

# **FAQ:**

# **The Campaign to Defame Israel**

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*“Delegitimization is a political, economic and philosophic campaign aimed at reversing the right of the State of Israel to exist and denying the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their homeland.”*

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The 3-Ds of the new antisemitism: delegitimization, demonization and double-standards.



## Introduction

### How is delegitimization dangerous?

Israel is confronted by several tangible threats, including the nuclear threat posed by [Iran](#) and the missile threat posed by [Hamas](#) and [Hizbullah](#). A no less worrying threat posed to Israel is that of delegitimization, which attempts to negate the legitimacy of the Israeli state, its policies and its right to self-defense.

Delegitimization is a political, economic and philosophic campaign aimed at reversing the right of the State of Israel to exist and denying the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their homeland.

The ultimate goal of delegitimization is the liquidation of Israel as a Jewish state. According to the delegitimizers, Israel not only has no right to defend itself, it has no right to survive. They seek to cause Israel's collapse by undermining the moral legitimacy of Israel, constraining its military activities, destroying Israel's image and isolating it as a pariah state.

There is a difference between conventional criticism of the policies of Israel and delegitimizing criticism of the existence and legitimacy of the state. Delegitimization exceeds valid discourse on specific Israeli policies and instead presents a fundamental challenge to its right to exist. Israel remains willing to engage with honest critics of Israel, as long as they don't engage in the 3-Ds of the new antisemitism: delegitimization, demonization and double-standards.

Although the ultimate goal is eliminating the Jewish state, delegitimizers usually does not clearly state that Israel must be abolished. Rather, they use euphemisms like the "one-state solution" or compare Israel to an apartheid state or Nazism, leaving the obvious conclusion to their audience. The use of comparisons to apartheid and the Nazis is not accidental; rather they were carefully chosen to represent the two greatest evils of the twentieth century, both of which are considered crimes against humanity and legitimate targets for elimination.

Delegitimization deploys a wide variety of anti-Israeli themes in addition to the apartheid comparison and Holocaust inversion. It disallows Israel's inherent right to self-defense and security, represents Israel as an international criminal, portrays Zionism as a racist ideology and denies the historic connection between the Jewish people and their ancient homeland, particularly Jerusalem. Delegitimization supports the one-state solution and the invented "right of return" for Palestinian refugees, both of which would mean the end of Israel's identity as a Jewish state.

Delegitimization focused its activities on NGOs, grassroots movements, academia and the general public. This campaign abuses international institutions to attack Israel, attempts to invent new legal principles that can be used against Israel and has tried to have Israeli governmental and military

officials falsely charged with war crimes in Western states. Delegitimization masks its activities as legitimate criticism, inverting morality, human rights and the law to achieve its aims.

Delegitimization is a political, economic, cultural and ideological war against Israel. It is characterized by a disproportionate and obsessive focus on Israel. It is against freedom of speech and open discourse, trying to end academic exchanges and commercial ties.

Israel is the only state whose very legitimacy is questioned and attacked, who faces a debate not about its borders, but about its very existence. Other states, even those in Africa and Asia who were established along arbitrary borders delineated by colonial powers, do not have their legitimacy as nation-states brought into doubt. This despite the fact that Israel is the only state whose right to exist was recognized by both the United Nations and its predecessor, the League of Nations. It is pure hypocrisy that those who question the Jewish people's right to self-determination in the state of Israel often support the self-determination of the Palestinians in the form of a Palestinian state.

The delegitimizers claim to be advancing the Palestinian cause, but in reality they are working against peace. Some accept Hamas, which rejects peaceful negotiations and aims to destroy Israel. They usually dispense with concepts such as co-existence and oppose the only realistic resolution to the conflict, the two-state solution, as this would mean accepting Israel's existence. They also pay no attention to the situation of Palestinians outside Israel, ignoring their second-class status and plight in most of the Arab world.

Delegitimization directly harms peace efforts because it fools the Palestinians into believing that there will be enough international pressure on Israel to force it to capitulate to any Palestinian demand without the need for true negotiations. It also severely undermines the confidence of Israelis in the international community's support for self-defensive actions should Israel be attacked after it withdraws from territory in the framework of a peace agreement.

Delegitimization contributes nothing to a peaceful settlement to the conflict. Its nefarious goals and distorted exploitation of principles such as human rights and international law should be denounced.

It is time to delegitimize the delegitimization of Israel.



Just as in the past Jews were made into the scapegoats for many problems, today there are attempts to turn Israel into an international pariah.



## Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism

### What is Zionism?

[Zionism](#) is the movement for the reestablishment of the Jewish people's self-determination in their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. The goal of Zionism is political: the establishment of an independent state for the Jewish people. The most natural place for this state is Zion, or the Land of Israel, the homeland of the Jewish people.

Although Judaism is a religion, the Jews constitute a people, with their own language, culture, literature and shared history. Zionism was their means to create a common future as well.

Jews from all persuasions - secular and religious, left and right - have supported the ideals of Zionism and their right to a national home like other nations around the world. Severely persecuted throughout the ages, the Jews had realized that their fate as a people laid in establishing their own country. For only in a Jewish state could the security of the Jewish people be guaranteed. Only in a Jewish state could they live their lives fully according to their own customs, culture, religion and sense of nationhood. Only in a Jewish state could refuge be ensured to Jews fleeing persecution around the globe.

In many ways, Zionism can be considered the national liberation movement for a people that was exiled from its historic homeland. Zionism differs from many other national liberation movements in one aspect: instead of seeking freedom in a new entity, the Jews sought the reestablishment of their ancient independent state.

Although Zionism only coalesced as a [modern political movement](#) in the 19th century - indeed the term wasn't coined until 1890 - the longing for a renewed Israel dates back to ancient times. The desire of the Jews to return to their homeland began nearly 2000 years ago. In 70 CE, the [Romans destroyed the holy Temple](#) and razed the city of Jerusalem, the religious and administrative capital of the Jewish people's state. This act of horrific destruction brought Jewish independence to an end, and in the decades that followed, most of the Jews of Israel were exiled. Still, a small number remained, so that throughout history, there has always been a Jewish presence in the Land of Israel.

Despite their exile, the vast majority of Jews never stopped hoping to return home, and these yearnings played an essential role in their [prayer and literature](#). For example, at the end of the annual Passover meal, Jews around the world repeat the vow "Next year in Jerusalem," while all Jews pray facing towards Jerusalem. Many spiritual aspects of Judaism are closely connected to the physical manifestations of the Land of Israel, with prayers and *mitzvot* (commandments) tied to the Land.

The Jewish connection with the Land of Israel was not manifested in prayer alone. In the late nineteenth century, as national movements took shape in Europe and as antisemitism on that continent grew, an Austrian-Jewish journalist, [Theodor Herzl](#), began to organize the national movement of the Jewish people - the Zionist movement. At the same time, yet independent of Zionist activities in Europe, Jews from Yemen, Iraq, Turkey and Morocco began their own return.

The League of Nations, the pre-cursor of the UN, granted international recognition of the goals of Zionism when it established the [1922 Mandate](#), declaring the League "in favor of the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people..." [More and more Jews were returning](#), limited at first by the harsh conditions and then by British restrictions on immigration. Finally, the gates of Israel opened completely when the [State of Israel was established in 1948](#).

Today, Zionism strives to maintain the State of Israel as a national home for the Jewish people. The future of Zionism rests in Israel's continued existence as a secure state that is both a homeland for the Jewish people and a democratic state for all its citizens, Arab and Jew alike.

### **Is all criticism of Israel antisemitic?**

It is important to recognize that Israel, as a democracy, is receptive to fair and legitimate criticism. A valid, yet negative, analysis of Israeli policies should not be considered antisemitic, any more than criticism of another country should be considered racist.

However, all too often condemnations of Israel cross the border from valid criticism into regions of denigration that can be considered antisemitic. The generally accepted term for this type of disparagement is "the new antisemitism." Just as in the past Jews were made into the scapegoats for many problems, today there are attempts to turn Israel into an international pariah.

The line between legitimate criticism and the new antisemitism type of criticism is often difficult for some to judge. Former minister Natan Sharansky, laid out the criteria for defining the boundary line in his seminal 2004 article ["Anti-Semitism in 3-D."](#) The 3-Ds of the new antisemitism are: demonization, double standards and delegitimization.

**Demonization:** Just as the Jews were demonized for centuries as the embodiment of evil, so too Israel has been called an evil entity. Much of the criticism in this category consists of comparing Israelis to the Nazis and Palestinians to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Holocaust inversion is not only prevalent in the Arab world, it is gaining ground in the West as well. This propaganda technique is particularly heinous as it not only fraudulently depicts Israel's struggle to defend itself, it also diminishes the extraordinary suffering of Holocaust victims, in itself a form of Holocaust denial.

**Double Standards:** The test for judging a double standard is to check whether Israel is being judged by different criteria than other states under similar circumstances. Double standards are often found in international forums, in which Israel is unfairly singled out for criticism and held up to standards not applied to any other state. At the same time, the behavior of other nations in a comparable, or

even worse, situation is ignored. The application of double standards can often be recognized by the unreasonable quantity, as well as the quality, of the criticism.

A significant example of double standards can be found in the calls for boycotts of Israel. If such calls were part of a larger campaign against the many regimes that grossly violate human rights around the world, Israel would argue that its inclusion in such a list is not legitimate. However, when Israel alone is singled out for a boycott, this is a clear demonstration of antisemitic activity.

**Delegitimization:** The new antisemites are attempting to delegitimize the very existence of the Jewish state. They do this either by undermining its right to have been established in the first place or by attempting to turn present-day Israel into a pariah state, for example by using loaded terms such as apartheid or human rights violator. As Natan Sharansky wrote: "While criticism of an Israeli policy may not be anti-Semitic, the denial of Israel's right to exist is always anti-Semitic. If other peoples have a right to live securely in their homelands, then the Jewish people have a right to live securely in their homeland."

A secondary, yet critical test to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate criticism is the examination of the intent of the commentator. Legitimate critics accept the right of Israel to exist as the nation-state of the Jewish people while antisemites do not.

Obviously not all criticism is antisemitic. Israeli society, with its robust support of democracy, is itself stridently self-critical. Antisemites, however, do not share Israelis' interest in improving the society; their goal is to delegitimize the state in the short-run, and destroy it in the long-run. There is nothing Israel could do to satisfy these critics.

Although valid criticism of Israel has absolutely no connection to antisemitism, some of the unreasonable condemnation has its roots in antisemitic attitudes, often disguised as "anti-Zionism." As a nation dedicated to the principles of democracy, Israel believes that criticism, whether by other nations or our own people, is a powerful force for positive change. However, there is a clear distinction between legitimate calls for improvement and the attempt to delegitimize Israel through the use of far-fetched analogies, demonization techniques, singling out or holding it up to standards not applied to other states. These types of criticism ignore the context in which Israel must strive to survive in the face of violent attacks against its citizens and, all too often, against its very existence.

### **Is there a difference between antisemitism and anti-Zionism?**

[Antisemitism](#) is the name given to the form of racism practiced against the Jewish people. Though the literal interpretation of antisemitism would appear to denote hostility to all Semitic peoples, this is an erroneous belief. The term was originally coined in Germany in 1879 to describe the European anti-Jewish campaigns of that era, and it soon came to define the persecution of or discrimination against Jews throughout the world. Therefore, Arabs who claim that they cannot be antisemites because they themselves are "Semites" are merely attempting to obfuscate the issue, and thereby sanitize their own racist attitudes. This attempt to absolve them from the charge of racism is

particularly blatant as extreme antisemitism exists in many Arab countries today.

Despite the relatively modern roots of the term antisemitism, hatred of the Jewish people is an age-old phenomenon. Antisemitism has taken different forms and used various motifs throughout history. In modern times, it has been promoted by extreme nationalistic and other ideologies. Antisemitism reached its peak in the [Holocaust](#). Over six million Jews (one third of the world's Jewish population) were brutally and systematically murdered during World War II.

Modern antisemitism in Europe, after being repressed for decades following the Holocaust, has erupted with renewed fury in recent years in a new form: "[anti-Zionism](#)," or hatred of the State of Israel. This despite the fact that Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people - an expression of their legitimate aspiration to self-determination and national independence. The Zionist movement was founded to provide an ancient people with a sovereign state of its own in its ancestral homeland. Israel is the modern political embodiment of this age-old dream. To deny the Jews the right to their own state is to deny them the same right of self determination that other nations enjoy, and that distinction is antisemitism.

The goal of anti-Zionism is to undermine the legitimacy of Israel, thereby denying the Jewish people their place in the community of nations. Denigration of Zionism is therefore an attack on Israel's basic right to exist as a nation equal to all other nations, in violation of one of the fundamental principles of international law.

Just as antisemitism denies Jews their rights as individuals in society, anti-Zionism attacks the Jewish people as a nation, on the international level. Similar to the use of "the Jew" as a scapegoat for many a society's problems, Israel has been singled out for disproportionate and one-sided condemnation in the international arena.

Anti-Zionism is often manifested as attacks on Israel in the United Nations and other international forums. Over the years, many an event of the international community has been exploited as an opportunity to condemn Israel - no matter what the subject matter, no matter how tenuous the tie to the conflict in the Middle East.

Moreover, it is no coincidence that the censure of Israel in international forums and the media often has been accompanied by a sharp increase in antisemitic incidents in many parts of the world.

While legitimate criticism of specific policies of Israel is considered part and parcel of the democratic process, criticism that crosses the boundary into the illegitimate - by demonization, the use of double standards or the delegitimization of Israel - should be considered an expression of the "new antisemitism." Both the traditional forms of antisemitism, as well as its new version (in which Israel is treated as the Jew of the international community) should be vigorously condemned.

### **Why has there been a rise in antisemitic incidents?**

The campaign to delegitimize Israel has led to a sharp rise in anti-Israel and antisemitic attacks worldwide. Increasingly, the line between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitic attacks on Jewish targets has been blurred.

Since the beginning of the [second intifada in September 2000](#), Israel has been subjected to a worldwide campaign of delegitimization. Every military action Israel takes brings on a new wave of attacks. Yet at the same time, the more concessions Israel makes for peace, the more it is subjected to verbal aggression.

Israel has been attacked in the media and international forums, vilified by political leaders and intellectuals. It has had its very right to exist questioned, as has its basic duty to defend its citizens. Extremists on the Left and the Right have joined together in their hatred of the Jewish state.

These attacks go beyond justifiable criticism, which Israel, as a vibrant democracy, considers part of the legitimate discourse of states. However, it is not legitimate to censure Israel in a grossly disproportionate way, single it out and hold it up to impossible standards not demanded of any other state. It is not legitimate to demonize Israel in any fashion. Not can it be acceptable to attempt to delegitimize its very existence or its existence as the nation-state of the Jewish people.

The reasons behind this growing phenomenon are many. It is closely connected to the ability of the Palestinians to market their image as one of powerless victims. They have used this perception to play on the sentiments of those who advocate human rights (while the Hamas leadership and terrorists violate the most basic human rights of innocent Israeli victims and of their own people).

Bias in the media has also been an important contributing factor to the delegitimization of Israel. It is not surprising that populations in the West, who generally trust their media, are influenced when exposed to largely one-sided depictions of the conflict.

Other condemnation is more ideologically based, often advanced by those who are willing to ignore all transgressions of totalitarian regimes, no matter how egregious, yet criticize any defensive steps taken by democratic states.

Traditional antisemitic attitudes, often cloaked as anti-Zionist positions, have also played a role. Given that there are those who are unable, or unwilling to differentiate between the Jewish state and Jewish communities abroad, these attacks on Israel's legitimacy have been accompanied by physical attacks on Jewish targets the world over, including in Europe. Antisemitic incidents have included bombings and the arson of synagogues and Jewish schools, vandalism and desecration of Jewish cemeteries, death threats and violence against Jews, and unprovoked assaults up to and including murder. These hate crimes directed against Jewish individuals, religious leaders and community institutions are often disguised as "anti-Zionist" actions.

These attacks often increase when armed conflicts break out. Both during and following the December 2008 - January 2009 operation in Gaza, antisemitic attacks in Western Europe peaked to a

level not seen since the end of World War II.

The situation in the Middle East is even worse. Virulent anti-Israeli rhetoric was commonplace in the past, but it has intensified in the last decade. Antisemitic and anti-Israeli myths, often perpetuated by governments with their own agendas, are readily believed by large percentages of the region's population. The relentless flow of outrageous and unfounded accusations emanating from Palestinian spokespersons has greatly contributed to the growing wave of antisemitism. One of the consequences of this hatred has been an increase in the attacks on Jews and Jewish targets.

Israel is gravely concerned by the recent significant rise in antisemitism that targets Jewish communities in Europe and elsewhere. This growing phenomenon should arouse the deep concern of all civilized peoples. Israel calls on the governments of countries where the scourge of antisemitism is spreading to take all measures necessary to ensure the security of Jewish communities and to bring the perpetrators of these deplorable attacks to justice. Antisemitic incitement - whether by individuals, organizations or even the leaders of certain countries - should be strongly condemned at every opportunity.



Holocaust denial, in all its forms, is a moral abomination. Only by remembering, documenting and commemorating the Holocaust can we ensure that nothing like it will ever happen again.



## The Holocaust

### What is Holocaust denial?

The [Holocaust](#) was the deliberate and systematic attempt by the Nazis to exterminate the entire Jewish people. Modern attempts to deny or even diminish this tragedy, unique in its scale, desecrate the memory of its millions of victims.

The Holocaust began with demonizing the Jews. In 1933, Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany and established a racist regime, in which Jews were deemed to be "Untermenschen" (sub-humans), not part of the human

race. After Germany instigated World War II in 1939, Hitler began implementing his Final Solution to annihilate the Jewish people. His forces concentrated the Jews in ghettos and established labor, concentration, and extermination camps to which the Jews were transported. Millions of Jews were deliberately slaughtered, while most of the rest died of premeditated starvation and disease. Hitler's aim was to wipe off the face of the map every Jew in the world.

During the six years of the war, six million Jews - including 1,500,000 children - were murdered by the Nazis. Hitler's deliberate annihilation of the Jews, carried out with chilling efficiency, killed one-third of the Jewish population of the world. This genocide was unique in scale, management and implementation. It sought to destroy an entire people, wherever they could be found, merely for being born Jewish. For these reasons it was given a unique name of its own: the Holocaust.

Now, little more than sixty years later, many antisemites [deny that the Holocaust took place](#), or attempt to belittle the tragedy by claiming that its scale was much smaller. Some racists wish to cleanse Nazism of its indelible stain. Others mistakenly believe the State of Israel was established to compensate the Jews for the Holocaust - by denying that it took place, they seek to deprive Israel of its right to exist. This is why Holocaust deniers have much support in Arab countries. In fact, during World War II, some Arab leaders, including the Mufti, the leader of the Palestinian Arabs, actively supported the Nazi plans to annihilate the Jews. More recently, some Arab voices have been heard complaining that Hitler did not finish the job.

In recent years, Holocaust denial has taken on a new facade. Malicious haters of Israel from both the left and the right wings of the political spectrum frequently equate Israelis with the Nazis and the Palestinians with the Jews. Not only is this an abhorrent blood libel aimed at delegitimizing the very existence of Israel, it is an attempt to minimize the Holocaust. By comparing the two situations, which absolutely share no common ground, Israel is both immorally condemned and the suffering of Holocaust victims is trivialized.

Holocaust denial, in all its forms, is a moral abomination and it should never be tolerated. Only by remembering, documenting and commemorating the Holocaust can we ensure that nothing like it will ever happen again to Jews or to any other people on earth.



The strategy to delegitimize Israel using legal frameworks, and exploiting both international and national legal forums, was adopted following numerous failed military attempts to destroy the Jewish state.



## Delegitimization Techniques

### How are Israeli values being denigrated?

Israel is a country that prides itself on its strong values, based on both traditional Jewish precepts and modern democratic principles. [Israel's Declaration of Independence](#) clearly incorporates both as foundations of the state.

Israel has struggled to maintain these ideals in the face of never-ending terrorist attacks and wars, to balance the rights of freedom with the needs of security, and in the words of the renowned former Supreme Court President, Aharon Barak, to "fight with one hand tied behind its back" by its democratic ideal.

Despite the difficulties involved, Israel remains proud of its record. The entire [Israeli system](#) - including the executive, judicial and legislative branches - are dedicated to the rule of law and respect for individual rights. The fiercely independent media, robust judiciary, strong opposition parties and numerous human rights organization which operate freely in Israel serve to guarantee that the rule of law is enforced and that human rights are respected.

Yet for all of its efforts to truly be a "light unto the nations," increasingly Israel's values are coming under attack by those who profess a dedication to human rights.

Israel's foundational character as a Jewish state is attacked in the name of equal rights; and Israel's entire political model is framed as being inherently immoral - a modern apartheid state. However, the fact that Israel has an official ethnic character does not render it unique in the family of nations. In fact, Israel is but one of many democratic countries which have an official ethnic character or state religion.

Further, as mentioned above, Israel's Declaration of Independence not only defines Israel as a Jewish state, but also as a [democratic state based upon the principles of the separation of power, freedom, and complete equality before the law](#) for all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, gender or nationality.

Those who attack Israel not only frame it as a discriminatory state but also as an aggressor in the Middle East, which has no interest in peace or in ending the occupation. For those who have adopted this frame of reference, only Israel bears responsibility for the deadlock in the Middle East, only Israel is to blame for the violence, only Israel is castigated for flare ups in the region, and only Israel is denied its right to self-defense. They ascribe sinister motives to every Israeli act and invert history to use it against Israel. All too often, Israel is unjustly accused and, in the words of the Prime Minister,

Israel "is presumed guilty until proven guilty."

Once again, however, the facts belie these claims. Israel's history is characterized by a consistent Israeli search for peace, and an Israeli aversion to unnecessary conflict and war.

A dangerous dynamic has been created as a result of the conscious decision to ignore these facts and the concerted attempt to attack Israel's universal values. This dynamic is well exploited by the extremist forces in the region, primarily Iran and its clients Hizbullah and Hamas, which have adopted a strategy that targets Israel militarily, politically and economically.

Whether intentional or not, the result of these processes is that self-proclaimed human rights activists are aligning with fundamentalist Islamists against Israel. The idea of precipitating Israel's capitulation using the model that brought down South Africa's racist regime - which is the conceptual and strategic core of the boycott campaign - is simplistic and unfounded and is likely to cause more human misery, chaos and bloodshed.

Those who really care about justice, peace, human rights and international law should reject this superficial analysis and the presentation of Israel as a violent aggressor intent on war. Instead, it is those in Israel and hopefully in the Palestinian territories who promote the principle of two states living side-by-side in peace, dedicated to shared universally held values, who could eventually bring about a true and stable peace in accordance with international law. It is Israel who encourages national, civil and human rights. Failure to acknowledge this simple fact only serves to fan the extremist winds blowing across the Middle East.

### **How is "lawfare" being used to delegitimize Israel?**

One of the weapons in the arsenal used by those committed to the delegitimization of the Jewish state, and the denial of Israel's right to self-defense, is "lawfare," a term coined by US Attorney Major Michael Newton. Lawfare is commonly defined as a strategy of using or misusing law as a substitute for traditional military means to achieve military objectives. The term can be used to define the new strategy that has been adopted in the political war against Israel.

The strategy to delegitimize Israel using legal frameworks, and exploiting both international and national legal forums, was adopted following numerous failed military attempts to destroy the Jewish state.

Lawfare involves two key components, both of which are employed against the state of Israel. The first is the flagrant abuse of the laws of armed conflict as a means of goading military forces into apparent violations of the law and using these alleged violations as propaganda against those forces. For example, terrorists will attack Israeli forces while hiding behind their own civilians and then blame the consequent loss of civilian life on aggressive or disproportionate IDF action.

A classic example of this form of lawfare is the infamous Goldstone Report, which castigated Israel

for the damage to civilian infrastructure and loss of civilian life during the Operation in Gaza, despite the fact that the damage was a direct result of Hamas' military tactics and blatant abuse of the laws of armed conflict, including Hamas' seeking shelter in hospitals, using civilians as human shields, and storing weaponry in civilian homes, schools, and mosques.

The second component of lawfare is no less damaging than the first. As part of this prong of attack, individuals and groups are encouraged to file criminal and civil law suits in national and international legal forums against prominent military and government figures for alleged violations of international law. The number of law suits that have been filed against Israeli officials has grown exponentially in recent years. These suits have been filed against government officials and political representatives from across the political spectrum, indicating a blanket condemnation of all Israeli actions and initiatives. Targeting Israeli officials attracts significant media interest and coverage, and therefore, even though most cases are dismissed in the preliminary stages, all constitute a public affairs coup for the plaintiffs.

This form of lawfare does not simply impede Israeli travel plans. It is intended to intimidate officials from acting out of fear of prosecution, and in fact impacts foreign relations, strains international ties, and serves to delegitimize the Jewish state. As a result of these consequences, several countries have amended their laws, so as to restrict the ability of private groups to initiate these lawsuits and abuse the national legal system. While a step in the right direction, lawfare continues unabated.

It must be recognized that just as German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz states that "war is...a continuation of political activity by other means," so too, lawfare is a continuation of terrorist activity by other means. And just as terrorist activity should be rejected by every person of conscience, so too, lawfare must be abandoned.

### **Is Israel treated fairly in the United Nations?**

The State of Israel is an active member of the family of nations and a dynamic participant in international organizations. Israel is one of the few states established under the aegis of the United Nations, joining that international institution as its [59th member](#) on 11 May 1949. Since then, it has participated in a wide range of UN activities and has enthusiastically contributed to UN organs and international agencies, such as those devoted to health, development, labor, food and agriculture, education and science. Israel also plays a role in the work of non-governmental organizations operating under UN auspices, which deal with issues ranging from aviation to immigration, from communications to meteorology, from trade to the status of women.

Unfortunately, Israel's willingness to fully participate in international affairs has not always been reciprocated. While the United Nations has intermittently adopted resolutions which would provide a reasonable platform for advancing peace between Israel and its neighbors, much of the time the UN has taken a biased approach towards Israel.

The UN has been misused often and turned into a partisan battleground in the ongoing political

campaign being carried out against Israel by its adversaries in the region and elsewhere. Anti-Israeli motions are often proposed by the 21 League of Arab States, who together with the other members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (56 states in total) and the large Non-Aligned Movement (117) constitute an almost automatic majority of the 192 UN member states. Therefore, any anti-Israeli resolution is almost guaranteed adoption in the General Assembly and other UN forums.

Since the end of the Cold War and with the momentum gained in the [Arab-Israel peace process](#) in the 1990s, a somewhat more balanced approach began to be felt in the General Assembly with regards to resolutions about the Middle East. The [General Assembly's 1991 repudiation of its infamous 1975 resolution libeling Zionism as racism](#) is one such example. In recent years, Israel has also been allowed to increase its involvement in United Nations activities, due to its limited admission into a regional group.

However, the [outbreak of Palestinian violence and terrorism in 2000](#), followed by the [Second War in Lebanon](#) (2006) and the [Operation in Gaza](#) (2008) have largely reversed the positive trend. The Palestinian leadership, the Arab member states and their supporters in the UN seek to exploit the situation in the international arena to their advantage. As in the past, blatantly biased resolutions against Israel are often proposed and adopted. And although Israel has gained temporary membership in the Western Europe and Others Group, the limitations on that membership mean that Israel remains the only member state denied the right to serve on the Security Council.

Particularly galling is the exploitation of UN forums for human rights, which are used - often by states known for their extreme abuse of human rights - as platforms for one-sided and outrageous attacks on Israel's reputation. This phenomenon is especially unfortunate given that the time devoted to condemning Israel takes away from the attention that should be devoted to grave human rights violations in other member states.

It should be remembered that some UN resolutions have been of crucial significance for Israel, among them Security Council Resolutions [242](#) (22 November 1967) and [338](#) (22 October 1973), which provide an agreed framework for settling the Arab-Israel conflict. Over the years, the UN has at times contributed to bringing about the cessation of hostilities between Israel and its Arab neighbors by appointing mediators, extending UN auspices to cease-fire and armistice agreements, stationing UN forces between the adversaries and its role in the international Quartet.

Still, the all too frequent anti-Israel bias on the part of the UN casts a dark shadow on its integrity and raises serious doubts about its ability to play a constructive role in promoting a genuine and fair peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors.



While the status of Arab-Israelis in Israel is still open to much improvement, a great deal has already been accomplished towards reaching the goal of absolute equality.



## Fallacies

### Was the Holocaust responsible for the establishment of Israel?

'[Holocaust](#)' is the name given to the attempted extermination of the Jewish people by Nazi Germany and its sympathizers during WWII. By its end in 1945, six million Jews (one-third of the world's Jewish population) had been annihilated.

While it is true that the horrors of the Holocaust caused many people to sympathize with the plight of the Jews, it

would be wrong to say that European guilt was the principal reason for the establishment of a Jewish state. Rather, the Holocaust can be viewed as an accelerant to a process of state-building that was already well under way.

The [Zionist movement](#) began in the 19th century and by the 1880s, the first organized wave of Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel had begun. Over the years, the Jews not only established farms, towns and cities, but had laid the foundations of the state-to-be. A flourishing society, with its own government-in-waiting, was actively striving to establish sovereignty over those parts of the country granted to it in the numerous peace plans of the pre-state era.

International support for the goal of the Zionist movement - the establishment of a homeland for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel - began long before World War II. Indeed, the initial key step towards the Jewish state was taken in the aftermath of the First World War, when in July 1922, the League of Nations granted Great Britain the [Mandate for Palestine/The Land of Israel](#). In a decision adopted by the 52 governments of the League, the Mandate called upon Great Britain to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in the land of Israel.

The next crucial step was the 1947 [United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181](#), which called for the partition of the Mandate territory into two states, one Jewish, the other Arab.

European guilt cannot explain away the 1947 UN vote. While most European members of the UN voted for the resolution, so, too, did most Eastern European, Latin American and African countries, countries with little or no connection to the Holocaust.

Moreover, the UN Partition Plan did not happen in a vacuum. The British Empire was already crumbling and that same year, India gained independence from British rule, with Muslim areas partitioned to form Pakistan. The process of decolonization had begun in much of the developing world.

Similarly, by this time, the Jewish state was well on its way to independence. The Zionist movement

had helped form a shadow government and most of the other necessary institutions for a state, including political parties, medical and educational systems, labor movements, social organizations, cultural venues and an underground defense force.

Given the abovementioned facts, the question should not be whether European guilt is responsible for the establishment of Israel, but rather had the state of Israel been established earlier, would the Holocaust have happened. However, this issue is largely ignored by those clinging to the 'European guilt' fallacy, since this claim is part and parcel of the theories presented by those who attempt to delegitimize the very existence of Israel.

### **Is Israel not an apartheid state?**

Like most other Western democracies with a sizeable minority population, Israel still has a great deal to do before absolute equality can be achieved. However, the disparity between the situation of [Arab-Israelis](#) and the situation that existed in South Africa is so vast that no legitimate comparison can be made. Indeed, when such parallels are drawn, they are far more indicative of the approach towards Israel of those making this judgment than they are of any reality in Israel.

As there is no genuine justification for making this charge, there can only be two possible explanations for it - either it is being made by someone who is totally ignorant of the situation in Israel or it is being made by someone who harbors a great deal of hatred for Israel. The "Israel is an apartheid state" lie is most often used by those that are trying to delegitimize the existence of Israel, which is one of the three components of the new antisemitism.

Moreover, this comparison does a great disservice to those who truly suffered under apartheid by diminishing both the agony of their situation and by denying the peaceful means that they used to end this horrific regime. Under apartheid, nonwhites could not become citizens or vote, they were limited professionally, forced to live in separate regions of the country and were provided with substandard public services and health care.

While the status of Arab-Israelis in Israel is still open to much improvement, a great deal has already been accomplished towards reaching the goal of absolute equality. Unlike under apartheid, Arab Israelis can vote, live where they want, receive excellent medical care and practice whatever profession they choose. One only has to look at the rise of Arab-Israelis in the public sphere to realize the advances Arab Israelis have made: they can be found on the Supreme Court, in the Knesset (parliament), in ambassadorial positions, as senior officers in the police and army, as mayors, as deputy-speakers of the Knesset and even as government ministers and deputy ministers. Prominent Arab Israelis can be found in almost every sphere of Israeli life, including in the medical fields, media and playing on Israel's national soccer team.

One of the ideals on which Israel was founded was that of equality. Israel's [Declaration of Independence](#) states that the State of Israel "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion,

conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions." Moreover, it goes on to appeal "to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions." Subsequent legislation and judicial decisions have upheld these principles.

One must question how a country that considers even incitement to racism illegal be considered an apartheid state? The absolute legal equality and the ongoing efforts being made to achieve practical equality clearly prove the spurious nature of this claim.

### **Is Israel not a colonialist invention?**

Anti-Israeli forces typically deploy two complimentary narratives to brand Israel as a colonialist entity. The first falsely claims that the establishment of Israel was a colonialist act; the second, that Israel itself is a foreign entity in the Middle East, and therefore its continued existence constitutes colonialism.

At the root of both narratives lies the denial of the Jewish people's historic connection to the land of Israel, of Jewish rights and of Jewish claims to the area. The Palestinians and their supporters ignore the [archeological evidence of Jewish life in ancient times](#), the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel throughout the ages, Jewish laws applicable only to the Land and Jewish traditions, including the Biblical accounts of ancient Jews in the Holy Land. Yasser Arafat went so far as to repudiate the Bible and the New Testament by denying that the Temple ever existed in Jerusalem. Palestinian propagandists still claim that the Jews are not a nation, but merely share a religious belief, thereby unworthy of the nationalist aspirations and self-determination granted to other peoples.

Those that support the claim that the establishment of Israel was a colonialist act often refer to Great Britain's [Balfour Declaration](#) as proof. Totally ignored is the fact that the British Mandate to establish a "national home for the Jewish people" was created by the League of Nations, the precursor of the United Nations. The [1922 Mandate](#) did not seek to create a new homeland for the Jews, rather it stated that "recognition has thereby been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and to the grounds for reconstituting their national home in that country." The will of the international community was to recognize a preexisting right and right a preexisting wrong.

The founding of Israel in 1948 had nothing to do with colonialism. Indeed, the exact opposite is true: Israel's independence assisted in the removal of the British presence in the Middle East. The Jewish residents of Israel struggled to obtain their independence from their colonial rulers. The Zionists had acted much like other national liberation movements of that time, striving to reestablish the Jewish people's self-determination and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in their homeland.

On the other side, the Arab states enjoyed the support of the colonial powers during the War of Independence, receiving arms and training. The Arab Legion, which played a crucial role in the war, was commanded by a British officer and had both British and Arab officers in its ranks. The Arab

states were supplied with weapons from Britain and France, the colonial powers in the region, while most of Israel's arms came from outside forces, primarily via Czechoslovakia.

Often the fact that most Arab countries were established following control by European powers and only became independent states due to European intervention is conveniently ignored. Also overlooked by those who attempt to portray the Jews as foreign interlopers and the Palestinians as the indigenous people is the large influx of Arabs into the Mandate territory, attracted by the improved conditions in the Holy Land and growing economy established by the Jews.

It is sad and ironic that the Jewish people who had a history in this Land dating back thousands of years are considered colonialists by some and that Zionism, the national liberation movement of the Jewish people, is deigned a colonialist movement. Yet a nation established with the specific approval of the United Nations cannot be considered a colonialist entity and a people returning to their historic homeland cannot be considered colonialists.

#### **Can Israel be both a Jewish state and a democracy?**

The Jewish people's ties to the Land of Israel encompass thousands of years of history and the yearning for their homeland reaches back to antiquity. Israel was established as a Jewish state to fulfill the Jewish people's right to self-determination and national independence. As [Israel's Declaration of Independence](#) states "It is a natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other peoples, in their own sovereign state."

The Jewish state in the Land of Israel was established with the backing of the international community and in accordance with international law.

International legitimacy for a Jewish homeland in the Land was first granted by the League of Nations, the precursor of the UN, when its [1922 Mandate decision](#) recognized the Jewish people, their historic ties to Israel and their rights to an independent national homeland there.

The international community granted its express support for the establishment of a Jewish state when it voted in favor of the [1947 UN Partition Plan](#). Furthermore, by stipulating that both the Arab and the Jewish state to be founded under the plan should adopt democratic forms of government, the international community declared that there was no contradiction between the national definition of these states and their democratic natures.

Israel has lived up to the confidence of the international community, and has developed into a contemporary Western liberal democracy with freedom of worship guaranteed to all. Israel has citizens from nearly every religion, race, ethnicity and national origin, all of whom enjoy equal rights under the law.

There is no contradiction between Israel's identity as a Jewish state and as a democracy. While some claim that defining Israel as the Jewish state would appear to imply that Israel is a theocracy that is

not true. Israel is governed by the rule of law as set out by a democratically elected parliament, and has an elected executive branch, an independent judiciary and a free press.

Israel is self-defined as a Jewish state, however it is mostly secular and has no official state religion. On the other hand, twenty nations that have established Islam as their state religion, two (Cambodia and Bhutan) are officially Buddhist states, while 14 (including Norway, Argentina and the United Kingdom) constitutionally recognize Christianity or Catholicism as their state religion. None of these states is attacked for their religious characteristics.

Israel's primary Jewish characteristics include the status of Hebrew, the official [days of rest and holidays](#) and the [state emblems and symbols](#). Israel's Jewish emblems and symbols are no more objectionable than the crosses that appear on the flags of the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Sweden and many other democracies.

Israel does set its holidays and weekly day of rest according to the Jewish calendar, but Western democracies set theirs by the Christian calendar. It is no more theocratic to celebrate Passover and Hanukah than to have an official holiday on Easter and Christmas. Israel respects Jewish values and norms, but that is no different than the Judeo-Christian heritage valued in many other democracies.

One of the claims against the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state is the contention that the Jews do not constitute a people. Proponents of this view claim that the Jews are merely members of a religion. Yet just like the Norwegians, Japanese and French, the Jewish people are a nation with a shared origin, history, religion, language and culture. Moreover, since self-definition is the foremost test of people or a nation, the very existence of the State of Israel provides the ultimate proof that the Jews define themselves as a people.

Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people. National independence can be consistent with democracy, as many modern nation-states are full-fledged democracies. Most European democracies - including Denmark, Italy, Spain, Poland and Hungary - are national states. Just like in Israel, the identity of the nation, as expressed by the majority, is manifested in the state's symbols, culture, heritage, language and calendar.

Many other nation-states also have large national minorities who wish to protect their unique identities, including Spain (the Basques), Poland (Germans) and Finland (Swedish). Still, all these states are considered democracies and their democratic natures are not questioned because their public character reflects that of the majority.

While Arab Israelis do face a certain degree of discrimination, this is not a function of Israel's legal structure as a Jewish state. Rather, this is a reflection of the difficulties faced by many minority populations in other democracies, compounded by the conflict.

Israeli law grants full civil rights to members of all ethnic groups and Israel's declaration of independence guarantees a large amount of cultural autonomy for individuals and for groups. [Minority rights](#) are respected by the state: Arabic is the second official language, marriage and other personal status issues are dealt with in a state-sponsored system of Muslim courts and Arab children

are educated in a state-sponsored Arab-language school system. In these respects, Israel is more liberal than many other democracies.

At the same time that Israel is subjected to criticism for its Jewish identity, Muslim states, with their state-sponsored religion, are given a free pass. Even the Palestinian Authority has declared Islam its official and sole state religion.

To deny Israel's legitimacy as the Jewish state is to deny the Jewish people's right to self-determination and a homeland. Given the long history of oppression of the Jewish people that included the Holocaust, that right is a necessity. To negate the validity of Zionism, the national movement of the Jewish people, while validating the national aspirations of other peoples is nothing more than discrimination and a challenge to the principle of universal equality. Just as the Palestinians expect Israel to recognize a Palestinian state, Israelis expect the Palestinians to recognize the Jewish state.

It is ironic that those who object to the term "the Jewish state" have no such qualms regarding the establishment of the Palestinian state, one which Palestinian leaders have declared would have no Jewish citizens.

### **Is the Law of Return a just law?**

The 1950 [Law of Return](#) gives every Jew the right to come to Israel as an *oleh* (immigrant) and become an Israel citizen. It also grants the right to make *aliyah* (immigrate) to any individual who has one Jewish parent or grandparent or is married to someone who is Jewish or has a Jewish parent or grandparent.

The Law of Return can best be viewed as a response to the long history of persecution of the Jews. It is also a practical expression of the Jewish people's aspirations for the rebirth of their independent state in their ancient homeland.

The rationale for the Law of Return was obvious in the wake of the Holocaust - it was designed to ensure that every Jew could find a place of refuge and rebuild their lives in a Jewish homeland. Upon establishment of the state in 1948, the first act of the government was to abolish all the British restrictions on Jewish immigration, allowing the survivors of the Holocaust, and later the Jews fleeing Arab states, to find shelter in their homeland. In many ways the Law of Return was the Jewish state's answer to the British White Paper of 1939, which severely limited Jewish immigration to the Mandate territory and doomed the Jews of Europe. With this act, the Israeli government declared that Israel would serve as a haven for Jews from around the world. Since then, it has helped Jews fleeing persecution and hardship, from antisemitism in the Communist bloc to famine in Ethiopia.

The Law of Return does not discriminate against non-Jewish citizens of Israel because it does not deal with any citizens of Israel, only potential immigrants. The law is sometimes criticized because it does not allow Arabs to freely immigrate to Israel or for Palestinian refugees and their descendants to

reclaim their former homes. Either situation would undermine the Jewish nature of Israel, which was established as a homeland for the Jewish people, as prescribed by [UN Resolution 181](#) of 1947 (the Partition Plan) and the [League of Nations Mandate](#) of 1922. Israel's Law of Return upholds the rights of the Jews.

Furthermore, the Law of Return is not the only path to Israeli nationality. Any non-Jew who wishes to immigrate to Israel may do so through the process of [naturalization](#), under the Law of Entry and the Law of Citizenship, in a manner similar to that in most other democracies. Meanwhile the matter of the Palestinian refugees should be settled through the negotiating process and in the framework of a Palestinian state. When a Palestinian state is established, the Palestinians will be free to enact their law of return to their own territory.

To criticize the Law of Return as racist is to apply a double standard to Israel. Many democracies have compatible laws and similar relationships between their nation-states and national diasporas. Numerous constitutions provide for national repatriation and these ties are reflected in immigration and citizenship laws.

A number of countries in Western Europe (Ireland, Greece, Germany, France, Finland), most central and eastern European states and some Asian states (China, Japan, the Philippines) have repatriation laws similar to the Law of Return. For example, under its immigration laws, Finland gives preferential treatment to those of Finnish-ethnic extraction from the former USSR, calling it repatriation, even though many are descendants of Finns who emigrated from Finland hundreds of years ago.

The Law of Return is compatible with Israel's identity as a liberal democracy. Israel was established to provide a safe haven for Jews around the world and the Law of Return also has brought a scattered people back together in their homeland.

### **Does Israel's identity as the Jewish state mean the oppression of its Arab minority?**

Israel's [Declaration of Independence](#) defines the state as a Jewish and democratic state, a state based on both Jewish precepts and democratic principles. Israel is the only Jewish state, rendering it an easy target of attack - a state that many people label exclusionary, discriminatory and undemocratic.

However, the fact that Israel has an official ethnic character does not render it unique in the family of nations. In fact, Israel is but one of many countries which have an official ethnic character or state religion (Argentina and Costa Rica, for example, are Roman Catholic, Denmark and Iceland are Lutheran, and almost every Arab country in our region is officially Islamic).

The fact that Israel has an official ethnic character is also not discriminatory. Israel's Declaration of Independence not only defines Israel as a Jewish state, but also as a democratic state based upon the principles of the separation of power, freedom, and complete equality before the law for all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, gender or nationality. These principles apply today. As Israel

is self-defined as both a Jewish and a democratic state, it guarantees the rights of its non-Jewish citizens, who enjoy full equality under the law.

Israel is not only a democracy in name, but also in practice. Israel is home to a [multicultural society](#), composed of various minority groups, including Israeli Arabs, Bedouins, Druze, and Circassians. These minority groups constitute approximately 20% of the Israeli population. They enjoy all the rights of Israeli citizens, and bear most of the concomitant responsibilities. In particular, minority citizens in Israel vote in elections, serve as representatives in the parliament, ministers in the government, and ambassadors abroad. They carry Israeli identity cards, travel on Israeli passports, attend Israeli schools, are admitted to Israeli hospitals, and pay Israeli taxes.

Even if redundant, it is important to note that as in any democracy, minorities in Israel enjoy the right to freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of association, among other important political rights. In fact, the freedoms that are afforded to minorities in Israel far surpass the freedoms granted to citizens of other Middle Eastern states.

However, having said this, one cannot and should not ignore that as in any multicultural society claims of discrimination can and do arise in Israel. However, the Israeli system has many safeguards in place to prevent discrimination. For example, these claims can be directly addressed to the Israeli Supreme Court, on which both Arab and Jewish judges reside. The Supreme Court has the power to overturn government action, to order injunctions and to grant relief; and does not hesitate to use this power where necessary.

Israel, like many other Western democracies, is still struggling to obtain absolute equality between all its citizens in practice. However, Israel's strong democratic and legal protections provide a strong base for the protection of minority rights.

### **Do the Palestinians have a "right" to immigrate to Israel?**

The State of Israel is a national home for Israeli citizens and for Jews living throughout the world. Upon its establishment, Israel provided a full and comprehensive solution to the problem of Jewish refugees who had survived the Holocaust in Europe, as well as those who, following the establishment of the State of Israel, were forced to leave Arab countries that they had lived in for centuries.

While the question of Palestinian refugees is an impassioned one, and while Israel empathizes with Palestinian refugees and their descendants, the Palestinian refugee problem demands a Palestinian solution. The future Palestinian state must provide a full and comprehensive resolution for the Palestinians, including both those who currently reside in the territories and those who travelled to various Arab states and have been deliberately kept as refugees there so as to be exploited as bargaining chips.

According to Palestinian sources, there are approximately 3.5 million Palestinian refugees and

descendants registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the U.N. Agency established for the sole purpose of addressing the Palestinian refugee problem. If Israel were to allow all of these individuals to return to her territory, this would be an act of demographic suicide on her part, and no state can be expected to destroy itself. As US President Obama stated "the right of return would extinguish Israel as a Jewish state."

Moreover, neither under the major UN resolutions, nor under international conventions, nor under the relevant agreements between the parties, are the Palestinian refugees granted a "right" to return to Israel. In fact, several UN resolutions hint at alternative means which can be implemented to resolve the Palestinian refugee problem, including resettlement and payment of compensation for lost property. Such measures would constitute a "just settlement" of the refugee problem.

International law does not recognize the right of the Palestinian refugees and their descendents to return to their homes. A methodical examination of the laws pertaining to refugees has found there is no basis for Palestinian claims. Indeed, the opposite is true: at the time when the refugee problem was created in 1948, the trend was to separate warring sides and returning to Israel was not considered an option. The position against refugees returning was strongly reinforced by the 2010 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights which held that due to the time that had passed, Greek refugees who had been expelled from northern Cyprus in 1974 should not be allowed to return to their homes and expel the current residents. The European Court decided that a resolution to the Cyprus refugee problem must be found through a political resolution to the conflict, much as a resolution to the Palestinian refugee problem can only be resolved politically and in the framework of a Palestinian state.

### **Is Israel viewed favorably in the US because of a Jewish lobby?**

Israel and the United States maintain close relations because both states share fundamental values and common strategic interests. The two states are allies in every sense of the word while the two peoples are strong friends.

Shared values include a reverence for democracy, respect for individual rights and the belief that governance should only be by the rule of law. The US and Israel also share similar histories: both are "promised lands", one old, one new, both are immigrant nations born as democracies and both have fought wars, though only of necessity or moral requirement.

While Israelis admire the United States, Americans, too, have seen Israel advance from a young country fighting for its existence to an outpost of democracy in a sea of repressive regimes. Israel, like the US, strives for progress, contributing to the world its innovations in science, technology, culture, the humanities and higher learning.

The [special bond](#) has existed since President Harry Truman recognized Israel a mere 11 minutes after its establishment as a modern state. The resilient nature of these ties is best demonstrated by the bipartisan support afforded Israel, ensuring that they do not waver no matter which party is in power

in Washington. And the US knows that no change of government in Jerusalem could cause Israel to abandon the alliance.

The parallel worldviews of both nations signify that the US and Israel share not only values, but interests as well. The two countries believe that their vital interests include promoting peace, security and stability in the region.

The hazards inherent to the Middle East threaten Israel directly, but also challenge American strategic interests. Both states are concerned with the spread of terrorism and extremism, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. President Obama has noted that: "Many of the same forces that threaten Israel also threaten the United States and our efforts to secure peace and stability in the Middle East. Our alliance with Israel serves our national security interests."

Together the US and Israel face these threats as allies. Indeed, it was President Barack Obama who called Israel "our strongest ally in the region and its only established democracy." Ties between the two countries serve as a stabilizing factor in an unstable region, as Israel acts as a deterrent to the extremists of the region.

While times have seen other alliances shift, Israel has remained a vital friend and ally to the US. Strategic cooperation has existed for decades. Whether during the Cold War, when Israel was America's only reliable friend in the region, or today in the fight against terrorism, this close cooperation and intelligence sharing has benefitted both parties. For it was Israel's 1981 attack on Saddam Hussein's Osirak nuclear reactor that allowed US forces to free Kuwait during the first Gulf war, protecting America's vital oil interests. At the same time, while American soldiers remain stationed in Germany, Japan, South Korea and elsewhere, Israel's doctrine of self-reliance has meant that American soldiers never have to fight its battles.

Israel continues to make strong contributions to the US in the framework of this strategic cooperation, including in the fields of intelligence sharing, weapons and technological development, combined military planning and joint exercises for the benefit of both sides. Israel's experience in counter-terrorism and homeland security expertise has served America well following 9/11.

Despite these bonds and quantitatively proven support of the American people for the people of Israel, there are those that insist that a Jewish lobby or an Israeli lobby stands behind US-Israeli ties. This view is nothing more than a conspiracy theory. Accusations of disproportionate Jewish influence are an expansion of old antisemitic myths that hold that a Jewish cabal controls the media, world finance and governments.

These types of conspiracy theories can do nothing to detract from the fact that America freely chooses its allies, searching out those nations who share its values and morals. There is nothing more genuine than the formation of close ties between two states that believe wholeheartedly in democracy, freedom and tolerance.

### **Is the conflict linked to all the problems of the Middle East?**

Linkage refers to the belief that the Arab-Israel conflict is inextricably linked to every other problem in the Middle East. The linkage concept is one of the greatest myths of the Middle East. It has served to alter fair reporting of the history of the region and more dangerously, distorts current assessments of the problems facing the region, preventing rational analysis.

Those that believe in the hard linkage fallacy hold that all the Middle East's issues are linked to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and that every other regional problem will be solved by resolving the conflict. Soft linkage does not support this ridiculous premise but does maintain that the establishment of a Palestinian state will enable significant progress on even the most problematic issues of the region.

The linkage myth began in the 1920s during the Mandate period, created by Arab elites for reasons connected to intra-Arab politics. This fabrication was used by Arab leaders who fought to gain a position of power with the British by representing the Palestinians. They used the linkage theory to explain their involvement in the matter. Additionally, it was part of their attempts to portray the Middle East as the home of a unified Arab nation, a force to be reckoned with.

Linkage gained hold as the US involvement in the Middle East grew. The goal then became to pressure the United States to abandon Israel, based on the claim that the US could not have good relations with both sides. As Arab states realized the extent of US resolve in supporting Israel, they tried to place the onus for resolving the conflict on the United States.

Currently, the myth plays a role in absolving the Arab leadership of all responsibility for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and for all other problems of the Middle East. For Arab leaders it has the very useful added benefit of placing Israel in the role of scapegoat, a rally point for popular support and a means to divert attention away from the tyranny, corruption and failures of their own regimes.

The linkage myth is so pervasive primarily because it is a propaganda line endlessly promulgated by the Arab elites. For those in the West, it seemingly supplies an easy explanation to an extremely complicated situation - solve one conflict and the Middle East will flourish. Its simplicity makes it attractive to those who seek uncomplicated solutions and refuse to face up to reality. It is particularly attractive to anti-Israeli forces in the West who seek to delegitimize Israel, blaming it for all the ills of the region.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is not the single defining issue of a conflict-ridden region. There have been countless numbers of conflicts in the Middle East since 1948, including the civil war in Yemen (1962-68), the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), the Gulf War (1990-91) and the Second Gulf War (2003-present). None of these wars had anything to do with Israel, and none would have been alleviated by a resolution of the Israel-Arab conflict.

In addition to the fights for power between nation-states in the Middle East, there are also conflicts between sectarian groups as well as between regimes and their domestic rivals. The Middle East encompasses a region with thousands of clans and tribes, different languages and dialects, ethnic

and religious groups. Presently, the Arab world is involved with the conflicts between the Sunnis and Shiites and secularists and Islamists, as well as dealing with Iran's nuclear program, the situation in Iraq, the instability in Lebanon, the currently dormant Hamas-Fatah civil war and the rebellion on the Saudi-Yemeni border. Polling data shows that these situations interest the residents of the Middle East far more than the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Similarly, none of the current Middle Eastern issues will be eliminated by a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Taliban's reign of terror in Afghanistan and the sectarian violence in Iraq are not dependent on border negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Nor will Iran abandon its nuclear plans or its regional ambitions because the Palestinian refugee issue is resolved. The Arab states will cooperate or not with the West regarding Iran according to how they view the regional balance of power and not how quickly the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations progress.

There are those that claim that America's support of Israel harms its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Is it realistic to claim that the insurgents in Iraq are concerned more with human rights in the Gaza than with overthrowing the current government, or that the average Afghani is more disturbed by settlement construction in the West Bank than the power of the Taliban.

Similarly, there are those that claim that resolving the conflict would undermine support for extremists. Those who hold this view ignore what happened in Jordan and Egypt. Israel's peace agreements with these two countries did not serve to moderate the extremists there, rather they utilized the peace issue to stir up their supporters in the same way they had used the conflict. A similar scenario can be expected after peace is reached with the Palestinians. This peace agreement will not convince the extremists to moderate themselves, rather it will only spur them on to further violence.

Radical Islamists will never accept a Jewish state in the Middle East. The extremists are not interested in issues such as border negotiations because they are not interested in peace. They care not for the matters relating to "1967" (i.e. the West Bank and Gaza), but for the affairs of "1948" (the existence of Israel). A peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians will not mollify the terrorists,

The same forces of extremism that want to eradicate Israel want to eradicate any American presence in the Middle East. They do not hate American because of Israel, but rather see Israel as an outpost of American democracy and hate Israel because of America. Both are part of the insufferable West, whose culture and beliefs are antithetical to their most closely held beliefs.

Al Qaeda views the resurrection of the caliphate as its prime goal, and US support for moderate Muslim regimes as its prime obstacle. Osama bin Laden's goal is to take power in Riyadh, not Jerusalem. Israel is only a minor blip on his radar. Pre-9/11, bin Laden barely referred to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. His 1996 fatwa "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places [Saudi Arabia]" concentrated on the US's outrage against the Muslim nation - the stationing of US troops on Saudi Arabian soil. After 9/11, his priorities remained the same: the downfall of pro-American regimes in the US and ultimately, the establishment of an Islamic caliphate. However, closely following trends in the Western media which blamed the attacks on the Israeli-

Palestinian conflict, bin Laden began to make some use of the Palestinians as a rallying cry. It was the prevalence of the linkage theory which then caused bin Laden to use the Palestinians as an excuse, not true devotion to the Palestinian cause.

Indeed, one of the fallacies of the linkage theory concerns the extent that the Arab world truly cares about the Palestinians. They are more a political ploy than a true object of concern. Since before the establishment of the state of Israel, Arab regimes have been more involved with advancing their own interests than with the welfare of the Palestinians.

Even when the Arab states actually took actions to help the Palestinians, they were acting for their own benefit: the Arab invasion of the newly-established state of Israel in 1948 was actually a land grab, while the Egyptians and Jordanians, who ruled Gaza and the West Bank until the 1967 Six-Day War, did nothing to promote Palestinian statehood. Time after time, the PLO was expelled from Arab countries when it threatened to destabilize the local regime and Arab leaders have done little if anything to defend Palestinian human rights in their own territories.

The linkage theory is dangerous as it diverts attention away from the true problems of the Middle East and absolves the local leadership from all responsibility for their resolution. If all international support for Israel was to cease to exist, Iran's pursuit of nuclear arms would not halt, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq would not end, and al Qaeda would not change its horrific aspirations. Rather, the extremists would be strengthened and the US' position in the Middle East would be gravely compromised. US-Israeli relations may be an irritant in the Arab world, but they do not determine the course of events in the Middle East. Even if the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was resolved, the deep-seated anger in the region will not disappear and the culture of shame and honor will soon find a new cause.

### **Is the fence a legitimate means of self-defense?**

Palestinian propaganda has tried to portray the [anti-terrorist fence](#) in the most negative light possible. Instead of acknowledging that the fence is a legitimate means of passive self-defense, the Palestinians and their supporters twist its purpose by calling it an apartheid wall or a new Berlin wall (ignoring the fact that almost all the barrier is a fence) that is intended to create ghettos.

The Palestinians have attempted to attach the term "apartheid" to the anti-terrorism fence, apartheid being a system of racial segregation designed to preserve the status quo and oppress black South Africans, who were denied all rights. But the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is nothing like the situation that existed in South Africa, and Israel's anti-terrorist fence has nothing to do with separation by race, but with the need to prevent terrorism.

Palestinian propaganda utterly ignores the fact that the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis is not a racial one, but in fact, a national-territorial conflict to which some Palestinians have tried to add religious traits. The fence was not designed to separate two peoples according to their race or religion, but rather to separate the perpetrators of terrorism from their victims. On one side of the

fence will be Israeli citizens - both Jewish and Arab - while on the other, the Palestinian population, amongst which the terrorists hide.

Israel is not seeking to isolate the Palestinians. Israel would like nothing more than to see cooperation flourish with its Palestinian neighbors and the Arab world. The only reason that Palestinians have in recent years been restricted from entering into Israel is because of the terrorist attacks that peaked during the second intifada that began in 2000. Moreover, the Palestinians have no legal right to enter the state of Israel: they are not citizens of Israel and many have had nefarious reasons for crossing into Israeli territory.

At the same time, Israeli Arabs (who constitute nearly 20% of Israel's population) are citizens with equal rights under Israeli law, and reside on the Israeli side of the fence. Therefore, it is clear that the fence does not divide on the basis of race or religion, but rather based on citizenship and past terrorist behaviors.

Similarly, the accusations that the anti-terrorism fence is creating another Berlin Wall is nothing more than cheap propaganda that plays fast and loose with historical facts. The Berlin Wall was not a defensive mechanism. Instead it was designed by the totalitarian Communist regime of East Germany to perpetuate the division of the city by keeping the citizens of East Germany - who sought only freedom and contact with their brethren in West Germany - locked in. In stark contrast, Israel is building the anti-terrorist fence for one purpose only: to keep Palestinian terrorists, who wish to murder and maim Israeli citizens, out.

By falsely claiming that the anti-terrorist fence created ghettos, Palestinian propaganda is cynically manipulating history and reality. Defensive measures, such as the fence, have no connection whatsoever with ghettos.

In misusing the term "ghetto," the Palestinians choose to manipulate a concept linked to the darkest, most painful periods of Jewish history, particularly the Holocaust. In this manner, the Palestinians once again exploit Jewish suffering to smear the name of Israel. This is a classic example of the new antisemitism, which uses an outright lie for the purpose of rewriting history and transforming the victim into the perpetrator. The Jews were forced into ghettos to isolate them, to discriminate against them, to persecute them, and ultimately - during the Holocaust - to kill them.

Israel is not pushing the Palestinians into ghettos; the Palestinians live freely in the West Bank. Rather, Israel is creating a barrier between Palestinian terrorists and Israeli communities. The fence was designed to create maximum security with minimal interference to Palestinian daily life. Israel is not forcing the Palestinians to move from their communities, but is being forced to build the security fence to keep the Palestinians terrorists away from Israeli civilians.

It is Palestinian terrorism that caused the fence to be built and it is Palestinian terrorism that must take responsibility for any inconvenience caused by the defensive fence. In actuality, the anti-terrorism fence has contributed to peace, by allowing both Israelis and Palestinians to live side-by-side, relatively free from the conflicts caused by terrorism.

## **FAQ: The Campaign to Defame Israel**

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