



# The Two-State Solution: History and Challenges

July 2024

## 1. Introduction



The two-state solution has long been the primary focus in negotiations to resolving the Palestine-Israel conflict, favored by the United States, the European Union, most of the world's democracies, and the United Nations. It advocates “two states for two people”, i.e., an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel with both sides running their countries peacefully and independently. While widely considered the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians and still officially endorsed by a significant majority of states and organizations, there have been increasing voices and warnings that the two-state solution is on the verge of collapse, if not dead altogether. Indeed, by 2023, it seemed to have lost its momentum and become secondary to de facto absent on the agendas of the international community, which has turned a blind eye to Israel's continuous policy of changing the facts on the ground in ways that made a two-state solution increasingly impractical. However, Israel's war against Gaza after the Hamas attack in southern Israel on 7 October 2023, has brought the Israeli-Palestinian conflict back into international spotlight – and with it the untenability of the status quo ante and the need for a two-state solution as the only post-war horizon for a lasting solution and sustainable peace.

### Contents:

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Historical Background – Emergence and Evolution of the Two-State Solution .....	2
3. Main Actors and Official Positions .....	10
3.1 Palestine .....	10
3.2 Israel .....	11
3.3 International Community .....	13
4. Key Concepts of the Two-State Solution and Alternatives .....	15
5. Public Opinion Over Time .....	17
6. Revival of the Two-State Solution After October 7, 2023 – Too Late, Dead or Still Possible? .....	24
6.1 International Commitment: from Fatigue to Revived Interest? .....	24
6.2 The Domestic Scene: Continuous Opposition or New Avenues? .....	27
Conclusion .....	29
Annex: Arguments Pro and Contra the Two-State Solution .....	30

But what do people mean when they speak about the two-state solution? How long has the idea been around? What are the arguments for and against the two-state solution? What are the prospects for its realization and are there any alternatives? This bulletin attempts to explain these and other questions by describing the historical context, evolution, key concepts, major players, and challenges surrounding the two-state solution, assessing its viability, and discussing the influence of the Gaza war on it as well as international commitment, local political dynamics in Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories, and public opinion.

**PASSIA**

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem

Tel: +972-2-6264426, Fax: +972-2-6282819, E-mail: [passia@passia.org](mailto:passia@passia.org), Website: [www.passia.org](http://www.passia.org), PO Box 19545, Jerusalem

## 2. Historical Background – Emergence and Evolution of the Two-State Solution

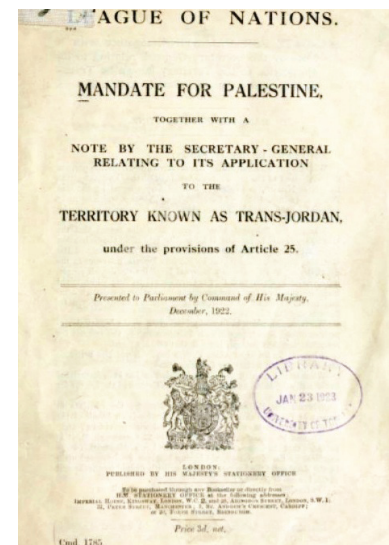
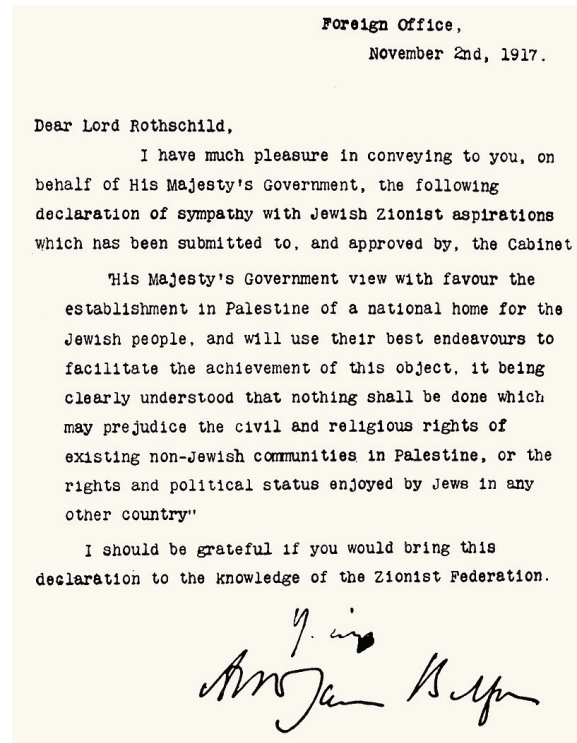
The roots of the concept of a two-state solution can be traced back to World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, when Jewish and Palestinian nationalisms and their respective aspirations for statehood in historical Palestine began to compete and clash. This was fueled in no small part by promises made by the UK to both groups, most prominently with the issuance of the **1917 Balfour Declaration** in support of Jewish homeland in Palestine, but also with holding out the prospect of independence for the Arab allies.<sup>1</sup>

The text of the Balfour Declaration, which recognized Jewish people's *national right* to self-determination, while only stating that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities,"<sup>2</sup> was included in the **British Mandate** document ratified by the League of Nations in **1922**. This distinction between national vs. cultural/religious rights has remained at the very core of the conflict ever since.

The policies of Jewish Herbert Samuel, who was appointed as first British High Commissioner of Palestine (until 1925), are widely seen as having set the foundations for a Jewish takeover of Palestine as he denied Palestinians a cohesive authority, while allowing the Jews to build institutions, granting them the right to levy taxes, and establishing a land administration that set the precedent for a system of expropriation which is still employed by Israel today.

Increasing Jewish immigration in the **1920s and 1930s** led to recurrent **outbreaks of violence** between the Arab and Jewish populations, which were subsequently examined by British commissions of inquiry<sup>3</sup>, all of which recommended limitations on Zionist immigration and land purchases as they caused Arab fears of Jewish dominance and thus the unrests. The **1937 Peel Commission** (sent to investigate the 1936 **Palestinian Great Revolt** against the British) was the first to propose a two-state solution, on the basis that the Mandate was unworkable, that the two sides could not live in peace together in one state, and that Palestine should thus be partitioned into a Jewish and an Arab state. The subsequent **1938 Woodhead Commission**, sent to study the practicability of the Peel

Commission recommendations and make a plan for two states, concluded that partition was impracticable, but issued three proposals (Plans A, B, and C), which were all rejected by the Zionists due to the limited scope of the proposed Jewish state.



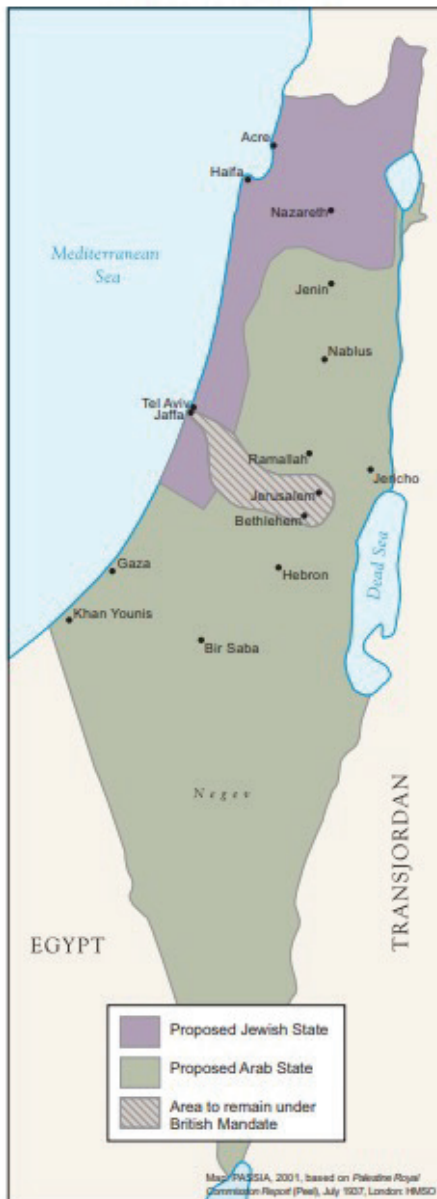
1 E.g., the correspondence between Sir Henry MacMahon and the Hashemite leader Sharif Hussein ibn Ali of Mecca (known as Hussein-McMahon correspondence) which encourage the latter to ally with Britain against the Ottomans in return for British support for Arab independence and a unified Hashemite kingdom.

2 [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/balfour.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/balfour.asp).

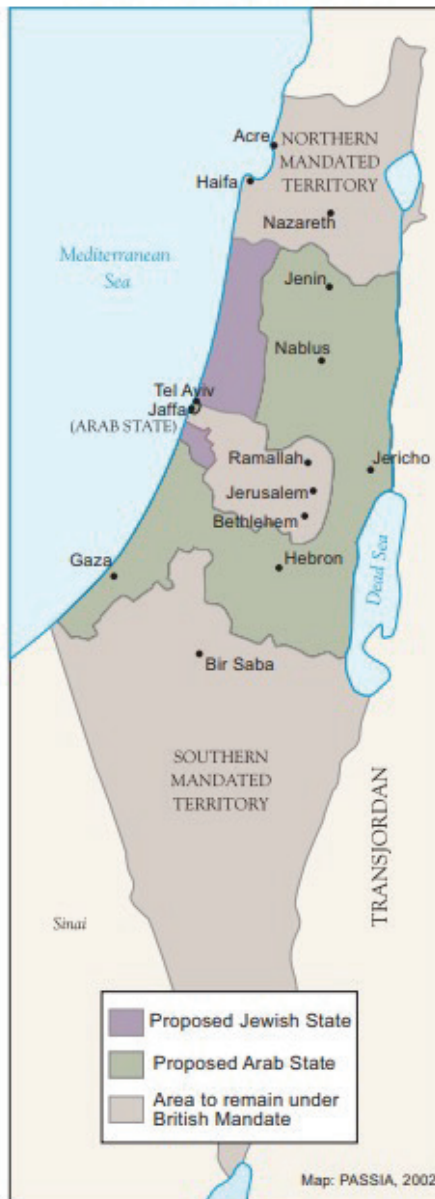
3 Haycraft Commission (1921), Shaw Commission (1930), Hope-Simpson Commission (1930), Peel Commission (1937).

# The Two-State Solution: History and Challenges

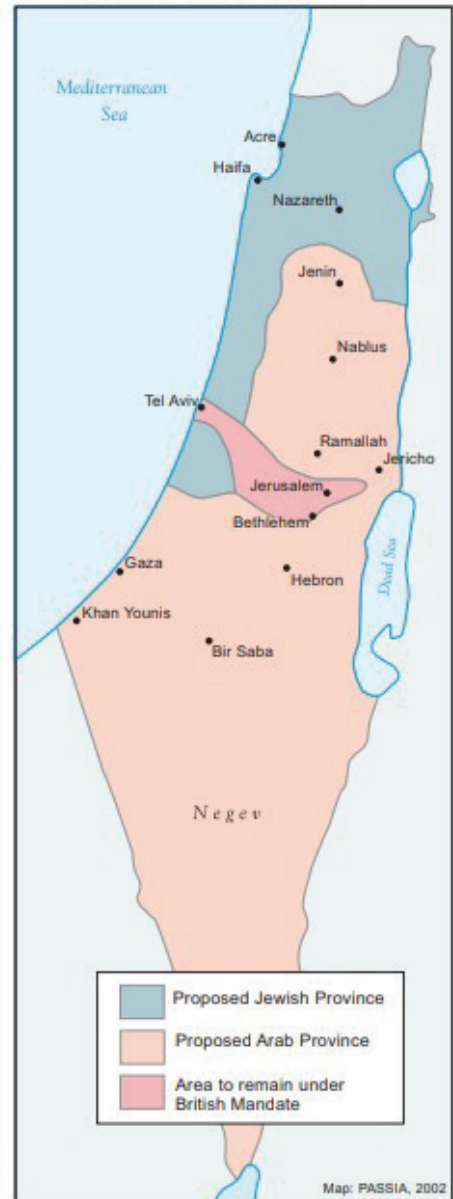
Peel Commission, 1937



Woodhead Commission, 1938



Morrison-Grady Plan, 1946



In 1939, the British government laid down its policy in the **MacDonald White Paper**, disclaiming any intention to create a Jewish state, placing restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchase, and envisaging an independent state in Palestine with a two-thirds Arab majority within 10 years. In response, the Zionists launched a bloody anti-British and anti-Palestinian campaign and mobilized American Jewry who formulated the idea of a 'Jewish Commonwealth' in Palestine at the **1942 Biltmore Conference**, which was endorsed by the US Congress and House of Representatives in 1944 and 1945 respectively. In 1945, a joint **Anglo-American Committee** of Inquiry was appointed to examine the continued Jewish immigration to Palestine in the wake of the Holocaust under the Nazi regime during World War II, but its proposal for a UN trusteeship was rejected. The subsequent **1946 Morrison-Grady Plan** (by British Deputy Prime Minister Herbert Morrison and US Ambassador Henry Grady) which proposed a federal solution in which the British Mandate would be converted into a trusteeship and the country divided into Jewish and Arab provinces, was also rejected by the 1946 **Palestine Roundtable Conference** in London, where Arab delegates instead proposed a unitary state of Palestine in which Jews would have full civil rights, which the Zionists discarded.

With the violence in Palestine continuing, Britain announced in February 1947 that it would cease its Mandate and hand the "problem" over to the UN, which then appointed a **Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP)** in May to investigate the situation on the ground and propose solutions. The UNSCOP report was published in September,

with a minority of the members recommending a federal solution and the majority recommending partition. The UN General Assembly adopted the latter on 29 November 1947 in **Resolution 181** (the **Partition Plan**), which is widely considered the “original” two-state solution: it divided Palestine into Jewish and Arab states with Jerusalem and Bethlehem as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime. Most Jews welcomed the Resolution as an achievement (i.e., international legal recognition for a Jewish state in Palestine), but did not intend to adhere to the proposed borders, which, as Ben-Gurion put it, “will be determined by force and not by the partition resolution”.<sup>4</sup> Palestinians and other Arabs rejected it as fundamentally unjust as the plan granted the Jews 56.47% of the territory at a time when they owned less than 7% of the privately owned land, with a population of 498,000 Jews and 325,000 Arabs, and the Palestinians only 43.53% of the land with 807,000 Arab inhabitants and 10,000 Jewish inhabitants.

With the passing of Resolution 181, violence surged again and extended into a regional war following Israel’s May **1948 Declaration of Independence**, leading to the expulsion of some 700,000 Palestinians mostly from the areas allocated to the Jewish state.<sup>5</sup> The **1949 armistice agreements** between Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria demarcated the Green Line, leaving the new State of Israel in control over 78% of historic Palestine, and the remaining 22% administered by Jordan (West Bank) and Egypt (Gaza Strip) respectively. These are still the internationally recognized borders on which the two-state solution is based.

During the next two decades, the Arab world did not recognize the state of Israel and called for the liberation of Palestine. The **1964 National Charter** of the newly established Palestinian Liberation Organization (**PLO**) referred to the “right of self-defense and the complete restoration of our lost homeland” and established that “Palestine is an Arab homeland” (Art. 1), that “Palestine with its boundaries at the time of the British Mandate is a regional indivisible unit” (Art. 2), that “The liberation of Palestine ... is a national duty” (Art. 14), and that “The Partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel are illegal and false” (Art. 17).<sup>6</sup>

The notion of partition made headlines again in **1965**, when Tunisian President **Habib Bourguiba** said during a visit to Jericho that Palestinians and Arabs should abandon the “all or nothing” principle and instead negotiate with Israel on the basis of the UN Partition Plan.<sup>7</sup> However, Israeli military assaults continued as well, most prominently with massacres in Qibya (1953), Qalqilya (1956), Khan Younis and Rafah (1956), and an attack on As-Samu’ village (1966) – all of which culminated in the **Six-Day War** in June **1967**, during which Israel occupied the remaining 22% of historic Palestine and carried out a second wave of expulsions, this time displacing about 300,000 Palestinians, including some 175,000 UNRWA-registered refugees for a second time. In November that year, **UNSC Resolution 242** called on Israel to withdraw its army from territories occupied in the course of the war, which, however, has yet to happen. Instead, Palestinians have ever since been denied political and civil rights while their lands were relentlessly confiscated and colonized with Jewish settlers. The PLO initially rejected



4 Pappé, Ilan, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications Ltd., 2006, p. 37. Zochrot, *Encountering the Nakba*, 2018 (PowerPoint presentation); <https://imeu.org/article/quick-facts-the-palestinian-nakba>.

5 See for details *The Nakba: 75 Years On*, PASSIA Bulletin, June 2023, <http://passia.org/publications/448>.

6 *Documents on Palestine - Volume II (1948-1973)*, Jerusalem, PASSIA, 2007.

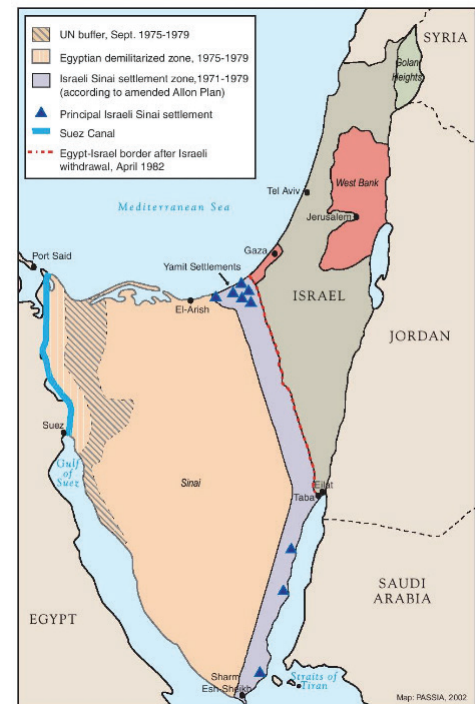
7 <https://theArabweekly.com/rediscovering-wisdom-bourguiba>.

UN Resolution 242 because it implied recognition of Israel's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, but as pressure mounted on the Palestinians to accept it and try to regain at least the 22% of their historic homeland, they gradually got used to the idea and decided to focus on building a state on whatever liberated part of Palestine.<sup>8</sup>

Following the **1973 Yom Kippur War**, **UNSC Resolution 338** called for the implementation of Resolution 242 and in **1974**, **UNGA Resolution 3236** reaffirmed the “inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including: a) The right to self-determination without external interference; b) The right to national independence and sovereignty”.

The partition idea was back in the debate after then US President **Jimmy Carter** declared in **1977** that “there has to be a homeland for the Palestinian refugees who have suffered for many, many years,” marking the first time that a US President had used such a phrase.<sup>9</sup> In its Six-Point Program issued in December 1977 in the wake of Sadat's “traitorous” visit to Israel, the PLO still strove for “an independent Palestinian national state on any part of Palestinian land, without reconciliation, recognition or negotiations, as an interim aim of the Palestinian Revolution.”<sup>10</sup> Negotiations on the **1978 Camp David Accords** and the **1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty** recognized the “legitimate rights of the Palestinian people” but came short of recognizing the right of the Palestinians to statehood and self-determination, instead discussing limited autonomy.

Camp David Accords, 1978-79



At this time and until after the 1982 Lebanon War, the PLO began to realize it could not defeat Israel militarily as there was no help from outside for such an effort; thus, the debate shifted with some calling for a political path and compromise with Israel (e.g., PLO representatives Said Hamami and Issam Sartawi, who were assassinated by the rival Abu Nidal group in 1978 and 1983 respectively, for advocating such an approach), while others, such as the DFLP and PFLP called for a continued struggle with military means. The **1980s** witnessed a flow of Arab-Palestinian political formulas – e.g., the **1982 Fez summit plan**, the **1985 Palestinian-Jordanian accords**, and the agendas of the **Palestinian National Council (PNC) sessions** in Algeria –, all of which called for ending the Israeli occupation, the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital and solving the refugee issues in accordance with UN resolutions. Internationally, the USSR presented the six-point **Brezhnev Plan** with the same essence in **1982**, while US President **Ronald Reagan** proposed a 5-year transition period, a self-governing Palestinian Authority, a freeze in settlement activity, and eventually a Palestinian entity, but in confederation with Jordan – also in 1982. In **1988**, after the outbreak of the first Intifada, US Secretary of State George **Shultz's initiative** called for peace negotiations based on Resolutions 242 and 338 between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Neither of these achieved any progress, but while Israel constantly adopted a rejectionist attitude, the Palestinian leadership became gradually more realistic and shifted its strategy, eventually accepting the idea of a “two state-solution” with a Palestinian state on only 22% of historic Palestine.<sup>11</sup> While this was mostly a pragmatic move, as this solution was internationally supported, Palestinians still see it as a historical concession – way beyond their dream of liberating their homeland entirely. This shift manifested in the Declaration of Independence that was issued at the **19<sup>th</sup> PNC** convening in Algiers on 15 November **1988**, proclaiming the State of Palestine on Palestinian

8 For a detailed account of this transition see Sayigh, Yezid (1997), *The Armed Struggle and Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949-1993*, Institute for Palestine Studies, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

9 <https://www.thecairoreview.com/tahrir-forum/faith-that-peace-will-one-day-come/>

10 *Documents on Palestine, Vol. III (1974-1983)*, Jerusalem: PASSIA.

11 See for example, Farsakh, L. H. (2021). “Introduction: The struggle for Self-Determination and the Palestinian Quest for Statehood,” in *Rethinking Statehood in Palestine: Self-Determination and Decolonization Beyond Partition*, eds. H. F. Leila (California: University of California Press): p. 3, doi: 10.1525/luminos.113.a

territory and explicitly endorsing the notion of two states for two people, one Jewish and one Palestinian. The PNC further confirmed its acceptance of UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis of an international peace conference. A month later, PLO Chairman Arafat addressed the UNGA in Geneva, reconfirming acceptance of 242 as well as of UNGA Resolution 181 (1947 Partition Plan), the creation of a Palestinian state and the two-state solution.

Some major events in the late 1980s/early 1990s – such as the Palestinian **Intifada (1987-1993)**, the **Gulf crisis and War (1990-1991)**, the subsequent beefing up of the US military presence in the region, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union (**1989-1991**) – prepared the ground to reshape relations and develop new policies.

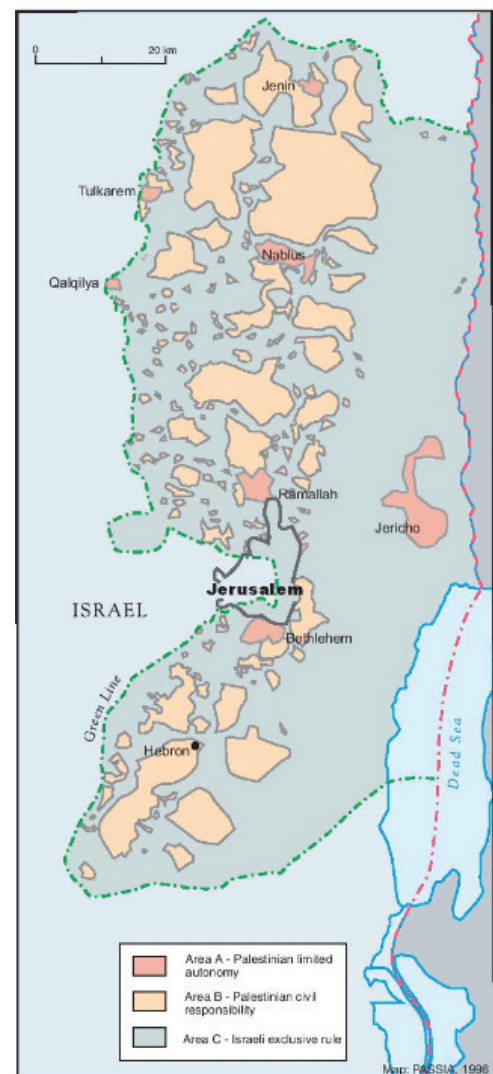
The first of these was the **Madrid Middle East Peace Conference** in October **1991**, called for by the US and attended by Europe, Russia, Arab states, Palestinians, and Israelis. It was based on the “land for peace” formula and followed by numerous meetings in Washington and elsewhere, which for the first time put issues such as borders, settlers, Jerusalem and refugees on the table. The Israelis tried to stick to the old “autonomy plan” of Prime Minister Begin, whereas Palestinian produced the “**PISGA (Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority) Plan**” in **1992**, which Israel rejected. At the same time, several secret channels were opened, one of which took place in Oslo and delivered the **1993 Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DoP)**, which provided the guidelines for a permanent settlement based on UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338 following a five-year interim autonomy for Palestinians. During this time, the difficult issues were to be discussed, i.e., how to share **Jerusalem**, which both sides claim as capital, how to deal with the right of return for **refugees**, what to do with the **settlements**, and what **security** arrangements and **borders** to agree upon. The signing of the DoP marked an historic turning point for Palestinians as they formally recognized the right of Israel to exist and reduced their claims to just 22% of the land of historic Palestine (West Bank, Gaza Strip & East Jerusalem).

Continued negotiations led to the **1994 Oslo I/Gaza-Jericho** and **1995 Oslo II/Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip**. The former saw Israeli redeployment from Gaza and Jericho and transfer of some authorities to the newly established Palestinian National Authority (PA), while the latter extended these to the remainder of the West Bank, which, however, was divided into Area A (full Palestinian civil jurisdiction and internal security), Area B (full Palestinian civil jurisdiction, joint Israeli-Palestinian internal security), and Area C (Israeli civil and overall security control). According to a poll conducted during this period, 49.8% of the Palestinians accepted the PLO’s solution, i.e., the establishment of two states, while 38.7% supported the Islamic solution, i.e., the liberation of all of historic Palestine.<sup>12</sup>

The problem with Oslo was that Palestinians accepted Israel in 78% of their historic homeland while Israel did not recognize Palestine in the remaining 22% but began to negotiate on them. Although the Oslo Accords implied to lead to a two-state solution, Israel knew how to carefully draft them with the result that a Palestinian state is not mentioned once in any of the texts.

As talks and diplomacy continued so did hope; however, there was also opposition on both sides – Israelis and Palestinians believing that the entire land was theirs respectively and therefore should not

1995 Oslo II/Interim Agreement



<sup>12</sup> CPRS Public Opinion Poll No. 13, November 1994.

be “traded” in the first place. Moreover, an increasing number of Palestinians got disillusioned as Israel refused to withdraw from the OPT and to freeze its settlement construction. Further negotiations on the implementation of Oslo II (**1997 Hebron Agreement, 1998 Wye River Memorandum, 1999 Sharm Al-Sheikh Agreement**) did not achieve anything at the time when the five-year interim period ended on 4 May 1999.

The **Camp David summit (2000)** was the final push to save the peace process but the talks did not bring the hoped-for breakthrough for a two-state solution but collapsed over issues of borders, settlements, Jerusalem and refugees. The subsequent US ‘Bridging Proposal’ (“**Clinton Parameters**”), *inter alia* proposing two independent states, borders based on 1967 with 3% land swaps, which served as basis for the **talks in Taba (2001)**, and the Ceasefire and Security Plan proposed by CIA Director George **Tenet (2001)** all ended in vain with additional distrust and mutual blaming for their failures. Throughout this period, the Palestinians felt that the so-called peace process was used as a cover to accelerate Israeli colonization while subsidizing the occupation under the guise of state-building, financed by the international community, and letting the two-state solution recede further and further into the distance.

Frustration and anger boiled over with Ariel Sharon’s provocative visit to Al-Aqsa Mosque, triggered clashes at the site that quickly spread and resulted in the **second Intifada**. At the same time, the events of **9/11** saw the US occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan (2001) and a US-led “war against terrorism” accompanied by the increasing containment of Islamic movements.

Nevertheless, diplomatic attempts continued, all of which pursued the two-state solution as their goal. In **2002**, the **Saudi peace initiative** was announced and adopted by the Arab League, offering “normal relations” with Israel for a full Israeli withdrawal, a just solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, and recognition of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. The high level of support for the Saudi initiative (70%, among Fateh supporters 77%) at the time indicated that the Palestinians remained firmly behind the two-state solution.<sup>13</sup>

In March **2002**, **UNSC Resolution 1397** marked a crucial milestone by reiterating UN commitment to the two-state solution, by “Affirming a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders.” In disregard of this and other resolutions, Israel began to unilaterally build a **separation barrier** on the pretext of “security” in the West Bank that year, which did not serve as a prelude to a future border between two states but to imprison, contain, isolate and humiliate Palestinians.<sup>14</sup> Also in 2002, the so-called **Middle East Quartet** was formed – comprised of the US, Russia, UN and EU, and tasked to help mediate negotiations towards an Israeli-Palestinian permanent status agreement. Concluding that a bi-national state will not be acceptable for Zionist or Jewish nationalist aspirations and that Israel’s ongoing occupation and denial of rights of the Palestinians will not ever bring stability, the Quartet came up with a new political formula, the **2003 “Performance-Based and Goal-Driven Road Map”**<sup>15</sup>, with a phased approach towards a final, comprehensive settlement within three years, based on a full two-state solution. The plan, which demanded PA reforms, a settlement freeze, an end to incitement and violence on both sides, the establishment of a Palestinian State within provisional borders, and final status negotiations on outstanding issues, was supported by 55% of the Palestinians, while 42% opposed it.<sup>16</sup> At the US-Israeli-PA Aqaba Summit to discuss the “Road Map”, Prime Minister Abbas vowed an end to “terrorism”, Prime Minister Sharon promised the dismantlement of settlement outposts and reiterated his commitment to a two-state solution, and President Bush stressed his commitment to “Israel’s security as a vibrant Jewish state” and to “freedom and statehood for the Palestinian people.” However, after the end of President Bush’s term of office in January 2009, the Road Map fell into the background.

13 PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll #4, May 2002. Another poll in 2010 still showed 60% support (37% opposition) for the Arab Peace Initiative calling for a two-state solution within the lines of June 1967. See PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll #35, March 2010.

14 78% of Palestinians believed that Israeli measures, including the building of the separation barrier, reduce the chances for the establishment of a Palestinian state. PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll #9, October 2003.

15 US Department of State, Press Statement, Washington DC, 30 April 2003.

16 PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll #7, April 2003.

In November **2003**, **UNSC Resolution 1515** reiterated the commitment to a two-state solution (per UNSC Resolutions 242, 338, 1397), urged an end to violence and endorsed the Road Map. Also in **2003**, two grassroots peace initiatives consistent with the Road Map and the “two states for two peoples” notion were launched: in June the **People’s Voice** initiative with six principles that address the core issues of a two-state solution, and in December the **Geneva Accord** with a detailed blueprint of a final status agreement, including arrangements for Jerusalem and Al-Haram Ash-Sharif (which Israel, however, condemned right away). In **2004**, then Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon introduced his unilateral **Gaza disengagement plan**, effectively ending the era of talks and attempts to negotiate a solution. A revised version of the plan was enacted **2005** through the removal of all settlement/military installations in the Gaza Strip and of four settlements in the northern West Bank.

With Hamas forming a **Palestinian unity government** in March **2006** – following its victory in the second PLC elections two months earlier – Israel suspended all remaining contacts with the PA. Meetings only resumed after the unity government was dissolved following the near civil war and **Hamas takeover of Gaza** in June **2007**, but with no results. Later that year the US-mediated **Annapolis Conference** aimed at relaunching direct talks on core final status issues but only produced a “joint understanding” regarding further talks, the goal of a peace treaty by the end of 2008, and a commitment to implement the Road Map obligations. **UNSC Resolution 1850** of December **2008** further underscored the importance of international and regional efforts to support a two-state solution and bring an end to the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, shortly afterwards the PA halted all negotiations in protest of Israel’s massive ‘**Operation Cast Lead**’ in Gaza.

Taking office in January **2009**, **US President Obama** made the peace process one of his top priorities. In a speech in Cairo in June 2009 he put pressure on Israel to accept a two-state solution, and urged the Palestinians to renounce violence and recognize Israel’s right to exist. Netanyahu, returned to power in Israeli elections in March, insisted on a demilitarized Palestinian state and recognition of Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people, while the PA insisted on a complete settlement freeze. After Netanyahu announced a partial 10-month freeze, Abbas – under US pressure – agreed to resume talks. Several meetings took place but the end of Israel’s settlement moratorium in September brought all activity to a halt.

In March **2011**, after a new round of meetings and in the midst of the **Arab Spring**, the Quartet declared that they held little hope for the resumption of talks as the differences between the two sides were far too wide. In January **2012**, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators met for the first time in over a year in Amman, but failed to revive peace talks. In May, then Israeli Defense Minister Barak suggested bypassing the stagnant talks with an interim agreement by imposing the borders of a future Palestinian state. Later that year and despite Israeli and US opposition, the Palestinians distributed a draft resolution to the UN seeking ‘non-member state’ status. Israel warned that it would consider partial or full cancellation of the Oslo Accords if the resolution was adopted. In July **2013** renewed peace talks were launched under the auspices of **US Secretary of State Kerry** in an initial timeframe of 6-9 months to discuss all the final status issues; talks continued in the following months but with no progress, *inter alia* due to ongoing settlement expansion and Israel’s failure to release the agreed fourth tranche of Palestinian prisoners. In April **2014**, Israel suspended the talks after Hamas and the PLO signed a **unity accord**, stating that it would not negotiate with any Palestinian government “backed by” Hamas.

After the Kerry initiative there were no more peace talks, until international efforts renewed in **2016** with France hosting a meeting of 28 delegations in June, which reaffirmed support for a two-state solution. On 1 July, the Middle East Quartet outlined key threats to the two-state solution and urged the parties to make progress, and on 23 December, **UN Resolution 2334** reiterated the condemnation of Israeli settlements as “flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution”. In yet another attempt to revive the peace process, over 40 foreign senior officials (but neither Israelis nor Palestinians) convened an international conference in Paris in January **2017**, which ended with a Joint Declaration reaffirming the two-state solution as the only way to achieve enduring peace. However, obstacles were put in this way in December, when President Trump announced the US’s recognition of Jerusalem as the unified capital of Israel, a move seen by the Palestinians as a destruction of the two-state solution and peace process. Encouraged by the friendly US



administration, Israel adopted its “Nation-State Law” in **2018**, which declared that “The Land of Israel is the historical homeland of the Jewish people, in which the State of Israel was established” and that “the exercise of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish People.”<sup>17</sup>

In **2019**, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared that the US no longer considered settlements a violation of international law,<sup>18</sup> and in January **2020**, the “Trump Plan” or “Deal of the Century” was publicized, drafted together with Israeli officials. Under the plan Israel would have had sovereignty over all existing settlements and been permitted to annex up to 30% of the West Bank as part of the suggested two-state solution, with Jerusalem as capital of Israel only. Israel welcomed the plan while the Palestinians firmly rejected it<sup>19</sup> and President Abbas halted almost all bilateral contacts with Israel in response. Israeli settlers and right-wing extremists also opposed the plan due to its envisioning a Palestinian state.

With the US election won by **Joe Biden** in November 2020, who had reiterated his commitment to a two-state solution during his presidential campaign, a little hope returned. In one poll, a majority of 57.4% of the Palestinian respondents thought the Biden’s election might open the door for the resumption of talks on the two-state solution, while 36.5% did not think so.<sup>20</sup>

In January **2021**, Egypt hosted the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Jordan to discuss ways to revive peace talks. In a joint statement, they called for practical steps to launch “credible negotiations” on achieving a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In a speech at the UNGA in September **2022**, then Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid expressed his support for „an agreement with the Palestinians, based on two states for two peoples.”<sup>21</sup> The international community hailed the comments, but also stressed the need for these words to translate into action, as did President Abbas who urged the Israeli government “to sit at the negotiating table immediately to implement the two-state solution,”<sup>22</sup> albeit in vain the statement.<sup>23</sup> In December 2022, the EU parliament passed a resolution, *inter alia* urging high-ranking officials to set up a European peace initiative with the end goal of a two-state solution and for the EU to “explore with Arab countries concerned how their respective normalization agreements with Israel could be conducive to the two-state solution.”<sup>24</sup>

As talks on normalization with Israel advanced in early **2023**, Saudi Arabia stressed that an agreement would not be reached without tangible and irreversible steps towards a two-state solution and a just arrangement for Palestinian refugees.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Netanyahu told the Knesset in July 2023 that Israel should “crush” Palestinian aspirations for statehood.<sup>26</sup> However, the Israel-Gaza War has brought the two-state solution back to the forefront – as the only way to lasting peace – advocated by a range of world leaders and organizations.

17 For the official English see <https://m.knesset.gov.il/EN/activity/documents/BasicLawsPDF/BasicLawNationState.pdf>.

18 A poll among Palestinians revealed that 66% believed that declaring settlements legal would destroy the two-state solution. See PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll #74, December 2019. The decision was retracted by the Biden administration in February 2024.

19 A February poll showed a decline in support for the two-state solution to 39%, marking the lowest in a PCPSR poll since Oslo, with 59% against. PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll #75, February 2020.

20 PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll #78, December 2020.

21 “Full text of Lapid’s 2022 speech to the UN General Assembly,” The Times of Israel, 22 September 2022; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-lapids-2022-speech-to-the-un-general-assembly/>.

22 UN (2022), Israeli, Palestinian Leaders’ Statements on Two-State Solution Positive Sign, but Words Must be Turned into Action, Speakers Tell Security Council – Press Release (SC/15042), 28 September 2022; <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/israeli-palestinian-leaders-statements-on-two-state-solution-positive-sign-but-words-must-be-turned-into-action-speakers-tell-security-council-press-release-sc-15042/>.

23 This should not be viewed as irrelevant and driven by political opportunism; at a time of public opposition towards a two-state solution and political neglect thereof, Lapid’s comments did not serve him politically, but planted a seed for bringing the issue back to the discourse; <https://israelpolicyforum.org/2022/09/29/lapid-says-the-magic-words/>.

24 The European Parliament (2022). European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2022 on the prospects of the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine (2022/2949(RSP)); [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0443\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0443_EN.html).

25 “Saudi FM rules out normalization with Israel without a two-state solution,” The Times of Israel, 20 January 2023; <https://www.timesofisrael.com/saudi-fm-rules-out-normalization-with-israel-without-a-two-state-solution/>.

26 Setton, K. (2023), “Netanyahu: Israel Should ‘Crush’ Palestinian Statehood Hopes,” The Medialine, 13 July 2023; <https://themedialine.org/by-region/netanyahu-israel-should-crush-palestinian-statehood-hopes/>

## 3. Main Actors and Official Positions

The two-state paradigm seems less and less relevant and an increasing number of observers and policy-makers openly question its feasibility<sup>27</sup> in face of Israel's *de facto* creeping annexation of the West Bank. However, others argue with the unsustainability of the one-state reality and still consider the two-state solution as the only alternative to the current situation.

### 3.1 PALESTINE

Stances on the two-state solution have shown varying levels of support and opposition within Palestinian leadership and society influenced by political dynamics and events. In recent years, support for the two-state solution has declined, especially among the younger generation. In principle, Palestinians still perceive the two-state solution as a powerful legal and a diplomatic tool in their struggle against Israeli occupation, annexation and apartheid, as it enjoys a broad international consensus.

Palestinians oppose all attempts of normalization and insist on an end to occupation and their right to self-determination. They are not willing to trade their national aspirations for the improvement of life conditions and perceive the emerging debate on the need to reconsider the two-state solution as part of Israel's efforts to normalize the Apartheid facts on the ground.<sup>28</sup>

Today, the PLO emphasizes the relevance of Resolution 242 as it is the only internationally acknowledged legal instrument which calls for negotiations based on the pre-1967 borders. However, while holding to its demand to establish a Palestinian state in only 22% of historic Palestine, it sometimes uses the one-state option as a "threat". During a visit to Washington in 2010, for example, President Abbas stated that "the hope is a two-state solution – a state of Palestine, independent, contiguous, viable Palestine living side by side in peace and stability and security with the state of Israel (...), but when people lose hope to have an independent state, they will think about a one-state solution."<sup>29</sup>

Palestinian factions are still divided on the issue. Initially, Fateh envisioned, as laid down in its constitution of the late 1960s, the "Complete liberation of Palestine" (Art. 12) and "the establishment of an independent democratic state with complete sovereignty on all Palestinian lands, and Jerusalem is its capital city" (Art. 13),<sup>30</sup> but has followed the PLO line ever since its establishment. Islamic groups continue to denounced the 'road map' as a 'plot' intended to end the Intifada without any Palestinian gains being achieved.

**Leftist PLO factions** historically have advocated for armed struggle against Israel, but their positions have evolved over time, reflecting changing political realities. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) traditionally rejected the idea of a two-state solution, advocating instead the establishment of a single, democratic state in all of historic Palestine. They criticized the Oslo Accords as failing to address the core issues but have participated under the umbrella of the PLO in debates and dialogues. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) has tended to support the two-state solution as part of the Palestinian national consensus, especially during the Oslo Accords era.

**Hamas** has not officially endorsed the two-state solution, but there have been nuanced shifts and considerations in their rhetoric and actions, reflecting a complex mix of ideological principles, pragmatic calculations, and external pressures. Hamas was founded on the principles of armed resistance and the rejection of Israel's

27 For instance, nearly half of the participants in a 2021 Foreign Affairs survey, 24 out of 59, either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is no longer viable." See article "Is the Two-State Solution Still Viable?", *Foreign Affairs*, 24 August, 2021, Section Ask the Experts.

28 See, for example, Shemer-Kunz, Yoav (2023), "Annexation, normalization and the two-state solution in Israel-Palestine", e. *Front. Polit. Sci.* 5:981237; <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpos.2023.981237/full>.

29 <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/mahmoud-abbas-visits-washington-key-quotes>.

30 <http://www.mideastweb.org/fateh.htm#Goals>.

existence, but seems to have acknowledged the current realities on the ground and communicated “pragmatic” willingness to consider a long-term truce or ceasefire with Israel, although there are still hardliners representing the rejectionist stance. In 2017, as a result of years of internal deliberation, Hamas revised its 1988 Charter; while still rejecting Israel’s “right to exist” and stressing the legitimacy and need to “liberate all of Palestine,” the 2017 Charta states that it is the “national consensus” to accept a sovereign Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders.<sup>31</sup> In the midst of the 2023/2024 Israel-Gaza War, Hamas official Khalil Al-Hayya said in an interview that Hamas would agree to a truce, lay down its weapons and turn into a political party if a sovereign Palestinian state was erected along the 1967 borders.<sup>32</sup>

Like Hamas, the **Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)** has historically opposed the two-state solution and advocated for a single Palestinian state but they remained vocal in their opposition to any agreements or negotiations that recognize Israel and accept a two-state solution.

## 3.2 ISRAEL



While Israel officially accepted UNSC Resolution 242, its actions on the ground have contradicted it ever since and obstructed its implementation. While defeating the Palestinian national movement, Palestinian identity and aspirations has always been part of Israel’s vision for the future, some voices called for Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories and dismantling settlements for the sake of peace. In 2001, ex-Shin Bet chief Ami Ayalon said “Only a Palestinian state will preserve the Jewish and democratic character of Israel” and that he therefore favors “unconditional withdrawal from the Territories – preferably in the context of agreement, but not necessarily.”<sup>33</sup> Former Prime Minister Shimon Peres was quoted as saying that “Israel must give up all of the land that it captured in the 1967 Middle East war. If you keep 10 percent of the land, you keep 100 percent of the conflict.”<sup>34</sup>

However, since around the time of the 2003 Road Map, Israel has worked to replace the two-state idea with that of an Israeli-controlled regime, which basically reflects today’s apartheid-like reality on the ground. Considering both withdrawal from or full annexation of the West Bank currently as not achievable, the Israeli strategy has become “managing” and/or “shrinking the conflict”, by improving the living conditions of the Palestinians (replacing the land-for-peace formula with “economic peace”) while expanding the grip on Palestinian territory and establishing both a one-state reality in which Palestinians have less rights and normalization with “moderate” Arab states.

In March 2014, Israel passed its ‘Referendum Law’, which requires a referendum on any future treaty that entails ceding land to which Israeli law applies. Since then, Israeli politics have seen further shift to the extreme right with formerly fringe ultranationalist ideas having become mainstream. In 2016, then-Minister for Education Naftali Bennett declared: “Today, the Israeli Knesset moved from heading toward establishing a Palestinian State to heading toward sovereignty in Judea and Samaria ... The outpost regulation bill is the tip of the iceberg in applying sovereignty.”<sup>35</sup> Prime Minister Netanyahu himself stated in 2017 that “This is the land of our fathers, this is our land. We are here to stay, forever ... There will be no uprooting of communities in the Land of Israel.”<sup>36</sup> Later that year, then-Minister for Jerusalem Affairs Ze’ev Elkin: “Khalas [‘enough’ in Arabic] with the story of two states.

31 Hamas, 2017, Article 21

32 <https://apnews.com/article/hamas-khalil-alhayya-qatar-ceasefire-1967-borders-4912532b11a9cec29464eab234045438>

33 Quoted in <https://electronicintifada.net/content/unconditional-withdrawal-territories-urgently-needed/3937>.

34 February, 24 2004; quoted in The American Task Force on Palestine (2005), *Palestine-Israeli 101, The Two-State Solution*, <https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/israel-palestine-presentation101v5/37751111>.

35 Jewish Link of New Jersey, “Jewish Home’s Bennett Says Outpost Bill Paves Way for Annexation of Judea and Samaria”, 8 December 2016. Available at [www.jewishlinknj.com/world-us/16063-jewish-home-s-bennett-says-outpost-bill-paves-way-for-annexation-of-judeaand-samaria](http://www.jewishlinknj.com/world-us/16063-jewish-home-s-bennett-says-outpost-bill-paves-way-for-annexation-of-judeaand-samaria).

36 “Netanyahu: Israel will stay in Judea and Samaria forever”, *Breaking Israel News*, 29 August 2017; available at [www.breakingisraelnews.com/93927/netanyahu-israel-will-stay-judeasamaria-forever/](http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/93927/netanyahu-israel-will-stay-judeasamaria-forever/).

There is no other option but the State of Israel, certainly between the Jordan [River] to the [Mediterranean] sea there will be one State.”<sup>37</sup>

The current Netanyahu government has maintained a firm stance against the two-state solution and a sovereign Palestinian state emphasizing Israel’s security control over the entire land west of the Jordan River. Its guiding principles, outlined in December 2022, explicitly declare that “*the Jewish people have an exclusive and unquestionable right to all areas of the Land of Israel*”<sup>38</sup> and pledge to “*promote and develop settlements in all parts of the Land of Israel – in the Galilee, the Negev, the Golan, Judea and Samaria*” (the latter referring to the West Bank), and express the intent that “[Israeli] sovereignty will be extended” throughout the occupied West Bank, including transfer from military to civilian control, which amounts to de facto annexation.

More recently, **Israeli officials and settler movements** have openly been calling for resettlement in Gaza. In December 2023, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich for example called for post-war Jewish settlements in Gaza<sup>39</sup> and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said at a conference in January 2024, Israel should “encourage voluntary migration” of Palestinians and return settlements to Gaza and the northern West Bank.<sup>40</sup> According to a Hebrew University survey, 33% of respondents support resettlement.<sup>41</sup>

In **Israeli society**, attitudes have also changed over time, although most Israeli Jews are content with the status quo of continued occupation. In the period between the first Intifada and the Oslo Accords, Israeli society was divided between those supporting the “land for peace”/two-state formula and those who opposed it. There is little left of the former group today, but those who remain in Israel’s shrinking peace camp still advocate for the two-state solution – albeit mainly for lack of an alternative on how else to end the occupation. They see the occupation is eroding Israel’s international standing, especially as major players such as the US and EU support a withdrawal to the borders of 1967. Others realize that Palestinian aspirations will not disappear any more than the ideology of Hamas will, and that “terrorism” cannot be defeated unless it loses its support base, which in turn is inconceivable without the prospect of a Palestinian state. They believe that the return to the two-state solution would help Israel regain international support and diminish Hamas’ popular backing significantly.

Even some **Zionists** view the two-state solution as a means to secure Israel’s long-term existence and protect its Jewish and democratic character. Hard-liner Zionists, including most settlers, however, see the two-state solution as a concession that would contradict Israel’s national interests. They advocate an expansionist agenda, not a compromising one, and argue that any kind of Palestinian state (which they totally reject) would be hostile towards Israel. Also ruling out a binational state for demographic reasons, they cling to the *status quo* of Israel’s control over the entire territory. A recent study found that Israeli settlers often (but falsely) believe that Palestinians are willing give up their national aspirations and dreams in exchange for better socioeconomic conditions.<sup>42</sup>

**Palestinian citizens of Israel** tend to favor the binational state option and vision of a shared state<sup>43</sup> which reflects their unity with the Palestinians under occupation and their sense of belonging to the Palestinian people as a whole.

37 Tovah Lazaroff, “Elkin: start preparing for one million settlers in the West Bank”, Jerusalem Post, 14 November 2017. Available at [www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Elkin-Start-preparing-for-one-million-settlers-in-the-West-Bank-514251](http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Elkin-Start-preparing-for-one-million-settlers-in-the-West-Bank-514251)

38 [https://www.adalah.org/uploads/uploads/Position\\_Paper\\_New\\_Government\\_19\\_April\\_2023.pdf](https://www.adalah.org/uploads/uploads/Position_Paper_New_Government_19_April_2023.pdf).

39 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/smotrich-touts-revival-of-gaza-settlements-after-war-says-no-innocents-in-strip/>.

40 <https://www.ft.com/content/9f55eb2c-5f2c-4399-b838-897c2e3e1585>.

41 <https://www.timesofisrael.com/majority-of-israelis-oppose-annexation-resettlement-of-gaza-poll/>.

42 Shemer-Kunz, Yoav (2023), “Annexation, normalization and the two-state solution in Israel-Palestine”, e. *Front. Polit. Sci.* 5:981237; <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpos.2023.981237/full>.

43 See for example, Kuttub, J. (2020). *Beyond the Two-state Solution*. Washington, D.C., Nonviolence International, and Ghanem, A., and Bavly, D. (2015). *Towards a Bi-National Homeland for Israelis and Palestinians: In Search of a Doable Solution – A United Democracy*. Saarbrücken: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing.

### 3.3 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Although the international community first adopted the two-state framework in 1947 with the UN Partition Plan, and has since promoted it through both diplomatic and economic means<sup>44</sup>, it has not acted accordingly. It not only failed in its realization but has also no coherent strategy to end the Israeli occupation or at least stop the constant settlement expansion, because of which hope for that solution is increasingly fading.<sup>45</sup> Israel “welcomes the international community’s ongoing mantra of two states because it perpetuates the illusion that such a solution is still within reach, and all that is needed is the right diplomatic magic sauce to make it happen,”<sup>46</sup> while continuing to underpin the one-state reality.

#### United States

The US have acted as mediator in various peace initiatives but is seen by Palestinians (and Arabs) as too biased towards Israel to be an honest broker. It sees the two-state solution, negotiated on the basis of UN Resolutions 242 and 338, as the basis of the path to peace and has repeatedly called for an end to the occupation and a “viable Palestinian State in which Palestinians can determine their own future on their own land and live in dignity and security.”<sup>47</sup>

Most recently, in the wake of the Israel’s war on Gaza, US President Joe Biden has called for the eventual implementation of the two-state solution<sup>48</sup> and said in January 2024 that there were “a number of types of two-state solutions”, possibly with a demilitarized Palestinian state.

#### Europe(an Union)

Since the 1970s, the EU has been the leading advocate of the establishment of a fully sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem as the only possible solution to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but has lacked the willingness to push Israel in that direction. In 1971, the European Community issued its first statement on the conflict, expressing support for UNSC Resolution 242 and a “just peace in the Middle East”.<sup>49</sup> The term “Palestinian” was not mentioned in any official statements and documents until 1973, when the EU recognized that “in the establishment of a just and lasting peace, account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.”<sup>50</sup> The early discourse focused on Palestinian rights, the need for a Palestinian homeland, and the illegality of Israeli settlements. It was not until the Venice Declaration of 1980, that the EU called for the “recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people” and “the need for a comprehensive solution to the ‘Palestinian problem’, including the issues of refugees and Jerusalem, in the context of negotiations.”<sup>51</sup>

44 The latter thought the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC), a semi-formal group of international donors promoting Palestinian economic development and state-building as well as negotiations towards a two-state solution that meets twice a year to examine the current situation.

45 In 2013, then US Secretary of State John Kerry stated that the window for a two-State solution was only “a year...to two years, or it’s over;” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/18/kerry-two-state-solution-middle-east>. In 2016, the UNSC warned that settlements are “dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-state solution,” <https://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>. In 2017, the EU warned of a one-state reality of unequal rights, <https://www.jta.org/2017/02/08/israel/eu-says-israels-new-settlements-law-leads-to-one-state-reality-of-unequal-rights>; and in 2021, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said that Israel’s annexationist policies had reached a “point where the prospect of a two-State solution has all but vanished”, <https://www.ft.com/content/c1210a21-0209-4c4b-8cb3-cfa31c3fdee0>.

46 <https://www.justsecurity.org/79777/the-international-community-and-israel-giving-permission-to-a-permanent-occupation/>.

47 E.g., former Secretary of State Powell November 19, 2001; <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2001-11-19-26-powell-66943982/377732.html>.

48 For example, during his State of the Union address in March 2024.

49 Persson, A. (2009), *The transformation of just peace: EU and the Middle East peace process*, Paper presented at a Seminar in Jerusalem, May 2009.

50 <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-180026/>.

51 [https://ecf.org.il/media\\_items/1476](https://ecf.org.il/media_items/1476).

In the 1990s, the EU started to promote a negotiated two-state solution, calling on Israel to “recognize the right of the Palestinians to exercise self-determination, without excluding the option of a state”<sup>52</sup> and in the Berlin Declaration of 1999, it explicitly endorsed a Palestinian state for the first time, saying it was “convinced that the creation of a democratic, viable and peaceful sovereign Palestinian State on the basis of existing agreements and through negotiations would be the best guarantee of Israel’s security and Israel’s acceptance as an equal partner in the region”, and declaring “its readiness to consider the recognition of a Palestinian State in due course.”<sup>53</sup> Since the Oslo process, however, the EU’s role has mainly been of financial value focusing on state-building initiatives, with a negligible influence on Israel’s policy, but clinging to the goal of a viable two-state outcome although it increasingly seemed to slip out of reach.<sup>54</sup> In 2014, EU member Sweden unilaterally recognized the Palestinian state, and in 2016, the EU supported UNSC Resolution 2334, which reaffirmed that Israeli settlements “had no legal validity” and were “a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.”<sup>55</sup> In December 2022, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell declared to the incoming Israeli government that “The two-state solution remains the best way of bringing lasting peace, stability and equal rights to both people.”<sup>56</sup>

## United Nations



UN Resolutions 242 (1967), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003), 1850 (2008), 2334 (2016) represent critical guidelines that have unlined the international community’s stance on the imperative of a two-state solution and the need to achieve this through negotiations. So far, however, living up to the principles of these resolutions has failed the test of history, and this, although 139 of the 194 members of the UN had already recognized the state of Palestine even prior to 7 October 2023.

## Arab and Islamic States



Arab and Islamic states influence to a varying degree regional dynamics and peace negotiations. More moderate Arab countries (such as Saudi Arabia and those that have diplomatic relations with Israel, including Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, and Bahrain) see the two-state solution as being the basis of the path to peace, while others, such as Iran and Syria, do not acknowledge Israel’s right to exist.

In 2002/2003, Saudi Arabia presented a peace plan for the Middle East, later endorsed by the Arab League, which called, *inter alia*, for the creation of a Palestinian state in exchange for “natural relations” with Israel. Israel rejected the plan, but it is still not off the shelves. Most recently, the Saudis have made it clear that they would not pursue further talks on joining the Abraham Accords without a ceasefire in Gaza and the establishment of a Palestinian state.



### المبادرة العربية للسلام

التي اقترحتها اللجنة العربية الرابعة عشر في بيروت - لبنان اذار 2002

انتهاء الاحتلال وسلام شامل مقابل علاقات  
دبلوماسية ومصيحية بين الفلسطينيين  
والصالحين العربي والاسلامي واسرائيل



المنظمة العربية للتعاون الإسلامي (OIC)



مجلس جامعة الدول العربية  
The Council of the League of Arab States



### Arab Peace Initiative

Adopted by the 14<sup>th</sup> Arab Summit in Beirut , Lebanon March 2002

57 Arab & Muslim Countries will Establish Full Diplomatic  
and Normal Relations with Israel in Return for  
Comprehensive Peace Agreement and  
Ending the Occupation



52 Amsterdam European Council, 16-17 June 1997, Presidency Conclusions, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/DOC\\_97\\_2](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/DOC_97_2).  
53 Presidency Conclusions, Berlin European Council, 24-25 March 1999; Berlin Declaration, 1999, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-205180/>.  
54 Strömbom, L. et al. (2023, June 26). “The two-state impasse in Israel/Palestine – The EU caught between egalitarian norms and expansionist realpolitik,” *Front. Polit. Sci.* 5:1049938. doi: 10.3389/fpos.2023.1049938.  
55 <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/179/66/pdf/n2317966.pdf?token=chjP8WnBVvYZw5Rfqh&fe=true>.  
56 [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/ep-pleinary-prospects-two-state-solution-israel-and-palestine\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/ep-pleinary-prospects-two-state-solution-israel-and-palestine_en).

## 4. Key Concepts of the Two-State Solution and Alternatives

The two-state solution refers to a proposed resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that envisions the creation of two separate, independent and viable states coexisting side by side: one for the Jewish people (Israel) and one for the Palestinian people, consisting of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, whose borders are based on pre-1967 lines with mutually agreed land swaps and guarantees for both states' security concerns. In many aspects, it would be sufficient to apply international law and resolutions to settle all issues for the implementation of the two-state solution – were it not for Israel, which has systematically failed to comply with international law and was able to do so unabated and with impunity like no other country.

Sticky points are:<sup>57</sup>

- **Jerusalem:** which has been discussed as a shared or divided capital for the two states in the past but remains a significant point of contention. For Palestinians, East Jerusalem is part of the occupied territory in accordance with UNSC Resolution 242 and should become their capital, while Jerusalem in its entirety should be an open city with no physical partition that would prevent free movement. For Israel, Jerusalem, east and west, is its capital under its exclusive sovereignty (as per its 1980 Basic Law).
- **Refugees:** proposed solutions ranged from compensation, return, or resettlement – or a combination of them; while Palestinians demand the right of return in accordance with UNGA Resolution 194, this is a contentious issue for Israel, which even refuses to acknowledge responsibility for the refugee issue and is only willing to consider a return to a potential Palestinian state. The crux of the matter here is that while currently about 55% of the world's Jewish population (about 8.6 million) live abroad, and in good conditions with no desire to relocate, the majority of the estimated 50.1% of Palestinians living in the Diaspora (7.3 million) live in bad socio-economic circumstances and cling to the hope to one day return to their homeland. It is, however, hard to imagine how a large number of potentially returning refugees could be accommodated.
- The status and future of the **settlements**, which are illegal under international law,<sup>58</sup> and **settlers**, whose number has almost quadrupled since Oslo, are seen by many as the greatest obstacle to peace. On the other hand, Israel has successfully evacuated settlements in Sinai and Gaza, the PLO has accepted that the large settlements in Jerusalem are a *fait accompli* (accounting for about one-third of the settlers), and the option of land swaps for the large settlement blocs, where the majority of the settlers live, has already been repeatedly on the negotiation table. Financial incentives would probably convince most of the remainder to relocate, unless they prefer to become permanent residents of the Palestinian state.
- **Borders:** in accordance with UN Resolution 242 the borders must be the June 4, 1967 lines. Within these, Palestinians want a sovereign, viable, and geographically contiguous state with a permanent territorial link between West Bank and Gaza. Israel insists on a border line that secures a solid Jewish majority within Israel and guarantees its security, which is why it wants to retain control of the land borders, airspace, and territorial waters of the entire country. The current route of the separation barrier is an obstacle as it runs over twice the length of the 1967 Green Line, to 85% within the West Bank. However, the International Court of Justice at The Hague has ruled already in 2004 that the barrier's path is illegal and must be torn down and compensation paid to the Palestinians adversely affected by it.

57 For more details see [http://passia.org/media/filer\\_public/10/b0/10b0f221-50c3-4758-9a7a-ee7f85834fa3/positions\\_on\\_outstanding\\_negotiation\\_issues.pdf](http://passia.org/media/filer_public/10/b0/10b0f221-50c3-4758-9a7a-ee7f85834fa3/positions_on_outstanding_negotiation_issues.pdf) and [http://passia.org/media/filer\\_public/a1/a5/a1a5c52a-65a4-480d-ad85-402b5ad5eb1a/neg\\_web3.pdf](http://passia.org/media/filer_public/a1/a5/a1a5c52a-65a4-480d-ad85-402b5ad5eb1a/neg_web3.pdf).

58 Especially Fourth Geneva Convention, Art. 47: "Protected persons who are in occupied territory shall not be deprived, (...) as the result of the occupation of a territory, into the institutions or government of the said territory, (...) nor by any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory." And Art. 49 "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies."

- **Water and natural resources:** Palestinians demand their water rights, the fair allocation of water and other natural resources, and compensation by Israel for the illegal use of their resources to date. Israel, however, insists on full control of all water sources and that additional water for Palestinians must not come out of the Israeli share but through wastewater treatment and developing of new sources.
- **Security:** For Israel, its security takes precedence above all else and requires defensible borders; therefore, it insists on complete Israeli control of the land and airspace and stipulates that a Palestinian state must be demilitarized. Palestinians do not want any Israeli presence or control over its borders and border crossings, but accept arms limitations and security cooperation. An international presence to protect borders, monitor crossings, resolve disputes has been accepted by Palestinians, but rejected by Israel.

## ONE-STATE SOLUTION

The main alternative to the two-state solution is one state for all – an idea that fundamentally departs from the partition and separation paradigm that existed since the 1930s towards one of mutual recognition of both peoples’ profound connection to the land and equal citizenship for all.

There should be no confusion between the terms one-state *reality*, i.e., the current status quo where Palestinians and Israelis often live side by side (e.g., Palestinians with Israeli citizenship or residency in Israel and Jerusalem, and settlers in the West Bank) but with unequal rights and Israel as an apartheid-like regime is in *de facto* control over the entire territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, and one-state *solution*, referring to a model of peace in which Palestinians and Israelis would live in one democratic state with equal rights.<sup>59</sup>

Talk of a one-state solution has gained traction as the two-state solution seems less and less viable, but due to demographic concerns and ideological differences the idea of a single democratic state is not at all an option for Israel since it would compromise the Jewish character of the state. For many Palestinians abandoning the goal of an independent Palestinian state is also a no-go, as it would imply their defeat after a long struggle against the occupation. Thus, the implementation of this proposal is extremely unlikely.<sup>60</sup>

## CONFEDERATION

A third option that has been discussed over again, albeit with less seriousness, is a confederation of two states in a shared homeland along the 1967 borders, as promoted, for example by the *A Land for All* initiative launched in 2012<sup>61</sup> or the *Holy Land Confederation* plan initiated in 2022 by former Israeli minister and Oslo negotiator Yossi Beilin, and Hiba Hussein, a former legal advisor to the Palestinian delegation at Oslo.<sup>62</sup>

To be sure, none of the above could be easily implemented and require commitment and concessions that neither side is presently willing or able to make.

59 See, for example, Michael Barnett, Nathan Brown, Marc Lynch, and Shibley Telhami, “Israel’s One-State Reality,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 14, 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/middle-east/israel-palestine-one-state-solution>.

60 See, for example, Sharvit Baruch, Pnina (2021), “Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Viability of One-State Models”, in *The Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)*, Tel-Aviv University, Memorandum no. 217, December 2021.

61 “From Conflict to Reconciliation: A new vision for Palestinian-Israeli peace. Draft for discussion”. *A Land for All*, 2021.

62 “The Holy Land Confederation as a Facilitator for the Two-State Solution”; <https://www.monmouth.edu/news/documents/the-holy-land-confederation-as-a-facilitator-for-the-two-state-solution-english.pdf/>.



## 5. Public Opinion Over Time

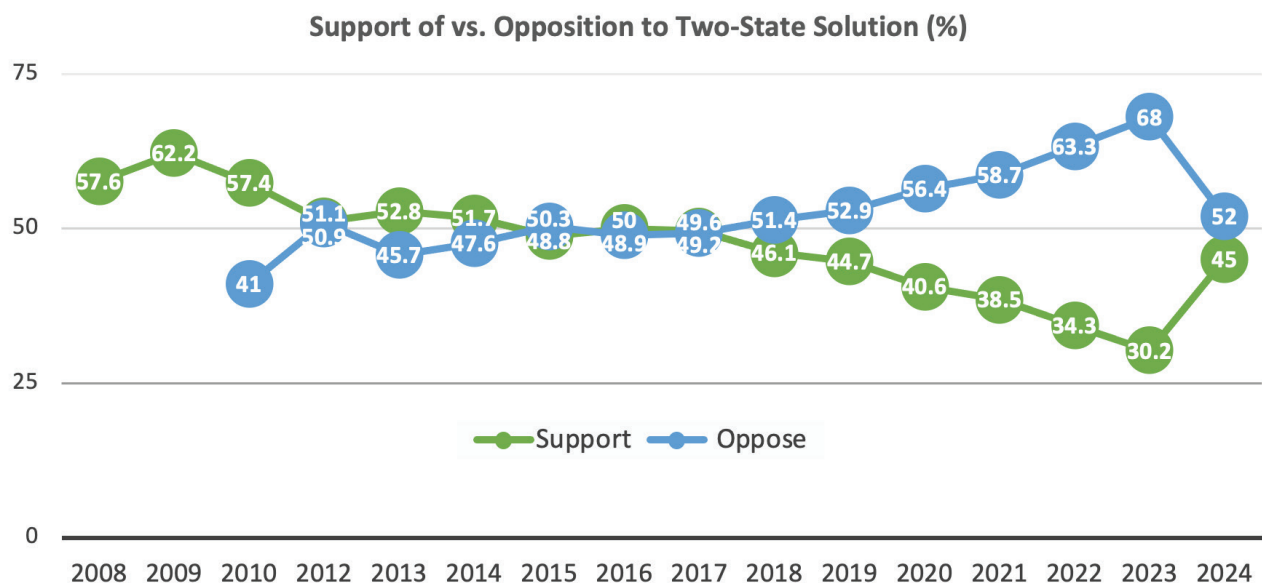
Public attitudes on the two-states solution have varied over time, although generally not to an extreme degree. While it remained the preferred option of all the alternatives, there was a clear trend of declining support and growing belief that it is not feasible.

### Palestinian Public Opinion

The public opinion polls that have been conducted the longest and most regularly on the subject of the two-state solution (*inter alia*) among Palestinians are the ones by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) in Ramallah. Throughout the years and regardless of the extent of support for the two-state solution, the overwhelming majority of those polled believed the chances for the establishment of a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel in the next five years were slim or non-existent, and support for the two-state solution is correlated with the perception of its feasibility, which in turn was linked to settlement construction. Despite the widely held belief that the two-state solution was no longer practical, a large majority opposed the alternative one-state solution.<sup>63</sup> Findings also showed that a majority was opposed to the concept of two-state solution when it was presented without any description, but a majority supported it when it was defined as the creation of a Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel on the basis of 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Moreover, when asked about specific conditions for the two-state solution, support was highest if it came with an “Israeli acknowledgement of and an apology for the suffering of the Palestinian refugees” (58.1%), followed by “Respect of the principles of international law by Israel and Palestine” (57.7%), and “Each side to reform its security, educational, and legislatives sectors so that they serve peace” (55.2%).<sup>64</sup>

Other general observations were that support for the two-state solution was higher in the West Bank than in the Gaza Strip, among Fateh supporters than Hamas supporters, among the less educated than BA holders, among employees/merchants than students, and among the non- or somewhat religious than the religious. Most opposed were the 18-22-year-olds, who were also the ones most supportive of an armed intifada.

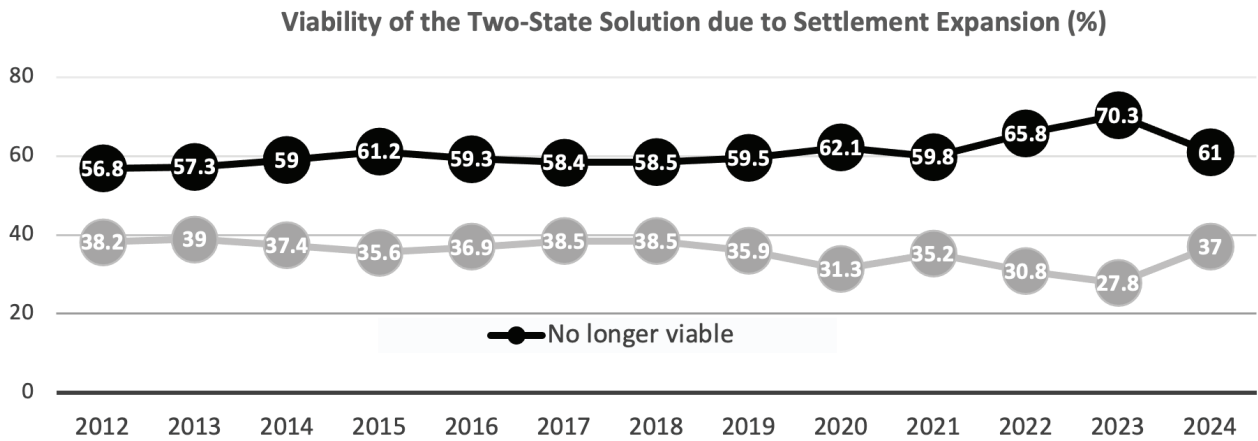
More specifically, the following graph shows the changes over time in the regular PCPSR surveys on the question: “Do you support or oppose the solution based on the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, known as the two-state solution?”



<sup>63</sup> <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/154>.

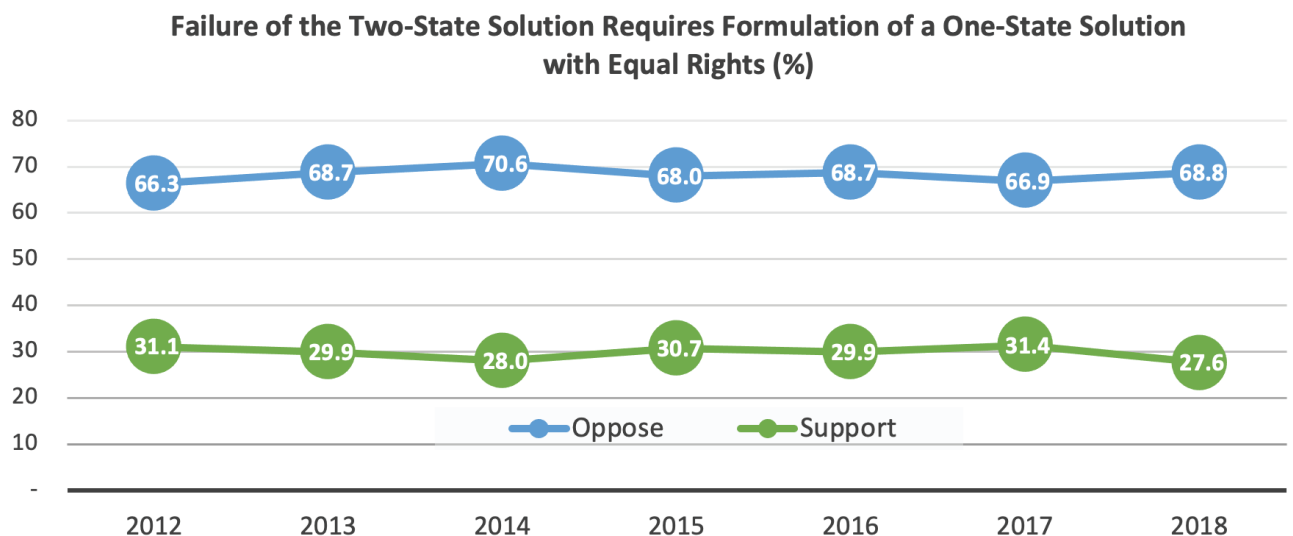
<sup>64</sup> E.g., PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll No. 72, June/July 2019.

Another question that these polls asked over a longer period of time is that about the perceived practicability of the two-state solution due to settlement expansion:



As the two graphs above show, there was a significant decline in support for the two-state solution around 2022, which correlated with an increase in the belief that such a solution was no longer feasible due to Israel’s continued settlement expansion. A major change occurred in light of the war on Gaza and renewed international calls for a revival of the two-state solution in 2023/24, when Palestinians became more optimistic and supportive of the two-state solution. This, despite the fact that the vast majority (83%) thought that recent talk about it in the US and other Western countries was not serious, while only 15% thought it was. However, poll results also showed that the increased support for the two-state solution came only from the Gaza Strip (+27%), while it remained stable in the West Bank at 34%.<sup>65</sup>

Another long-standing question was whether, in view of the inevitable failure of the two-state solution, it was necessary to call for a solution based on the establishment of one state in which Arabs and Jews would have equal rights. Palestinians rejected this rather consistently as illustrated in this graph:



This principal rejection of the one-state paradigm was confirmed in a similar question that asked about a set of political alternatives in case the negotiations fail/under the current conditions. Among the options was “Abandon the two-state solution and demand the establishment of a state for Palestinians and Israelis” in search of the implementation of Palestinian rights, and the response was as follows:

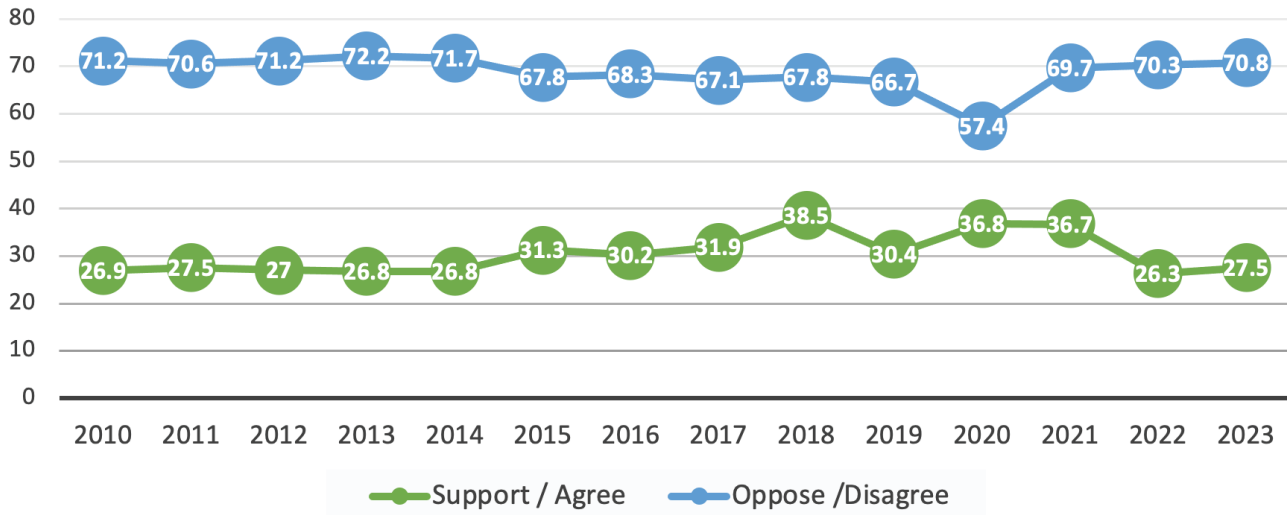
<sup>65</sup> PCPSR, Public Opinion Poll # 91, March 2024.

# The Two-State Solution: History and Challenges



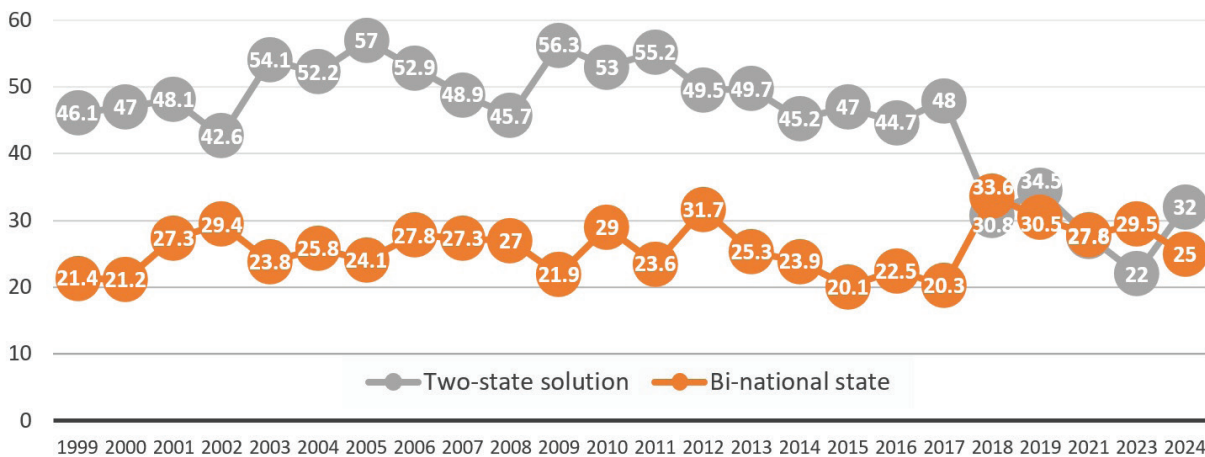
Another question asking about the best lasting solution to the conflict with Israel completes the picture, confirming that the two-state solution is still the preferred option for the majority, albeit also on decline.

**Abandon the Two-State Solution and Demand Establishment of One State (%)**



The Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC) also runs regular public opinion polls among Palestinians, which since 1999 have asked the question “What is the most preferred solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?”, with the following results<sup>66</sup>:

**Most Preferred Solution for the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict**



Source: JMCC and FES, West Bank Poll Results, May 2024; [https://mcusercontent.com/769c956beb1afe70d94fe83/files/0eb2230d-9971-f633-2efc-f6de7ba6f025/102\\_WB\\_English\\_charts.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/769c956beb1afe70d94fe83/files/0eb2230d-9971-f633-2efc-f6de7ba6f025/102_WB_English_charts.pdf).

<sup>66</sup> [https://mcusercontent.com/769c956beb1afe70d94fe83/files/0eb2230d-9971-f633-2efc-f6de7ba6f025/102\\_WB\\_English\\_charts.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/769c956beb1afe70d94fe83/files/0eb2230d-9971-f633-2efc-f6de7ba6f025/102_WB_English_charts.pdf)

## Israeli Public Opinion

Israeli public opinion underwent transformation from the late 1970s, when some 90% of Israeli Jews opposed a Palestinian state as a threat to Israel,<sup>67</sup> to the mid-1980s, when support for a two-state solution increased to 20%,<sup>68</sup> and to 1994, when support stood at 47.2%.<sup>69</sup> Subsequently, there were some ups and downs but generally support has dramatically fallen in the three decades since the Oslo Accords and more recently from 44% in September 2020 to 34% in late 2022. According to the **Palestine-Israel Pulse**, support is significantly higher among Jews older than 55 years (38%) than those in the 18-34 age group (20%). Israeli Jews more strongly support a single non-democratic state without equality over a democratic state that would include equal rights for Palestinians.<sup>70</sup>

An ongoing survey project that was initiated by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University in 1994 and is still done jointly with the Open University and the Israel Democracy Institute, is the so-called **Peace Index**.<sup>71</sup> In its most recent round in May 2024, 46.5% of Israelis were opposed to Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations (54% Jews and 11.7% Arabs) – down from 57.5% in January – and only 21.2% believed that negotiations would lead to peace in the coming years (15.4% Jews, 50.5% Arabs). Some 32.5% of Israelis support the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside the State of Israel (26.1% Jews and 65.8% Arabs), 14.8% support the creation of a binational state between the “river and the sea” with full and equal rights for Jews and Palestinians (10.5% Jews and 37.3% Arabs), 21.9% support annexation of the occupied territories and the creation of one state under Israeli rule with limited rights for Palestinians (36.1% Jews and 10.1% Arabs), and 22.5% support the continuation of the existing situation (24.3% Jews and 13.1%Arabs).<sup>72</sup>

However, while the majority supports the two-state option, only 17.9% of Israelis believe it could be achieved in the foreseeable future (14.2% Jews, 36.4% Arabs) and a 44.5% majority thinks the existing situation will continue (49% Jews, 20.2% Arabs).<sup>73</sup>



Source: The Peace Index (Tel Aviv University) <https://en-social-sciences.tau.ac.il/peaceindex>.

67 Magal, T., Bar-Tal, D., Oren, N., & Halperin, E. (2013), “Psychological Legitimization - Views of the Israeli Occupation by Jews in Israel: Data and Implications,” in D. Bar-Tal & I. Schnell (Eds.), *The Impact of Lasting Occupation*, New York: Oxford University Press, 122-186.

68 Arian, Asher (1995), *Security Threatened*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 105.

69 William Cubbison, “Two States for Two People? A Long Decline in Support,” Israel Democracy Institute, October 23, 2018 (based on Peace Index); <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/24664>.

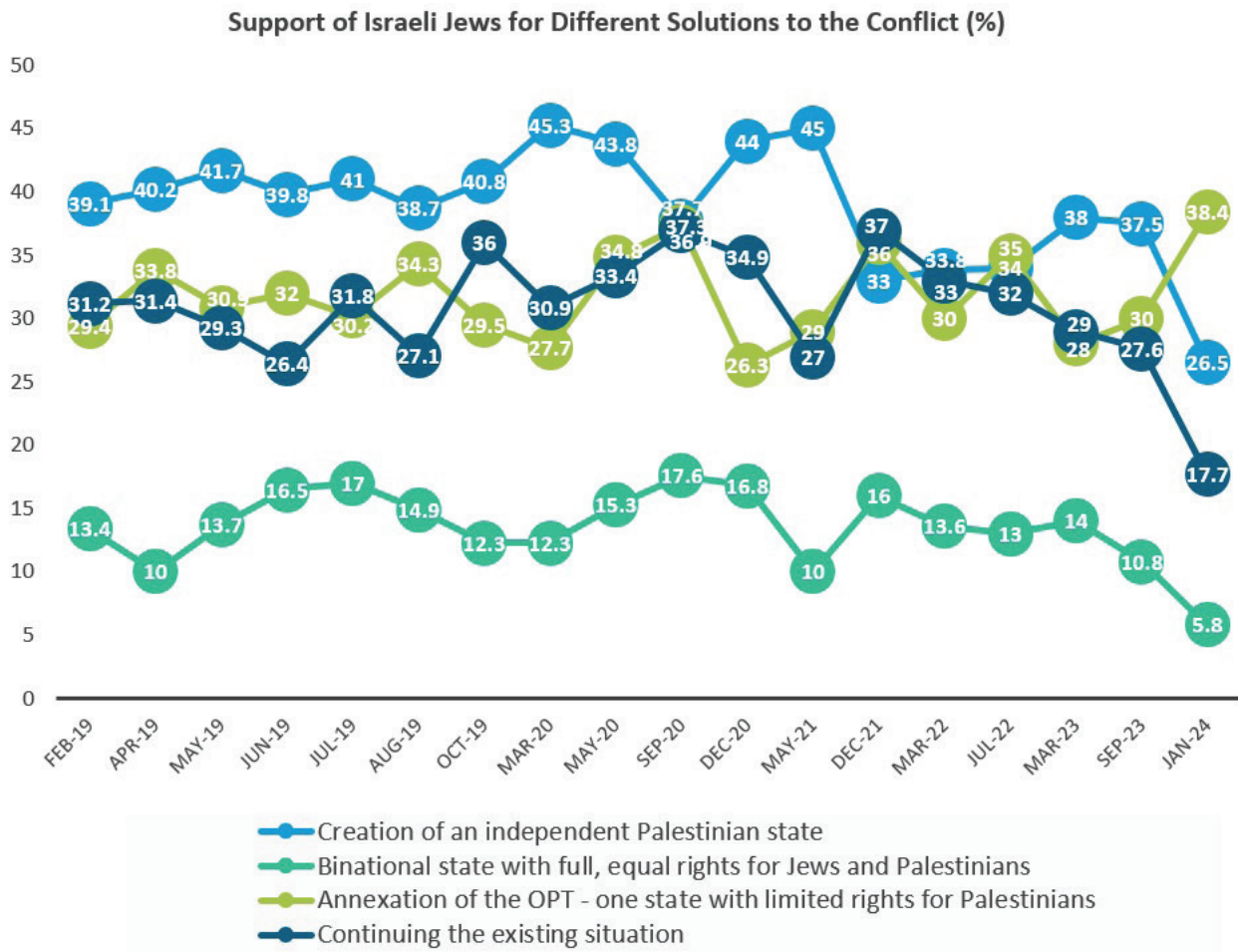
70 Shikaki, “The Palestine/Israel Pulse, a Joint Poll Summary Report.” PCPSR, December 2022, <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/928>.

71 <https://en-social-sciences.tau.ac.il/peaceindex>.

72 [https://en-social-sciences.tau.ac.il/sites/socsci-english.tau.ac.il/files/media\\_server/social/peaceindex/2024-05-findings.pdf](https://en-social-sciences.tau.ac.il/sites/socsci-english.tau.ac.il/files/media_server/social/peaceindex/2024-05-findings.pdf).

73 *Ibid.*

# The Two-State Solution: History and Challenges



Source: The Peace Index (Tel Aviv University) <https://en-social-sciences.tau.ac.il/peaceindex>

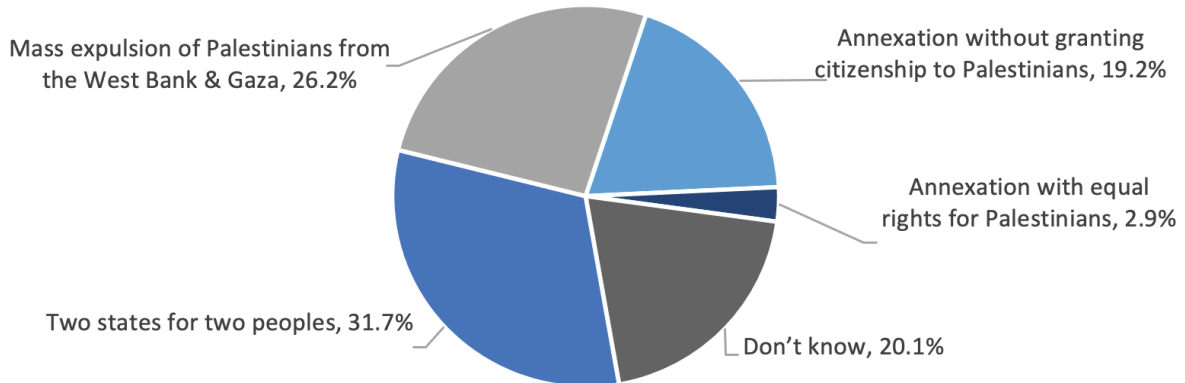
Polling by the **Pew Research Center** in March and April 2023 – well before the Hamas attack – showed only 35% of Israelis (including both Jewish and Arab respondents) thought “a way could be found for Israel and an independent Palestinian state to coexist peacefully”. That was down 9 percentage points from 2017 and 15 points from 2013. Among Israeli Jews, those agreeing with the statement dropped from 46% in 2013 to 32% in 2023 and among Israeli Arabs from 74% to 41%.<sup>74</sup>

A recent public opinion survey by the **Geneva Initiative** among Israelis, carried out in January 2024, asked about the most viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and received most votes for the two-state option (31.7%), although closely followed by “Mass expulsion of Palestinians” and “Annexation without granting citizenship to Palestinians”<sup>75</sup>:

74 <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/09/26/israelis-have-grown-more-skeptical-of-a-two-state-solution/>

75 <https://geneva-accord.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/GI-Midgam-Poll-January-2024-1.pdf>.

## Most Viable Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Israelis)



However, when framed as an agreement with “return of the hostages, agreement to establish in the future a non-militarized Palestinian state in the West Bank & Gaza, and total normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia”, support for such an agreement rose to 51.3%.<sup>76</sup>

### Palestinian-Israeli Joint Polls

In the **joint polls by PCPSR and the Hebrew University’s Truman Institute**, one consistent question related to the two-state solution was about mutual recognition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people and Palestine as the state of the Palestinian people after the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and the settlement of all issues. Support for this has declined almost steadily among Palestinians over the years from 52% in 2003 to 28% in 2023, while it was 65% and 63% respectively among Israelis.<sup>77</sup>

### Support of Mutual Recognition after the Establishment of a Palestinian State and the Settlement of All Issues (%)

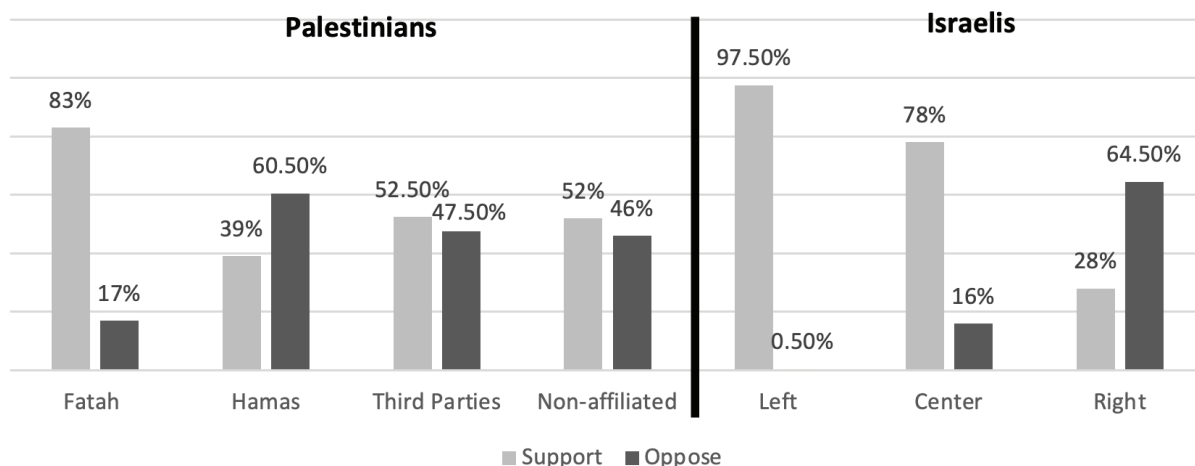


<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Joint Polls 2002-2023, PCPSR and Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University; <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/255>.

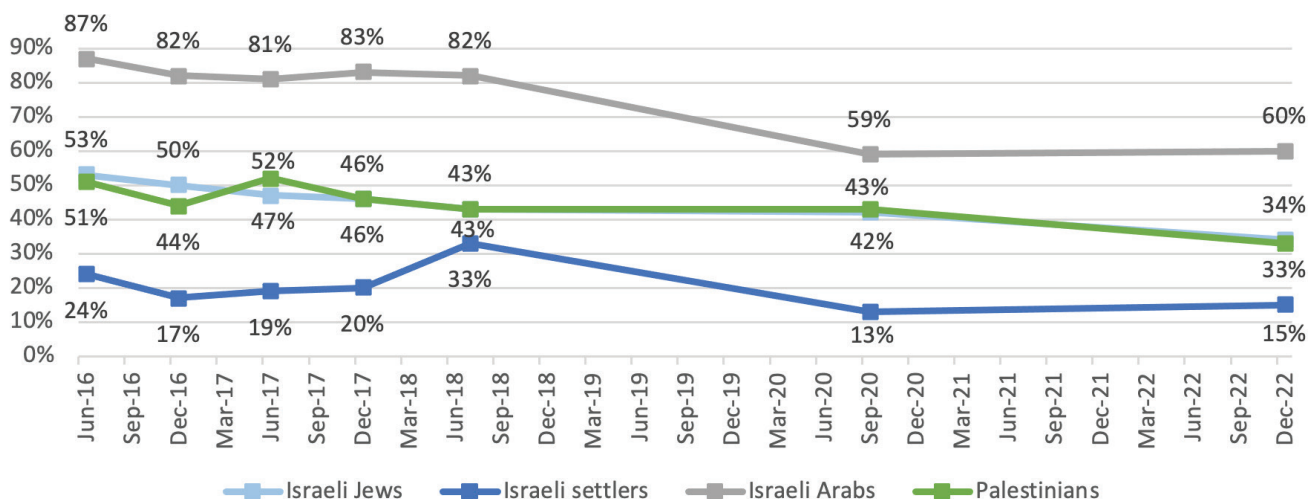
A specific round of joint polls was conducted **among elites** on both sides in January 2018 and 2019. Asked about their opinion regarding the *general* concept of the two-state solution based on the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, the answers were as follows<sup>78</sup>:

**Elites' Support and Opposition to Two-State Solution**



While the two-state solution was still the preferred option, polls of the so-called **Palestinian-Israeli Pulse**, jointly conducted by PCPSR, Israel Democracy Institute, the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research at Tel Aviv University since 2016, have also seen declining support, which is mainly attributed to the rise of fringe and minority groups (Israeli right-wing, Haredi, Palestinian Islamists), increased distrust of what the other side's real intentions are, and rise in skepticism about the viability of a two-state solution.<sup>79</sup>

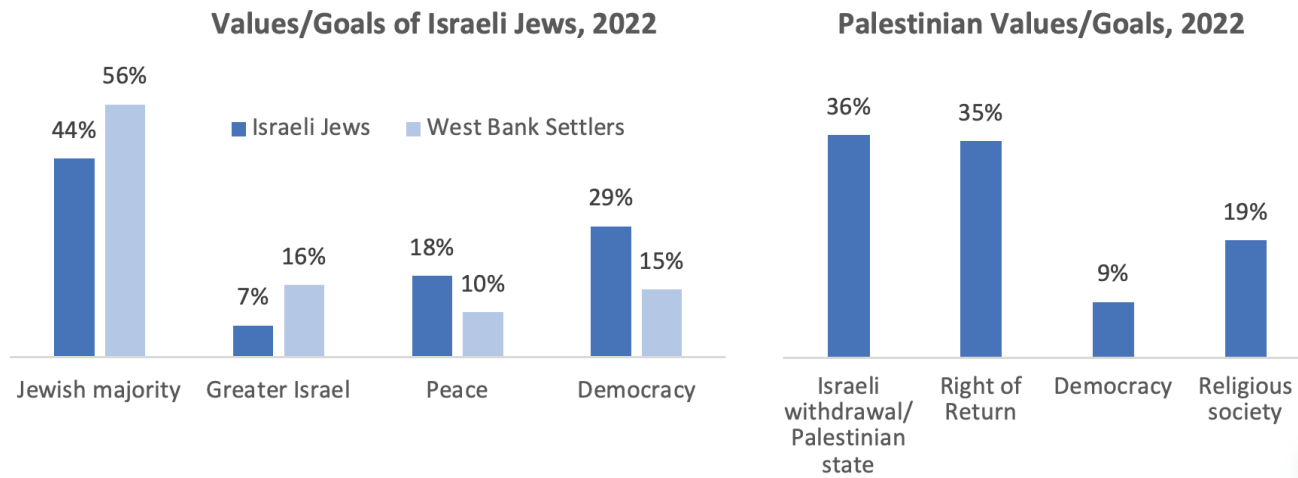
**Support for the Concept of the Two-State Solution**



78 Joint Elite Poll 1 - January 2018 - <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/719> and Poll 2 - January 2019 - <https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/744>.

79 Shikaki, Khalil and Dahlia Scheindlin (2018), *Role of Public Opinion in the Resilience/Resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, Palestinian-Israeli Pulse: A Joint Poll (2016-2018) – Final Report*; <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/742>.

By December 2022, levels of trust in the other side were already very low, with 86% of Palestinians and 85% of Israeli Jews not considering the other side trustworthy. Some 84% on both sides perceived themselves as an exclusive victim and 93% on both sides saw themselves as rightful owners of the entire land. Willingness to promote good relations ranged from 70% among Israeli Arabs and 56% among Jews to only 22% of Palestinians.<sup>80</sup> The goals of the two sides also differed as the following graph shows<sup>81</sup>:



## 6. Revival of the Two-State Solution After October 7, 2023 – Too Late, Dead or Still Possible?

The two-state solution proposal for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has remained a topic of global interest and diplomatic efforts, although support for it has dwindled among both Israelis and Palestinians over the years. In the wake of the devastating War on Gaza, the idea of a two-state solution has resurrected – unsurprisingly rejected by Israel’s government but being promoted by many in the international arena, including US President Biden and the EU.

### 6.1 INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT: FROM FATIGUE TO REVIVED INTEREST?

Since the very day the war started, the two-state solution has reclaimed its centrality in the international discourse. Already on 8 October 2023, China’s foreign ministry stressed the need for the international community to “promote the early resumption of peace talks between Palestine and Israel, and seek a path to lasting peace” through a two-state solution,<sup>82</sup> Turkish President Erdogan said the formation of an independent Palestinian state is “a necessity that cannot be delayed,”<sup>83</sup> and Saudi Arabia called for an immediate halt to the war and called upon the international community to “activate a credible peace process” leading to a two-state solution.<sup>84</sup> Since then calls for a two-state solution have exponentially increased, grounded in a shared sense that the conflict will never end if Palestinians continue to be denied their rights. The US joined the call in late October, with President Biden stating that “there has to be a vision of what comes next, and in our view it has to be a two-state solution.”<sup>85</sup> Soon after, Secretary of State Blinken stressed that “a Palestinian state” is the only way for Israel to get “genuine security.”<sup>86</sup>

80 *Ibid.*

81 *Ibid.*

82 Kim, S. (2023), “China Reiterates Two-State Solution Needed for Israel, Palestine,” Bloomberg, 8 October 2023; <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-10-08/china-reiterates-two-state-solution-needed-for-israel-palestine>.

83 Reuters (2023), “Two-state solution only way to achieve peace in Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Erdogan,” *Al Arabiya News*, 8 October 2023; <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2023/10/08/Two-state-solution-only-way-to-achieve-peace-in-Israeli-Palestinian-conflict-Erdogan>.

84 Falor, S. (2023), “Israel-Hamas conflict: Saudi Arabia calls for ‘two-state solution’ as attacks escalate,” *Hindustan Times*, 8 October 2023; <https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/israel-palestine-hamas-crisis-saudi-arabia-two-state-solution-101696734530728.html>.

85 Ravid, B., “Biden’s post-war plan: New talks on Israel-Palestine two-state solution,” *Axios*, 26 October 2023. <https://www.axios.com/2023/10/26/biden-post-war-plan-two-state-solution-israel-palestinians>.

86 Keaten, J. (2024), “At Davos, Blinken calls a pathway to a Palestinian state a necessity for Israeli security,” *AP News*, 17 January 2024; <https://apnews.com/article/zelenskyy-davos-blinken-guterres-amirabdollahian-world-economic-forum-373494e853e64422674b9c3130fb3806>.



The EU has become very vocal about the two-state solution as the only post-war political horizon, with President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen stating on X that “A two-state solution is the only way to achieve peace,”<sup>87</sup> and EU foreign policy chief Joseph Borrell Fontelles telling Israeli foreign minister Yisrael Katz in January 2024 that “the solution for sustainable, lasting peace that ensures security for Israel and living side by side with neighbors would involve the setting up of a Palestinian state”.<sup>88</sup> He stressed that the plan will be followed even if opposed by Israel<sup>89</sup> and that the EU is prepared to sanction any party unwilling to comply with the development and implementation of a clear roadmap towards two states<sup>90</sup>, even asking member states “to start contemplating sanctions against Netanyahu and others who are really destroying the chances for a two-state solution and for peace in the Middle East.”<sup>91</sup> His statement that “Israel cannot have the veto right to the self-determination of the Palestinian people”<sup>92</sup> could mark the beginning of a policy change, in which the international community advances a two-state solution even against Israel’s opposition.

Moreover, on 29 April 2024 European and Arab foreign ministers discussed in Riyadh how to cooperate on a push for a two-state solution<sup>93</sup> and on 27 May EU foreign ministers met in Brussels with their Arab counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, and the UAE, who presented their peace plan proposal, which included an international conference on how to implement the two-state solution.<sup>94</sup> These initiatives indicate that new pathways to the previous US-dominated efforts are being explored.

The main question, however, is whether these calls are mainly symbolic, with governments trying to appease the massive protests demanding rights for Palestinians, or whether this reflects a turning point with unprecedented commitment. Having become disillusioned after years of international lip service but no tangible steps taken, most Palestinians do not expect much from this new wave of support for a two-state solution. In a March 2024 opinion poll, 83% of the Palestinian respondents did not think US declarations about reaching a two-state solution were serious.<sup>95</sup>

However, there are indications that the international commitment could be serious this time: Firstly, beyond the issuing of declarations, concrete plans are also being developed as to how a two-state solution can be advanced. Secondly, a number of states that previously made steps towards a two-state solution dependent on Israel’s willingness now seem to be ready to take unilateral action regardless of Israel’s approval. Third, Israeli policies that violate international law and pose obstacles to a two-state solution are being scrutinized more closely and even sanctioned. Finally, a number of states have newly recognized the Palestinian state or intend to do so in due course.

87 <https://twitter.com/vonderleyen/status/1726174816833519741?s=46&t=zGT6ZJDQtwpGtEbjGmjWlQ>; 19 Nov. 2023.

88 Stevis-Gridneff, M. et al. (2024), “Israel-EU Meeting on Gaza’s Future Yields Division and Confusion,” *The New York Times*, 22 January 2024; <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/22/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-eu-postwar.html>.

89 Reuters (2024). “Israel’s Plan to Destroy Hamas Not Working, Peace Talks Needed, Top EU Diplomat Says Minister Gather,” *Haaretz*, 22 January 2024; <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/2024-01-22/ty-article/.premium/israels-plan-to-destroy-hamas-not-working-peace-talks-needed-top-eu-diplomat-says/0000018d-3086-dd75-addd-f2e732620000>.

90 “Israel’s Plan to Destroy Hamas Not Working, Peace Talks Needed, Top EU Diplomat Says Minister Gather,” *Haaretz*, 22 January 2024; <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/2024-01-22/ty-article/.premium/israels-plan-to-destroy-hamas-not-working-peace-talks-needed-top-eu-diplomat-says/0000018d-3086-dd75-addd-f2e732620000>.

91 Cook, L. (2024), “EU pushes for Palestinian statehood, rejecting Israeli leader’s insistence that it’s off the table,” *AP News*, 22 January 2024; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-eu-europe-statehood-ee6db2a05e31038278ab5d702aaca8b9>.

92 “Israel can’t ‘have veto’ on Palestinian state: EU’s Borrell says,” *Al-Arabiya English*, 23 January 2024; <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2024/01/23/Israel-can-t-have-veto-on-Palestinian-state-EU-Borrell-says->.

93 “European, Arab ministers meet in Saudi to jump-start two-state solution,” *France 24*, 29 April 2024; <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240429-european-arab-ministers-meet-in-saudi-to-jump-start-two-state-solution>.

94 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/eu-mulls-rafah-mission-next-diplomatic-steps-after-talks-with-arab-counterparts/>.

95 PCPSR, *Public Opinion Poll No. 91*, March 2024; <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/973>.

In April and May 2024, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas, Norway and EU member states Ireland, Spain and Slovenia officially recognized Palestine as a state. Malta expressed its intention to do the same soon,<sup>96</sup> and Belgium's foreign minister confirmed that his country is "considering it seriously".<sup>97</sup> While the majority of UN member states – 146 of 193 as of 28 May 2024 – already recognize Palestine, most Western countries have so far been reluctant to do so without a 'political solution'. The current shift was also demonstrated when 12 out of the 15 members of the UN Security Council voted in favor of full Palestinian membership in the UN in April 2024, including Japan, Korea, Malta, Slovenia and France who have not yet recognized Palestinian statehood (UK and Switzerland abstained and the US vetoed it).<sup>98</sup> Also in April, French foreign minister Stephane Sejourne said that recognizing a Palestinian state "was not a taboo for France but must be useful in a global strategy for the two-state political solution."<sup>99</sup> And on 10 May 2024, the UN General Assembly voted with 143 in favor and only 9 against to grant Palestine new "rights and privileges," and call on the UNSC to reconsider the request for full membership.<sup>100</sup>

The majority of Arab governments support the implementation of a two-state solution. Most recently, the Arab League summit in Manama on 16 May 2024 called for it and urged the world to rally behind the plan. Since the war, Arab states that normalized relations with Israel have been increasingly under pressure from their peoples who support the Palestinians and oppose normalization with Israel.<sup>101</sup> Should this sentiment further intensify, it is conceivable that the states concerned could leverage popular resentment and condition the upholding of their peace and normalization agreements with Israel on concrete steps towards a two-state solution.

The case of Saudi Arabia could prove particularly significant. Saudi Arabia has not yet normalized relations, but has entered talks to do so and is likely to tie further progress to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Since the war began, Saudi officials have stressed their continued interest in normalization, but also made it clear that this will be contingent on the end of the war and a political horizon for the Palestinians. The US, meanwhile, continues to work on a mutual defense treaty with Saudi Arabia, hoping to pressure Israel to commit to a two-state solution if it wants to join.<sup>102</sup>

A further shift can be observed when it comes to exerting diplomatic pressure on Israel in other areas. For example, after reversing Trump's policy of denying that settlements are illegal under international law in February 2024, the US imposed sanctions on a number of violent settlers,<sup>103</sup> which were soon followed suit by other states, including the UK and France,<sup>104</sup> and the EU, which added the particularly violent Hilltop Youth and Lehava groups to its Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime.<sup>105</sup>

While so far mainly symbolic, such concrete consequences for Israel's violations of international and human rights law is a "fundamental break" in Western policy towards Israel and could imply an end to "Israel's monopoly on

96 Statement by the Prime Ministers of Ireland, Malta, Slovenia and Spain, 22 March 2024; <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/presidente/actividades/Documents/2024/220324-Statement-of-four-Prime-Ministers-on-the-Middle-East.pdf>

97 Valente Rasquinho, S. (2024, March 5). Belgium calls for immediate cease-fire in Gaza. Anadolu Agency. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/belgium-calls-for-immediate-cease-fire-in-gaza/3155765>

98 <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15670.doc.htm>.

99 "European, Arab ministers meet in Saudi to jump-start two-state solution," *op. cit.*

100 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/05/1149596>.

101 See, e.g., Metz, S. (2023), "Opposition mounts in Arab countries that normalized relations with Israel," AP News, 2 November 2023; <https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-arab-normalization-agreements-0c4707ff246c0c25d1ca001f8b1e734a>.

102 Ravid, B. (2024), "Sullivan postpones trip to Saudi Arabia to discuss Israel mega-deal," *Axios*, 3 April 2024. <https://www.axios.com/2024/04/02/saudi-arabia-israel-normalization-deal-sullivan/>; "Saudis push for 'plan B' that excludes Israel from key deal with US," *The Guardian*, 1 May 2024; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/may/01/saudi-us-biden-deal-israel>.

103 Ravid, B. (2024), "U.S. announces new sanctions against occupied West Bank settler outposts," *Axios*, 14 March 2024; <https://www.axios.com/2024/03/14/us-settler-sanctions-west-bank>.

104 "France sanctions 28 Israeli settlers over West Bank violence," *Al Jazeera*, 13 February 2024; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/13/france-sanctions-28-israeli-settlers-over-west-bank-violence>

105 Council of the European Union, (2024). *Extremist settlers in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem: Council sanctions four individuals and two entities over serious human rights abuses against Palestinians*, Press Release, 19 April 2024; <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/04/19/extremist-settlers-in-the-occupied-west-bank-and-east-jerusalem-council-sanctions-four-individuals-and-two-entities-over-serious-human-rights-abuses-against-palestinians/>.

victimhood”.<sup>106</sup> If this trend holds on, it could possibly be expanded to Israel’s settlement policy overall and become an effective pressure tool necessary to move Israel in the direction of a two-state solution. However, it is too early to say whether international pressure will persist.

## 6.2 THE DOMESTIC SCENE: CONTINUOUS OPPOSITION OR NEW AVENUES?

Since the beginning of the war, the Israeli government has made no secret of its disinterest in a two-state solution. The Knesset openly rejected the calls for it and voted for a statement saying that “Israel utterly rejects international diktats regarding a permanent settlement with the Palestinians” and that the recognition of a Palestinian state “in the wake of the October 7th massacre would be a massive and unprecedented reward of terrorism”.<sup>107</sup> In a recent meeting with US Secretary of State Blinken, Netanyahu said that the two-state solution would be a recipe for terror.<sup>108</sup> In addition, Israeli ministers called for the resettlement of the Gaza Strip.<sup>109</sup>

However, one of the likely outcomes of the war is the end of the current ruling coalition and, in particular, the end of Netanyahu’s role as Prime Minister, as Israelis harbored deep distrust towards him after his government failed to prevent the events of October 7, 2023.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, parts of Israeli society have since then become critical of his handling of the war, mainly due to the neglect of the hostages, which has led to widespread waves of protests in Israel. In January 2024, 71% of Israelis were in favor of early elections,<sup>111</sup> which, according to survey data from February 2024, would lead to the defeat of Netanyahu’s far-right coalition,<sup>112</sup> with its number of Knesset seats dropping from 64 to 45 (and Likud’s seats under Netanyahu from 32 to 18). The extremist Religious Zionism under Smotrich would no longer cross the threshold, while Ben Gvir’s Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power) would gain nine seats.<sup>113</sup>

However, it is rather doubtful that a new government would fundamentally change the course of rejecting Palestinian statehood, especially as the current dominant narrative amongst Israelis is that this would be an “award for terrorism.” Benny Gantz, who is being touted as the head of the next coalition, has never officially endorsed a two-state solution – only the eventual establishment of a “two-entity solution”<sup>114</sup> – and currently stresses that peace will not come about until the distant future.<sup>115</sup>

Most Israelis also continue to oppose a two-state solution – 65% according to a Gallup poll in late 2023.<sup>116</sup> In another poll, 63% of Israeli Jews opposed the establishment of an independent and demilitarized Palestinian state.<sup>117</sup> In a scenario in which US post-war assistance would be tied to Israel agreeing to pursue a two-state solution, opposition among Jewish Israelis slightly lowered to 52%.<sup>118</sup> In a survey by the Jerusalem Center for Foreign Affairs (JCFA), 64% of Israelis opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state as part of the normalization process with Saudi Arabia (84% of right-wing voters, 54% of centrist voters, and 24% of left-wing voters).<sup>119</sup>

106 Western diplomat, speaking at a closed meeting at PASSIA.

107 <https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/news/pressreleases/pages/press21224w.aspx#>.

108 <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-801341>.

109 See for example <https://www.newarab.com/analysis/israeli-resettlement-gaza-no-longer-fringe-idea>.

110 Support for Netanyahu has slightly increased from 24% in October 2023 to 32% in March 2024 <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/03/inside-israel-netanyahus-poll-numbers-improving-despite-us-rupture>.

111 <https://www.idi.org.il/articles/52733>.

112 <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/elections-in-israel-possible-scenarios-and-outcomes/>.

113 *Ibid.*

114 <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-697070>.

115 <https://www.jpost.com/israel-hamas-war/article-787579>.

116 Viger, B. (2023), “Life in Israel After Oct. 7 in 5 Charts,” *Gallup*, 22 December 2023; <https://news.gallup.com/poll/547760/life-israel-oct-charts.aspx>.

117 [https://en.idi.org.il/media/23124/war-in-gaza-11-\\_data\\_eng.pdf](https://en.idi.org.il/media/23124/war-in-gaza-11-_data_eng.pdf)

118 Hermann, Prof. T. et al. (2023), “Israelis Sharply Divided on the Question of a Two State Solution in Return for US Assistance - War in Gaza Survey 6,” The Israeli Democracy Institute, 5 December 2023; <https://en.idi.org.il/articles/51746>.

119 <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-803881>

While some Israelis saw October 7 as a “wake-up call” for the untenability of occupying another nation, it remains questionable whether this will turn into a significant trend, as, simultaneously, hostility towards and dehumanization of Palestinians has massively increased, and even many on the Israeli left have described themselves as “sobering up” to the infeasibility of peace.

Despite the criticism and sanctions of the international community, expulsion of Palestinians from their homes in the West Bank have reached unprecedented levels since October 2023<sup>120</sup> as has settler violence – burning houses and cars, killing livestock, murdering four Palestinians, and wounding many more, often while Israeli forces stood by watching but not interfering.<sup>121</sup> According to Peace Now, 2024 (as of April) “has already broken a record for most land grabs.”<sup>122</sup> In East Jerusalem, over 20 settlement projects have been approved or advanced,<sup>123</sup> and in March alone construction of 3,476 housing units in West Bank settlements were approved.<sup>124</sup>

Today, the situation is still framed by the Oslo Accords which included numerous protective measures for Israeli settlements, allowing Israel to take unilateral actions and create more facts on the ground with the result that despite numerous attempts to freeze settlement activity, such as the 2003 Road Map, the number of settlers has increased by 332% between 1993 and late 2023.<sup>125</sup>

Since October 7, Palestinians have repeatedly called for establishing the long overdue Palestinian state as the only way forward. President Abbas gave in to demands for PA reforms by appointing a new Prime Minister and cabinet and announcing further reform packages. However, these efforts are mainly perceived as cosmetic and will not conceal the inefficacy of the government nor the fact that it lacks any legitimacy. Some 62% of Palestinian respondents to a recent poll did not see the cabinet reshuffling as a step towards reforming the PA, support for Fatah further decreased, and 84% of respondents want Abbas to resign.<sup>126</sup> This lack of support is concerning insofar as it has been the PLO and Fatah under Abbas that have positioned themselves for decades as committed to a two-state solution.

Within society, Palestinians are torn between the desire for a two-state solution and their doubts about its feasibility. In March 2024, 72% of Palestinians considered the chances for an own state in the next five years as slim or non-existent, and 61% felt that the two-state solution was no longer practical.<sup>127</sup> Yet, 45% supported the idea of a two-state solution *per se*, marking an increase from pre-war 32% in September and 30% in December 2023. Remarkably, this was mainly due to an increase in Gaza, where 62% of the respondents supported a two-state solution.

However, internal troubles, i.e., the split between PLO/PA/Fatah and Hamas, the leadership’s legitimacy crisis, since no election were held since 2006, the unpopularity of the current PA which is considered corrupt and a puppet of Israel, and substantial support for Hamas, which however is considered a terrorist organization by many western states, all pose obstacles in envisioning a brighter future.

120 Between 7 October 2023 and March 2024, 1,222 Palestinians from 19 herding communities were displaced, the homes of 592 Palestinians in the West Bank and Jerusalem were demolished, and there were 603 settler attacks, which left at least nine Palestinians killed. UN Palestine, *UN Human Rights Chief deplures new moves to expand Israeli settlements in occupied West Bank*. Press Release, <https://palestine.un.org/en/262773-un-human-rights-chief-deplures-new-moves-expand-israeli-settlements-occupied-west-bank>.

121 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/state-backed-deadly-rampage-by-israeli-settlers-underscores-urgent-need-to-dismantle-apartheid/>.

122 <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/israeli-land-grabs-spike-west-161243418.html?guccounter=1>.

123 Burke, J. (2024). “Revealed: Israel has sped up settlement-building in East Jerusalem since Gaza war began,” *The Guardian*, 17 April 2024; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/17/revealed-israel-has-spiced-up-settlement-building-in-east-jerusalem-since-gaza-war-began>.

124 Shezaf, H. (2024). “Israel’s Approves Construction of 3,476 Housing Units in West Bank Settlements,” *Haaretz*, 6 March 2024; <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-03-06/ty-article/.premium/israels-approves-construction-of-3-476-housing-units-in-west-bank-settlements/0000018e-144f-d792-a7be-3cffd18d0000>.

125 Peace Now, *30 Years After Oslo*, 2023.

126 PCPSR, *Public Opinion Poll No. 91*, March 2024. <https://pcpsr.org/en/node/973>.

127 *Ibid.*

---

## Conclusion

---

While the two-state solution has remained the internationally most widely supported framework for resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and there have been numerous and ongoing diplomatic efforts to this end, many challenges persist in its implementation, including the lack of effective political pressure from outside, the continued growth of Israeli settlements, the rise of the hardline right-wing in Israel, the continual leadership of Netanyahu who has steadily upheld his rejection of two-states since Oslo, the marginalization of the PA, the political and geographic division of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, dwindling support among both Israelis and Palestinians, the common belief that it is not feasible, continued political violence, and most recently, unprecedented dehumanization and hatred between the two sides, and an Israeli society in belligerent mood.

However, it is also true that many people want a different future. Reviving the two-state solution amidst all its challenges has to start with instilling the political will for achieving a lasting solution and overcome decades of conflict and failed negotiations that have eroded trust between the parties and led to ever more mutual resentment and violent hostility. Raising the level of perceived feasibility is key, but so far, domestic politics on both sides prioritize hardline positions over compromise. Especially religious zealots using religion/their faith as argument against a two-state solution (i.e., against giving up the “holy” land) have proven major obstacles in attempts to restart the peace process.

The Gaza War has exposed the bankruptcy of past policy approaches and the fact that security cannot be achieved by military means alone. The dead end of the Oslo process must now be taken as an opportunity to embark on a new path to achieve durable peace and security for both people. The conflict is between Israel and the Palestinians, but its resolution can only be achieved through a broad regional approach. Israel, “as the territory’s supreme authority and thus the one that holds the keys to ending this unjust system” must prove its “willingness to bring about justice.”<sup>128</sup> As especially Israel is unlikely to voluntarily embark on the two-state approach, international pressure will be needed.

### *Principles required for future negotiations*

- Agreement that ending the occupation is the only formula for peace and security that works. This has proven true in Egypt/Sinai, where the occupation ended after 26 years (1956-1982), and in South Lebanon where it ended after 22 years (1978-2000).
- Leadership on both sides recognizing the connection of both peoples to the land, as well as their equal rights to freedom, equality, security, and self-determination.
- Israeli recognition for its responsibility for the decades of suffering and historical injustice inflicted on the Palestinians.
- A specific political horizon, grounded in international law, under which the parties negotiate. The focus should be on the outcome, the general direction, and not the process or exact details, which to address is too early.
- A process based on what the two peoples want, not their respective leaderships, i.e., polling or a referendum on both sides should be done.
- A trusted, valid interlocutor or mediator is needed (not the United States)
- A future vision for a region with free movement and growing prosperity; i.e., draft a detailed peace agreement that is consistent with the Arab Peace Initiative (including normalization with Israel and regional cooperation as an incentive)
- Negotiations with a set of benchmarks that both sides – not only the PA/Palestinians – must meet, and a fixed, adhered to timetable, after which Palestine becomes a state and coexistence can prevail.

---

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.972mag.com/lament-israelis-gaza-october-7/>.

## ANNEX: ARGUMENTS PRO AND CONTRA THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION

The following table lists the main arguments put forward in support of or against the two-state solution.

### Pro Two-State Solution

- ✦ The existence of two national groups with conflicting aspirations which neither is willing to give it up it will not pacify the situation on the ground.
- ✦ Deep mistrust and sacrifice due to decades of ethnic and national conflict which cannot easily be undone, making alternative solutions such as a bi-national state impossible.
- ✦ The “demographic threat” of Palestinians outnumbering Israeli Jews, who are attached to the basic Zionist idea of a state with a clear “Jewish majority”.
- ✦ The two-state solution is the best way to preserve Israel as a state that is both Jewish and democratic.
- ✦ There is an international consensus that the two-state solution is the best/only viable solution to the conflict.
- ✦ The two-state solution has endured because there is no other viable option. A one-state solution has no prospect of gaining support, especially not in Israel.
- ✦ Realization of the two-state solution would weaken Hamas and other resistance groups.
- ✦ The two-state separation would provide most security to all.
- ✦ Among all people living between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea there is more acceptance of some sort of a two-state solution than there is for any other solution.
- ✦ Under a political process promoting a two-state solution support on both sides will grow.
- ✦ Realization of the two-state solution would reduce the traction of boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) campaigns against Israel
- ✦ Realization of the two-state solution would strengthen/enhance normalization of ties between Israel and the Arab and Muslim worlds and be the key to any further regional accord.
- ✦ The two-state solution could lead to a new prosperous and peaceful Middle East. Without it, security escalations will remain on the agenda.

## Contra Two-State Solution

- The two-state solution depends on widespread and unwavering acceptance by the two sides' populations which is not the case.
- The Israeli government is actively promoting anti-two-state policies, including Prime Minister Netanyahu's "investment" in preserving the Hamas-Fatah split.
- Israeli settlements complicate borders and demographics and are not compatible with the principle of a Palestinian state that is territorially contiguous and viable. Evacuation and resettlement of settlers would be immensely costly.
- Return and/or compensation of Palestinian refugees is simply impossible.
- Loss of control over the West Bank would carry high security risks for Israel.
- Prior to October 7, 2023, the conflict was not a priority area for Israelis, nor for the international community, including many Arab states, and the two-state solution was long considered dead and buried. Its recent "exhumation" is a mere displacement activity that only highlights the inability of world leaders to propose – and/or impose – something more credible.
- Peaceful coexistence of two states born into such an ocean of blood is unimaginable. The level of dehumanization and distrust impedes the parties' willingness and capability to make concessions or even negotiate.
- The rise of support for Hamas/armed groups only shows what would be expected from a Palestinian state. Potential Palestinian elections outcomes (in favor of Hamas/Islamists as suggested in some polls) casts doubts about the PA's commitment to democracy and human rights.
- Ongoing Palestinian disunity makes it difficult or impossible for the Palestinians to govern a state and for Israelis to believe there is a partner for peace.
- There is currently no political Palestinian entity that enjoys the broad domestic and international legitimacy needed to make bold decisions towards a two-state solution.
- It is naïve to hope that Palestinians with Israeli citizenship would be allowed to remain peacefully in an "ethnically pure" Israel, and that Jewish settlers would be allowed to remain peacefully in an "ethnically pure" West Bank.
- Demographics: Jews and Palestinians are currently 50:50 but the land would be divided 78:20 which makes a model of a peaceful exchange of populations unrealistic.
- The horrific destruction of Gaza will take decades to rebuild, require immense resources, and add new challenges – including trauma and potential for radicalization – which would complicate efforts towards a two-state solution.

## FURTHER READING



**Palestinian Academic Society  
for the Study of International Affairs**

Tel: +972-2-626-4426 / 628-6566 | Fax: +972-2-628 2819

Email: [passia@passia.org](mailto:passia@passia.org) | Hind Al-Husseini, Alley, 2 Wadi Al-Joz | P.O. Box 19545, Jerusalem / Al-Quds



**Kindly supported by the  
Friedrich Ebert Foundation  
(FES), Jerusalem**

©