



Shimon Peres

The President of the State of Israel

Shimon Peres was born in Belarus and immigrated to Eretz Israel with his family at age eleven. He studied at the Ben Shemen Agricultural School, and was one of the founders of Kibbutz Alumot in Lower Galilee. In 1945, he was elected Secretary of the Hano'ar Ha'oved (Labor-Zionist) youth movement.

Peres's service to Israel has been lifelong and he has held every position of note in Israel's government. Recruited to the Haganah in 1947, he was assigned responsibility for arms purchases and recruitment, which he continued assuming during Israel's War of Independence. In 1948 he was appointed head of Israel's navy, and in 1949 he headed the Israel Defense Ministry's procurement delegation to the United States.

A member of the Knesset since 1959, Peres served as Deputy Minister of Defense from 1959-1965. After leaving the Mapai Labor Party with Ben-Gurion in 1965, he became Secretary General of Rafi, and in 1968, was instrumental in uniting Rafi with Mapai to form the Israel Labor Party.

Among his wide range of ministerial posts, Peres headed the ministries of Immigrant Absorption (1969); Transport and Communications (1970-1974); Information (1974); and Defense (1974-1977). The highlight of his tenure as Defense Minister was the Entebbe rescue operation.

In 1977, Peres was elected chairman of the Labor Party and in 1984, when a National Unity Government was formed, he served first as its Prime Minister (1984-1986), and then as Vice Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1986-1988). During his term as Prime Minister, Israel withdrew from Lebanon and an economic stabilization plan was implemented.

From December 1988 until the dissolution of the National Unity government in 1990, Shimon Peres served as Vice Premier and Minister of Finance and in the years 1990-1992, he led the opposition in the Knesset. He began his second tenure as Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs on July 13, 1992 with the establishment of the new Labor-led government, during which he played a leading role in the Oslo Accords, which earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994.

Created in 1996 by Shimon Peres, the Peres Center for Peace was officially inaugurated in October 1997. From 1997 to 2007, Shimon Peres served as Foreign Minister, Minister of Regional Development and Minister for the Development of the Negev and the Galilee under the governments of Ariel Sharon, Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert.

On June 13, 2007, the Knesset elected Shimon Peres to serve as Ninth President of Israel.

He is married to Sonya and has a daughter, two sons, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Shimon Peres has authored a number of books and many articles.