

# South Africa's Advocacy for Palestine

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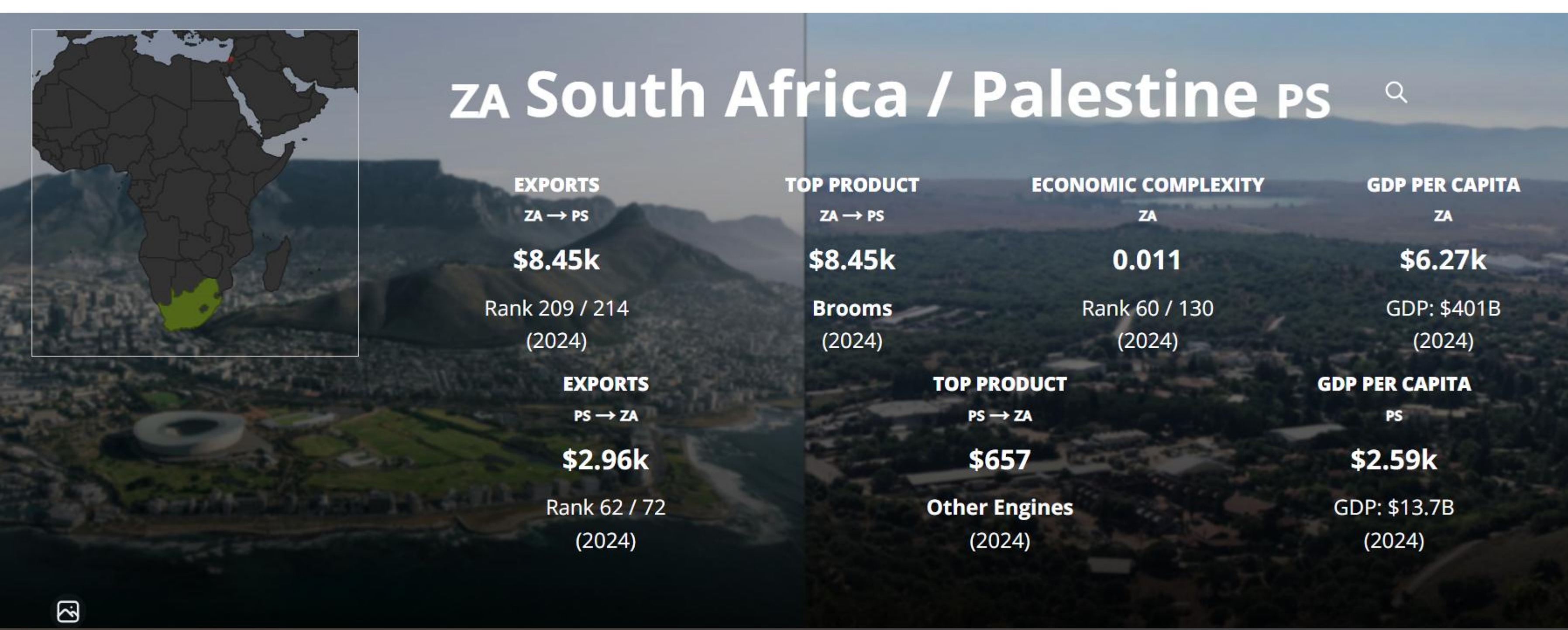
## Abstract

This article covers two brief histories of both South Africa and Palestine, as well as their experiences with apartheid and border partition. Additionally, their trade statistics are presented to gauge the bilateral economic relations between them. It is found that South Africa's foreign policy has changed toward Palestine with the fall of the National Party (the Afrikaner ethnic nationalist party), amidst the near-unanimous election of the African National Congress (ANC). Nelson Mandela, president of the ANC (1991-1997) and the first black president of South Africa (1994-1999) altered the way the government and people perceive the question of Palestine. Observing the rhetoric and policy of South African officials, for example, President Cyril Ramaphosa (2018-Present) and Naledi Pandor, South Africa's Minister of International Relations and Cooperation (2019-2024), as well as the economic policy of the state itself toward Israel, the article finds a balancing act being conducted to support the Palestinian people and the State of Palestine and to maintain trade relations with Israel.

## Objectives

This project was intended to examine the ways in which South Africa, throughout historical geopolitical analysis, has changed its perspective on Palestinian liberation and the journey to statehood and recognition. It also poses questions for further research, such as the continued economic relationship that has persisted with Israel despite ongoing legal proceedings led by the South African ANC against the state in the International Court of Justice.

Observatory for Economic Complexity Bilateral Trade: ZAF to PS



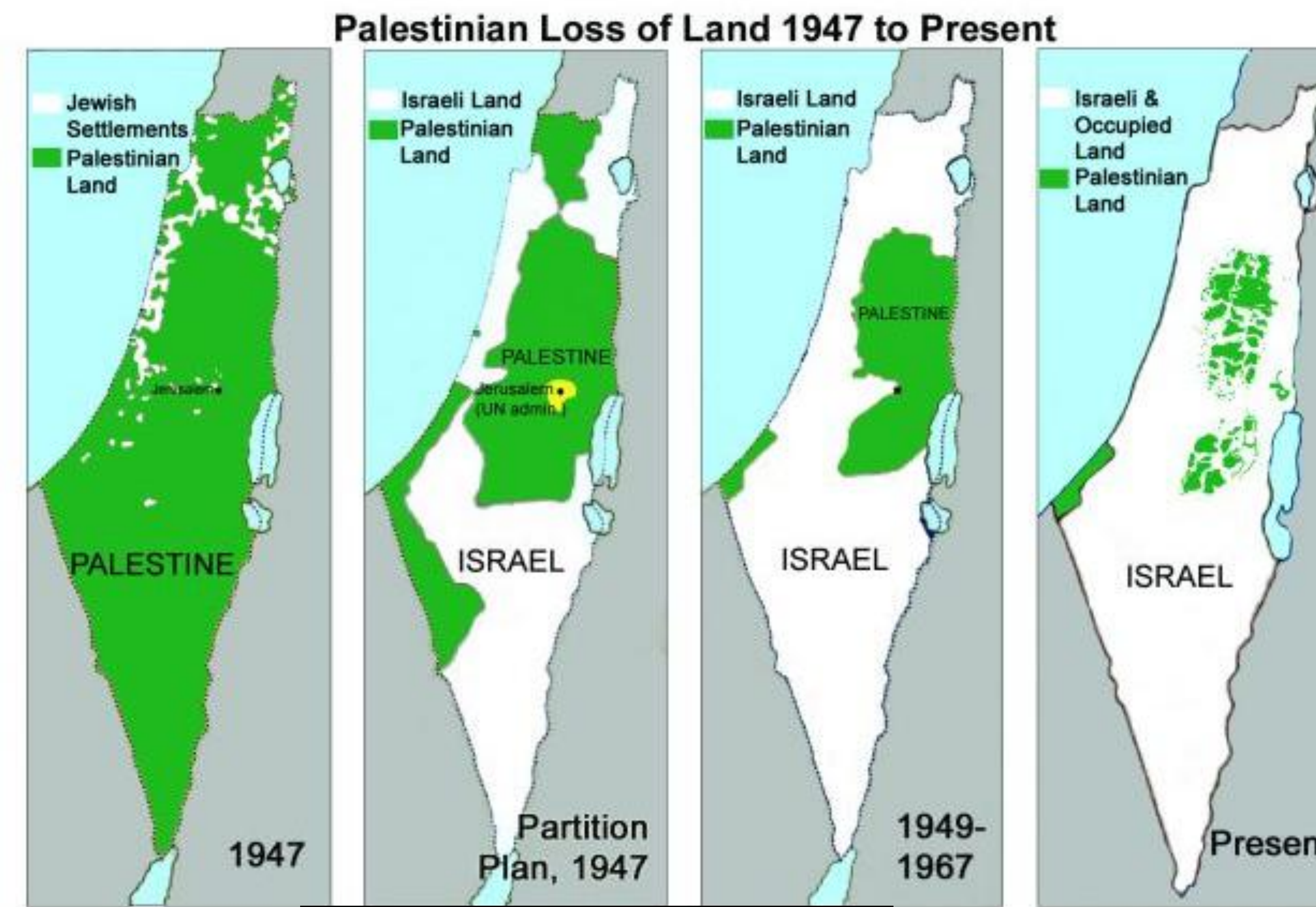
## Methods

Firstly, I compiled a historical foundation of both nations and their political backgrounds. It was imperative to note the length of apartheid, as well as its end being facilitated through international pressure and constructive changes in global norms at that time. Secondly, drawing parallels to the Israeli government's behavior towards Palestinians in Israel proper as well as the occupied territories was crucial to establishing a connection and shared history between the two countries. Next, a quantitative analysis of the specified countries was put forward to understand their diplomatic establishments in the form of embassy/consulate presence, as well as any possible bilateral trade activity that was ongoing. Lastly, a legal analysis of the South African Constitution (1996) and the proceedings and decisions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) tie off the independent study.

## Findings

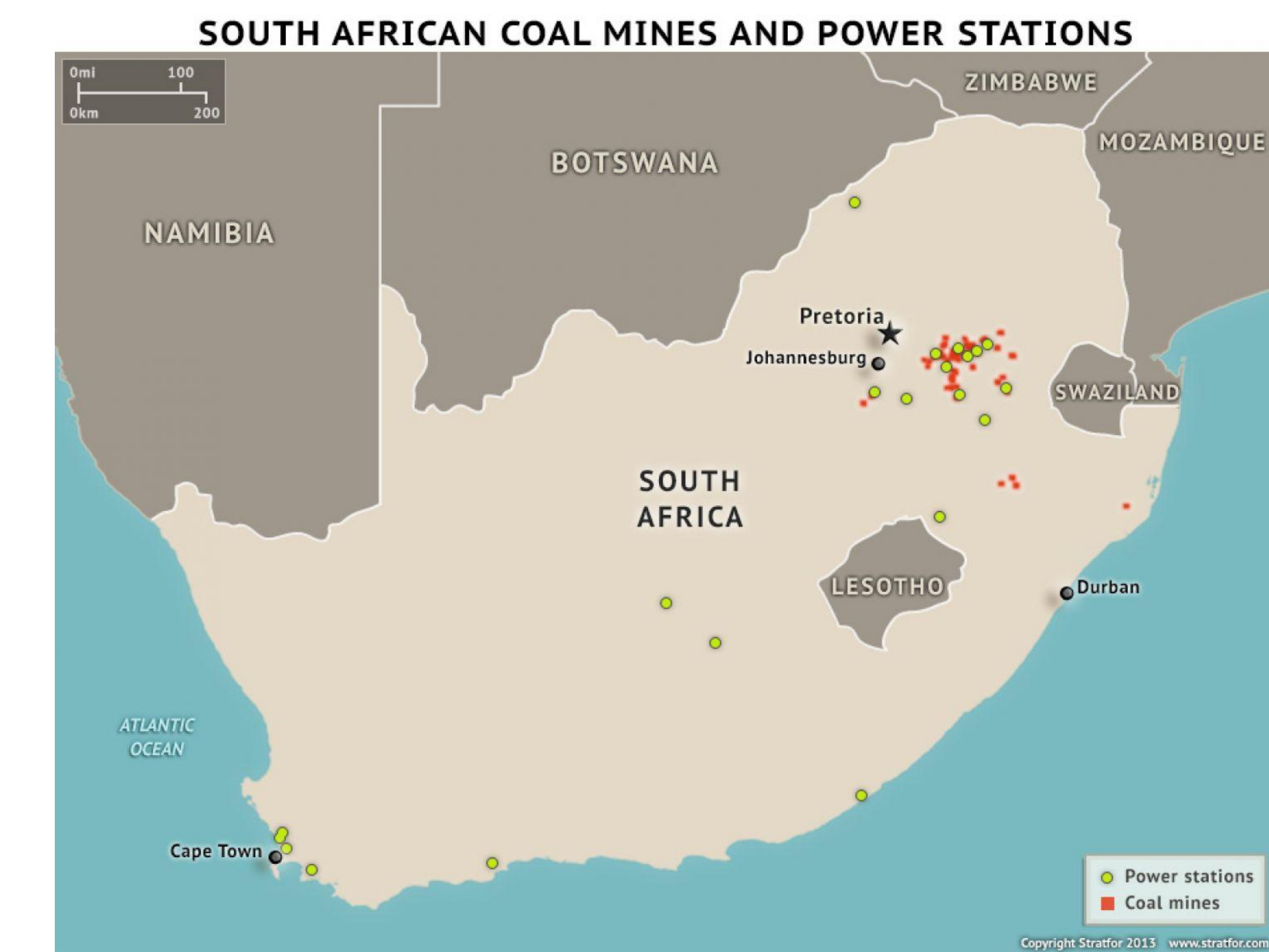
Initially, the South African government's official position on the Palestinian Question was that of staunch Zionists. Despite being rather anti-Semitic themselves, the National Party (of the Boers) supported the creation of an Israeli state. There were parallels to how the Boers systemically discriminated against Black South Africans, maintaining economic and racial hierarchy by law and deprivation of property. After the end of apartheid due to international pressure, Nelson Mandela had made a promise of remaining in solidarity with Palestine, and South Africa was one of the first member states of the United Nations to have recognized Palestinian statehood; consistent with that promise are the extensive diplomatic relations, as the South African consulate is situated in Ramallah, while a more formal embassy of Palestine is located in Pretoria. While there is little evidence to demonstrate a robust economic relationship in terms of trade, the diplomatic relationship, based on Mandela's promise to the Palestinians upon his election in 1994, still holds strong, as Naledi Pandor, the former Minister for International Affairs, had been a leader in bringing the South Africa v. Israel case to the ICJ for charges of genocide in Gaza, and this legacy has been continued by her successor Ronald Lamola. The growing role of South Africa as a leader in the Global South and its stated goal of being a voice for those often overlooked by the wider international community is a rationale supported by the evidentiary observations within this paper.

The Progress of Land Loss for Palestinians from 1947 to the Present Day

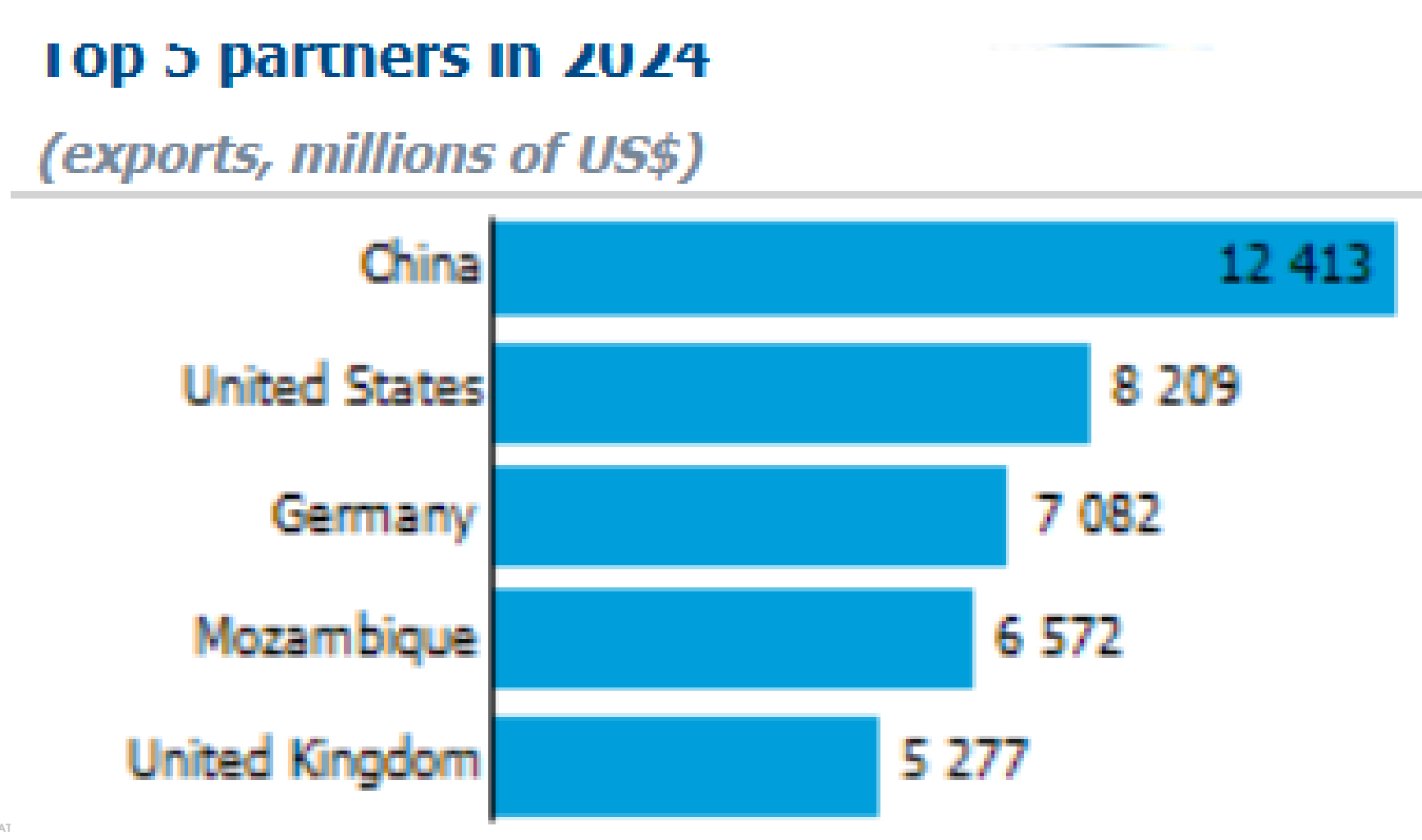


Observatory for Economic Complexity Bilateral Trade: PS to ZAF

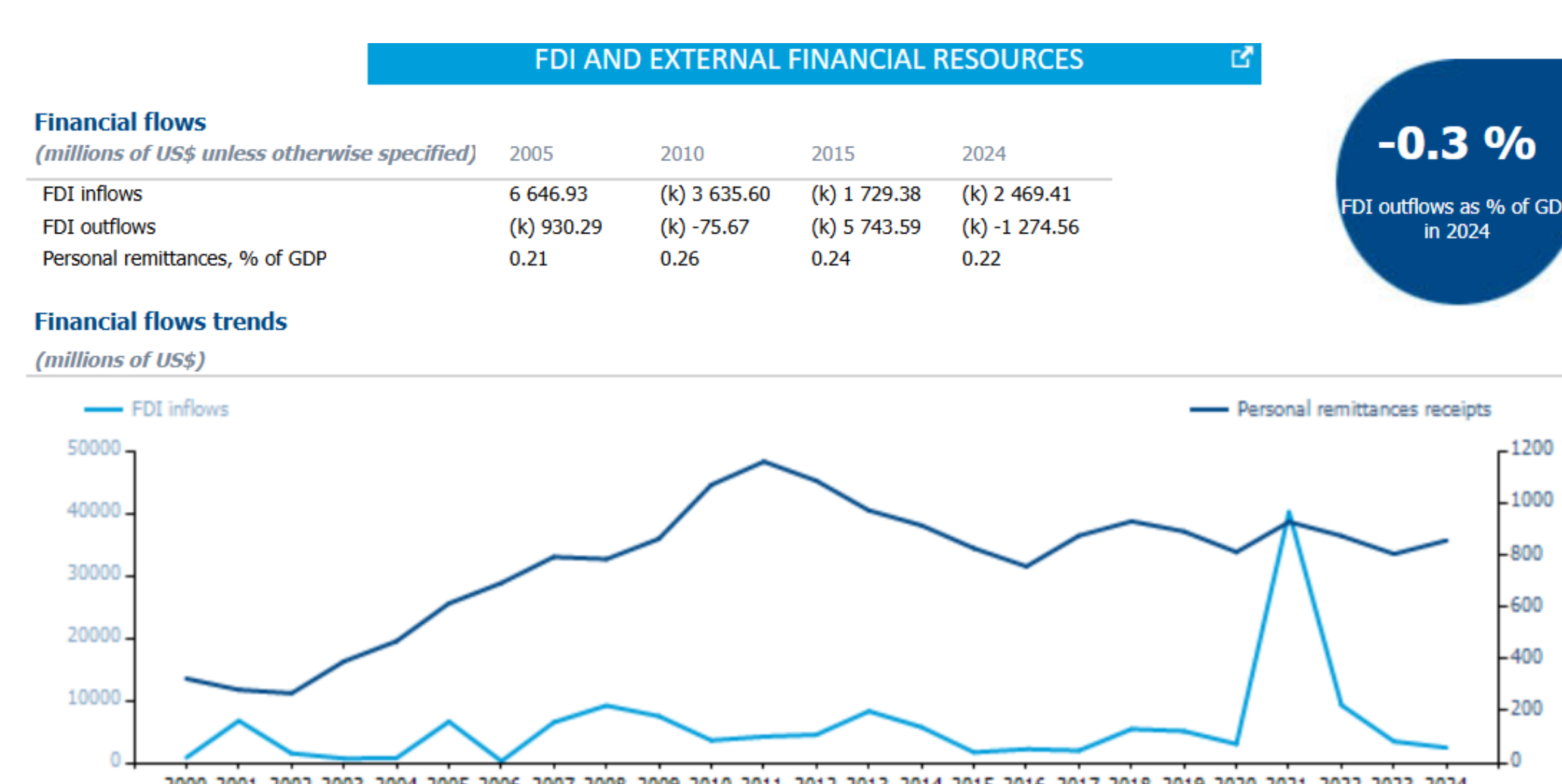
Observatory of Economic Complexity Bilateral Trade: ZAF to Israel



Top 5 Export Partners South Africa (UNCTAD)



FDI Inflow Trends for South Africa (UNCTAD)



ps Palestine / South Africa za



za South Africa / Israel il

