territory’s biblical name). There’s no such thing as a settlement. They’re communities, they’re neighborhoods, they’re cities. There’s no such thing as an occupation.”** In contrast, in July 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) said that “Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories and settlements there are illegal and should be withdrawn as soon as possible.”
- Huckabee does not support a two-state solution. **A 2015 piece in the *Times of Israel* quotes him saying, “I never supported, ever, the notion that a two-state solution would mean that Israelis would be disrupted from their homeland.** Palestinian peace is something to be (discussed) separate(ly), but I think the notion of two governments operating on the same piece of real estate is unrealistic and unworkable.” He has stated that the West Bank belongs to Israel, claiming that “the title deed was given by God to Abraham and to his heirs.”
- **Huckabee argued that the October 7th 2023 Hamas-led attacks on Israel were worse than crimes committed by the Nazis.** He stated “As horrible as the Nazis were, they weren’t posting their atrocities on social media and trying to trumpet what they were doing to the world,” he said in an appearance with the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews. “Which is what makes this horrendous thing Hamas has done so much, to me, worse, because they want everyone to see what they’ve done.”
- In **2015, Huckabee’s comments regarding the Iran Nuclear deal drew criticism as he claimed that the agreement would “take the Israelis and march them to the door of the oven,” referencing Nazi concentration camps.** Following these comments, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the then-chair of the Democratic National Committee, said: “Cavalier analogies to the Holocaust are unacceptable. Mike Huckabee must apologize to the Jewish community and to the American people for this grossly irresponsible statement.” Additionally, the National Jewish Democratic Council (NJDC) said it “denounced” Huckabee’s comments “in the strongest possible terms.”
- In a November 2024 piece for The Atlantic, Yair Rosenberg noted that Huckabee’s positions on Israel “stand in stark contrast to those held by most American Jews,” as he cites a Pew 2024 survey, which found that just 22 percent of American Jews support a single Israeli state, as Huckabee does. Rosenberg argues that Huckabee’s appointment “is a transaction meant to reward evangelical Christians, who are among the president-elect’s most ardent non-Jewish supporters.”
- In response to Trump’s appointment of Huckabee as the US Ambassador to Israel, Palestinian priest Munther Isaac questioned whether Huckabee, as an evangelical Christian, knew “that these settlements [in the West Bank] make the lives of Palestinians, including Palestinian Christians, a living hell? Does he care about us to begin with?”
- **A 2007 profile of Huckabee in the *New York Times Magazine* noted that Huckabee identified Frank Gaffney as one of the individuals who influenced his thinking on foreign affairs.** Gaffney is the founding director of the Center for Security Policy (CSP), a “national security” think-tank that has promulgated falsified claims about Muslims and has been identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) as an anti-Muslim hate group. Gaffney has advanced right-wing conspiracy theories including claims about Sharia, Muslim “infiltration,” and “civilization jihad.” He views Islam as a national security threat. **In the 2007 profile, Zev Chafets, the reporter, stated that Huckabee “believes that the next president of the United States will have to lead Western civilization in a worldwide conflict with radical Islam.”**
- **During a February 2011 appearance on *Fox & Friends*, Huckabee criticized two protestant churches for giving space to Muslims to worship when mosques in the area were too small or under construction.** He stated “If the purpose of a church is to push forth the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then you have a Muslim group that says that Jesus Christ and all the people that follow him are a bunch of infidels who should be essentially obliterated, I guess I have a hard time understanding that.” **He went on to describe Islam as “the antithesis of the gospel of Christ.”** He opined, “I mean if a church is nothing

Last updated November 25, 2024

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more than a facility and a meeting place free for any and all viewpoints, without regard to what it is, then should the church be rented out to show adult movies on the weekend?" When asked if he was comparing Islam to pornography, Huckabee responded, "No. I'm sure that some bloggers will say that."

- In August 2013, Huckabee called Islam "a religion that promotes the most murderous mayhem on the planet in their so-called 'holiest days.'" He stated: "Can someone explain to me why it is that we tiptoe around a religion that promotes the most murderous mayhem on the planet in their so-called 'holiest days.'" He said, "You know, if you've kept up with the Middle East, you know that the most likely time to have an uprising of rock throwing and rioting comes on the day of prayer on Friday. So the Muslims will go to the mosque, and they will have their day of prayer, and they come out of there like uncorked animals -- throwing rocks and burning cars." He went on to say "I'm not saying all Muslims are radical and I am not saying that all Muslims are violent. I'm not. But we as a government recognize that the most likely times for them to erupt in some type of terrorist activity, violent storming of an embassy, is on their holy days."
- In February 2015 during another appearance on Fox & Friends, Huckabee criticized then-President Barack Obama's speech at the National Prayer Breakfast. A February 2015 piece in Politico reported that Obama had "brought up Christians' misdeeds during the Crusades." Huckabee responded to the speech saying, "Everything he [Obama] does is against what Christians stand for, and he's against the Jews in Israel. The one group of people that can know they have his undying, unflinching support would be the Muslim community."
- During the January 2016 Republican presidential debate, Huckabee was asked what his solution would be for America's war in Afghanistan, to which he responded, "When I went to Afghanistan, I saw a land that looked like the land of the Flintstones. It was desolate, it was barren, it was primitive, and it's been that way for thousands of years. They want to take the world back to be just like that. We don't. We need to make a clear goal as to why we want to be anywhere in the Middle East, and I'll tell you why we want to be and need to be is to destroy radical Islam and everything that threatens civilization. It's not just a threat to Israel or to America; it's a threat to every civilized person on this earth."
- In an April 2024 podcast episode with Jonathan Tobin, Huckabee stated, "radical Muslims want to take us back to the seventh century" adding "I don't want to go back there". He said: "I like modernity."