

Bat Yam has its origins in the settlement of "Beit Vagan", which was founded by 13 families in 1927. In 1937, upon being granted the status of a local council and with the appointment of the first council by the Mandate authorities, the settlement was named "Bat Yam". The choice of this specific name was justified by its blessed proximity to the sea, by its reference to the first and last letters of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and by the fact that the name "Bat Yam" contains no guttural letters, which might emphasise differences in pronunciation and origin amongst its residents.

During the first two decades of its existence, up until 13 May 1948 – the day of the surrender of Arab Jaffa – the residents of Bat Yam faced a series of increasingly intense clashes with neighbouring Arab settlements. As a result of the escalating security situation, its residents frequently suffered from the cutting off of access routes to Tel Aviv, isolation, loss of life and even the partial evacuation of residents for short periods.

Following the establishment of the State of Israel, Bat Yam absorbed thousands of new immigrants arriving from various countries of the Diaspora. The growing demand for housing led to a massive construction and development boom. Consequently, Bat Yam was granted city status in 1958. During the first three decades of the State of Israel, the city's population grew rapidly, with most of its land reserves being used for the construction of housing estates.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, thousands of new immigrants chose to settle in Bat Yam. Affordable housing prices, its central location, the established community of veteran immigrants from Russia already living in the city, and, of course, the extensive seafront – all these factors appealed to the new immigrants, resulting in approximately 30 per cent of Bat Yam's current residents being from the former Soviet Union.

Despite the social difficulties associated with Bat Yam's history of mass immigration, and despite the out-migration of its residents to neighbouring towns and settlements, Bat Yam enjoys relative stability in its municipal governance systems. Over the course of the city's 72 years as a recognised municipal entity, it has been led by some 11 mayors.

The change of administration that took place in the autumn of 2003 led to a renewed and highly significant surge in development in Bat Yam. This is evident, amongst other things, in the city's appearance, in accelerated

construction, in extensive public landscaping, in the municipal education system – which has become a national model – and in high-profile cultural and artistic events.

(Translated with DeepL.com)