



Cite this article as: Ijaz, S., & Jafri M. H. (2025). The Palestine-Israel Conflict: Peace Process and the Debate of One or Two States. *Journal of World Sociopolitical Studies*, 9(2), pp. 371-396. <https://doi.org/10.22059/wsps.2025.382555.1466>

The Palestine-Israel Conflict: Peace Process and the Debate of One or Two States^{*}

Sabir Ijaz¹, Mubasshar Hassan Jafri²

1. Assistant Professor (visiting) of International Relations, National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Karachi Campus, Karachi, Pakistan (Corresponding Author) (sabir.ijaz@numl.edu.pk)  0009-0004-4517-2356
2. MPhil in Peace and Conflict Studies, National Defense University, Islamabad, Pakistan (mobihasan25@gmail.com)  0009-0002-3804-0203

(Received: Jul. 09, 2024 Revised: Oct. 02, 2024 Accepted: Nov. 02, 2024)

Abstract

The Palestine-Israel conflict is among the most protracted disputes in recent history. Muslims and Jews have been competing for territorial, political and religious claims over the sacred land since the Ottoman Empire. The historical struggle, the establishment of the state of Israel against the wishes of local inhabitants, and Israel's subsequent oppression and violence against Palestinians has pushed the region in an everlasting crisis, in which numerous regional and international actors are involved. Many proposals have been presented by different actors for a solution; however, neither the Palestinians nor Israelis have accepted the terms of such proposals. The idea of a two-state solution has been backed by different international actors for the lasting peace of this turbulent land, but political leaders of both Palestine and Israel have shown their reservations over this proposal. Leaders from both sides have argued for the one-state solution for many reasons. This article first discusses the existing proposals and efforts for the peaceful settlement of the land. It will then highlight the prospects and opinions of both Israel and Palestine over the status of refugees and their right of return and implementation of a two-state and one-state solution. The article will finally signpost the arguments from both sides for the resolution of the conflict, and suggest some findings by employing elite interviewing method.

Keywords: Conflict, Israel, Palestine, Peace Process, Refugees, Right of Return

^{*} The authors have no affiliation with any organization with a direct or indirect financial interest in the subject matter discussed in this manuscript.

Journal of **World Sociopolitical Studies** | Vol. 9 | No. 2 | Spring 2025 | pp. 371-396

Web Page: <https://wsps.ut.ac.ir/> Email: wsps@ut.ac.ir

eISSN: 2588-3127

PrintISSN: 2588-3119

This is an open access work published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY-SA 4.0), which allows reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, so long as attribution is given to the creator. The license allows for commercial use (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)



1. Introduction

The resolution of the Palestine-Israel conflict is necessary for the millions of people living in the region. Uncertainty and insecurity have made life difficult particularly for the Palestinians. Palestinians have vehemently objected to the creation of Israel and opposed Israelis' right of return as illegal. On the other side, Israelis consider the creation of Israel and the right to return as their legal right. These opposite perceptions and divergence of positions have lingered this conflict. People from both Palestine and Israel want a single independent state, which has made the situation more problematic. With this background, the article mainly discusses why the peace process and accords have remained unsuccessful in the resolution of the conflict. It also debates the question of why both sides disagree over the establishment of two-state solutions. Palestinians oppose this notion, as they believe that this land only belongs to the Palestinians. On the contrary, Israelis object to the idea that the establishment of a Palestinian state could pose an existential threat to Israel. The question is important as peace in the land cannot be achieved unless both sides agree on a two or one-state solution. The study has used the elite interviewing method to inquire about the perspective of one or two-state solutions. The majority of participants in elite interviews have suggested a one-state solution for the resolution of the conflict. To grasp a deeper understanding of the conflict, the next section explains the background of past and recent developments of the conflict.

1. 1. Background

The Palestine-Israel conflict dates back to the British announcement of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 (Caplan, 2019). With the declaration, the Jewish political movement

(Zionist) hastened efforts to establish a Jewish state in Palestine for the Jewish people (Morris, 2009). The Jews have a historical connection with the land and believe that they have the right to return to this sacred land. Based on the right of return, Israelis consider the land a perfect place for a Jewish state. Jews from different parts of the world started to migrate to region of Palestine when it was part of the Ottoman Empire (Galtung, 1972). However, a larger migration to the land accelerated with the onset of World War Two. A large number of Jews from European countries migrated to Palestine to escape Nazi threat (Alroey, 2014). The Jewish population in the land increased from 6% to 33% from 1918 to 1947 (Grossman, 2017). The rising Jewish immigration and subsequent settlements in Palestine were opposed by local peasants and political figures (Shafir, 2012). The Palestinians felt the threat of demographic change as a result of migrations. These fears were genuine, as these changes would make them a minority even in their own country. Putting aside Palestinians' reservations and sentiments, the United Nations (UN), United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) favored the partition plan on 14 May, 1948. The British Mandate of Palestine was divided into Jewish and Arab states without Palestinians' consent (Ben-Dror, 2007). Israelis celebrated 1948 as the year of independence, while Palestinians referred the year as 'Al Nabka' meaning devastation or catastrophe (Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007). Israel's creation sparked the first Arab-Israel war on 15 May, 1948. Triumphed Israel displaced 750000 settled Palestinians, destroyed more than 500 villages, towns and cities, killed more than 15000 people and divided the territory into three parts; the Gaza Strip, The West Bank and the state of Israel (Robinson, 2013). This division has never been accepted by Palestinians and they refer to Israelis as

usurper and colonialists. Israel has constructed more than 150 settlements for about 700,000 settlers in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem (Sasley & Sucharov, 2011; Darr, 2014). Almost 10% of Israel's total population lives in these settlements. Israeli Jews believe that the settlements in occupied territories restrict the movement of Palestinians and undermine the feasibility of a separate Palestinian state. Moreover, these settlements occupy almost 40% of the West Bank territory. Israel has built a 700-kilometer separation wall, which restricts the movement of more than three million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem (Abdallah & Parizot, 2016; Usher, 2006). The illegal occupation of Palestinian territories has been opposed by the majority of Islamic countries and regional actors. Israel not only seized Palestinians' lands, but it has also snatched lands of neighboring countries (Rowley & Taylor, 2006).

In the eyes of the regional actors, the creation of Israel presents threats to the entire region. There is suspicion and rivalry, particularly between Israel and its neighboring Islamic states (Roberts, 1990). Neighboring Islamic countries perceive that Israel has been endeavoring to become a regional hegemonic state by occupying their lands and strengthening its military capabilities. In the 1967 war, Israel's preemptive strikes destroyed Egyptian and Syrian air forces. It occupied lands from Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Israel established its territorial control over the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, grabbed the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan and took the Golan Heights from Syria (Rodman, 2010). It also received strategic advantages from the 1973 war. Israeli forces thwarted Syrian and Egyptian forces to take more advantages. The 1982 war with Lebanon further strengthened the view that Israel is making every effort to dominate the region

(Freedman, 1986). Israelis have been most intractable and critical towards Palestinians. Israel's conflict with neighboring countries centers around territorial disputes, but its conflict with Palestine is composed of core issues like the status of Jerusalem, settlements in Palestinian territories and the disputes over the return of refugees.

2. Palestinian Resistance

Palestinians have initiated many uprisings against Israel's illegal occupation of their territories. Since the illegal creation of a state of Israel, Palestinians have displayed severe resentment against dominant Israeli forces. The Palestinian people have used different tactics of resistance, opposition, protests and movements to repel Israel's dominance, and Israeli forces have employed all kinds of belligerence and hostility to subdue Palestinians' uprisings, revolts and upheavals. The extreme enmity and aggression by Israelis on Palestinians have resulted in mayhem. Thousands of Palestinians have been martyred, slaughtered and killed by Israeli forces. The first major uprising occurred in 1987, known as the first Intifada (Hammami & Tamari, 2001; Hunter, 1993). Under this popular mobilization, Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip boycotted Israeli products, observed strikes, refused to pay taxes, established underground freedom schools and organized massive demonstrations against Israeli atrocities. The Israeli government used force to smash the Intifada. Statistics show that Israeli forces killed more than 1000 Palestinian between 1987 to 1991 (Beinin & Hajjar, 2014). Similarly, the second Intifada, which occurred in October 2000, caused much more violence than the first one. One million bullets were fired at unarmed civilians during the first three weeks of the uprising. Israeli forces also used tanks, helicopters and

F-16 to quell the uprising (Nasrallah, 2013; Peretz, 2019). Israel has also detained thousands of Palestinians since 1967. A large number of Palestinians are under Israeli custody. A large number of Palestinians under the age of 18 are in Israeli prisons. More than 9 thousand Palestinian prisoners are held by Israel. Similarly, more than a thousand Palestinian women are in Israeli prisons (Bornstein, 2010). These prisoners are suffering harsh imprisonment, violence, hunger and abuse in Israeli jails. Hamas and several Palestinian politicians and journalists have criticized Israelis for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians (Khalidi, 2014). Many international agencies have termed the political, economic and social conditions in the occupied territories as critical. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), after observing the dismal human rights and international law violations by the Israeli government towards Palestinian civilians, termed Israel as an apartheid state (Falk et al., 2023). Israeli forces have killed more than 134000 Palestinians since 1948 (Rjoob & Topcu, 2024). The recent Hamas-Israel clashes have further worsened the conflict.

3. Recent Hamas-Israel Conflict

In the recent Hamas-Israel conflict, more than 50000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces (Byman, 2024). The ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israeli forces since October 2023 has put havoc on Gaza. People in Gaza are living in inhumane conditions. With the recent war between Israel and Hamas, the situation has become more complicated than ever before. Thousands of people have died on both sides and the ongoing crisis in Gaza has made life difficult for millions of people. More than half a million people are facing extreme hunger, lacking the necessities of life and health, and almost 2.2 million people are

living in terrible conditions (Khan et al., 2024). Reports have shown that people are dying because of lack of medicine and hospitals, since nearly all the hospitals in Gaza have been damaged by Israeli bombardment. The international community has termed these atrocities as genocide against Palestinians, urging Israel to stop this massacre and brutality on Palestinians (Elessi, 2023). The UN stated over the situation that Israel is committing genocide on the besieged Gaza population, as it has violated three of the five acts listed under the UN Genocide Convention. The plight of civilians has become miserable, while the international community has failed to put any significant pressure to stop Israel from targeting Gaza's population. Women and children are suffering acute challenges in this dire situation. It is estimated that 2 billion, which is approximately 85% of the total population has fled Gaza (Monshipouri, 2024). ICJ has warned Israel to end these violations against Palestinians. Moreover, it is also the responsibility of the US to restrict its egregious policy of defending Israel's persecution on Palestinians. The major powers should also take responsibility of solving the conflict and all concerns related to refugees, as the issue of returning refugees has been one of the main disputes since 1948 (Falk et al., 2023).

4. Palestinian Refugees and Right of Return

Israel has forced millions of Palestinians to vacate their homes and live in refugee camps around the world. More than 7 million Palestinian refugees live in Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon under the UN special agency of United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and some other camps (Custer Jr, 2010; Rosenfeld, 2009). Israel has not granted these refugees the right of

return. The UN Resolution 194 indicates and advocates for the return of refugees to their homes and return of their properties. The resolution has achieved a customary status, which means that it has become a binding international law. The resolution compels states to follow legal principles to allow refugees irrespective of any creed and location to return to their original places without any discrimination and prejudice. Moreover, it also prohibits mass expulsion of persons from any state on any ground (Radley, 1978). Israel has vehemently opposed and objected the 194 resolution since its creation, for various reasons (Abdelrazek, 2008): Firstly, Israel wants to maintain a Jewish demographic majority over Palestinian Muslims. By accepting the resolution and allowing refugees to their homes, Israel would lose a demographic majority over Palestinians. Secondly, Israel portrays that the land (West Bank) has an insufficient place to accommodate such huge refugees. Thirdly, it also fears that allowing an exodus of refugees to return home would create security issues for Israelis. These fears, particularly the loss of demographic majority, have restrained Israel from accepting the resolution. However, it is obvious the conflict cannot be solved without resolving the issue of Palestinian refugees and allowing refugees to return to their homes and properties, which had been subjugated by Israeli Zionists forcefully and illegally. It is also evident from continuous Palestinian resistance, which started with the creation of Israel that Palestinians would never accept a Zionist state. The Palestinian resistance, even with limited resources, also manifests that Palestinians will keep rejecting Israeli occupation of their land and never compromise with the Zionist regime (Wilson Center, 2023). On the contrary, Israel would also utilize all its resources with the help of major powers (USA, UK) to oppose Palestinians' right of return and accept a Palestinian state. The situation calls for a greater solution

for the peaceful settlement of the dispute. Efforts have been made to resolve this endemic conflict. The next section will discuss the important accords and negotiations held between both.

5. The Peace Process

5. 1. 1967: UN Resolution 242

The first major effort in the settlement of the conflict after the 1967 war is the UN Resolution 242. The resolution called on Arab countries Egypt, Syria and Jordan to acknowledge Israel's right to live and recognize its boundaries free from threats or acts of force. The resolution also stressed that Israel withdraws its forces from the territories it occupied during the war. Following the resolution, Egypt and Jordan ceased confrontation with Israel (Lynk, 2007). Both countries also recognized Israel's legal existence; however, Israel did not fully revert to its pre-1967 borders, which led to the 1973 war. The 242 resolution was affirmed later in UN Resolution 338 in 1973 (Neff, 1994).

5. 2. The Camp David Accords

The accords mainly established peace between Egypt and Israel after the 1973 war. The negotiations were brooked by US President Jimmy Carter in 1978. Both agreed to avoid confrontation and use of force in resolving disputes. As a part of the deal, Israel agreed to return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt (Strieff, 2013). Palestinians were not invited to participate in negotiations because the US refused to deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) until it acknowledges Israel's right to existence. However, it was decided that there would be a self-government for Palestinians in

the West Bank and Gaza within five years (Tal, 2016). Israel kept its promise of peace with Egypt, but could not abide by its commitment regarding Palestine and did not grant autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza within the agreed five years. Moreover, Israel increased its settlements in occupied territories to a large extent.

5. 3. 1993: Oslo

The Oslo negotiations are the watershed event in the Palestine-Israel relations. Norwegian officials facilitated PLO and Israel negotiations in Oslo in 1993 (Sanders, 1999). According to the pact, Israel agreed to allow Palestinians to form a self-government in Gaza and West Bank. It also promised to withdraw its forces from Gaza and West Bank in phases. In return, PLO agreed to recognize Israel and acknowledge its people's right to live according to the UN resolution 242. However, the majority of Palestinians objected this deal and referred the agreement as their historic compromise. PLO also failed to restrict Israeli forces in the West Bank and Gaza. Moreover, the pact did not guarantee any timeline for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and settlements in occupied territories continued to rise (Bercovitch, 1997). The accord could not solve the core issues like the status of refugees, that is, whether they could return to their homes, the status of Jerusalem, the status of the Palestinian state and its border; as a result, even the most critical issues of settlers remained unresolved.

5. 4. 1995: Oslo II

Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and PLO President Yasir Arfat signed this agreement in Washington DC. According to the pact, West

Bank was divided into three zones Areas A, B and C and keeping Gaza continuous. It was pledged that a Palestinian state would be formed accordingly. Areas A and B were administrated and controlled by the Palestinian Authority (PA) (O'Ballance, 1998). However, Area C (comprised of the majority of the West Bank and encompassing all the settlements since 1967) was entirely administrated by Israel. Rabin promised to withdraw its forces from Gaza and Areas A within three months of the pact (Weiner, 1996). Political parties from both sides rejected the accord. Widespread protests led to the election of Netanyahu as the new Prime Minister of Israel. He strongly opposed the proceeding of the accord and halted all negotiations.

5. 5. 2000: Camp David and Clinton Efforts for Settlement

President Clinton invited Arfat and Netanyahu to Maryland' and tried to salvage the negotiations in 1998. Israel agreed to withdraw its forces from the West Bank. Arafat promised to take measures to prevent violence against Israelis. Netanyahu was criticized for giving unreasonable territorial concessions to Palestinians and was replaced by Ehud Barak (Freedman, 2018). In 2000, two leaders met at Camp David to discuss the status of refugees and their right of return, the status of Jerusalem and the position of settlers in the West Bank (Pressman, 2003). It was suggested that 80% of settlers would remain in the West Bank covering only 10% of the occupied land. In exchange, Palestinians would receive some land adjacent to Gaza. The rest of the West Bank and Gaza would form Palestine. The new state would be controlled and supported by international police and demilitarized. Palestinians would control the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem and also the Al Aqsa

mosque, whereas Israel would control the Western Wall. Displaced Palestinian refugees would be assured of the right to return; however, they would not return to their homes owned by Israelis (Hanieh, 2001; Quandt, 2015). The majority of Israeli politicians objected Palestinian right of return, as it would alter the Israelis demographic majority. Palestinians also raised many reservations, hence the deal ended in failure.

5. 6. 2002 -2010: Various Efforts for the Peace

In 2002, Arab states particularly the Saudi Prince instigated the Arab Peace Initiative (API). The plan proposed that Arab states would recognize Israel in exchange for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories. Ariel Sharon's government rejected the plan and started operations in the West Bank in response to the second Intifada (Ben-Meir, 2010). A new initiative for settling disputes started in Geneva in 2003. It aimed to resolve disputes on the framework of API and Clinton's parameters, but the plan was rejected by the Israeli government. A roadmap for the peaceful settlement of the conflict was announced by the US, Russia, the European Union and the UN in 2003. The Quartet designed progressive steps for a durable peace of the conflict. It described a two-state solution of the conflict over the course of three years. Sharon's government demanded certain prerequisites that eventually doomed the deal (Bayefsky, 2003). In 2005, Sharon's government declared that it would withdraw settlements and its forces from Gaza. Nearly 8500 Israeli settlers vacated their home and the control of Gaza was given to PA (Harel, 2015). This move was mainly to cut Israel's losses in Gaza and to pursue the major goals of annexing Jerusalem, Jordan Valley and increasing settlements in the West Bank. Sharon's government

could not achieve its objectives as Hamas won the 2006 election in Gaza. The US did not recognize the Hamas government and a civil war sparked in Gaza. Ehud Olmert became president after Sharon presented a proposal of significant territorial concessions. He presented 5.8% of Israeli farmland to Palestinians in exchange for 6.3 percent of the land of the West Bank comprising major Israeli settlements. PA authority did not accept the proposal, as there was no exclusive indication to resolve issues of refugees and the withdrawal of Israeli forces (McMahon, 2011). Netanyahu replaced Olmert and became once again Israel's prime minister, as Olmert was charged with corruption. Netanyahu immediately halted all negotiations and termed these talks perilous for Israel's survival. His government started 'Operation Cast Lead', which further strained the relationship between both sides.

5. 7. 2010-2024: Peace Talks in Netanyahu Era

President Obama's government approached for the settlement between the two sides in 2009. The key element of the US intention was to commit Netanyahu's government to freeze settlement in the West Bank. Israel settled for nine-month freeze in the West Bank; however, it continued its construction in East Jerusalem (Siniver, 2011). The US President also stated that for the better peace of the two sides, the border should be based on the 1967 lines with mutual collaboration and swaps. The Israeli establishment objected the statement and added that the country would not pursue a pact based on illusions (Ruebner, 2016; Gilboa, 2013). US Secretary of State John Kerry started a series of confidence-building measures in 2014. Netanyahu's government showed a willingness to release Palestinian prisoners in four parts. It also agreed to halt settlements

in the West Bank. In retrospect, Palestinians agreed to halt their progress to be recognized by the UN and other international agencies. In every major fights between Israel with Hamas, the US sided with Israel and supported its right to defend itself. The US also voted against the “non-member Observer State status” of Palestine to please the Israelis (Saltzman, 2016). President Donald Trump went a step ahead and recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and relocated its embassy to the city in 2018 (Yahaya, 2020; Rinehart, 2018).

The President recognized the Golan Heights annexation to Israel, which Syria has claimed as its rightful property. He argued in 2019 that Israeli settlements in the West Bank are not entirely illegal (Erdoğan & Habash, 2020); Israeli settlements in the West Bank had not been recognized by any states before. He also gradually slashed bilateral aid to the Palestinians and closed the PLO office in Washington, DC (Brunnstrom, 2018). There have been efforts from different countries and political leaders to resolve the issue. These leaders have opted for two-state solutions for the peaceful settlement of this dispute. Recently, Norway, Ireland and Spain have recognized Palestine as an independent state (Landauro, 2024). The decision has been opposed by the Israeli government and it has decided to recall its ambassadors from these countries. The atrocities of the Zionist regime reached to apex during the President Biden era. October 2023 reached to pinnacle and calls for an immediate solution of the conflict. President Biden has also stressed for the two-state solutions to end the conflict. It is evident from past pacts, negotiations and agreements that both sides in one way or another have rejected many proposals regarding two-state solutions. Both sides have raised multiple concerns and reservations over different proposals. The next section will discuss the prospect of a two-state solution of this conflict.

6. The Debate of One or Two State Solution of the Conflict and Right of Return

The diplomatic initiatives for much of the twenty-first century to resolve the conflict have fallen short. The major powers mainly USA and UK advocate for the two-state solution of the conflict (Beinin, 2015). The UN also favors a two-state solution of the conflict. It argues that the only legitimate way of ending this violence and brutality is a two-state solution. These powers envisage a Palestine state in the Gaza Strip and West Bank linked by a corridor through Israel (El-Hasan, 2010). Even after more than seventy years since the conflict began, all diplomatic efforts such as the Oslo Accords, the Camp David meetings, the Clinton Parameters, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Olmert-Abbas talks, the Kerry peace efforts, as well as President Obama, President Trump and President Biden's efforts and many other initiatives from different countries and organizations have remained unsuccessful to convince both sides for a greater compromise or a solution which would benefit all stakeholders. The diplomatic efforts, accords, summits, and negotiations brooked by major powers have mainly emphasized the two-state solution of the conflict; however, by most standards, there have been insignificant progress and intensity from both conflicting sides toward a two-state solution (Azoulay & Ophir, 2012). By comparing complex realities on the ground, destabilization of the region of recent Iran-Israel rifts, weakened peace process and political trends of conflicting sides have made the situation more challenging for a two-state solution. Moreover, the two-state solutions have been severely opposed by the majority of Palestinians (Tilley, 2005). A senior member and Secretary General of the Global Campaign to Return to Palestine expressed his views that although a two-state solution has been accepted by PLO and the Palestinian Authorities, it is always

challenged by the majority of Palestinians and Hamas, which is followed by the majority of Palestinians (Personal Conversation, 03 November 2024).

Both sides have preferred a one-state solution instead of two-state solution. Both Jews and Muslims have a historical inclination towards Palestine. Since Israel's creation, Palestinians as well as Arab countries condemn its creation. Palestinians believe that this land belongs to them; as a result, every settler should be expelled from the land. The Israeli parliament (Knesset) has recently presented a resolution about the status of a Palestinian state. Knesset rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state. A high majority of members opposed the establishment of a separate Palestine. The resolution is passed by the majority of numbers. The resolution argued that a free and independent Palestine will present an existential threat to the survival of Israel, Jews and nevertheless destabilize the region (VoA News, 2024). All the Jews across the world have not such view. Rabbi Dovid Feldman, a New York-based Jewish activist and a spokesman for an international organization of anti-Zionist Jews reveals that the real peace that existed in Palestine before the creation of Israel in 1948 can only be reestablished and returned if the international community dismantles the illegal and rogue state of Israel and transfer all the territories and control to its indigenous inhabitants who have been living in Palestine (Press TV, 2023). A senior member of The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (*PFLP*) also believes that Palestine has been occupied by Zionists by force and crimes, and that the ongoing conflict can only be resolved by transferring all the territories to Palestinians and by ceasing the Zionist movement (Personal Conversation, 08 October 2024).

Another member of the Palestine Islamic Jihad maintains that

there must be a referendum to settle this dispute. All the Palestinians and Jews should be given the choice of voting to decide on their future (Personal Conversation, 14 September 2024). Presently, there are about 7.2 million Jews and 7.1 million Muslims including additional territories such as the Golan living in historic Palestine. In addition, there are a further 7 million Palestinians in the Diaspora, 6.3 million in Arab countries, and around 750,000 elsewhere. All these account for 21 million, among which two-thirds are Palestinian (Miller, 2024). With such a large Palestinian population, the state of Israel would be voted out of existence if people are asked to decide their state by the democratic (referendum) process. The idea of a referendum has been officially registered by the Islamic Republic of Iran at the United Nations. A prominent religious scholar argued that all the refugees must be allowed to return to their original homes. The peace in the region cannot prevail unless Palestinian refugees are guaranteed the right of return.

The Palestinians, along with Hamas, would keep their formidable resistance alive until the Palestinian refugees are granted the right of return. It is apparent from the seven decades-long resistance of Palestinians that they would not allow the Zionist regime to settle. They would keep targeting Zionist establishment to free their land from occupation. Israelis would never be able to stop Palestinians' resistance and right to self-determination by any means of force and aggression (Press TV, 2024). By analyzing previous accords and discussing with some prominent members of different organizations working in Palestine, some findings have been presented for the peace of the land.

- A lasting peace cannot be established until all Palestinian refugees are given the right to return to their lands.

- A two-state solution to the conflict is not possible for the permanent settlement of the dispute, as both sides want total control and complete jurisdiction over the land.
- The conflict will continue to linger until a single dominant state is established and recognized by the international community.
- Palestinians believe that total De-Zionism from their land will guarantee a state of their own.
- Palestinians also believe that a sovereign Palestinian state can only be established by taking all occupied lands from Israel.
- Israeli religious as well political leadership cannot compromise a separate independent Palestinian state.

7. Conclusion

The core of the Palestine-Israel conflict is the claim of two sides on the same piece of land. International agencies, organizations and major powers have remained unsuccessful in reaching any compromise between Palestinians and Israelis. Failed negotiations, agreements and accords indicate that both sides would not settle on any solution threatening their survival. Palestinians have been living in the land for many centuries before the creation of Israel. Zionists occupied Palestinian land and displaced millions of inhabitants from their homes. The international laws, UN agencies and majority of states call for the return of these Palestinians. Israel has restrained millions of refugees from returning. The conflict cannot be solved unless the refugees return to their homes. It is also very important that all inhabitants of the land, not the settlers, should decide for the solution of the conflict. There is no state in the world like Israel, created by the advent of settlers and immigrants. It is evident that even after seven decades of

continuous clashes and wars Palestinians would never accept the illegal state of Israel and the division of their land. They would not settle on any decision until Israelis vacate their land.

References

- Abdallah, S. L., & Parizot, C. (2016). *Israelis and Palestinians in the Shadows of the Wall: Spaces of Separation and Occupation*. Routledge.
- Abdelrazek, A. (2008). Israeli Violation of UN Resolution 194 (III) and Others Pertaining to Palestinian Refugee Property. *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture*, 15(16), 47-53. <https://www.proquest.com/docview/235690685?sourcetype=Scholarly%20Journals>
- Alroey, G. (2014). *An Unpromising Land: Jewish Migration to Palestine in the Early Twentieth Century*. Stanford University Press.
- Azoulay, A., & Ophir, A. (2012). *The One-state Condition: Occupation and Democracy in Israel/Palestine*. Stanford University Press.
- Bayefsky, A. (2003). Israel, the United Nations, and the Road Map. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 25(5), 373-394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10803920390246599>
- Beinin, J., & Hajjar, L. (2014). Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A Primer. Middle East Research and Information Project. <https://merip.org/palestine-israel-primer/>
- Beinin, J. (2015). Coexistence, Equality, and Universal Principles in Israel/Palestine: Regrouping in the Absence of a Two-State Solution. *Tikkun*, 30(2), 9-10. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08879982-2876581>

- Ben-Meir, A. (2010). The Arab Peace Initiative: Now or Never. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, 19(2), 228-233. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1949-3606.2010.00031.x>
- Ben-Dror, E. (2007). How the United Nations Intended to Implement the Partition Plan: The Handbook Drawn up by the Secretariat for the Members of the United Nations Palestine Commission. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43(6), 997-1008. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200701568402>
- Bercovitch. (1997). Conflict Management and the Oslo Experience: Assessing the Success of Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking. *International Negotiation*, 2(2), 217-235. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718069720847951>
- Bornstein, A. (2010). Palestinian Prison Ontologies. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 34(4), 459-472. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10624-010-9197-3>
- Brunnstrom, D. (2018). Trump Cuts More than \$200 Million in U.S. Aid to Palestinians. <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/trump-cuts-more-than-200-million-in-us-aid-to-palestinians-idUSKCN1L923C/>.
- Byman, D. (2024). A War They Both Are Losing: Israel, Hamas and the Plight of Gaza. *Survival*, 66(3), 61-78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2024.2357484>
- Caplan, N. (2019). *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Contested Histories*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Custer Jr, S. (2010). United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA): Protection and Assistance to Palestine Refugees. In *International Law and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (pp. 55-78). Routledge.

- Darr, S. (2014). The Expansion of Israeli Settlements in the West Bank and Their Impact on Displacement. *Journal of Palestinian Refugee Studies*, 316, 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.12816/0014079>
- Elessi, K. (2023). Save Gaza Residents from Imminent Catastrophe. *The Lancet*, 402(10412), 1522-1523. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(23\)02299-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)02299-7)
- El-Hasan, H. A. (2010). *Israel or Palestine? Is the Two-state Solution Already Dead?: A Political and Military History of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*. Agora Publishing.
- Erdoğan, A., & Habash, L. (2020). US Policy Toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict under the Trump Administration. *Insight Turkey*, 22(1), 125-146. <https://doi.org/10.25253/99.2020221.09>
- Falk, R., Dugard, J., & Lynk, M. (2023). *Protecting Human Rights in Occupied Palestine: Working Through the United Nations*. SCB Distributors.
- Freedman, R. O. (1986). *The Middle East After the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon*. Syracuse University Press.
- Freedman, R. O. (2018). George W. Bush, Barack Obama and the Arab-Israeli Conflict from 2001 to 2011. In *Israel and the United States* (pp. 36-78). Routledge.
- Galtung, J. (1972). Conflict Theory and the Palestine Problem. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 2(1), 34-63. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.1972.2.1.00p0021h>
- Gilboa, E. (2013). Obama in Israel: Fixing American—Israeli Relations. *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 7(2), 19-28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2013.11446549>

- Grossman, D. (2017). *Rural Arab Demography and Early Jewish Settlement in Palestine: Distribution and Population Density During the Late Ottoman and Early Mandate Periods*. Routledge.
- Hammami, R., & Tamari, S. (2001). The Second Uprising: End or New Beginning?. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 30(2), 5-25. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2001.30.2.5>
- Hanieh, A. (2001). The Camp David Papers. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 30(2), 75-97. <http://ereserve.library.utah.edu/Annual/HIST/4490/Nazzal/campd.pdf>
- Harel, A. (2015). *"The Eternal Nation Does not Fear a Long Road": An Ethnography of Jewish Settlers in Israel/Palestine* [Doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University-Graduate School-New Brunswick]. <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/48507/PDF/1/play/>
- Hunter, F. R. (1993). *The Palestinian Uprising: A War by Other Means*. University of California Press.
- Khalidi, R. I. (2014). From the Editor: Israel: A Carceral State. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 43(4), 5-10. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2014.43.4.5>
- Khan, M. F., Ahmad, N., & Matloob, S. (2024). Humanitarian Crisis and International Response: "A Case Study of the Gaza Conflict Aftermath on October 7, 2023". *Jahan-e-Tahqeeq*, 7(2), 990-1014. <https://jahan-e-tahqeeq.com/index.php/jahan-e-tahqeeq/article/view/1552/1432>
- Landauro, I. (2024). Spain, Ireland and Norway Recognise Palestinian Statehood. <https://www.reuters.com/world/spain-ireland-norway-set-recognise-palestinian-statehood-2024-05-28/>.
- Lynk, M. (2007). Conceived in Law: The Legal Foundations of Resolution 242. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 37(1), 7-23. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2007.37.1.7>

- McMahon, S. (2011). Post-Oslo Peace Initiatives and the Discourse of Palestinian-Israeli Relations. *Revista UNISCI*, 26, 27-58. https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/767/Resumenes/Abstract_76718800002_2.pdf
- Miller, D. (2024). Not Two-state Solution, the Only Panacea for Palestine Is to Dismantle Zionism. *The Press*. <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2024/02/21/720494/not-two-state-solution-only-way-out-palestine-dismantle-zionism>
- Monshipouri, M. (2024). Lessons for Israel's Gaza War In America's Strategic Blunders. *Middle East Policy*, 31(2), 3-18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12744>
- Morris, B. (2009). One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict. Yale University Press.
- Nasrallah, R. (2013). The first and second Palestinian intifadas. In J. Peters, & D. Newman (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (pp. 74-86). Routledge.
- Neff, D. (1994). The Clinton Administration and UN Resolution 242. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 23(2), 20-30. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538228>
- O'Ballance, E. (1998). The Oslo Accords. In E. O'Ballance, *The Palestinian Intifada* (pp. 155-170). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Peretz, D. (2019). Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising. Routledge.
- Pressman, J. (2003). Visions in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba?. *International Security*, 28(2), 5-43. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/50967>
- Press TV. (2023). Palestine Belongs to Its Indigenous Inhabitants, not Zionist Occupiers: Rabbi. <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2023/12/02/715663/palestine-belongs-indigenous-inhabitants-not-zionist-occupiers>

- Press TV. (2024). The Urgent Need for 'Global De-Zionization'. <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2024/02/15/720121/The-only-just-and-workable-solution-to-the-problem-of-the-occupation-of-Palestine-is-to-end-the-Zionist-colony>
- Quandt, W. B. (2015). *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Radley, K. R. (1978). The Palestinian Refugees: The Right to Return in International Law. *American Journal of International Law*, 72(3), 586-614. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2200460>
- Rinehart, C. S. (2018). President Trump and Jerusalem: The Effects of the Relocation of the American Embassy on the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. *The Journal for Interdisciplinary Middle Eastern Studies*, 2, 25-45. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325793664_President_Trump_and_Jerusalem_The_Effects_of_the_Relocation_of_the_American_Embassy_on_the_Israeli-Palestinian_Peace_Process_Special_Issue_The_Middle_East_and_Israel-From_War_to_Reconciliation_Journal
- Rjoob, A., & Topcu, G. (2024). Israel's Occupation: 76 Years of Palestinian Tragedy. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/israels-occupation-76-years-of-palestinian-tragedy/3217700>
- Roberts, A. (1990). Prolonged Military Occupation: The Israeli-occupied Territories since 1967. *American Journal of International Law*, 84(1), 44-103. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2203016>
- Robinson, S. (2013). *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel's liberal Settler State*. Stanford University Press.
- Rodman, D. (2010). The Israel Air Force in the 1967 and 1973 Wars: Revisiting the Historical Record. *Israel Affairs*, 16(2), 219-233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121003643862>

- Rosenfeld, M. (2009). From Emergency Relief Assistance to Human Development and Back: UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees, 1950–2009. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 28(2-3), 286-317. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdp038>
- Rowley, C. K., & Taylor, J. (2006). The Israel and Palestine Land Settlement Problem, 1948–2005: An Analytical History. *Public Choice*, 128, 77-90. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-006-9045-9>
- Ruebner, J. (2016). Obama's Legacy on Israel/Palestine. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 46(1), 50-64. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2016.46.1.50>
- Sa'di, A. H., & Abu-Lughod, L. (2007). *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*. Columbia University Press.
- Saltzman, Z. (2016). Much Ado About Nothing: Non-Member State Status, Palestine and the International Criminal Court. *Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 3(2), 162-209. <https://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=jicl>
- Sanders, J. (1999). Honest brokers? American and Norwegian Facilitation of Israeli Palestinian Negotiations (1991-1993). *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 21(2), 47-70. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/41858284.pdf?refreqid=fastly-default%3A8dcba1bb59665cea85c8c6a2ad1722&ab_segments=&initiator=recommender&acceptTC=1
- Sasley, B. E., & Sucharov, M. (2011). Resettling the West Bank Settlers. *International Journal*, 66(4), 999-1017. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/002070201106600423>
- Shafir, G. (2012). Settler Citizenship in the Jewish Colonization of Palestine. In C. Elkins, & S. Pedersen (Eds.), *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century* (pp. 41-58). Routledge.

- Siniver, A. (2011). Change Nobody Believes In: Obama and the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 22(4), 678-695. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2011.625825>
- Strieff, D. (2013). *The President and the Peacemaker: Jimmy Carter and the Domestic Politics of Arab-Israeli Diplomacy, 1977-1980* (Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science). http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/802/1/Strieff_President_and_Peacemaker.pdf
- Tal, D. (2016). Who Needed the October 1973 war?. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 52(5), 737-753. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263206.2016.1186655>
- Tilley, V. (2005). *The One-State Solution: A Breakthrough for Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Deadlock*. Manchester University Press.
- Usher, G. (2006). The Wall and the Dismemberment of Palestine. *Race & Class*, 47(3), 9-30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396806061084>
- VoA News. (2024). Israeli Parliament Votes to Oppose Formation of Palestinian State. <https://www.voanews.com/a/israeli-parliament-votes-to-oppose-formation-of-palestinian-state/7703280.html>
- Weiner, J. R. (1996). An Analysis of the Oslo II Agreement in Light of the Expectations of Shimon Peres and Mahmoud Abbas. *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 17(3), 667-704. https://jcpa.org/pdf/analysis_oslo_weiner.pdf
- Wilson Center. (2023). Doctrine of Hamas. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/doctrine-hamas>
- Yahaya, J. U. (2020). President Trump Peace Strategy: Emerging Conflict between Israel and Palestine. *International Affairs and Global Strategy*, 82, 25-37. <https://doi.org/10.7176/IAGS/82-04>