

Trump's Visit to Israel: Prospects for Peace and Justice in the Middle East

Global Research News Hour Episode 183

By [Michael Welch](#), [Richard Silverstein](#), and [Prof. Richard Falk](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)
Theme: [Crimes against Humanity, GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#)
In-depth Report: [PALESTINE](#)

"I've heard it's one of the toughest deals of all, but I have a feeling we're going to get there eventually. I hope."

-US President Donald Trump, on prospects for an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal [1] (May 22, 2017)

LISTEN TO THE SHOW

Beleaguered by ongoing accusations of being a Kremlin agent, protests, and calls for his impeachment, President Trump has finally seen fit to embark on a multi-state visit abroad.

Trump's first stop was in Saudi Arabia, where he signed a weapons deal worth \$109.7 billion, the largest in history. This princely sum is expected to mushroom to \$380 billion within 10 years. [2]

The second stop was Israel. Aside from the multiple photographs circulating through media of him and his entourage visiting the Western Wall, the trip was notable for public statements by both the US President and the Israeli Prime Minister indicating that the president's "strong position on Iran" advances the prospects for peace in the region.

The subject that should have been front and centre however, was the nearly forty day hunger strike by Palestinian prisoners, spearheaded by Marwan Barghouti. The more than 1000 prisoners were attempting to raise concerns about the poor treatment of prisoners in Israeli jails. These included the practices of administrative detention allowing detentions on 'secret evidence', excessive use of solitary confinement, and the severe restriction of family visits. (source: Al Jazeera report) [3]

According to press reports, as of Saturday May 27th, the hunger strike has finally been suspended following talks involving the International Committee for the Red Cross and the Palestinian Authority concluding in a deal with Israel. [4]The Free Barghouti Campaign put out the following statement:

This is an important step towards full respect of the rights of Palestinian

prisoners under international law. It is also an indication of the reality of the Israeli occupation, which has left no option to Palestinian prisoners but to starve themselves to achieve basic rights they are entitled to under international law.[5]

On the occasion of both the Trump visit and the end of “[one of the widest and longest Palestinian hunger strikes in history of the prisoners’ movement](#)” the Global Research News Hour looks at the prospects for peace and justice in the Middle East.

Richard Silverstein is a political writer and commentator. Since 2003 he has authored the progressive Jewish blog [Tikun Olam](#), which focuses on exposing the excesses of the Israeli national security state. He has contributed to the Independent Jewish Voices essay collection, [A Time to Speak Out](#) (Verso, 2009), and to [Israel and Palestine: Alternate Perspectives on Statehood](#) (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016). He contributes regularly to [Middle East Eye](#), and has contributed in the past to Truthout, Alternet, Haaretz, Mint Press News, Jewish Forward, Los Angeles Times, Comment Is Free and Al Jazeera English. In the first part of the show, Silverstein probes some of the dynamics of Trump’s visit to the region, what is on the table in terms of Israeli-Palestinian peace, and the major players involved. His site is [www.richardsilverstein.com](#)

Richard Falk is a professor emeritus of international law and practice at Princeton University. From March 2008 to March 2014 he served as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation in the Palestinian Territories occupied since 1967. He also co-authored with Virginia Tilley a [recent report](#), released in March 2017 and since suppressed at the insistence of the UN Secretary General, that evaluated Israel’s practices toward the Palestinian population as essentially apartheid. In the second half of the program, Professor Falk discusses the findings of his report, and the repudiation it received at the UN level. He also discusses how the Palestinian prisoners hunger strike coming on top of an effective boycott, divestment, sanctions campaign holds promise for precipitating an optimistic outlook for justice movements in the region. His blog is featured at [richardfalk.wordpress.com](#) Many of his articles are posted at [Global Research](#).

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Notes:

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrQuiMX7BZ8>
2. Rachael Revesz (May 21, 2017) “Donald Trump Signs \$110 Billion Arms Deal with Nation He Accused of Masterminding 9/11” Independent; <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-arms-deal-saudi-arabia-110-billion-911-terrorism-international-law-war-crimes-a7747076.html>
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_04nj5vxps
4. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/05/palestinian-prisoners-israel-suspend-hunger-strike-170527074751097.html>
5. ibid

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