

Land Grabs, 1918-2015

Year	Land Grab		Territory
	BY	AGAINST	
1919	Romania	Russia	Bessarabia
1919	Finland	Russia*	East Karelia (p)
1920	Poland	Russia	Ukraine (p); Belarus (p); Lithuania (p)
1920	Poland	Lithuania	Vilnius
1921	Costa Rica	Panama*	Coto
1921	Yugoslavia	Albania	Northern Albania
1922	Turkey	Britain	Chanak
1923	Italy	Greece	Corfu
1927	Norway	Britain	Bouvet Island
1928	Paraguay	Bolivia*	Chaco (p)
1931	Japan	China	Manchuria
1932	Bolivia	Paraguay*	Chaco (p)
1932	Peru	Colombia*	Leticia
1933	Yemen	Saudi Arabia*	Najran
1937	Russia	Japan	Amur River Islands
1938	Russia	Japan	Changkufeng
1939	Japan	Russia*	Nomonhan
1939	Russia	Finland	Karelia (p); Salla (p); Rybachi; Gulf Islands
1941	Japan	Britain	Malaysia; Burma; Hong Kong
1941	Japan	Netherlands	Dutch East Indies
1941	Japan	United States	Philippines; Guam; Wake Island
1941	Peru	Ecuador*	Marañón
1954	Thailand	Cambodia	Preah Vihear
1954	South Korea	Japan	Dokdo (Takeshima) Islands
1956	Israel	Egypt	Sinai; Gaza
1957	Nicaragua	Honduras*	Mocoron
1958	Egypt	Sudan	Hala'ib Triangle
1959	India	China*	Longju
1959	China	India	Ladakh-Aksai Chin border region (p)
1961	India	Portugal	Goa
1962	India	China*	Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh borders (p)
1963	Morocco	Algeria	Colomb-Bechar; Tindouf
1965	Pakistan	India*	Rann of Kutch (p)
1965	Pakistan	India	Akhnur
1966	Venezuela	Guyana	Ankoko Island
1967	Israel	Egypt	Sinai; Gaza
1967	Israel	Jordan	West Bank
1967	Israel	Syria	Golan Heights
1969	Argentina	Uruguay	Punta Bauza

* This land grab provoked an immediate retaliatory land grab by this state

(p) This land grab seized only part of the named territory

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1969	China	Russia	Damansky (Zhenbao) Island
1969	Iraq	Kuwait	Strip of land near Umm Qasr
1971	Iran	UAE	Abu Musa; G. and L. Tunbs
1973	Egypt	Israel	Sinai (p)
1973	Syria	Israel	Golan Heights (p)
1974	S. Vietnam	China*	Paracel Islands
1974	Turkey	Cyprus	Northern Cyprus
1975	Cambodia	Vietnam*	Phu Quoc; Tho Chu; Poulo Wai
1975	Morocco	Spain	Western Sahara
1977	Somalia	Ethiopia*	Ogaden
1978	Uganda	Tanzania	Kagera Salient
1979	Cambodia	Vietnam	Ha Tien, adjacent areas
1980	Iraq	Iran	Khuzestan
1981	Ecuador	Peru*	Cordillera del Condor (p)
1982	Argentina	Britain*	Falkland (Malvinas) Islands
1983	Nigeria	Chad*	Islands in Lake Chad
1983	Malaysia	China, DRV	Spratly Islands (p)
1984	India	Pakistan	Siachen
1984	Laos	Thailand	Three-Village Border Region
1984	India	China*	Thag La
1985	Mali	Burkina Faso	Agacher Strip
1986	Qatar	Bahrain	Fasht al-Dibal
1987	China	India	Thag La (Sumdurong Chu)
1987	Thailand	Laos*	Three-Village Border Region
1987	Nigeria	Cameroon	Islands in Lake Chad
1988	China	Vietnam*	Spratly Islands (p)
1992	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Nagorno-Karabakh, adjacent regions
1993	Cameroon	Nigeria	Diamant; Jabane
1994	China	Philippines	Spratly Islands (p)
1995	Egypt	Sudan	Hala'ib Triangle
1995	Ecuador	Peru*	Cenepa (p)
1995	Yemen	Eritrea*	Hanish Islands
1996	Greece	Turkey*	Imia (Kardak); Akrogialia
1998	Eritrea	Ethiopia*	Badme
1999	Pakistan	India*	Kargil
2002	Morocco	Spain*	Parsley (Perejil) Island
2007	Ethiopia	Eritrea	Badme (p)
2010	Nicaragua	Costa Rica	Calero Island (p)
2014	Russia	Ukraine	Crimea

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For more information on how I define “land grabs” and collected these data, please see the relevant papers on my website:

<http://www.danielwaltman.com/research.html>

To address the most likely questions here more briefly, note that I exclude cases from the list for the following reasons:

- Case involves an attempt to seize the territory of an entire country, rather than just a piece of its territory. Cases like Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait are excluded accordingly. Although such cases fit a common sense understanding of “land grab,” they are not comparable to the cases listed here in that same way that a Russian seizure of Crimea would differ from a Russian conquest of all of Ukraine.
- Case occurs after a war is already well underway.
- Case is not a conflict between two sovereign nations.
- Case occurs during a state formation process and so there is no clear prior territorial control (e.g., Israel-Palestine and India-Pakistan in the late 1940s; Yugoslavia in the 1990s).
- Case involves active support for separatist rebels rather than an attempt to acquire the territory under dispute. With some trepidation, I placed both Russia’s intervention in Georgia in 2008 and the Donbas region of Ukraine in this category (thus their absence from the list). I acknowledge that one could make a plausible case for including both.

Note also that the legitimacy of a claim to the “grabbed” territory is not a factor in whether I regard the case as a land grab. Consequently, labeling a case as a land grab is not in itself a value judgment or criticism.