

UN Resolution on Palestine: Palestinians Need Fewer Negotiations, Not More

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When the U.N. Security Council resolution to end the Israeli military occupation of the occupied territories and establish a Palestinian state by 2017 was [defeated](#), not a single human with a pulse was surprised. The resolution received eight votes in favor, with the United States and Australia against and five countries abstaining. Even though the measure was one vote shy of adoption, the United States decided to exercise its veto power anyway just to make its rejectionist stance abundantly clear. But the bill would not have led to a fair settlement anyway. If it led to a settlement at all it would have been an unjust one for Palestinians. A just settlement would mean assuming the goals of the resolution as a starting point, not as an end point.

Explaining why she put a kibosh on the resolution, United States Ambassador [Samantha Power said](#) the bill was “imbalanced” and addressed “only one side.” It did address only one side – Israel’s. It was imbalanced because it sought legal rights already due to Palestinians since 1967 as its objective while ignoring other Palestinian rights like the right of return and equal rights inside the 1948 borders. And it rewarded Israeli for 47 years of atrocious criminality – ethnic cleansing, land and water theft, destruction of thousands of homes and olive trees – without any consequences.

The insistence on maintaining the status quo was explained by Power saying that “we firmly believe the status quo between Israelis and Palestinians is unsustainable.”

Power also made multiple references to negotiations between the parties. “The United States every day searches for new ways to take constructive steps to support the parties in making progress toward achieving a negotiated settlement,” she said. By this, she apparently meant that the United States searches for ways to force Palestinians negotiate how many of their rights they are willing to forfeit, while Israel demands they don’t have to give up anything.

The only acceptable outcome for Israel is maintaining control of all of Mandate Palestine, from the Jordan River to the Sea, by *de facto* annexation. The United States knows this and has enabled them to do so, by giving them \$3 billion per year in aid and vetoing 43 resolutions meant to hold them accountable since 1972, among other things.

If Power was not being dishonest and deceitful, the only other explanation for her statement is that she is clinically insane. The definition of [insanity](#) is “a mental illness of such a severe nature that a person cannot distinguish fantasy from reality.” The idea that Israel has ever for one second been interested in a negotiated settlement since its foundation in 1948 is more of a fantasy than *Game of Thrones*. And to think the U.S. has done anything other than

aid and abet Israel's conquest of Palestine through ideological, financial and diplomatic support would require an unfathomable level of historical amnesia.

If Israel was interested in an actual settlement they would have to admit that they cannot bargain with what does not belong to them – namely *any* land beyond the Green Line. Palestinians don't need another resolution to clarify that Israel needs to remove its military occupation from the lands that were conquered in the 1967 war. This has already been the law for 47 years.

UN Security Council [Resolution 242](#) declared that “the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East ... should include” the “withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict” and “termination for all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area.”

This was reiterated six years later with the demands in [Resolution 338](#) to implement 242 “in all of its parts” and that “negotiations shall start between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace.”

By proposing a new resolution that would achieve at best what is already guaranteed by Resolutions 242 and 338, Palestinians would be forced to surrender the rest of their rights – namely the right of return of the 1948 refugees and their ancestors displaced during the Nakba, and the end to discrimination of Palestinians within Israel who are second-class citizens in the Jewish State.

Israel could not practically dismantle all the illegal settlements they have built in the West Bank and move 500,000 settlers back inside the Green Line, much less absorb possibly millions of refugees, many who still hold the keys to their ancestral homes inside Israel. There is no possibility of a two state solution. It is as much as a fantasy as Ambassador Power's claim that the U.S. doesn't believe in the status quo.

Once this two-state scam is exposed for what it is, the only possibility left is a binational state where Palestinians enjoy equal rights with Jews. It is the reason that Ali Abunimah, writing in the *Electronic Intifada*, said last month he hoped for the U.S. to veto the U.N.'s [“terrible resolution.”](#)

“It insists that the entire question of Palestine be reduced to the question of the 1967 occupation and that merely ending this occupation would effectively end all Palestinian claims,” Abunimah writes.

When the question of the occupation has already been resolved in existing law in favor of the Palestinians, why would they want to give away willingly the rest of what was stolen from them? Since Yasser Arafat signed the Oslo Accords in 1993, Palestinian leadership has demonstrated their willingness to surrender the rights of the people they represent to placate Israel and the United States and be left with scraps.

With incredible foresight Edward Said called the Oslo Accords, with “so many unilateral concessions to Israel,” the [“Palestinian Versailles.”](#) Then, as now, Israel was not willing to give an inch toward recognition of Palestinian self-determination. Pretending that Palestinians can lure Israel into accepting a settlement if they just concede a little bit more

is even more absurd now than it was 21 years ago in Oslo.

A news [census](#) shows that Palestinians will outnumber Jews in Greater Israel by 2016. Palestinians in the occupied territories and within the '48 borders are expected to equal Jews with a population of 6.42 million before surpassing them. By the end of the decade, the census bureau estimates Palestinians will reach 7.4 million to 6.87 million Jews. This does not even include the estimated 5 million Palestinians living in the diaspora and prohibited by Israel's Prevention of Infiltration Law from returning.

So by virtue of merely existing Palestinians will put an end to Israel's hollow claims of being a democracy. Of course this is no small feat. Palestinians have been struggling for seven decades to maintain their existence in spite of dispossession, ethnic cleansing, apartheid, and slow-motion genocide. How else to honor this heroic resistance than to prove definitively that Israel's claims to being a democracy and Jewish state have never been anything more than a myth?

By demanding their rights outside of negotiations with Israel, as they did when they signed the [Rome Statue](#) this week, Palestinians are able to apply pressure unilaterally. With world opinion turning in favor of the Palestinian plight, it has become clear that isolation of Israel and forcing them to be accountable for their crimes is the only way for Palestinians to attain their rights.

[Joseph Massad](#) writes that "Palestinians must insist that those in solidarity with them adopt BDS [Boycott, Divest, and Sanction] as a *strategy* and not as a *goal*, in order to bring about an end to Israel's racism and colonialism in all its forms inside and outside the 1948 boundaries."

It is worth remembering that the only reason Israel exists at all is precisely because the colonial powers who created it acted against all concepts of democracy and human rights. If the newly formed World Court would have heard the case of Palestinians in 1948, when they owned nearly 90% of the land and consisted of about 66% of the population, they never would have permitted granting the country to a minority to rule over it.

No amount of negotiations will be able to force Israel to give up its racism and colonialism willingly - just as no negotiations were able to force the South African apartheid regime to do so. The only way for Palestinians to achieve peace will be in spite of the Israel and the United States, who will continue as they have for decades to do everything they can to prevent Palestinian self-determination. Palestinians must expose Israel and the U.S.'s hypocrisy on democracy and human rights, not let them hide from it.

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