

The ‘Two State Solution’: Illusion, Delusion and Distraction

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US President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. (Design: Palestine Chronicle)
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By Jeremy Salt

The time is long past for Israel to be asked. It has to be told what to do or face consequences that the ‘international community’ will not just threaten but is prepared to see through.

Having watched the genocide since 2023 without intervening, without supporting the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court’s findings against Israel and its prime minister, Keir Starmer, Emmanuel Macron and others in the international beltway are now declaring their support for Palestinian statehood and a ‘two-state’ solution.

What accounts for this? Has rising public outrage forced them into the sudden realization that they have been wrong all along? Are they really determined to compel Israel to accept a Palestinian

state? Or are they just covering their backsides on the home front, and will subside into their usual subservience once the heat is off?

The spate of declarations began on May 19, when the prime ministers of the UK and Canada and the president of France threatened, if that is the right word, that “if Israel does not stop the renewal of its military offensive (on Gaza) and lift its restrictions on humanitarian aid, we will take further concrete actions in response.”

‘Further to what?’ is the question to be asked here, as there have been no “actions” by these three governments against Israel recently, let alone concrete ones.

On the other hand, there have been numerous concrete actions in support of Israel, including the sale of arms, reconnaissance flights over Gaza to help target Hamas and find where Israeli captives are being held, the suppression of public protests against the genocide, and, in the UK, the listing of Palestine Action as a terrorist group. Thus, anti-genocide is to be punished, not genocide.

On July 21, 2025, the UK and 31 “partners” signed a statement on the occupied Palestine territories – assumed to be only those occupied in 1967 – declaring that the “war” on Gaza “must end now” as the suffering of civilians “has reached new depths” and “the denial of essential humanitarian aid is unacceptable.”

Moving on from “unacceptable,” the partners insist that Israel “must” comply with international law as “we are prepared to take further action to support a ceasefire” (same question as before – further to what?).

Finally, “we strongly oppose any steps towards territorial or demographic change in the occupied Palestinian territories.”

To state the obvious, the UK and its 31 ‘partners’ had 19 years from 1948-1967 to stop territorial and demographic change but did nothing about it. They have had a further 58 years since 1967, but have still done nothing about it. Why would anyone believe they are serious now?

On July 30, Starmer said the UK would recognize the state of Palestine in September “unless the Israeli government takes substantive measures to end the appalling situation in Gaza.”

Thus, Palestinian statehood is not a stand-alone right connected to nothing else. In the corruption of Starmer’s mind, it is no more than as a bargaining chip to force Israel out of Gaza. The natural corollary is that if Israel gives him what he wants, the UK won’t acknowledge Palestinian statehood.

Starmer also wants Israel to commit to ‘the’ two-state solution, which he says is “under threat.” In fact, it doesn’t even exist yet. It is a mantra chanted repeatedly by politicians who don’t want to talk about what is really going on. Israel has no intention of going along with it anyway, if the idea is converted into what Starmer and others would call a concrete plan.

As Bezalel Smotrich recently remarked of Gaza, “we didn’t sacrifice all this to transfer Gaza from one Arab to another Arab ... Gaza is an inseparable part of the land of Israel.”

Communications minister Shlomo Karhi, Netanyahu’s Likud ally, said at the same time that “now our soldiers are there [in Gaza], conquering the territory and Israeli settlement is a must.”

Even as West Bank settlers plan the settlements they are going to build in Trump’s Gaza ‘riviera’, settlement expansion continues on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem at an accelerated pace. The

imminent annexation of the West Bank has been proclaimed by Smotrich and others. The annexation of at least part of Gaza is also being discussed.

This is not just crazy settlers acting beyond the control of their politicians, many of whom are crazy West Bank settlers anyway. This is regime policy pursued ever since 1967, built on the most fundamental historical premises of Zionism, and backed by the Knesset, which, on July 18, 2018, voted against the establishment of a Palestinian state on any piece of land west of the Jordan River.

The next day, a Knesset vote established Israel “as the nation state of the Jewish people,” not of the people who actually live within its (non-declared) borders, irrespective of ethnic or religious background.

As religion alone does not make a people, Jews worldwide are communities and not a people, only *part* of the people constituting the national community of the states in which they live. This attempt to turn all Jews into Israelis – to bind them to a state now loathed around the world – is deliberately intended to undermine them in their home countries so that they will only feel secure in Israel.

Nowhere could they be less safe, of course. Iran’s missile attack almost brought Israel to its knees, all settlements in the north have been abandoned, and tens of thousands of Israelis have left the country for good since October 7, 2023. Israel has not just fenced itself off in the Middle East, it has fenced itself in.

On July 29, 2025, delegates of 17 governments, the EU, and the Arab League issued a ‘New York Declaration’ at the end of a conference chaired by Saudi Arabia and France under the aegis of the UN.

According to this document, Hamas’ rule in Gaza “must” end and the group “must” hand its weapons over to the Palestinian Authority. The “war” on Gaza “must” end “now,” with no occupation or displacement of the population.

“After the ceasefire”, a transitional administration “must” be “immediately” established in Gaza under the authority of the PA. Recovery and reconstruction will be in the hands of a “dedicated International Trust Fund.” A temporary “international stabilization force” will be established at the invitation of the PA, with UN member states “welcome” to provide troops.

A “just” two-state solution will be negotiated in accordance with UNGA Resolution 194 (December 11, 1948), which calls for the return of ethnically cleansed Palestinians to their homes, with compensation paid to those who decide not to return and paid anyway for the destruction of or damage to property. Not in another 80 years will Israel accept this, even as the possible basis for negotiations.

The declaration says the two states will be established on the lines that existed before the 1967 war. These lines have been deliberately wiped out by Israel, however, and it has no intention of returning to them.

There are many more ‘musts’ for those who want to read all 30 pages of the document and its annex. There is a mass of detail, but when there is no explanation of *how* to get Israel out of the territories on which the Palestinian state is to be erected, the ‘two-state solution’ falls apart at the start. Clearly, none of the governments now making political mileage out of Palestinian statehood have any idea, unless they are not prepared to admit that persuasion is not going to work.

The declaration would force the PA and Mahmud Abbas onto the Palestinians. Abbas' mandate as an elected president ran out in 2009, and both he and the PA have a long record as Israel's collaborationist enforcers in the West Bank.

They have no authority outside the money, weapons, and protection provided by Israel and will have none outside the protection of the international "stabilization force" if a PA administration is actually installed in Gaza.

Most Palestinians want Abbas removed, but even with him gone, the PA's record is far too toxic for it to be trusted by Palestinians. That they should have the right to choose who they want to govern them is not even mentioned in this document.

The roots of this denial of their right to choose go all the way back to 1918. When they did exercise this right democratically in 2005/6, choosing Hamas in West Bank local elections and then voting Hamas into government in Gaza, the territory was sealed off by Israel.

A concerted attempt was then made by Israel, the US, the UK, and the PA to destroy the Hamas government through sanctions, military intervention and the instigation of civil war between Hamas and Fatah. The lesson for the Palestinians was that democracy only works if they choose what has already been chosen for them.

In Trump's view, the solution to the Gaza genocide is not to stop the genocide but for Hamas to surrender and hand back the 20 Israeli captives still believed to be alive. Israel simultaneously withdrawing from occupied territory and handing over thousands of Palestinians held without trial would be a reasonable alternative in a reasonable world, but Trump's world is not a reasonable world.

Knowing that the US will block any initiatives it does not like, and will continue the flow of arms, despite rising public and congressional opposition, why should Israel be alarmed by the huffing and puffing of Starmer and company or the 'New York Declaration'?

It will play around with these declarations in the same way a cat paws a mouse. If it agrees to negotiations, it will only be with the sole intention of dragging them out forever, as it did with the Oslo 'peace process' in the 1990s.

The most reliable indicator of Israel's intentions is what it does. It is still killing about 100 Palestinians a day in Gaza. They are also being killed on the West Bank, where towns are being ripped up by bulldozers, thousands of people driven out of their homes and where control of one of the most sensitive sites on the West Bank, the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron, has just been placed in the hands of the Kiryat Arba settlement, the most racistly vicious on the West Bank.

The 'hilltop youth' and other settlers continue to run wild in the knowledge that they can vandalize and kill without fear of being punished. One of them, Yinon Levi, had already been sanctioned by the EU when he was videoed on July 28 firing his revolver near the village of Umm al Khair. Levi had also been sanctioned by the Biden administration before Trump took him off the list soon after being elected.

By the most basic standard of normality, Levin is a violent, deeply disturbed psychopath who should be in a prison or a mental home, not running around the West Bank with a gun in his hand. In fact, his demented state of mind makes him the perfect instrument of regime policies.



No one else was shooting, so it is clear that it was a bullet from Levi's gun that hit and killed 'Awdeh Muhammad Khalil al Hathalin, a consultant for the award-winning film No Other Land. Far from being imprisoned, Levi was released to three days of house arrest without even being charged.

The time is long past for Israel to be asked. It has to be told what to do or face consequences that the 'international community' will not just threaten but is prepared to see through.

Unfortunately, there is no chance of this point being reached, given the real-time support for Israel currently obscured by the flim flam coming out of Paris, London, New York, and Washington.

These statements are no more than an updated version of the plans coming out of the same cities or out of Riyadh, the Arab League offices, and Camp David after 1967. All turned to dust and are now hardly remembered. The fate of the current declarations of support for a 'two-state solution' is likely to be the same.

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